

## PARENT HANDBOOK

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## INTRODUCTION

The Head of School, the Principals, teachers, and the administrators of Central Montessori Schools (CMS) extend a warm welcome to all students. In order to ensure that students have a happy, stimulating and successful school year, we have prepared this document, which outlines the school's policies and procedures. We ask that you read this document carefully and refer back to it for future reference.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

CMS welcomes all children & employees regardless of country of origin, race, or religion.

We are committed to providing an educational environment that is free of unlawful harassment and discrimination. CMS will not tolerate actions, comments, words or jokes based on an individual's sex, race, age, religion or any other legally protected grounds. Any person who becomes aware of possible harassment should promptly advise the Head of School, Principal, Supervisor, or Administrator who will handle the matter quickly and confidentially.

## PROGRAM STATEMENT

Central Montessori School's (CMS) interpretation of Montessori pedagogy and programming is consistent with the Minister of Education's Policy Statement as set out in "*How Does Learning Happen (HDLH)*". It is important to note that Montessori pedagogy often describes children's activities as 'work' where the HDLH describes children's activities as 'play', but the activities, as experienced by the child, are one and the same.

We plan for and create positive learning environments by following the Montessori method of child development. Montessori programs have been shown to develop executive function, gentle play by connecting to the social, emotional and cognitive developmental needs of the child. Each classroom is comprised of mixed age groups which, reflective of society as a whole, create a community where children are free to progress at their own pace, learning from each other under the guidance of trained adults.

CMS believes that all children are competent, curious, and rich in potential. Montessori pedagogy places the child at the center of the learning environment with staff and materials as a means of taking on the mantle of their own development. The child has freedom of choice – within limits. He/She is given a lesson and then offered the opportunity to come to a deeper understanding through his/her own efforts and engagement.

Our *Program Statement & Program Statement Implementation Policy* describes our goals for children and the approaches that we implement to meet these goals, while diligently meeting all requirements of ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15. This program statement will be reviewed with staff, students and volunteers annually before they start working at CMS, and whenever an amendment is made. (s.46(3)(k))

CMS ***promotes the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children*** (s.46(3)(a)): We provide well-balanced and nutritious lunches and snacks, meeting the recommendations as set out in the *Canada's Food Guide*. All meals are served in a relaxed and social atmosphere where teachers join the children at the table to encourage them to eat. Each child has the freedom to choose what they want to eat and how much. Mealtime is set up to promote self-help skills and independence by encouraging the children to serve themselves as well as scrape their plates after eating and to try different foods. Children with food allergies and dietary preferences are carefully adhered to. Our staff monitor and document children's health and well-being and communicate concerns immediately with families when necessary.

We promote the health, safety, and well-being of the children by:

- Teaching the importance of hygiene with proper procedures for hand washing, blowing noses, sneezing etc.
- Enforcing Public Health guidelines around quarantines for various illnesses.
- Each child is signed in and out each day.
- Providing sensible, solution-based rules and guidelines regarding outdoor play.
- All staff members are CPR/First Aid trained and attend annual refresher courses.
- Ensuring that the following ***Prohibited Practices*** are not committed:
  - o *Corporal punishment of the child;*
  - o *Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a chair, stroller or other devices for the purpose of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child*

*from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;*

- *Locking the exits of the school for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the school's emergency management policies and procedures;*
- *Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;*
- *Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or*
- *Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.*
- *Sexual abuse, sexual misconduct and prescribed sexual acts (as defined under the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007)*

**CMS supports positive and responsible interaction among children, parents, childcare providers and staff (s.46 (3) (b)):**

Every classroom operates on a principle of freedom within limits and is based on the core Montessori belief of respect for each other and the environment. Each child is free to work at his/her own pace with the materials they have chosen. This gives them the opportunity to explore their natural curiosity, inquiry, and absorb what they learn. We encourage parents to carry the Montessori philosophy into their homes. This helps create a harmonious and mutually supportive atmosphere where children have a positive attitude towards school and receive lifelong learning skills.

We give children the tools and methods in order to encourage them to verbalize to peers and others what they want and how they feel. Staff continuously model caring and respect for others regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, nationality or social origins.

**CMS encourages the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate (s. 46(3)(c)):** The staff at CMS rely on their empirical observations to determine new activities to introduce to the child. The aim is to encourage active, positive and self-directed learning. Emphasis is placed on “*PROCESS NOT PRODUCT*”. Creative learning allows children to work alone or in groups for social interaction and helps develop language, sharing, and cooperation skills during both indoor and outdoor times.

**We foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry (s. 46(3)(d)):** Younger children are inspired and motivated by asking for explanations, while older children share what they have learned while simultaneously reinforcing their own learning and leadership skills. This also encourages an atmosphere of inspiration and co-operations.

*Free play* provides children with an opportunity to explore, design, create and carry out projects and foster creativity.

We provide many different materials in the classroom for children to express and explore in their own way, providing experiences in which they are encouraged to explore their environment and feelings freely.

**CMS provides child-initiated and adult-supported experiences (s. 46(3)(e)):** A Montessori classroom is a prepared environment with materials appropriate for each learning level, allowing children to learn respect for one another and the materials around them. All materials are purposeful, clean, neat and complete. They must be accessible to the children, as well as encourage them to be patient and wait for their turn, or choose another activity, thus learning respect for others. The classroom is prepared to help children accomplish their goals and work independently by gaining confidence and practicing particular skills. The adults encourage, observe and guide inquiry-based activities, recognizing and addressing different learning styles of children.

**We plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported (s.46(3)(f)):** Children are free to challenge themselves at their own pace, allowing them to build confidence and independence. Teachers at CMS are **accommodating and responsive** to the needs of the **individual** child. Opportunities are provided for each child to develop **social skills, cooperation and sharing**.

We believe that the best form of behaviour guidance is self-discipline. Children learn self-discipline, positive work habits and independence through working within **clearly established boundaries** and **consistent positive reinforcement**. A healthy self-image is nurtured through a relaxed, supportive atmosphere where each child is respected and valued as an individual. We encourage children to communicate their needs, as we believe in promoting self-regulation in a positive supportive learning environment. Staff are trained to listen to children's cues in order to support each child when encouraging self-regulation. We believe that every child is a capable communicator who expresses himself/ herself in many ways, and it is the staff's

responsibility to help each child problem-solve at an age-appropriate level of understanding. Montessori education recognizes the individual potential in every child and guides each child to discover that potential. The aim is to encourage active, positive and self-directed learning. The younger children are inspired and motivated by asking for explanations, while older children share what they have learned while simultaneously reinforcing their own learning and leadership skills. This encourages an atmosphere of inspiration and cooperation. At CMS we will work in partnership with families to achieve these goals.

**CMS incorporates indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and gives consideration to the individual needs of the child** (s.46(3)(g)): Each child who receives child care for six hours or more in a day has a rest period not exceeding two hours in length. Each child is permitted to sleep, rest, or engage in quiet activities based on his/her needs. The school provides beds and sheets and we ask that each child bring a blanket (which is sent home weekly for washing).

Children who receive care for six hours and more in a day spend time outdoors for at least two hours each day, weather permitting. Large motor skill activities are included in daily indoor and outdoor play which promotes good health and development for growth. It also aids in balance and coordination, promoting social skills such as sharing, taking turns and cooperation.

CMS also offers weekly activities such as yoga, music, gym time, obstacle courses and “Rainbow Fun”. Through these activities, children develop balance, coordination, flexibility, posture, rhythm and “team spirit”. The children are encouraged to increase their physical limits, which in turn allows them to develop confidence in their abilities.

**We foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children** (s.46(3)(h)): At CMS we believe in open communication with parents and foster engagement by communicating through school policies, our parent handbook, monthly calendars and seasonal newsletters. Parents are also updated weekly about upcoming events that have happened or will happen. Weekly/monthly program/ themes are posted outside each classroom for parents to view. We also offer after-hour educational opportunities, such as parent workshops and program information nights. Transparency is the key to open communication with parents.

**CMS involves local community partners and allows those partners to support the children, their families and staff** (s.46(3)(i)): If we find that we have exhausted our internal resources and need help dealing with children who may require extra attention and/or direction, we welcome third party involvement such as specialists from CCAC and Adventure Place to come and observe children and give our staff and families suggestions and recommendations that can aid in the further development of an individual child, if required.

As part of one of our weekly themes, *Community Helpers*, we arrange visits for dental hygienists, firefighters, police officers or other professionals, to come to speak to our students about their profession and how they help in the community. They provide children with information and goals for a healthy and safe growing experience. It also aids in building a connection with the community, contributing to the world around them. CMS also participates in the annual Terry Fox Run and other charity activities such as MS Read-a-thon, Jump Rope for Heart, Food Bank collections, toy drive and cleaning up our community to acknowledge Earth Day. All these activities foster a sense of belonging to the local community, our natural environment, and a collective universe.

**We support staff, or others who interact with the children at our child care centre in relation to continuous professional learning.** (s.46(3)(j)): We support and encourage our staff to regular continuous professional learning by having monthly meetings, weekly Lunch and Learns, workshops throughout the school year, and annual reviews and completion of all necessary documentation required by ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15. In addition to these, staff members are also encouraged to spend time at least once a year observing other classrooms in the school and at different locations. All staff receive updates on changes provided by CCEYA and are provided dedicated time to engage in collaborative and reflective dialogue in reviewing the impact of program strategies based on “How Does Learning Happen”.

As per s.46.(3)(k), we **document and review the impact of strategies set out in clauses (a) to (j)** through daily observation of what children do and learn, and reflect back to what they have achieved to set goals for their future learning. Our approach to learning is in alignment with the Ministry of Education’s *How Does Learning Happen?*, a resource developed to promote a shared understanding of what children need and what can be done to help them grow and flourish.

Our program statement is reviewed and signed off by staff, students and volunteers prior to interacting with children, annually and whenever modified. Through regular staff meetings, sharing of ideas and difficulties are encouraged to jointly modify our practices and procedures on an ongoing basis. CMS also has written procedures for monitoring compliance and contraventions, which set out recommended and prohibited practices.

CMS ensures that all staff members are monitored and in compliance with all the approaches set out in the program statement with respect to reporting, management and follow-ups. Monitoring also includes an ongoing review of practices, procedures and training needs.

## GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

### 1. PROGRAM OFFERED AT ALL CMS CAMPUSES

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR PROGRAM FEES FOR OTHER CAMPUSES. ([www.cmschool.net](http://www.cmschool.net))

Programs offered	Willowdale Campus	Maplehurst Campus	Maplehurst Early Years (180 Sheppard Ave. E)	York Mills Campus	Thornhill Campus
<b>Infant Program</b> (12 – 18 months)				X	X
<b>Toddler Program</b> (18 months – 2 ½ years)	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Jr. Casa Program</b> (2 ½ - 3.8 years)	X	X	X	X	X
<i>A child will be placed in Sr. Casa (Kindergarten) in September if they turn four on or before December 31st of that calendar year.</i>					
<b>Sr. Casa Program</b> <b>3.8 – 6 years</b>	X	X		X	X
<b>Elementary</b> (Grades 1 – 3)	X	X		X	X
<b>Elementary</b> (Grades 4 – 8)		X		X	
<b>French Immersion</b> (2 ½ years – Grade 6)		X			

### 2. CENTRE HOURS

<b>Before School Program</b>	<b>7:30 am – 8:30 am</b>
<b>Program Hours</b>	<b>8:30 am – 3:30 pm</b>
<b>Pick-up time</b>	<b>3:30 pm – 5:00 pm</b>
<b>Extended Hours</b>	<b>5:00 pm – 6:00 pm</b>

### 3. CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING & CHILD CARE (CWELCC) SYSTEM

Effective January 1, 2025, along with the implementation of the new, cost-based funding approach, base fees for child care in CWELCC-enrolled programs are aligned with the current CWELCC fee guideline, averaging **approximately \$22/day** for eligible children in the Infant, Toddler, and Preschool (Jr. Casa) programs.

Non-base fees refer to any fees charged for optional items/services. These fees are not applicable to receive the CWELCC rebate. Items included in Non-Base Fees are late pick-up fees (after 6:00 pm), 3% Credit Card fees and NSF fees.

#### 4. FEE STRUCTURE

PROGRAMS OFFERED		Monthly Frozen Base Fees 2022	Parent Fee CWELCC \$22 per day
<b>Infant (12 to 18 months)</b>	5 Full days	<b>\$1890</b>	<b>\$478.50</b>
<b>Toddler (18 months to 2.6 years)</b>	5 Full days	<b>\$1590</b>	<b>\$478.50</b>
<b>Jr. Casa (2.6 – 3.8 years)</b>	5 Full Days	<b>\$1450</b>	<b>\$478.50</b>
<b>Extended Hours (Optional)</b>	5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	<b>\$150</b>	

#### 5. WAITING LIST POLICY

In order to be placed on a waiting list, families must complete an online admission form available on CMS website [www.cmschool.net](http://www.cmschool.net) and the child will be placed on the list. All information collected will be private and confidential, only to be used for admission purposes by school administrators.

CMS does not collect a fee for the placement of a child on a school waiting list for admission. Priority shall be given to transfers from other CMS locations, siblings of existing students, and children of CMS employees. The information on the waiting list will be available in a manner that maintains the privacy of the children listed on it, and information will be given to parents/guardians of the position of a child on the list upon request. Visible information on other children and their families will be physically concealed (using pieces of blank paper to cover the names of others that come on the list before and after the child in question), but the position on the waiting list of a child being inquired about will be ascertained by their parents/guardians.

Once a space becomes available, parents/guardians will be contacted on a first-come, first-served basis, determined by the application submission date (the date the child was placed on the waiting list). When a placement is offered and accepted, a non-refundable deposit equivalent to the last month's fee is required to secure the spot at CMS.

#### 6. FEE RE-IMBURSEMENT

The CWELCC program is subject to ongoing updates, if there are any discrepancies or changes with fee structures or payments made through CWELCC, CMS will issue a refund or communicate updates accordingly.

Fee reimbursement will follow the flow of the established fee structure. Any overpayment identified due to changes in CWELCC contributions or CMS adjustments will be reconciled and reimbursed to families in a timely manner.

#### 7. ITEMS REQUIRED UPON ACCEPTANCE

To complete the registration process, the following must be received by CMS:

- A completed Application Form;
- Terms & Conditions of Enrollment Form
- Up-to-date copy of Public Health Immunization Record;
- Copy of Birth Certificate;
- A **non-refundable** deposit equivalent to ONE month's tuition dated the day your application is received. This deposit is a pre-payment for the last month's tuition fee;
- Pre- Authorized Debit Agreement Form (PAD) form/ Credit Card Form (for monthly payments)

## 8. NSF (NON-SUFFICIENT FUNDS)/ AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY

### NSF (Non- Sufficient Funds)/

Parents are required to add a payment of \$60 after the third instance of NSF (Non-Sufficient Funds) to cover banking fee(s) and the costs of administrating such NSF payments. If more than two payments are declined, parents will be required to pay tuition by certified cheque, bank draft, money order, cash, or credit card. Interest will be charged at the rate of 5% per month for payments made 30 days or more in arrears. Furthermore, CMS reserves the right to send any outstanding accounts to a collection agency if/when required, and any fees incurred will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian and you will be asked to temporarily withdraw your child from school until full payments are received.

### Withdrawal Policy

Sixty days' written notice is required in the event of a child's withdrawal from school. Prior to the withdrawal date, a "Written Notice of Withdrawal" form must be completed. This form is available at the office. Alternatively, parents may write a note, clearly stating the date and nature of their reason for withdrawal.

Tuition will be due for the sixty days following receipt of the Notice of Withdrawal even if the student is no longer attending school. If the sixty-day written notice is not received, full program fees will be charged.

A permanent space cannot be guaranteed in the event of a temporary withdrawal. Tuition fees are based on continuous, uninterrupted enrollment for the full academic year; therefore, temporary withdrawals do not qualify for a refund. The deposit submitted at the time of application is applied to the final month's tuition and is non-refundable.

**CMS reserves the right to terminate services if policies are not followed or fees are not paid in a timely manner.**

## 9. CLASS PLACEMENTS

CMS determines the placement of each child based on the following:

- The emotional, academic and developmental well-being of the child;
- Maintaining the Montessori age-mix principle;
- Developing balanced classroom composition related to age, gender, developmental maturity, toilet training, special needs, personality, etc.;
- Observation by the Head of School, the Principals/Vice-Principal/Supervisor of each campus and classroom teachers. Specific requests by parents will be carefully **CONSIDERED** but **not promised**. Once an appropriate placement is determined, a change is made only if the administration and teachers feel that the student's development merits the change.

## 10. EXCLUSION POLICY

CMS reserves the right to exclude any child from attendance, temporarily or permanently, who is deemed by an assigned committee to be interfering with the health, safety, or educational development of him/herself or any other child or staff in the program. CMS may ask the child to leave and/or CMS may (but does not have to) help to find an alternate care/school for the child if the staff and administrators feel that they cannot adequately meet his/her needs. CMS may ask the child to leave if CMS feels that the student or parent/guardian is not in agreement with the school's policies, practices or regulations.

## 11. PROGRAM SCHEDULE AND SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

CMS offers an ongoing childcare program for children up to 4 years of age (as of September of the applicable year). The program operates year-round and is closed only on statutory holidays\*, from December 21, 2026 to January 1, 2027, and for one designated day at the end of August\* to allow staff time for classroom cleanup, preparation, and professional development.

The 2026 - 2027 school year commences on September 1, 2026.

**\*Statutory Holidays (CMS will be closed and no childcare will be available for children):**

<i>New Year's Day</i>	<i>Canada Day</i>
<i>Family Day</i>	<i>Civic Holiday (first Monday in August)</i>
<i>Good Friday</i>	<i>Thanksgiving Day</i>
<i>Easter Monday</i>	<i>Christmas Day</i>
<i>Victoria Day</i>	<i>Boxing Day</i>
<i>Labour Day</i>	

**\*Other Holidays (CMS will be closed and no childcare will be available for children):**

*Dec. 21, 2026 to Jan 1, 2027*  
*August 31, 2027*

## **12. INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In the event of inclement weather, if the school needs to close, CMS will notify families via Lillio by 7:00 a.m. If the school remains open but heavy snow is expected to impact travel, we kindly ask families to plan for a longer-than-usual commute for pickup.

## **13. DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

### **Arrival before 9:00 am**

The importance of timely arrival and departure cannot be over-emphasized. All children should arrive on time (by 9 a.m.) in order to prevent distractions for other students. Parents should walk their child to the classroom. The teacher or assistant will greet the child and welcome them into the classroom. Please close all gates and doors every time you enter and leave the school.

**Pick-Up and Drop-Off at Classroom Doors:** We are requesting parents to wait patiently at the classroom doorway when picking up or dropping off children. Parents walking into the room disrupt the focus of the children. At arrival, please say 'goodbye' at the door and allow your child to walk in independently. At the time of departure, please knock on the door and the teachers will see you and call your child to put away their work and meet you at the doorway. We ask that you not enter the room at this time. Your help with this would be greatly appreciated.

Your child's safety is very important to us. Please do not leave children unattended in the hallways kindly adhere to the school rules and ask your children to walk down the hallways rather than run. If you are speaking to another parent, keep your child by your side so they do not wander around the school.

### **Departures**

Your child learns to expect you at a certain time each day. Please pick up your child promptly at the specified time. Children will be released only to authorized persons who are designated on the child's pick-up list. The end of the day can be a hectic time for parents wishing to discuss their child's progress with the teacher. Please make an appointment for a time other than the end of the school day, thereby enabling staff to attend to the children's needs without distractions.

Please notify the school in writing if there is a change in authorized persons picking up your child. We **WILL NOT** let your child leave the school premises with anyone who is not on the contact list. If an emergency comes up, call the school office and inform them of who will be picking up your child, giving name(s), approximate age(s), and a brief description over the phone. Persons picking up children who are not familiar with school personnel must provide identification before the school personnel will release the child.

### **Tips For The First Days/ Minimizing Separation Anxiety (For Infants & Toddlers)**

Starting school is a big step for both children and parents. Infants and toddlers are just beginning to learn how to separate from their parents and develop a sense of independence and security. To support this transition, we recommend using the first week or two as a gradual adjustment period. On the first day, plan to stay for just 1 to 2 hours. Gradually increase your child's time at school each day, based on how comfortably they are settling in.

For older children, the process of separation is different. Lingering in the classroom can send mixed messages, and children may interpret a parent's hesitation as a sign of worry or fear. To help your child adjust positively, we kindly ask that parents avoid staying in the classroom during drop-off. In our experience, short and confident goodbyes support a smoother transition.

We encourage you to send your child off with a smile, a hug or kiss, and a few reassuring words. Let them know you're confident they'll have a great day, and always remind them that you will return. Saying a clear goodbye is important, it helps your child understand that you are leaving and gives them the confidence to begin their day.

#### **14. NO SMOKING, VAPING TOBACCO, CANNABIS, AND OTHER SUBSTANCES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY**

The *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* prohibits smoking, holding lit tobacco or vaping (the use of electronic cigarettes, cannabis and other substances) in a child care centre, in the building, on the playground, or the grounds of the school. This includes the parking lot and areas surrounding the outside of the building.

#### **15. SEAT BELTS AND BOOSTER SEATS**

According to the Ministry of Transportation, EVERYONE including parents, grandparents, relatives, or friends, who drive with a child under the age of 8, or who weighs less than 36 kg (80 lbs.) and stands less than 145 cm (4'9") tall, is required to ensure the child is properly secured in the appropriate child safety seat or booster seat, based on his/her weight or height.

#### **16. EXTENDED HOURS AND LATE PICK-UP FEE**

CMS extended hours end at 6:00 p.m. at which time the school is closed. After this time, a charge of \$2.00 per minute applies and is payable directly to the staff member on duty that evening. Payment should be made no later than the next school day. We understand that you may be late due to poor weather conditions, such as a severe winter storm. On those days, the charge will be waived.

#### **17. ABSENCES OR MID-DAY APPOINTMENTS**

If your child is going to be late, absent, or has a mid-day appointment, please notify the school no later than 8:30 a.m. In case of absence due to illness, you must inform the office of the nature of the illness.

#### **18. SCHOOL OFFICE**

You are encouraged to contact the school office at any time with messages relating to your child's school day or if you have any questions relating to school registration, tuition, or special programs. The telephone numbers of all campuses are listed on our website.

#### **19. PARENT ISSUES OR CONCERNS POLICY**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our school and regularly discuss what their child(ren) is experiencing within our program. As stated by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, childcare providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff members are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by CMS staff and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 1 - 2 business days. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to the parties involved.

## Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children’s Aid Society).

## Conduct

CMS maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modelling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or licensee.

## Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the [local Children’s Aid Society](#) (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the “Duty to Report” requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

## **PROCEDURES:**

<b>Nature of Issue or Concern</b>	<b>Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:</b>	<b>Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:</b>
<b>Program Room-Related</b>  E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to - the classroom staff directly or - the supervisor or licensee.	- Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised or - arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within 1 – 2 business days.  Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include: - the date and time the issue/concern was received; - the name of the person who received the issue/concern; - the name of the person reporting the issue/concern; - the details of the issue/concern; and - any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding the next steps or referral.
<b>General, Centre- or Operations-Related</b>  E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to - the supervisor or licensee.	

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
<b>Staff-, Supervisor-, and/or Licensee-Related</b>	Raise the issue or concern to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the individual directly</li> <li>or</li> <li>- the supervisor or licensee.</li> </ul> All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, duty parents, etc. that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.	Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.  Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within [insert number] business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.
<b>Student / Volunteer-Related</b>	Raise the issue or concern to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student</li> <li>or</li> <li>- the supervisor and/or licensee.</li> </ul> All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.	Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.

**Escalation of Issues or Concerns:** Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to the Head of School.

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act., 2014* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

## 20. LILLIO COMMUNICATIONS

Once the registration process has been completed, parents will be receiving an email to sign-up on *Lillio*, an online secure system CMS uses as our student's database, and as a means of communicating between the school and home. Throughout the school year, parents will be receiving email prompts from *Lillio* whenever newsletters, calendars or other school information is available on the system for review.

**Important:** Please be sure to update the system promptly to make changes to your child's information on file. Up-to-date contact numbers, pick-up persons, hours, etc., are critical.

## 21. CLOTHING AND POSSESSIONS

Help your child dress appropriately for the activities of the Montessori classroom, both indoors and outdoors. Please remember that the children will be painting, sitting on the floor, participating in physical education activities, as well as, working and playing outdoors during a typical day. No child should feel inhibited because of wet or dirty clothing; therefore students should have spare clothes at school. For Toddlers and Casa children, please dress your child in clothing which they can manage by themselves. Please practice with your child at home, so that they will feel confident in their dressing skills. Your child needs your patience, encouragement and consistency.

The following is a recommended list of items for each child to bring to school:

❖ **Spring and Summer**

- Water bottle
- Extra pair of underwear & socks
- Extra t-shirt, blouse or dress
- Cap or sunhat
- Sunscreen
- NO BACKLESS SANDALS or CROCS are permitted on the playground

❖ **Fall and Winter**

- Water bottle
- Extra pair of underwear & socks
- Snow jacket
- Extra pair of mittens or gloves
- Scarf/Neck warmer
- Extra pair of pants, blouse/sweater, t-shirt
- Snow boots
- Snow pants
- Warm hat

**!** *Please have each item clearly labelled with your child's name.* **!**

Children are discouraged from wearing clothing or backpacks depicting cartoon or violent characters.

Plastic “Shopping bags” must not be left in children’s cubbies. Children who nap are requested to bring a blanket, which will be sent home every Friday to be laundered and returned to school. All CMS students are prohibited from bringing electronic devices (cell phones, iPods, Ipads, Nintendo DS, etc.) to school for any reason. Any such devices will be kept in the office until the end of the school day.

**22. LOST AND FOUND**

Unmarked items left at the school will be deposited in the school *Lost & Found* box. Please check regularly for missing items. Clothes not collected at the end of each term will be taken to a local charity. Labelled items will be taken to the appropriate classroom.

**23. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Extra-Curricular Activities are offered each term for Casa students (Fall, Winter, and Spring) for approximately 10 weeks per session. There is an additional fee for these activities and information is sent home each term indicating the activities offered, dates, times and costs.

**24. ACTIVITIES OFF-PREMISES AND FIELD TRIPS**

The school will not be participating in any off-campus activities or field trips due to the young age of the children. All activities will take place on school premises.

**25. PROGRESS REPORTS**

Toddler and Preschool (Jr. Casa) children will receive a progress report twice per year: January & June.

Parent/Teacher interviews are held following each progress report. Please watch for the sign-up google form during the above-stated times to discuss the progress reports with your child’s classroom teacher(s).

**26. HEALTH & WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN**

In assessing a child’s wellness and ability to participate and remain at school, staff take into consideration the following:

- a) The risk of spreading illness
- b) The child's ability to participate comfortably in the program
- c) The parent's responsibilities and schedule during the day

Staff use their judgment and consult with the supervisor/principal to decide whether to call a parent to inform them of their child's health or to ask the child to be picked up. Staff must ensure that children are separated from their peers and taken to the illness room/office to stay when illness is suspected.

The following is a list of symptoms/illnesses for which a child may be sent home:

- Fever 38C or higher
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting (2 cases)
- Undiagnosed rash
- Communicable disease
- Persistent pain and discomfort
- Head Lice
- Uncomfortable or severe cough, OR
- Child is not well enough to participate in the program.

In the event that a child has been sent home, they are not to return to the program until:

- 1) A note from a medical doctor states they are well enough to return to school AND are not contagious, OR
- 2) They are on medication for 24 hours so as to no longer be contagious, OR
- 3) For diarrhea or vomiting for 48 hours symptom-free
- 4) Are symptoms-free as per Public Health recommendations.

Parents are encouraged to arrive promptly if they receive a phone call from the staff indicating that their child is ill and needs to be picked up. Families are encouraged to have reliable backup plans of friends and/or family members who are authorized and able to help in the event that parents are unable to get to the school in a timely manner. In the event that parents cannot be contacted, the emergency contacts will be phoned. If an illness or condition develops into that of a serious nature, the Serious Occurrence procedure will be followed.

## HOW TO KNOW WHEN THERE IS AN OUTBREAK

An outbreak occurs when there are 2 or cases of gastroenteritis in a specific room within 48 hours.

Early detection of signs and symptoms through observation of children's health, as well as record keeping there of are crucial to the recognition and control of an outbreak.

CMS will notify York/Toronto Public Health if an outbreak is suspected. If an outbreak is confirmed, CMS will be following guidelines communicated to us by York/Toronto Public Health.

Public Health requires that children do not attend school when suffering from any communicable disease. Parents **must** play their part in trying to curb epidemics by not sending children to school when they are sick. The **recommended minimum period of exclusion** is as follows:

- Impetigo: 24 hours after treatment has been initiated. Lesions on exposed the skin should be covered.
- Pink Eye: 24 hours after appropriate antibiotics has started.
- Strep and Sore Throat: 24 hours after appropriate antibiotic treatment has started
- Scarlet Fever: 24 hours after treatment has started and the child is able to participate in activities.
- Whooping Cough Until 5 days of appropriate antibiotics has been completed. If untreated, until 21 days after the onset of the cough.

- Red Measles: 4 days after the beginning of the rash and when a child is able to participate.
- Rubella: 4 days after onset of rash.
- Mumps: Until 5 days after onset of parotid glands swelling.
- Norwalk: 24 hours symptom-free OR 48 hours symptom-free during an outbreak.
- Ringworm: Until the appropriate treatment has been started

A child who returns to school after contracting any of the above communicable diseases must bring a note from their physician indicating that they are in good health and able to return to school.

**Any children exhibiting signs of fever, diarrhea or vomiting must be picked up immediately and may return to school only after they have been symptom-free (fever for 24 hours, diarrhea or vomiting for 48 hours).**

Please be aware that existing by-laws require outdoor play for all children. If you feel your child is too sick to participate in outdoor play, then it is deemed that your child is too sick to be at school.

**Children who require prescribed fever reduction medication every four hours (e.g. Tylenol) should NOT be at school. Staff cannot administer such medication without a doctor's note.**

## **27. MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY**

CMS will only administer prescription drugs that have a pharmacy label or over the counter medication accompanied by a note from a physician. A Medication Dispensing Form must be completed and signed by a parent/guardian. This form will include the child's name, the name of the drug, the dosage to be given, the date of purchase, and instructions for storage and administration. In addition to emergency medications for anaphylaxis and asthma, children may have medications for epilepsy, diabetes, or any other medical condition where a legally qualified medical practitioner or nurse practitioner has determined that the medication must be readily available to prevent a significant risk to the child's health. These medications will be stored in a secure, clearly labelled classroom emergency knapsack that accompanies staff during outdoor play, walks, transitions outside the classroom and emergency evacuations to ensure immediate access when required. Staff will ensure that the emergency knapsack is kept out of the reach of children while remaining readily accessible to authorized staff at all times.

## **28. ALLERGIES / ANAPHYLAXIS / EPIPENS**

CMS is a **NUT AWARE** environment. We do not allow items with nuts and/or nut bi-product in our centre for the safety of children with severe nut allergies. All allergies must be listed on the student's enrolment form. If your child develops any new allergies not listed on the form, please notify the office and the teacher(s) immediately.

**What is Anaphylaxis?** A severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction can be fatal, resulting in circulatory collapse or shock. The allergy may be related to food, insect stings, medicine, latex, etc. Epinephrine (EpiPen) is the first-line treatment for anaphylaxis and should be administered promptly during an anaphylactic reaction.

If a child is anaphylactic, prior to enrollment, parents/guardians must provide the school with an individual plan and emergency procedures for their child. Annually, all room staff and a trainer (Principal/Supervisor) will be trained by the child's parent or designated on the use of the epinephrine auto-injector (EPI PEN) and the details of the child's individual plan. Copies of the allergy list are available in each classroom, emergency bags and kitchen, including the CMS office.

If CMS is unable to cater food for the child with allergies, parents will be asked to provide the food for their child and will be asked to make sure that the food brought to school should be labelled with the child's full name. It must not contain any nuts or nut products as well as a list of allergens provided to the parent to which children may be allergic to in the classroom. **All food must be kept in the original container with the ingredients list. If any food is brought and that is homemade, parents are to provide a list of ingredients that go along with that particular food.**

Parents are requested to advise the school office if their child develops an allergy, and requires medication and/or of any change to the child's individual plan or treatment. The Individual plans will be revised yearly and as directed by the parent or physician.

## **29. INCIDENTS/ ACCIDENTS/ SERIOUS INJURY**

### **MINOR/ NON-EMERGENCY INCIDENTS/ INJURY PROCEDURE**

From time to time, minor incidents/ injuries may occur. Staff will apply first-aid and comfort as needed and an *Accident/ Incident Report* will be completed by staff which has to be signed by parents at the time of pick-up. A copy of this report will be provided for parents. Depending on the nature of the minor injury, a parent or contact person may be notified.

In the case of more serious incidents or accidents, CMS will follow its *Serious Occurrence Policy*.

## **30. SAFETY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

CMS conducts monthly Fire Safety and Lockdown Drills. These drills will ensure preparedness in case of a real emergency situation for staff and children so that everyone remains safe and accounted for.

Each staff member is instructed as to his/her responsibilities in the event of a fire, lockdown, or other emergencies, before commencing work for the first time.

Our Lockdown, Fire Safety and Emergency Management Policies & Procedures set our roles and responsibilities of staff in case of an emergency. In case an evacuation is required, each CMS campus has an emergency shelter within walking distance of each location. Throughout the emergency, staff will:

- help keep children calm;
- take attendance to ensure that all children are accounted for;
- conduct ongoing visual checks and head counts of children;
- maintain constant supervision of the children; and
- engage children in activities, where possible.

### **Communication with parents in case of an emergency:**

When the “**all-clear**” notification is given:

- 1) As soon as possible, office staff or other designated persons must notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation and that the all-clear has been given.
- 2) Where disasters have occurred that did not require the evacuation of the centre, the office must provide a notice of the incident to parents/guardians by email and/or a message on Lillio.
- 3) If normal operations do not resume the same day that an emergency situation has taken place, the office must provide parents/guardians with information as to when and how normal operations will resume as soon as this is determined.

When the “**unsafe to return**” notification is given:

- 1) Upon arrival at the emergency evacuation site, the office will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation, evacuation and the location to pick up their children.
- 2) Where possible, the office staff will update the childcare centre’s voicemail box as soon as possible to inform parents/guardians that the child care centre has been evacuated, and include the details of the evacuation site location and contact information in the message.

## **31. SAFE ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES:**

This policy, along with its associated procedures, is designed to facilitate the safe arrival and dismissal of children under the care of Central Montessori School. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of staff, students, and volunteers in ensuring the safety of children during these crucial moments. Clear guidelines are provided, including steps to be taken if a child fails to arrive as expected and procedures for the safe dismissal of children.

Central Montessori School is committed to ensuring that children in its care are only released to their parent/guardian or an individual authorized in writing by the parent/guardian. The release of a child will strictly adhere to the authorized individuals specified by the parent/guardian, and the center will not permit the release of children without appropriate supervision.

### **Purpose**

This policy and the procedures within help support the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care at Central Montessori School.

This policy will provide staff, students and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for ensuring the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care, including what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at the child care centre as expected, as well as steps to follow to ensure the safe dismissal of children.

### **General**

- Central Montessori School will ensure that any child receiving child care is only released to the child's parent/guardian, or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization to the child care centre may release the child.
- Central Montessori School will only dismiss children into the care of their parent/guardian or another authorized individual. The centre will not release any children from care without supervision.
- When a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below. To support accurate attendance tracking and ensure the safety and well-being of all children, a daily attendance reminder will be sent to parents/guardians through the Lillio app at 10:30 AM each day. If a child will be absent for any reason, parents/guardians are required to mark the absence in the Lillio app and provide the reason for the absence. This proactive communication is an important part of our Safe Arrival policy and helps our staff maintain up-to-date attendance records.

### **Policy Statements**

#### **Procedure:**

*Children will only be released to adults who are permitted by the parents and listed on the child's file or if written consent has been provided.*

#### **Accepting a child into care**

1. When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, program staff in the room must:
  - Greet the parent/guardian and child.
  - Where the parent/guardian indicates that someone other than the child's parent/guardians will be picking up, the staff must confirm that the person is listed on the student pick-up list on the child's file or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (e.g., note or email).
  - Document the change in the pick-up procedure in the daily written record.
  - Sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

#### **Where a child has not arrived in care as expected**

1. Where a child does not arrive at the Central Montessori School, and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (e.g., left a voice message or advised the closing staff at pick-up or marked absent on Lillio app), the staff in the classroom must
  - Inform the supervisor/ designee. The staff must commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than 10:30 am, and leave a message if there is no response. If no response is received after/within 4 hrs, the staff will report to the supervisor/designee.

- Then supervisor/designee will contact the emergency person listed on file.
2. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.

### **Releasing a child from care**

1. The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization to the child care may release the child. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual),
  - Confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
  - Where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization. A copy of the identification of that individual will be kept in the child's file.

### **Where a child has not been picked up as expected (before the centre closes)**

1. Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or time frame that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up at a specific time, the staff/supervisor/ designee will call the parent/ guardian and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.
  - Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, staff must leave a message. If the staff/ supervisor/ designee does not hear from the parent/guardian after 15 minutes, the emergency person listed on the child's file will be contacted. Where the individual picking up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff shall proceed with contacting the individual to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact Central Montessori School.
  - Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was to pick up the child, the staff shall wait until the program closes at 6 pm and then refer to procedures under "where a child has not been picked up, and the program is closed".

### **Where a child has not been picked up, and the centre is closed**

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by 6 m, staff shall ensure that the child is given a snack and activity, while they await their pick-up.
2. One staff shall stay with the child, while a second staff proceeds to call the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire about their pick-up time. In the case where the person picking up the child is an authorized individual, the staff shall contact the parent/guardian first and then proceed to contact the authorized individual responsible for pick-up if unable to reach the parent/guardian.
3. If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff shall call the emergency contact person listed on the child's file.
4. Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file (e.g., the emergency contacts) by 7 pm, the staff shall proceed with contacting the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) (416) 924-4646. Staff shall follow the CAS's direction with respect to next steps.

### **Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedure**

Staff will only release children from care to the parent/guardian or other authorized adult. Under no circumstances will children be released from care to walk home alone.

This policy is established to meet the requirements stipulated in Ontario Regulation 137/15, specifically addressing policies and procedures related to the safe arrival and dismissal of children in the care of the school.

### 32. SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

CMS supports the education of future professionals through field placements and volunteers as additional support and value to our programs.

Students and volunteers are supervised and function under the direction of qualified CMS staff and are never left alone with children or replace a staff member.

- (e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding;
  - (f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will. O. Reg. 126/16, s. 34.
- (2) No employee or volunteer of the licensee, or student who is on an educational placement with the licensee, shall engage in any of the prohibited practices set out in subsection (1) with respect to a child receiving child care.

### 33. NUTRITION AND SNACKS

#### CMS is a NUT-AWARE environment.

CMS provides a hot nutritious lunch and two snacks daily. Please ensure that your child eats a nutritious breakfast at home. The school provides a mid-morning snack, which is available between 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. Although lunch is provided by the school, children are allowed to bring nutritious snacks. In the case of parents providing lunch/ snacks for a child, a parent letter/ note will be required stating the reason why the lunch/ snack is provided by the parent. This letter/ note will be placed on the classroom information board and one copy will be placed in the child's file.

#### CMS Food Guidelines:

- Bring only nutritious (NUT-FREE) food items.
- Chocolate, candy, chips, soda pop, gum and junk food are not permitted.

If your child brings a snack, please make sure that it is free of NUTS AND NUT BY-PRODUCTS. All items must be labelled with the child's name.

Children are not to share their food with others at school. Please inform the school of ANY allergies or special dietary requirements for your child.

### 34. BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We love to celebrate birthdays with our students. A week or so before your child's special day please contact your child's teacher and they will instruct you on what she/he would like you to bring to school so that a "timeline" of your child's life can be made. CMS encourages sharing healthy snacks for your child's birthday. We do not allow cakes, cupcakes or treats **with sugary icing, custard, whipping cream, etc.** We only allow the sharing of healthy snacks such as fruit/vegetable trays, cheese and cracker trays or cheese pizza. All food brought to school must be packaged with ingredients listed on the label. Also note that balloons, party hats, loot bags, etc. may **NOT** come to school. Please save these items for celebrations at home.

### 35. PICTURES AND VIDEO CAMERAS

The school may take various pictures and videos throughout the course of the year that may be displayed in the school, on the school's website, yearbook and/or on promotional material. These pictures can range from class trips to various activities the children participate in throughout the year. These pictures will **NOT** be used for any other purpose.

### 36. SHOW & TELL

Generally, toys should not be brought to school. Children are encouraged to share fascinating discoveries with the class related to the theme of the week, culture, science or nature (i.e. found/made objects, books, articles, pictures). Please label any items brought to school so that they will be returned safely. "Show & Tell" is generally each Friday.