

2019-2020

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Heartwood Montessori School Parent Handbook



HEARTWOOD
MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Table of Contents

Background & Philosophy	
Location	3
Class Groups	
Parent Involvement	
Heartwood Parent Support Group (PSG)	4
Parent Education Program (PEP)	
Procedures	
Tuition	
Observations	5
Conferences	
Evaluations	
Field Trips	6
School Closings	
Everyday Matters	
Arrival and Dismissal	
Playground	
Nutrition	7
Lunch	
Personal Items	
Lost and Found	
Absences	
Health	8
Medication	
Health Policy	
Insurance	
Activities	9
Birthdays	
Holidays	
Discipline Policies	10
Media Policies	11
Board of Directors	12
2019-20 Programs	
Heartwood Staff	12

Background & Philosophy

HMS was founded in 1991 by a group of individuals who were interested in providing a quality educational program. Heartwood's leadership includes Sue Daniel, Director/co-owner and Mary McKinney, Business Manager/co-owner who work together, each bringing different expertise and talents to the program. We embrace the philosophy and educational approach expressed by Dr. Maria Montessori while always keeping ourselves open to new ideas to broaden and enhance our programs. The staff views each child as an individual with a unique background, personality, maturity, and intellect. We encourage a whole family approach at Heartwood by providing opportunities for parents and staff to work together, share, and to learn from one another.

Location

Heartwood is located in the heart of Cary, North Carolina at 112 Byrum St. Our phone number is (919)-465-2113. HMS is a private institution with no religious affiliation.

www.heartwoodmontessori.com

Class Groups

At HMS each class is composed of children within a three-year age span. The usual age divisions are: 18 months to three years, three to six years, six to nine years, nine to twelve years, twelve to fifteen years, and fifteen to eighteen years. Multi-age classrooms foster a sense of collaboration and mentoring among students. Older students are encouraged to be role models for younger ones. The ratio of children to adults is 6 to 1 at the toddler level, 12 to 1 at the preschool level and 10 to 1 at the elementary & middle school and high school level. Before moving a child to an older age grouping we consider the child's social and psychological needs as important as his/her academic needs.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Heartwood Parent Support Group (PSG)

We encourage an active and involved parent group. All parents are members of the PSG, but may choose their level of participation. The purpose of the PSG is:

1. TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION between parents and school staff, as well as between parents and other parents, via newsletters, meetings, social activities, and school projects.
1. TO PROVIDE VOLUNTEER SERVICES to Heartwood including, but not limited to, specific technical or other knowledge, and relieving teachers in certain areas (such as playground duty, computer services, and newsletter preparation).
2. TO RAISE FUNDS to enrich the Montessori program for our children including art, music, physical education, library, and foreign language and intercultural studies, along with field trips.

Parent Education Program

The Parent Education Program (PEP) provides Heartwood families with a forum to discuss challenges, share parenting resources, and broaden understanding.

Depending on what most interests our school's community, PEP events may feature book discussions, parenting workshops, or presentations from guest speakers. The topics are determined at the first Parent Support Group (PSG) meeting of the year.

PROCEDURES

Tuition

Tuition can be paid in 12 monthly payments, 10 monthly payments, quarterly, or biannually. Parents are billed by the school and each payment is due by the first of the month. If your child is admitted after the first two weeks of the school year, the tuition will be pro-rated. In order to maintain services over the entire year, it is essential that the annual income from fees be assured. For this reason, it is understood that no reduction or remission of fees can be allowed for absence or withdrawal unless the vacancy can be filled immediately. HMS requires a 30-day written notice for early withdrawals.

We prefer to do a direct draft from your bank account. You may pay by check if it is consistently paid on time. Tuition checks should be made payable to Heartwood and mailed to 112 Byrum St., Cary, 27511 or put in the wall mail box. Parents are requested to see that their child's tuition is paid promptly. After a period of 10 days, a late fee of \$50 will be added. Accounts that become 60 days past due will require an emergency payment plan or the possible withdrawal of your child. Your \$450.00 tuition deposit will be continued from one year to another. After your final payments are made, deposit checks are normally refunded by August 31st. This deposit is nonrefundable if you leave HMS without 30 days written notice, if you re-enroll and do not follow through, or if your vacancy cannot be filled immediately.

Observations

Parents are welcome and encouraged to observe their child's class. Seeing the children at work is the best and only real way of understanding what the children are experiencing. Arrangements should be made in advance with the office so as to avoid congestion on any one day. As a general rule, we prefer to wait until October to start scheduling observations.

Conferences

Conferences are held two times during the year. Third grade and up have conferences three times a year, with the last conference after standardized testing. If you would like a conference at any other time, please contact your child's teacher for an appointment. The teachers are interested in knowing such things as inability to sleep for several consecutive nights, birth of a sibling, stress in the home or at school, or any other information that may provide insight into the child's behavior. Parents are requested to inform the teachers of

such matters either by phone or in writing. Any unobserved incident occurring in school which has upset your child should be reported in the same manner. All teachers may be reached by email using their first name @heartwoodmontessori.com unless otherwise noted in the directory.

Evaluations

Student evaluations are given orally in conference with the lead teacher at the end of the school year. The teacher discusses the child's progress throughout the year and gives test score results (if applicable). Written progress reports are given to parents at the end of each year.

Field Trips

The blanket permission slip you sign at the beginning of the year gives permission for your child to go on the class field trips for the year. You will be informed of field trips by your teachers, the room rep parent, and by consulting the main hallway calendar.

The lead teacher will provide the field trip map with the route that all parent drivers must follow. It is very important that drivers follow the prescribed route and stay together. Chaperones are responsible for the children in their car for the entire field trip, unless the field trip leader specifies otherwise.

When chaperoning a trip where direct supervision is not needed during the program, parents should model appropriate behavior: avoid cell phone use in view of the children (unless taking pictures) and ensure that social conversation is conducted away from the group where it will not distract from the program. When parents go on field trips, your own children often need your careful guidance even more, being uncertain who is in charge of them. When supervising your own children, please do not wait for the teacher to act if you are closer to a situation needing adult intervention.

School Closings

When the school must be closed because of inclement weather, or for other unexpected reasons, this information will be announced local TV channels 5 & 11. You may also find this information on our website by 7:00 am. In case of poor weather conditions, Heartwood recognizes the right of each parent to decide whether or not to send his/her child to school.

EVERYDAY MATTERS

Arrival and Dismissal

An HMS greeter will meet morning arrivals at their car between 8:15-8:45am. After that time, Children's House (CH) parents must park and bring their children to the classroom. **Please make certain the teacher is aware of the child's presence.** Elementary, Middle, and High School parents should make sure their children enter the building before leaving the parking area. Weather permitting, CH children may start on the playground until escorted to their class by their teacher. The CH's first group meeting begins promptly at 9:00am. Elementary, Middle, and High School classes start at 8:30am. Please be on time.

Dismissal is from 11:45am-12:00pm for half-day children. Afternoon carpool is from 2:50 - 3:10pm for full-day programs. Middle School and High School classes dismiss at 3:00pm.

Playground

Please be aware that the staff members who are on the playground before and after school, and at lunch time, are there to supervise the children. For safety reasons, this is not the place for conversations. If you need to talk to your child's teacher, please email the teacher (first name@heartwoodmontessori.com) or ask to set up an appointment.

Nutrition

There is an annual snack fee, payable by September 15th. It is used to purchase the snack foods that are served daily to your children. Snacks include fruit, crackers, cheese, and vegetables. **No tree nut or peanut products are allowed in the school.**

Lunch

Children who stay all day need to bring a lunch. Food that contains meat, dairy or rice must be labeled so that it can be easily found & put in the refrigerator OR put hot foods in a thermos labeled "HOT". Please send lunches that your child enjoys. Please do not include soft drinks or candy. Limit the amount of dessert. To support our recycling program, we encourage you to purchase reusable containers for your child's lunch. **Please do not bring peanut products, as we have several children with severe peanut allergies. ALL TREE NUTS and peanut products ARE BANNED.** Sunflower butter is a great alternative.

Personal Items

Please wear close-toed shoes only -- no sandals. Since the materials in the classroom are for the use of all the children, please leave toys, wallets, purses, and jewelry at home.

Books, CDs, or other educational materials are always welcome. Please label these items with your child's name.

Lost and Found

Please label all your child's belongings, especially water bottles and outerwear. We will return the item to the child's classroom if we know who it belongs to. Unlabeled items are held in the lobby and, if left unclaimed, periodically donated to charity.

Absences

Frequent absences impede children's academic progress and cause children to miss important experiences. Students, kindergarten and older, should not have more than 20 absences per academic school year (10 per semester). Unless otherwise approved by the Director, students who exceed these guidelines may be withdrawn from HMS, lose preferred enrollment status, and/or not advance to the next level. This policy allows us to do all we can to ensure that each child grows and learns to his/her potential. Absences and excessive tardiness will be noted on all forwarded records.

When a child will be absent from school for an extended time, please notify your child's teacher as soon as possible. If a child must leave school during regular hours (i.e., doctor's appointment), the teacher and office should be notified in writing in advance.

HEALTH

Medication

If your child is taking ANY medication during the school day, please bring it to the office to fill out the required forms for administering the medication. NEVER leave medicines or any type of pills/vitamins with your child or in the lunchbox.

Health Policy

Children must be inoculated for communicable childhood diseases unless they have filed an exemption with the office. Health forms must be returned to the school by the time the fall term begins. The first year the child attends school is generally the most difficult as far as illness is concerned because (s)he is exposed to many children in a group situation for the first time. In order to protect all the children in the school, any child who is ill should be kept at home.

Children should be kept home for the following reasons:

1. Above-normal temperature and for 24 hours thereafter.
2. A cold with sore throat, cough, or runny nose.
3. A discharge from nose or eyes.
4. Not well enough to go outside. (There will not be a staff member available to remain in with the child.)
5. Any type of contagious disease.
6. Vomiting or upset stomach and for 24 hours thereafter.

The parents of a child returning to school after an illness should be available to receive a call should the child be unable to stay the full time.

Insurance

The school provides a medical and dental accident insurance plan for the students. This policy coincides with a child's existing coverage and will often cover the deductible. If your child has a school-related accident, please contact the school.

ACTIVITIES

Birthdays

It is our custom to celebrate this most important day for your child. The 3-6 classes celebrate birthday using a Montessori tradition, "The Circle of the Sun." We ask that parents bring pictures of their children representing each year of life. Special treats may be sent for your child's birthday celebration; however, we ask that no cakes, frosted cupcakes, or candy be sent. We suggest cookies, muffins, fruit, pizza, etc. A date will be set aside for children who have summer birthdays for a special celebration (generally in the spring). If you wish, you may celebrate your child's 1/2 birthday.

Holidays

HMS is fortunate to have children of diversified racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds. The rituals and special foods associated with each group's celebration of the holidays provide valuable learning experiences for the children. Parents are welcome to arrange a holiday celebration with their child's teacher.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline at HMS is based on a positive attitude toward children. The staff believes that self-discipline is the desired goal of all people. To this end, the staff models respect and problem-solving skills. We believe that prevention of inappropriate behavior, based on clear expectations, is best. Expectations are developed and discussed with the students.

Appropriate means of communication needs are stressed. In all areas the child is assisted in constructing the skills necessary to control his/her own actions. We, as a staff, do not believe in adult threats of reward or punishment. Natural consequence is used as a means of helping the child to develop inner limits. If a child is disruptive or endangers himself or others, we will stop that child. Expectations will be verbally clarified. If necessary, the child may be asked to remove him/herself from the group. If a persistent breakdown occurs, parents will be notified. Staff, parents, and child will work together to modify behavior.

The following policy is in place for students aged 6-18 years:

Any type of bullying (verbal or physical), inappropriate language or subject matter, unsafe behaviors (hitting, throwing objects with the intent to hurt others, etc.) will have these consequences:

1. The child's freedom will be limited with a time out. The playground staff will report any incidents to the lead teachers who will then meet with the child and clarify the rules and consequences. The office will be notified. An incident report will be given to the parents.
2. Next offense - In-school suspension with the day spent in the office doing their assignments with no exposure to other students. Parents will be notified immediately.
3. Next offense – Parents will be called to remove the student from school immediately for that day.
4. Next offense – 2-day home suspension from school
5. Last offense - Expulsion from school

The Director of the school reserves the right to review each and every situation and respond to the needs of our students and staff and serve their best interests while preserving the integrity of our programs.

MEDIA POLICIES

Under no circumstances are children identified by name in HWM's marketing materials.

Families are considered opted-in to informational and archival documents such as the **yearbook** and **school directory**, and to class or school-specific **closed** or **private** social media groups open solely to Heartwood families, unless an opt-out request has been received (see below).

Photos of large groups, including class photos or all-school events, and those in which the subject(s) are not identifiable, may not be subject to opt-out requests.

Photos of individual students that will be used in a public-facing manner for marketing, or in print materials which also appear online (i.e. the monthly newsletter), require parental/guardian approval.

Non-identifiable photos (backs of heads, silhouettes) may be used without requesting permission. If an opted-out child can be visually identified (i.e. by facial recognition software), a different shot should be used or it may be emailed to the yearbook instead of shared online.

Opt-out Policy

- Opt-out requests must be in writing, directed to office@heartwoodmontessori.com.
- Details of requests are shared with the classroom's teachers and room parents, who then communicate with their class parents to honor the request in their online groups.
- Photos of a child who is opted-out of **social media** will still be shared with the **yearbook** unless the parent or guardian specifies otherwise. These photos may be emailed to yearbook@heartwoodmontessori.com.
- Opting out of the **school directory** removes parental/guardian contact information, the child's birthdate, and their gender from the document, which is then distributed in PDF format to currently-enrolled families. For clarity, the family's names and class assignment will still be printed. When opting out, please specify whether HWM may still provide contacts for the purposes of party invitations, etc, to other parents.
- Opt-outs for **print media** must be received **prior to the publication's print deadline** to be honored. For the school directory, this deadline is October 1. For the yearbook, the deadline is April 1. Newsletter deadlines are the 25th of each month, unless otherwise noted. Requests received after these deadlines may not be able to be processed, although the request can be applied to future editions.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sue Daniel / President - Director

Mary McKinney / Secretary - Treasurer

2019-20 STAFF AND PROGRAMS

Toddler Program

Co-Teachers: Misty Massey and Kristal Wright

Preschool/K Program

Lead Teacher: Becki Peterson; Assistant: Kathryn Wood

Lead Teacher: Tanya Dillard; Assistant: Tracy Cubbison

Lead Teacher: Liz Flynn; Assistant: Jody Trainor

Extended Day/Kindergarten

Co-Teachers: Tanya Dillard and Jody Trainor

Lower Elementary

Lead Teacher: Bridget Dickerson; Assistant: Rebecca Porter

Lead Teacher: Ryan Shands; Assistant: Lindsey Williams

Upper Elementary Middle School

Lead Teacher: Mary McKown; Assistant: Tammy Smith

Lead Teacher: Jay Batman; Assistant: Mack Wilson-Leigh

Middle and High School

Co-teachers: Ray McClure and Rebecca Bloom;

Assistant: Ashley Blevins

Specials

Isabel Moncayo and Emily Wade, Spanish;

Vanessa Hanley and Courtney Taylor, Art;

Beth Ponder, PE

Preschool Program

Tracy Cubbison; Tanya Dillard; Liz Flynn; Devika Kathresal; Cecile Kohlhofer; Isabel Moncayo; Becki Peterson; Jody Trainor; Emily Wade; Kathryn Wood

Toddler Program

Misty Massey; Isabel Moncayo; Kristal Wright

Elementary Program

Jay Batman; Bridget Dickerson; Mary McKown; Rebecca Porter; Ryan Shands; Tammy Smith; Lindsey Williams

Middle/High School

Ashley Blevins; Rebecca Bloom; Ray McClure

Office

Sue Daniel, Director

Lynda Dawson, Associate Director

Mary McKinney, Business Manager

Ginny McCollum, Office Manager

Specials

Isabel Moncayo, Spanish; Vanessa Hanley, Elementary and Upper School Art; Beth Ponder, PE; Emily Wade, Spanish; Laura Smith, Yoga; Courtney Taylor, Children's House Art
Private lessons available in piano (James Catton) and violin (Dana Friedli) through arrangement with the instructors.