



PARENT HANDBOOK

2020-2021

Joliet Montessori School
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Hours of Operation:

Before Care: 7:00 AM - 8:30 AM
Classrooms in Session: 8:30 AM – 3 PM
After Care: 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

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INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement

Joliet Montessori School inspires students to engage academically and socially every day, developing independence, a love of work, and a respect for all.

Montessori Philosophy

In the words of Maria Montessori, we shall describe the Montessori Method as an “aid to life.” In the early 1900’s she developed this philosophy of education based upon her intuitive observations of children from diverse cultures. She saw universal principles of human behavior, which belong to all peoples. There are three main themes to her work.

- 1) **Human development does not occur in a steady pattern but in a series of four formative “planes.”**
 - a. The first plane occurs from birth to age six. During this time, children are sensorial explorers. They will often find themselves absorbed with one characteristic in their environment to the exclusion of all others.
 - b. The second plane occurs from age six to age twelve. These children begin to explore the world in abstract concepts rather than depending solely on concrete materials.
 - c. The third plane occurs from age twelve to age eighteen. Children this age seek to understand the world and their place in it.
 - d. The fourth plane occurs from age eighteen to age twenty-four. As young adults, individuals seek to understand how to contribute fully to their society.

- 2) **Human beings develop in relation to their environment.** Dr. Montessori created materials to match the child’s developmental needs. Many of these materials are specific to a Montessori classroom. The child uses this prepared environment to select individual activities which correspond to his/her own “sensitive periods” of interest.

- 3) **Human beings require the freedom to follow their individual interests while developing within the prepared environment.** When the child is free to follow his/her interests, focused learning occurs. To be free means to be in control of self, not to be controlled by emotions or whim. Children are free to choose their own activities. They are not free to waste their days in aimless activity or idle conversation with their friends. In a Montessori classroom, freedom always goes hand in hand with responsibility.

Non-Discrimination

Joliet Montessori School (JMS) is committed to equal opportunity and respect for diversity. The school admits qualified students of any race, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, gender, sexual orientation, or religion, and extends to them all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental disability, or any other status protected by applicable law in the administration of its admissions, scholarships, and loans, and its education and other programs.

CHARACTER AND CODE OF CONDUCT

JMS promotes a safe, healthy and inviting learning environment for all. Students are encouraged to practice self-discipline and consider how their personal choices can impact themselves, as well as their community. Self-control and situational awareness are valued characteristics that contribute to a harmonious learning environment. This code of conduct is designed to provide students, parents and school personnel clear guidelines for expectations of behavior.

Expected student conduct is based upon JMS's fundamental, valued characteristics (see also Portrait of a Graduate). This code of conduct is in effect at school, as well as, but not limited to, school-sponsored trips or off-campus and school-sanctioned activities.

- Lifelong learning: problem-solving abilities, an ability to find appropriate resources, an open mind, the pursuit of knowledge;
- Integrity: honesty, perseverance, personal responsibility for one's actions and choices, care of one's self;
- Community: an awareness that one is part of a larger whole and that one's choices and actions have an impact on others; situational awareness and a consciousness of what is happening around oneself; patience for others and one's self; responsibility for other; a contribution to a positive and peaceful school environment;
- Concern for Others: an awareness of the needs of others; empathy; appreciation for diversity in all of its forms;
- Civility: respect toward others, self, materials and the environment; self-control that prevents one from rudeness or insensitivity toward others; an ability to disagree without being disagreeable; and
- Leadership: modeling of good behavior for other students; proactive problem solving; making choices that benefit the larger community.

A Code of Conduct supplementary document specific to the Adolescent Program is distributed each August to Adolescent students and parents.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Curriculum

Dr. Montessori referred to her approach as “Educating the Whole Child,” that is, serving each student’s academic, physical, emotional, spiritual and moral development. Montessori’s developmental approach recognizes that each student reaches certain milestones at different stages. For this reason, the Montessori lessons are presented to students when they are developmentally ready and have mastered certain prerequisite activities. At JMS, we strive to prepare our students for life by offering them methodical academic program that aims to develop important skills for success such as creativity, communication, critical thinking, independence, interdependence, confidence and resilience.

JMS has compiled a “Curriculum Scope and Sequence” document that gives more information on lessons and materials within each of the levels. A copy of this document can be found on the school’s website.

Montessori education is structured around four distinct planes of development, in which JMS focuses on the first three:

- First Plane of Development: 0 to 6 years old
- Second Plane of Development: 6 to 12 years old
- Third Plane of Development: 12 to 18 years old
- Fourth Plane of Development: 18 to 24 years old

Students in each “Plane” share similar physical and cognitive traits. The classroom environment, curriculum and instruction are specially designed to meet these developmental stages.

Assessments

Observation of the student by the teacher is the cornerstone to effective assessment. Teachers make many formal and informal observations of each student throughout the day. These observations allow the teacher insight into the student’s work habits, academic progress, interests and social interactions. Primary level teachers informally guide the work of their students based on observations and record-keeping of individual lessons. Elementary level teachers conference with the student to review work portfolios and discuss progress, completed work and future goals. Elementary students also keep a work journal to record their school day activities.

Montessori lessons are typically given to individual or small groups of students. This practice helps the teacher to ascertain quickly how much the student comprehends the concepts

presented. Instruction can be differentiated based on the needs of the small group or individual student. Repetition or increased instruction is implemented as needed.

Progress Reports

Communication between teacher, parent and student is essential to understanding the individual learning profile of each student. Students do not receive grades or report cards. Teachers meet with parents at the scheduled parent-teacher conferences outlined on the school calendar and are available to provide updates on a student's progress at other times when requested by the parent. Parents will receive a progress report in the mail at the conclusion of each trimester, two of which precede parent-teacher conferences.

Moving Up Readiness

A child's emotional maturity, skills in independent learning and academic readiness are key factors to be considered when determining if a student is ready to move up to the next level. This is an ongoing conversation between teacher, parents, and Head of School, but the ultimate decision rests with the school, in its sole discretion.

Standardized Testing

Testing at JMS is used as a diagnostic tool rather than a single evaluative measure of a student's progress. Teachers use data gathered from these tests as one indicator of a student's academic development over time. These tests are only one of the many assessment tools available to our teachers. Although we realize the importance that is sometimes placed on these tests, the tests alone cannot portray an accurate picture of the whole child.

Students from 3rd through 9th grade are given the IOWA Basics every spring. Results of all standardized tests are shared with parents and recorded in the student's school record.

School Trips

Trips during the school year are part of the regular Montessori curriculum at the Elementary and Adolescent levels. Parents/guardians are notified of upcoming trips off campus. For the safety of all, students participating in school trips must comply with all applicable school rules, all applicable laws and any additional rules applicable to the particular trip setting.

Going Outs are meaningful, productive components of 'Cosmic Education' as implemented in an elementary Montessori classroom.

As children develop through the second plane, they realize that not all their answers can be found in the classroom environment. Going Outs are not field trips, nor are they play dates. They are small group visits to local areas of interest, specifically coordinated, planned and

implemented by the children themselves, in direct conjunction with the research happening in the classroom.

A parent who wishes to assist as a chaperone on field trips or a Going Out is expected to review and comply with the Chaperone Guidelines provided in connection with a particular trip. Parents who wish to chaperone a school trip also must agree to a background check before the trip takes place, checks are to be updated as necessary based on school procedures, at a minimum every 3 years. For parents or guardians who are requested and wish to assist as a driver for student trips, the background check also includes a driving record search. Additionally, a copy of the parent's current driver's license will be kept for the school's records.

Co-Curricular Programs

The JMS after-school co-curricular programs are designed to complement the Cosmic Education curriculum and enrich the school experience. Co-curriculars are available to kindergarten, elementary, and adolescent students at the rates indicated during registration periods. Class schedules may change from session to session based on facilitator availability. Current year schedules and offerings will be communicated via newsletter, School Cues or other means.

Primary Step-Up Policy

Each primary half-day child will be invited to step-up to full-day when the directress is assured of his or her greatest readiness for success in the afternoon environment.

It is our belief that the majority of children are prepared for the rigors of the full day experience by the age of five. The vast majority of JMS primary children will be invited to step-up no later than their 5th birthday. If there are extenuating circumstances preventing a child from stepping up by their 5th birthday, the directress will discuss the situation in detail with the parents/legal guardians. Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that each child's needs are being met in order for the child to succeed as an 'afternoonner.'

SCHOOL RULES

Attendance

Absences

Daily school attendance is vitally important to a student's academic achievement and the teaching-learning process, so it is important that staff, parents and students be familiar with the JMS attendance policy. Daily attendance helps to develop patterns of behavior essential to professional and personal success in life. A brief explanatory note when a student returns to school after an absence helps the teacher understand each student's health, personal or family issues or needs and encourages communication.

Frequent absences impact academic and social progress. JMS expects that students will attend classes daily for the entire regular school term. Please refrain from taking students out of school unnecessarily. Teachers are not responsible for providing work for students when vacations are taken outside of the school calendar or lessons are missed due to extreme tardiness.

The school will notify parents when students have an excessive number of absences and are at risk of not being promoted to the next academic level. In this case, parents will be required to meet with administration to discuss the impact of excessive absences on the student's education, as well as appropriate next steps for the student's future at the school.

Tardiness

The school day officially begins at 8:30 AM. All students may enter the classroom between 8:30 - 8:45 AM. Students who arrive to class after 8:45 AM are marked "tardy" in the attendance book. Being tardy on a regular basis has a significant impact on a child's learning and social/work groupings.

It is important that students have sufficient time to organize and settle in before the school day begins. Bringing students to school late is difficult for them as they may have missed important morning announcements and group meetings. Students may also be excluded from certain lessons planned by the teacher if the student is late for the beginning of that lesson.

Young students often have a difficult time when they enter the classroom late and see that their classmates have already begun their morning work. For older students, joining in lessons and work groups that are underway is often socially awkward and can be academically challenging. If a child is consistently tardy, a written notice will be sent to parents/guardians to alert families so adjustments can be made to the family's schedule.

If your child will be absent, please either contact 815-741-4180 or School Cues. Should your child contract a contagious disease, please notify the school immediately so that we may alert the faculty and other parents. Contact your family physician for exclusionary time frames for

children returning to school after an illness.

Children who are ill should recuperate at home. Children must be fever free without the aid of medication for 24 hours before returning to school. Children must be free of vomiting and diarrhea before returning to school. We ask you to be considerate not only of your own child's health but also that of the other children and the staff. Your child may be removed from the classroom, at the discretion of the directress, to help prevent the spread of illness and contagious diseases. Please ensure all contact information is updated as needed in the event your child becomes ill while at school.

Safety and Security

At JMS, student safety is our number one concern and for that reason, our school is a closed campus.

- All exterior doors of the school building are locked at all times, but can be used to exit in case of emergencies.
- The main entrance is monitored by a camera and all visitors must sign in at the front desk before proceeding to their destination within the building.
- Parents are not allowed to approach the outdoor environment during the school day (8:30 AM-3 PM). Since our staff does not recognize each parent from our school, it is important to check in with the front office first.
- Students are not allowed to leave school grounds without approved adult supervision.
- Parents are expected to closely follow all carpool pick-up and drop-off procedures and follow directions of the AHOS and HOS during this time.
- Fire drills are conducted with the Lockport Fire Department once a year and practiced throughout the year meeting Illinois regulations. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in each classroom.
- Crest Hill Police personnel meet periodically with school staff to discuss the school's emergency lockdown procedures and prepare for such an event.
- Tornado drills are practiced with JMS staff during the year.

Conceal and Carry Law

While Conceal and Carry is now allowed in many public and private places in the State of Illinois, citizens are prohibited from carrying them into public schools or on school grounds, according to the new law (430 ILCS 66/65). In order to keep students safe and to be in compliance with state law, Joliet Montessori School displays Illinois State Police issued signs on school doors to remind those with concealed carry licenses that firearms are not permitted in our building or on school grounds.

Dress Code and Appearance

JMS is a place of learning and work. Children should dress comfortably so they can sit at the tables or on floor rugs to work, play, paint, etc. A daily school uniform is not required of students enrolled; however it is expected that all students come to school dressed and groomed in a manner that is conducive to our School learning environment.

Shoes need to be sturdy, closed-toed with non-skid soles for safety when playing outdoors. **Flip-flops or open-toed slippers will not be allowed either outdoors or indoors.** Please refrain from sending children in shoes that flash or light in any way or fashion boots. In order to keep mud and dirt away from our carpeted areas, all children are required to bring inside shoes that will remain at school. Primary children are asked to bring ballet slippers. Elementary children may bring comfortable, closed-toed inside shoes of their choice.

If your child comes to school in a dress or skirt, they must wear privacy shorts underneath. Shirts need to cover midriffs and undergarments. Hats and baseball caps will remain in your child's cubby for outdoor use only. **As always, please label everything with your child's name.** Joliet Montessori School sells Mabel's Labels for your convenience. Please call the office and ask for details if interested.

Primary directresses request that all children bring a change of clothes in a labeled resealable bag to keep in the classroom which includes the following: shirt, pants, socks, and underwear.

Winter Weather Play: Children will go out to play whenever it is not physically dangerous to do so. We do check the precipitation, temperature and wind chill factor every day during inclement weather. We will enjoy outdoor recess when the wind chill factor is 20 degrees or warmer. All children should be in possession of hats, waterproof gloves/mittens, snow pants, and appropriate footwear for the weather.

When snow makes its appearance, children must have snow pants, boots, hats and waterproof gloves/mittens in order to play in the snow. Elementary children who are not dressed for snow play will remain on the blacktop.

Toys and Personal Belongings

Due to COVID-19, all toys and personal belongings must be left at home. Students at younger ages have a difficult time sharing toys from home and personal items can become a distraction to the other students. The classrooms provide ample materials for the students to work with and explore.

Computers, Internet, Electronic Communications and Usage

Access to the Internet enables students to explore many educational libraries, databases, and websites. The intent of JMS is to make Internet access available to elementary and adolescents to further educational goals and objectives, as necessary. Children accessing the Internet will do so only under the direction of their director and are to only use Internet access as provided in the classroom. While the school makes full use of firewalls, Internet filtering and monitoring software, no Internet security system is without fail. Families should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are inaccurate, potentially offensive, illegal or defamatory. We believe that the benefits to students from Internet access, in the form of information resources, outweigh the disadvantages. While parents are ultimately responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources, JMS faculty and staff will make every reasonable effort to remind your child of his or her role as a responsible digital citizen.

Joliet Montessori School may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student's account or profile on a social networking website. The school may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is specific information about activity on the student's account on a social networking website that violates a school disciplinary rule or policy. In the course of an investigation, the student may be required to share the content that is reported in order to make a factual determination.

Students should not:

- Use inappropriate language or images in email, web pages, videos or social networking sites;
- Be disrespectful by talking or posting derogatory material (images, video, etc.) via email, social networking sites, live chat, web page or any other method;
- Engage in cyber-bullying, harassment or sexting;
- Access inappropriate information on the Internet such as (but not restricted to) sites that bypass filtering, promote hate or violence, gaming or sites with sexually explicit or graphic, pornographic or obscene material;
- Carry cell phones or other personal electronic communication devices on their person; all such items must remain turned off and in a designated space in the classroom;
- Access, change, delete, read or copy any file, program or account that belongs to someone else without permission.

Students should know the use of inappropriate language, harassment and disrespectful comments in email, texting or a chat room, or on a website or social networking site as long as a student is enrolled at the school, may result in disciplinary action.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

Parents: (During Observations, Meetings, Parent Nights, Drop-Off and Pick-Up)

Parents are asked to silence or turn off cell phones during classroom observations, conferences, school meetings, and parent night. If an urgent call is expected, the parent is requested to discreetly leave the room. It is truly important during observation to observe and appreciate your child's work. Parents dropping off or picking up children from extended care are also asked to be off of their cell phones so that the extended care personnel can verbally relay any messages or notes about your child, as needed. It is against Illinois State Law to be on your cell phone in a school zone while operating a vehicle.

Students:

Cell phones are not necessary for students to bring to school, as they may use the phone in the Main Office at any time with their teacher's permission. If your child does bring a cell phone to school, it may not be turned on at any time during the school day and will be turned in to the teacher and returned at dismissal. Those students in before or aftercare are to follow the same procedures.

If a staff member sees or hears a phone being used, the phone will be confiscated for up to 24 hours. If this occurs, a parent will be notified.

Other Electronic Devices:

iPods, CD Players, other personal music systems and electronic games may not be used while your child is on campus. If a staff member sees one of these devices being used, the staff member may confiscate the device for up to 24 hours. If this occurs, a parent will be notified.

Use of Alcohol and Drugs

JMS's foundational and primary responsibility is to cultivate in our students the intellectual, social, physical and emotional skills necessary to become healthy, productive members of society. Use of harmful substances such as vaping, tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs is illegal and inconsistent with the needs of healthy, growing children.

Policy

Joliet Montessori School strictly prohibits student use or possession of any harmful substances such as tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs and related paraphernalia. Any such substances will be confiscated. This policy applies on or around the school premises and at school-sanctioned activities. Supervising adults are required to report offenses to the Head of School and parents will be notified.

Procedure

If a student's demeanor, smell, actions or other behavior indicate that the student may be in violation of the above policy, a supervising adult is expected to report the incident and student to the Head of School. The Head of School, sometimes in consultation with faculty, will determine if the student is in violation of the above policy and administer appropriate consequences, which may involve one or more of the following (not in any particular order):

- Parents will be contacted by the Head of School or designee to inform the parents of the student's behavior.
- Depending upon the seriousness of the behavior or its repetitive nature, the school may require the parents to seek counseling for the student.
- Depending upon the seriousness of the behavior and its ongoing effect on the student, a formal intervention (described below) may be required.
- Students will be required to amend their behavior and may be suspended for a period of time deemed necessary and appropriate by the Head of School.
- A suspended student will not be allowed to attend school and may also be suspended from particular privileges or trips. The number of days of the suspension will be specified by the Head of School in consultation with the student's teacher. Teachers are not expected to give extra help or makeup work for lessons missed due to a suspension.
- Under certain circumstances, and at the sole discretion of the school, the student may be dismissed from the school.
- Violations occurring on school property may be required to be reported to the Illinois State Police pursuant to the School Reporting of Drug Violations Act. Documentation of the incident will be placed in the student's file.

Search and Seizure

JMS may conduct a search of a student that is reasonable in scope, and/or a search of the student's belongings, including personal items, such as bags and backpacks, personal electronic devices and other effects if the school suspects a student may be violating the law or violating a school rule or code of conduct. Cubbies are the property of the school. Students exercise control over their cubbies from other students, but not from the School and its officials. As a result, the Head of School and the AHOS, as well as law enforcement officials, have the right to search cubbies to ensure School safety and the students' welfare, including, without limitation, to determine if students are harboring stolen property, weapons, or illegal or dangerous substances, and school and law enforcement officials have the right to seize such items or other items that jeopardize the safety of the students or the building or constitute health hazards.

POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR INTERPERSONAL STUDENT RELATIONS

Commitment To Respectful And Healthy Relationships

In order to keep JMS a safe and healthy learning environment for all members of its community, behaviors that are disrespectful of, and physically and/or emotionally harmful to, others is prohibited. All members of the school community play vital roles in maintaining these standards and intervening, as appropriate, when they witness behavior that conflicts with community standards.

JMS expects all members of the school community to treat others with courtesy, respect and dignity and to interact politely and appropriately. Students should always give careful consideration to how their communications – whether through words, actions or otherwise – may negatively impact others. All students are valued members of the JMS community and we strive to bring others closer together in order to develop lifelong friendships. Therefore, it is expected that all relationships be appropriate and healthy. JMS aspires to promote this through education and intervention.

With these goals and interests in mind, as well as the legal requirements of the State of Illinois, the school has established policies to help students manage these interpersonal relationships safely and appropriately. Students and parents/guardians are encouraged to communicate with the Head of School with any questions or concerns regarding these policies. The school believes that open communication about these sensitive topics is integral to preventing serious misconduct from occurring and essential to fostering a culture of personal responsibility, mutual accountability and positive peer leadership.

Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

JMS does not tolerate verbal or physical behavior that constitutes bullying (including cyber-bullying), harassment or discrimination, sexual assault and sexual harassment. JMS is also committed to promptly addressing any behavior that impedes the learning of any student or interferes with the experience of any other member of the school community.

Bullying, harassment, discrimination sexual assault and sexual harassment are prohibited on JMS's campus, school vehicles and at school-sponsored events, activities, and off-campus trips. School-owned technology may not be used to intimidate, harass, threaten, or bully another student. In addition, interpersonal misconduct is prohibited at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school, if such conduct: (a) creates a hostile environment at school for a student, (b) infringes on the rights of a student at the school, or (c) substantially disrupts the educational process or the school's orderly operations.

Definitions

Aggressor: A student or faculty/staff member who engages in bullying (including cyber-bullying), or retaliation towards another person.

Bullying: Bullying includes "cyber-bullying" and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following: (a) places the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property; (b) causes a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health; (c) substantially interferes with the student's or students' academic performance; or (d) substantially interferes with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school. Bullying occurs over an extended period of time (one instance does not connote bullying) and must involve a power differential.

Cyber-Bullying: Cyber-bullying through the use of technology or electronic communication, including, but not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo electronic system, or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying includes, but is not limited to: (a) the creation of a webpage or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, and (b) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation constitutes bullying conduct as defined above. Cyber-bullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person, or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying is prohibited under the laws of the State of Illinois. It is very different from your usual playground mix-ups or disagreements (see charts below). The following chart has been put in place as a guideline for parents and staff members. Joliet Montessori advocates immediate student-centered intervention and conflict resolution techniques when students are affected by peer mistreatment.

Friendly Teasing	Hurtful Teasing	Peer Conflicts	Bullying
Equal power Neutral Purpose is to be playful Joins relationships Funny to both parties	Unequal power Sensitive topic Purpose is to upset Excludes Sarcastic	Equal power Occurs occasionally Negotiations and options Withdrawing and options Relationship is valued Effort to resolve	Imbalance of power Occurs repeatedly Intentional and serious Seeks to gain power Victim is vulnerable No remorse No effort to resolve
Friendly Teasing: One student comments to another student that he should turn his/her jersey inside out because his favorite team lost last night	Hurtful Teasing: One girl comments to another girl that she looks chubby in the outfit she is wearing.	Peer Conflicts: Two students have a disagreement on the playground about which one will be the pitcher in kickball.	Bullying: One student repeatedly threatens another student that if he walks down a specific hallway he will get "beat up." Another example is one student repeatedly calling another student a name regarding his sexual orientation.

Harassment Or Discrimination: Harassment or discrimination is behavior that is widespread or severe and has the purpose or effect of: (a) creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment; (b) interfering unreasonably with a student’s academic performance; or (c) creating a situation where academic decisions of a student depend on the student submitting to and/or not objecting to the behavior.

Harassment and discrimination can take many forms. Examples include limiting opportunities to participate in activities based on certain characteristics, as well as slurs, jokes, statements, remarks, questions, gestures, pictures, emails, texts, or cartoons regarding a legally protected status that are derogatory or demeaning to an individual’s or group’s characteristics or that promote stereotypes. Harassment also includes sexual harassment (as defined below).

Retaliation: Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a student who reports misconduct, provides information during an investigation, or witnesses and/or has reliable information about such misconduct.

Sexual Assault: Sexual assault occurs when a person is forced or coerced into sexual activity without giving consent. Sexual activity includes, but is not limited to, touching or

fondling, either directly or through the clothing, of another's intimate areas or any contact, intrusion or penetration of another's sex organs, anus or mouth.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment is a type of harassment (as defined above). Sexual harassment includes unwilling and unwanted sexual attention, regardless of gender, from anyone with whom a person may interact in the course of attending JMS or being present at school-sponsored activities.

Examples of behavior that may constitute sexual harassment include:

- a) offensive or unwanted sexual comments, abuse, jokes, insults, delivered orally or in writing;
- b) derogatory or pornographic posters, cartoons or drawings;
- c) pressure for sexual activity
- d) offensive or unwelcome physical advances (including pinching, grabbing, kissing, etc.)

Target: Any student against whom bullying, harassment, discrimination, or sexual harassment has been perpetrated.

Reporting Complaints

A student who is the target of bullying, harassment, discrimination sexual assault or sexual harassment or who has witnessed such an incident or any incident of retaliation, or who otherwise has relevant information about conduct prohibited by JMS, is strongly encouraged to report the matter promptly (either orally or in writing) to the Head of School, or to any other administrator or faculty member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. If a student is uncomfortable contacting one of these individuals, the student may ask an advisor, another adult or a classmate to help.

Parents/guardians of a student who is the target of interpersonal misconduct, or of a student who has witnessed or otherwise has relevant information about such misconduct, are urged to immediately notify the Head of School or Assistant Head of School. Furthermore, any parent/guardian who has witnessed interpersonal misconduct, or has relevant information concerning such an incident or any incident of retaliation, are strongly encouraged to contact one of these administrators immediately.

JMS urges students and parents/guardians not to make anonymous reports. Although there are circumstances in which an anonymous report can be better than none at all, it is far more difficult to determine facts of what occurred if complaints are made anonymously and disciplinary action will generally not be taken against an individual solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

JMS cannot promise absolute confidentiality to those reporting bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual assault or sexual harassment as there may be a need to share

information during an investigation or otherwise; however, JMS will disclose such information with discretion, on a need-to-know basis.

False Complaints

All persons involved in a complaint or investigation should understand that false or exaggerated accusations can be extremely damaging to innocent persons; therefore, JMS expects and requires the honest and full disclosure of facts, taking into account the ages of the individuals, by all involved. Any person who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action.

Responding to Complaints

The goals of an investigation, and any supportive, disciplinary or other remedial process that is imposed following that investigation, are to correct the situation to the extent reasonably possible and to take steps to prevent repetition of the incident and retaliation. JMS strives to make all reasonable efforts to complete an investigation within ten (10) school days after the date of the initial report.

When a complaint is brought to the attention of the Head of School or the Head of School's designee, an assessment is made to determine the initial steps appropriate to protect the well-being of the students involved (including both the alleged targets and aggressors) and to prevent disruption of the learning environment while the investigation is undertaken. JMS may use strategies, such as increased supervision and stay-away mandates as may be appropriate to prevent further misconduct, witness interference and/or retaliation during the course of and after the investigation.

The Head of School or Head of School's designee will conduct an impartial, fact-finding investigation of the complaint. This investigation may include (but is not necessarily limited to) interviews with the complainant, alleged target(s), alleged aggressor(s) and any other witnesses or parties who have information relevant to the alleged incident. JMS may consult with faculty, the parents/guardians of the alleged target(s) and/or the alleged aggressor (s), or any other person deemed to have knowledge about, or circumstances surrounding, the complaint.

JMS neither tolerates nor engages in retaliation against an individual for filing a complaint about interpersonal misconduct or cooperating in an investigation of such a complaint. The School will not take adverse action against a student for making a good faith report of interpersonal misconduct. An individual who is found to have engaged in retaliation against a student for filing a complaint, or participating in the investigation of a complaint, may be subject to disciplinary action.

Upon completion of the investigation, the Head of School or the Head of School's designee will generally make the following determinations:

- Whether any and to what extent the allegation of bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual assault or sexual harassment has been substantiated.
- Whether any disciplinary action and/or other remedial action is appropriate and, if so, how it will be implemented.
- Whether counseling, or a referral to appropriate services, should be offered to targets, aggressors, or family members of the affected students or targets.

The Head of School or the Head of School's designee will determine any appropriate disciplinary action for a student who is found to have committed an incident of bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment, or retaliation. The range of disciplinary actions will balance the need for accountability with the goal of teaching appropriate behavior, and may result in restriction, disciplinary notice, mandatory counseling, suspension, separation, dismissal, and/or any disciplinary action deemed appropriate by JMS.

Information about consequences or other corrective action may be shared with the school community as deemed appropriate by the Head of School. This announcement may be made in person, by electronic communication, or otherwise. Resources such as counseling or referral to appropriate services are available to all students – including the alleged aggressor(s) and the alleged target(s) – during and after an investigation.

Notification to Parents/Guardians

The school will notify the parents/guardians of the alleged target(s) and the alleged aggressor(s) promptly after a complaint has been filed, upon completion of the investigation and to report the results of the investigation. Parents/guardians of the target(s) will generally also be notified of any action to be taken to prevent further acts of bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual assault sexual harassment or retaliation.

In all situations, the amount of information shared by JMS may be limited by confidentiality laws protecting student and employee records, other confidentiality or privacy considerations and/or concerns regarding the integrity of the investigation processes.

Notification to Government Authorities

In appropriate circumstances, such as when a crime may have been committed or a child may have been subjected to abuse or neglect of the type that is reportable under Illinois law to DCFS, law enforcement or other appropriate government agencies may be notified. At any point after receiving a report of misconduct, including, but not limited to, bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual assault or sexual harassment, JMS may notify local law enforcement or other government agencies. If JMS receives a complaint involving students from another school, the school may notify the appropriate administrator of the other school so that both may take appropriate action.

Other Behavioral Challenges - Care and Concern Procedure

Children may experience repeated behavioral challenges in the classroom and either the parents/legal guardians or the classroom directress may initiate the Care and Concern process. It is designed to help us work as a team to enhance and ensure the child's academic success and social well-being.

**** Phase One: Initial Care and Concern Discussion** – This meeting will include the classroom directress, the Head of School, the parents or legal guardians, and the student (when appropriate). The nature of the concern will be communicated, and a school and parent action plan will be determined by the involved parties.

**** Phase Two: Continuing Care and Concern Discussion** – These meetings will continue as long as all parties are in agreement that progress is being made, action plan items are being supported and followed both at home and at school, and placement at Joliet Montessori remains appropriate.

**** Phase Three: Final Care and Concern Discussion** – Once the plan outcomes have been met and the concern has been resolved, the Care and Concern Process will be considered completed. If outcomes have not been met, the school may call for dismissal of the student.

This process will enable us to respectfully and compassionately address and resolve concerns, while ensuring a mission-appropriate student body for all our students.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

Under Illinois law, all professionals responsible for the care of children (including, but not limited to, teachers, school administrators, etc.) are considered mandated reporters and are required to make a report to the Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) when, in their professional capacity, they have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of eighteen is suffering from abuse or neglect.

The DCFS defines child abuse as the mistreatment of a child under the age of eighteen by a parent, caretaker, or someone living in their home or someone who works with or around children. The mistreatment must cause injury or put the child at risk of physical injury. Child abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional. "Neglect" happens when a parent or responsible caretaker fails to provide adequate supervision, food, clothing, shelter, or other basics for a child.

The fact that faculty and staff may have learned of abuse or neglect through a communication that would otherwise be considered privileged does not exempt the faculty and staff's duty to report. Under Illinois law, the employee is protected from any lawsuit for taking such action.

DAILY LIFE AT SCHOOL

Arrivals and Dismissals – Please see COVID-19 Section

Early Release/Late Arrivals – Please see COVID-19 Section

Extended Care

Before and After Care is provided as a service for our working families. Before Care opens at 7:00 AM and remains open until the children move to their classrooms at 8:30 AM. After Care begins at 3:00 PM and is open until 6:00 PM. All students enrolled in After Care receive one snack. If your child requires more, please pack them a peanut and tree-nut free snack to enjoy.

All children remaining on campus at the close of 3:00 PM dismissal (3:15 PM) will be immediately released to After Care and invoiced at the Drop-In rate. Children picked up after 6:00 PM will be charged a late pick-up fee (see Financial Information – Payment Policy).

Carline Protocols

Carline is an excellent opportunity to effectively role model the grace and courtesy that distinguishes the Montessori community. Please adhere to the designated carline route from 8:30-8:45 AM, 12-12:20 PM and 3:00-3:15 PM. **All vehicles must enter into the JMS driveway via Imperial Drive and pull forward into the numbered spots. Do not pull directly into the driveway, even if you do not see any cars** as families are almost always en route around the block during carline times. After 8:45 AM, all cars are welcome to pull directly into the driveway. Primary and Elementary carline protocol is in effect during the following times, 8:30–8:45 AM, 12:00 - 12:10PM, and 3:00- 3:15PM. Adolescent carline protocol is in effect from 8:30– 8:45 AM and 3:00 – 3:15 PM.

In order to keep carline safe and moving with fluidity, please adhere to the following protocols:

1. Display carline nametag at all times when picking up your children. Please do not depend on the staff to visually recognize you or your vehicle.
2. Remain in your car unless you are helping to buckle your child. In that case, please make sure your car is in park.
3. Keep conversations brief. If there's an important issue, please schedule a meeting with your child's teacher or administration.

4. The staff is concentrating on the safety of the children. Please do not give the attendants verbal messages or engage in extended conversations. Provide written notes which can be forwarded or contact the office during the school day to set up a meeting, if needed.
5. Never back out of the driveway.
6. Back parking lot is closed.
7. Cell phone use and smoking is strictly prohibited.
8. Do not park and leave your car on the east side of Imperial Drive during the times of carline operation.

Please do not park in front of the Adolescent House at 1612 Root St., as this is the Adolescent carpool queuing area. If you would like to park and walk your child for arrivals and dismissals, you may park on the north side of Root Street beyond the Adolescent House or the west side of Imperial Drive.

Children will not be released to unauthorized people without **written notification** from the parent or legal guardian. Authorized people will still be required to provide identification before we will release your child. Please be patient; the safety of your children is our first priority.

Please help us be good neighbors. Watch your speed and follow all rules of the road, as well as our carline protocols. **Do not use our neighbor's driveways to turn around and under no circumstances should you U-turn on the streets surrounding the school.** While waiting on Imperial, please wait behind our school sign, instead of the stop sign, prior to turning the corner onto Root Street. This will allow neighborhood traffic to continue unimpeded. Traffic on Root Street has the right of way.

Children not picked up by the close of carpool will be sent to After Care, and invoiced accordingly.

School Delays/Cancellations

Families will be notified of school delays/cancellations due to inclement weather or other emergencies as soon as those decisions are made by administration via School Cues and the school website. We will also contact WJOL AM 1340 Joliet radio, with school closing information, and post school closings on our Facebook page, and the Emergency Closing Center (www.EmergencyClosings.com) page. Each parent should exercise his/her own judgment when driving in severe weather. The school will be open when we feel a majority of parents can safely bring their children to school.

Lunch

It is expected that all children come to school with a packed lunch every day. We encourage you to involve your child in packing his or her lunch with reasonable healthy options. It allows

them the freedom and responsibility of choice and direct input, and it contributes to the development of their independence. Please send your children to school with a healthy, nutritious, nut-aware lunch. We suggest a simple lunch which includes a main course (whole grains, protein), cut fresh fruit and/or vegetable and a reusable water bottle. Candy and soda are not allowed. Classroom directresses may have their own lunch guidelines, which will be communicated to parents as appropriate.

Children do not share food. If your child forgets his/her lunch, we will contact you to make arrangements. If you must purchase food locally for drop-off, please consider using a neighborhood grocery store. Please do not drop off “fast food” lunches for your children.

Nut-Aware Policy

JMS strives to be a safe school for all our students, including our students who have a life-threatening food allergy. Towards this goal, we have adopted a nut-aware environment. We will work with our students and their parents to understand that nuts should not be brought to school for lunch, snacks, or other celebrations. This includes items that contain ingredients made with nut oils or nut butters. We request that all parents support our students by keeping all nut products at home. Directresses will work with students to establish good hand washing and classroom maintenance standards. School administration has further defined the school’s efforts toward this goal by adopting an individualized student health care plan, which can be reviewed in detail on our website.

Birthday Celebrations

Montessori classrooms celebrate each child’s birthday. You can support this by adhering to the following protocols. Due to COVID-19, we will not be allowing treats or snacks of any kind into the classrooms.

Private birthday party invitations must be distributed **outside** of school. The parent directory is provided to facilitate these types of communications. If you would like to present a gift to Joliet Montessori or your child’s classroom in honor of your child’s birthday, we are always grateful for such support. Please contact your child’s directress for suggestions.

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

Accreditation and Recognition

Joliet Montessori School has been affiliated with and recognized by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) since our inception in 1966. We are also accredited by and members of the American Montessori Society (AMS). The AMI & AMS pedagogical standards for schools ensure

that each school is offering programs for their children that allow for their full intellectual, social and psychological growth. JMS is also a fully recognized school by the Illinois State Board of Education. In addition, JMS holds a professional membership with: the Association of Illinois Montessori Schools (AIMS), the Montessori Administrators Association (MAA), the Independent School Management (ISM) and the North American Montessori Teacher's Association (NAMTA) and the License-Exempt Center Provider, Child Care Assistance Program (DCFS)

Governance

We are pleased to announce the current year **Board of Trustees** (the "Board") for Joliet Montessori School, which consists of 9 voting members and the Head of School as an ex-officio non-voting member.

The Board provides guidance and direction for JMS, oversees budgeting to ensure the school's financial stability and ensures that the school maintains its focus on its mission. The Board of Trustees consists of current JMS parents, past parents, and friends from Joliet and surrounding communities. Board members are profiled by the Committee on Trustees to identify individuals who will best carry out the strategic plan and move our school forward. Each member of the Board has expressed a continuing pledge to the success of JMS. Every effort is made to ensure that the Board embodies a broad cross section of our school community and includes individuals who bring distinct skills to the school.

Each Trustee is charged with supporting the school's mission and overseeing the fiscal health of the organization. Specific responsibilities of the Board of Trustees include assuring that there are adequate resources for the school to deliver its mission to the student body. The Board does so by the development of the strategic plan, review of the school's progress toward those goals, cultivation of major donors and hiring, supporting, and evaluating the Head of School.

Tawnie Cisneros, President, HSE Committee Chair
Alyson Wozniak, Vice President, HSE Committee
Scott Termine, Treasurer, Finance Committee Chair
Michael Santschi, Secretary, Advancement Committee

Board of Trustee Members

Rita Gercone
Steven Golub
Ashley Leet
Andrea Londergon
Megan Owens
Tom Polacek

Our Board of Trustees is a strategic entity which functions under the guidance of Independent School Management (ISM), of which the school is a consortium member.

The Board of Trustees meetings are held at the school on the third Monday of each month. Meetings begin at 7 PM. All parents are invited and welcome to attend. Agendas and approved minutes can be reviewed in the office.

Parent-School Communication

JMS is committed to providing timely and effective communication to the members of our community. Valuable information is conveyed via the Parent Handbook, parent education evenings, our website, our Facebook page, newsletters, notes sent by classroom directors and letters mailed through the U.S. Postal Service.

We ask our families to assist us in this effort by familiarizing themselves with the policies and procedures necessary to operate the school, to stay informed by reading all written communication provided by JMS, and to address any concerns immediately using the appropriate channels.

All staff members can be reached via email and telephone and are committed to open and frequent communication. Each class directress has an email address and telephone extension from the main school line. Contact information for all members of the JMS staff can be found on the front cover of this handbook. Class directresses will not answer their telephone extensions or reply to emails during the class day. Messages will be retrieved and returned within 24 business hours.

Should you have an emergency during school hours, please call the office and speak with an office staff member. Under no circumstances should staff or faculty members be contacted via personal cell phone, personal email addresses or social media platforms for school matters.

Conflict Resolution

It is our intention to work collaboratively with our families to resolve issues and find solutions. Parental concerns relating to curriculum, field trips or classroom management issues should be addressed with your child's directress first. Parental concerns requiring additional assistance will be directed to the Assistant Head of School. Administrative and communication issues are handled by the Head of School.

Once all appropriate channels have been exhausted, any unresolved issues should then be submitted, in writing, to the Head Support and Evaluation Committee, with a courtesy copy provided to the Head of School. The Committee and the Head will then work together to address the concern and resolve the issue.

It is our goal to model for our community both the value of healthy discussions aimed at finding mutually satisfactory solutions and the peaceful resolution of differences.

Custody/Access Policy

Parents and legal guardians will be allowed access for orientation, parent education evenings, drop-off, pick-up, observations, parent conferences and all other parent/school interactions unless there is legal documentation on file limiting or otherwise restricting said access. JMS will not limit access solely at the request of one of the child's parents or other legal guardians.

Decision Making Process

Circumstances sometimes dictate that changes be implemented in the administration and/or operation of JMS. These suggestions may come from faculty, staff, parents, trustees, or external agencies such as AMI, AMS or ISM. The following criteria are in place for adopting administrative and procedural changes:

- All changes are evaluated in relation to Montessori Pedagogy.
- Classroom issues are referred to our faculty for input with the Head of School.
- Administrative and operational issues are decided by the Head of School.
- Issues requiring parental input and implementation may result in the formation of an ad hoc committee reporting to the Head of School and the Board of Trustees.
- Issues resulting in changes to the by-laws or budget must be voted on by the Board.

Decisions will be communicated to parents in a timely fashion.

Family Directory

The family directory is an internal document provided to our current families to facilitate communication outside of school. Please utilize this in order to coordinate school related functions, birthday parties, play dates, etc. Contact the office if you prefer not to be included. Please **do not** use the family directory for any business or commercial solicitations, or personal solicitations not affiliated with JMS business.

Media Use of Images

Occasionally, JMS will utilize promotional materials and/or receive media news coverage which includes the work of the children. All parents must sign a Consent of Media form in order to participate.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations are an important piece of understanding your child's educational experience here at JMS. Observations are typically welcome any time after the first six weeks of school through the end of April, by appointment only with a 24-hour notice. **However, due to COVID-19, JMS has postponed all classroom observations until further notice.**

Parent/Directress Conferences

Conferences are an essential component of communication between parents and classroom directresses. These meetings are valuable tools in our continuing efforts to create and maintain productive working relationships that benefit our families and our children. Conferences are scheduled very tightly, so please be on time. Directresses are also available throughout the school year to address concerns for your child that require immediate attention. **We will be offering in-person and remote options for parents during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Supplies

Most classroom supplies are provided by JMS. Individual classrooms may have specific requests for parent donations, such as a sharing basket. These needs will be discussed during the orientation process. Due to limited space, it is advised that the children do not bring backpacks.

Religious and Cultural Observances

Different holidays are recognized and discussed with activities that convey the cultural significance of the holiday. JMS recognizes, but does not celebrate, holidays from a religious perspective. If a particular holiday or its traditions are important to a student's heritage, and the student would like to share information with other students at school, the student is invited to contact the teacher to make arrangements for a presentation about the holiday and its traditions.

Background Checks

In accordance with Illinois law, JMS conducts fingerprint-based criminal history checks and statewide sex offender background checks on all applicants for employment and current employees who have direct, daily contact with students. In addition, JMS conducts similar background checks on any parent volunteers who will be spending time with students without the supervision of school personnel. JMS also checks the driving records of any parent

volunteers who will be driving students (other than the parents' own children) for school-sponsored activities.

Guide to Giving

JMS is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt corporation organized under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All revenues and operating funds are received from tuitions, fees, donations, and grants. All donations are tax deductible. There are many ways you may contribute to JMS:

- JMS Annual Fund Campaign – It is the expectation, as articulated in our Family Perpetual Enrollment Contract, that all families contribute at their personal challenge level. Please note that the parent participation level is an indicator that many corporations take into account when considering grant applications.
- Unrestricted monetary gifts to your child's classroom.
- Matching gifts – Hundreds of companies will match donations; please contact your human relations department to obtain appropriate paperwork.
- Legacy giving (i.e., wills, living trusts, charitable remainder trusts, etc.)
- Gifts in Kind – These gifts include services such as handy man, carpentry, gardening, etc. These types of donations are always welcomed and appreciated.
- Occasional voluntary opportunities to fundraise will be provided throughout the school year.

New Student Referral Program

New student placement referrals in a full-year program, which includes primary through adolescent, will result in a \$250 cash gift, directly to the referring family, subsequent to new family enrollment. Word of mouth is one of our most powerful marketing tools and this program is intended to express our appreciation to those families who are sharing their positive experience at JMS with their friends and family.

Program parameters are as follows:

- Referral thank you gifts are applicable only for families brand new to JMS. Siblings and families returning after a lapse in attendance will not be eligible.
- Applicants may identify only one referring family.

- New students must remain actively enrolled at JMS for a minimum of 60 school days (approximately three calendar months.)
- There will be no limit to the number of thank you gifts referring current families may receive.
- Thank you gifts will be disbursed in December and June, at the close of the semester in which the new child(ren) begin attendance. Employees of JMS are not eligible for referral thank you gifts.

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Fundraising

Students may choose to raise money to support a specific cause or organization. Students interested in doing so must submit a proposal to their teacher and the Head of School explaining the scope and resources needed to conduct an independent fundraiser.

Student Publications

Any student-written publications (newspapers, magazines, movies, etc.), whether hard copy or digital, must adhere to JMS rules and appropriateness. They must be approved by the Head of School prior to publication. A school yearbook is available for sale each year to all students and is generally delivered in the spring.

Community Service

Community service is part of the primary through adolescent programs. Each year, students decide with their directress which outreaches they would like to take part in, then take the necessary steps needed to put their plan into action. At times, certain outreaches have been dependent on donations, such as collecting pennies or books. Donations are always welcome in order to support our students with their mission.

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

Student Health

Parents are encouraged to carefully assess student health each morning and determine if the student is well enough to attend school. **Please see the section “Health and Safety Action Plan and/or Procedures” under the COVID-19 section, pp. 33.**

It is not uncommon for students first entering school to be susceptible to contracting many different illnesses. Eventually they seem to build up immunity and be less vulnerable to contagious illnesses. If your child develops a contagious disease such as, but not limited to, chicken pox, strep throat, scarlet fever, hand-foot-mouth disease or COVID-19, please contact the Main Office so that exposure notices can be sent out at once.

Head lice are common among school age students. Please see Head Lice section below for more information.

Health Records

JMS has adopted a first day exclusionary policy as required by the Illinois State Board of Education. **All required Health Examinations must be turned in prior to the child's first day of school.** Failure to provide required documentation will result in the child being held out of class until such time as the paperwork is submitted.

The Health Records Program at JMS is under the direction of the Will County Public Health Department. For students attending school programs where grades are not assigned, health examinations with immunizations or doctor signed exemptions are required to be completed prior to the date of entry to the school, for Kindergarten, 6th or transfer or new students. Dental exams are required by law for children entering Kindergarten, 2nd, 6th and transfer students. Eye exams are required for children entering Kindergarten, 8th and Illinois schools for the first time.

Preschool and Vision and Hearing screenings are done periodically at the school. When screening tests indicate concerns, parents will be notified so that the family may follow up with the family doctor.

State and County Guidelines for health records are as follows:

- All public and private schools are required to maintain up-to-date health examinations for currently enrolled children.
- All exams must document immunization history or be accompanied by immunization records, or an immunization exemption, in writing. All exams must be completed by a licensed dentist/physician.
- Medical History must be completed and signed by the parent. Physician is required to sign and date physicals upon completion.

Information on physical and immunization clinics can be obtained by calling the Will County Community Health Center at 815-727-8670.

Medications at School

For the protection of all students, we prefer that no medication be sent to school with any student. Please do not send medication of any kind (including Motrin and Tylenol) in a student's lunchbox. We recognize that occasionally a medication must be administered during school hours.

If a student has a condition that requires medication to be administered during the school day, the following guidelines must be followed:

- Written consent to share the diagnosis and other information with necessary JMS personnel;
- Physician requests for the provision of medication during school hours shall include the following:
 - Name of medication, dosage, route of administration;
 - Frequency and time of administrations;
 - Special circumstances in which medication is to be administered;
 - Side effects and/or intended effects which might be observed and reported to a teacher, parents and administrator;
 - Name, signature, address, office phone, fax and emergency numbers of physician and/or medical provider;
 - Other medication child may be receiving at home;
 - Regimen of medical follow-up
- Any medications necessary to treat the student's condition in their original container with prescription and dosage information.

A student may carry and self-administer their medication during school hours as follows:

- Asthma Inhalers when authorized in writing by the student's health care provider and the parent/guardian;
- Epinephrine Auto-Injector ("Epi-Pen") to treat life-threatening allergies – when authorized in writing by the student's health care provider and the parent/guardian; and
- Diabetes Testing devices and Insulin when authorized in writing by the student's health care provider and their parent/guardian.

Head Lice

It is the position of the American Academy of Pediatrics that the management of head lice should not disrupt the educational process. Lice are not a major health problem since they do not transmit diseases or cause permanent problems. However, JMS understands the unpleasantness of the condition and the appeal of limiting its spread across the school community. JMS therefore has a "no nit" policy.

Students with any nits will be sent home. A parent will be contacted by phone and written information will be sent home with grade level students.

It will be at the discretion of the HOS whether to check other students of the whole classroom.

In all cases where nits have been found, the student must be treated before returning to JMS the following day. The HOS or AHOS must evaluate the student before the student returns to the classroom. All nits must be removed by the seventh (7th) day following treatment if the student is to remain in school.

Emergencies

JMS will attempt to contact parents regarding illness or injury, minor or serious, but in circumstances that warrant immediate attention when JMS is unable to reach the parents/guardians or designated emergency contacts, JMS will determine appropriate management. In the event of a serious emergency, an ambulance will be called, the student will be taken to a nearby hospital emergency room and at least one parent will be notified immediately.

Parents are expected to keep emergency information up-to-date by calling the Main Office. Please remember, it is most important that your current home, work and cell phone numbers, especially for other caregivers listed on your student's profile, be current.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Special Needs Policy

It is our goal to meet the educational and developmental needs of all our students. JMS does not discriminate against qualified applicants or students on the basis of disabilities that may be reasonably accommodated. JMS shall provide an appropriate Montessori education and necessary related services to all children with unique and special needs to the best of our ability, as will meet the educational and developmental concerns of each individual child. Maintaining a students' IEP is the responsibility of the parents/guardians. JMS uses documentation as one piece of the child's educational portfolio and may at times, ask parents for updated progress from professionals.

If it is determined by the Head of School and Faculty, in partnership with the student's parents or legal guardians, that Joliet Montessori is not capable of meeting the educational and developmental needs of the child, parents will be informed of this determination and options for a more suitable and appropriate educational environment will be discussed.

Confidentiality

Members of the JMS community commit themselves to maintaining appropriate professional etiquette and discretion with regard to confidential information they receive. However, confidential information may be disclosed to the Head of School, appropriate administrators, outside professionals, law enforcement officers, parent/guardians or others when there is a compelling reason for doing so, including, but not limited to, cases of health and safety emergencies (when students or others are in imminent danger of harm); when there is a concern about an individual's ability to function academically, emotionally, physically and/or mentally within the school environment; or when legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed.

ENROLLMENT AND RE-ENROLLMENT

Application for Enrollment

Joliet Montessori School maintains an enrollment pool. Parents and guardians may pick up an application at the school or download one from the JMS website. Prospective families will return the completed application with the \$100.00 non-refundable application processing fee. Accepted applicants, as determined by our Directresses and Head of School, will be invited to enroll when a placement is available upon the completion of a tour of the campus and a meet-and-greet with the lead directress of the classroom in review. New siblings and their families must complete the admissions process.

Perpetual Enrollment Contract

All families must complete the Family Perpetual Enrollment Contract. Requests for class assignments, transitions, and sibling placement must also be submitted in writing at this time. Once the initial contract is submitted, students will be considered perpetually enrolled for future academic years unless the Responsible Party submits to the Head of School, in writing, their intention to withdraw by the specified annual opt-out due date, noted in the "Family Perpetual Enrollment Contract" and our Parent Handbook under "Financial Information – Payment Policy".

Class Assignments

Placements are considered deliberately and with great care, in accordance with AMI & AMS guidelines. The JMS administration and faculty are collaboratively responsible for the placement of children into specific classrooms. The administrative team and primary faculty determine the placement of students and siblings in the primary program. The administrative team and elementary faculty are responsible for placing elementary students. The

administrative team and adolescent faculty are responsible for placing adolescent students. Once placements have been made, the class rosters are considered final.

We ask all families to honor the 3 year cycles of Montessori. All students will be notified of their placement status once class rosters are finalized.

Compliance Statement

Joliet Montessori School will be in general compliance with the applicable sections of the Illinois School Code, with relevant case law (including *Plyler v Doe*), and with 23 Illinois Administrative Code Part 425.

Birth Certificates

In accordance with Public Act 84-130, families must provide the original birth certificate with the raised seal for newly enrolling children. The office will make a copy and return to the family. All other required forms will be provided to families during the enrollment process.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Payment Policy - Terms and Rates

The entire staff of JMS is committed to your child's education for the entire academic term; and as such, we expect full and timely payment of all amounts invoiced. All families are **required** to set up a FACTS account online for all tuition payments, unless grandfathered into a bank withdrawal with our Business Manager. Once the Family Perpetual Enrollment Contract is submitted, responsible parties are contractually obligated for the full year's tuition.

All deposits, tuition payments and fees are non-refundable if an application is withdrawn by the family once placement has been granted. An annual deposit of 10% of annual tuition will be due on April 15 of the current school year. All tuition payments are made through an online portal known as "FACTS", which is an account you must create and maintain throughout your time of enrollment. Annual and semi-annual payments are due August 1 and January 1 each year, or prior to start date, for initial contracts. Responsible Party may also elect to pay in 10 monthly installments or weekly installments. Accounts in arrears for 30 days or more will result in student exemption from attendance, until such time as accounts are made current. Responsible parties understand that records will not be released until all outstanding balances are paid in full. No reduction in tuition will be given due to a student's inability to attend school because of illness, vacation, inclement weather, suspension, expulsion, or any other reason.

The Family Perpetual Enrollment Contract may be withdrawn if JMS is notified **in writing** on or before April 15 of the current school year. No deposit or payment refunds will be given if JMS is notified after April 15th. The Responsible Party must give the Business Manager at least two business day notice if changes to their FACTS account needs to be updated.

Responsible Parties understand that JMS may require the withdrawal of any student, or decline enrollment of a student at any time in the School's sole discretion, if the school determined the student's behavior is detrimental to the well-being of other students or the staff, or the student or any parent or guardian fails to follow rules and policies, have been uncooperative or if their actions have in any way undermined the effectiveness of our teachers.

JMS may further require withdrawal of a student if tuition or extended care costs are not paid within 30 days of the payment due date. If JMS requires a student withdrawal, the student's Balance Due will be due at that time.

All due dates for tuition deposits and tuition payments, and opt-out dates will be communicated by the school administration. Tuition deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable unless admission is denied by the school. All accounts must be current prior to finalization of the registration process.

Also note:

- Tuition is prorated for all start dates beginning after October 1.
- A multi-student discount of 10% will be applied to the tuition for all second and subsequently enrolled children.
- Financial Aid is available, and determinations are need-based. You can access the FAST application on our website under FAQs within the Admissions tab.
- Joliet Montessori School is a license-exempt center with the Department of Children and Family Services. JMS does works Child Care Resource and Referral for families that qualify for the Child Care Assistance Program. Monthly payments are required by the family who are wholly responsible for any and all balances not funded by CCR&R.
- Payment Plan Options are: Annually, Bi-Annually, Monthly, or Weekly.
- All Payment plans are required to go through FACTs Tuition Management Service, a third-party administrator. The FACTs portal can be accessed through our website by selecting Admissions and then Financial Information.
- Before/After Care Payments are accepted via cash, check or credit card in the Business Office. If you are enrolled in the monthly program, those fees will be added to your FACTs account and are billed at the beginning of the month.
- ***Effective 8/1/19, all credit card payments will be assessed a 2.5% fee to help defer the rising costs from credit card companies.***
- Tuition Rates for the School Year 2020 -2021 are as follows:

Joliet Montessori's Program Options School Year 2020.21	Age Served Programs are designed to meet the needs of a three (or more) year age span	Schedule Regular school year is ~ 38 weeks.	Annual Tuition	Semi Annual Tuition* Due Aug 1st & Jan 1st	Monthly Tuition* July thru March; 5th or 20th of the month	Weekly Tuition* August thru May
Primary Half-Day 5 Days	3 & 4 year olds	8:30 to 12:00 pm	\$5,460	\$2,457	\$546	\$123
Primary Half-Day 4 Days (M-Th)	3 & 4 year olds	8:30 to 12:00 pm	\$4,370	\$1,967	\$437	\$98
Primary Half-Day 3 Consecutive Days (limited spots)	3 & 4 year olds	8:30 to 12:00 pm	\$3,685	\$1,658	\$369	\$83
Primary Full-Day 5 Days	3,4, and 5 year olds	8:30 to 3:00 pm	\$7,895	\$3,553	\$790	\$178
Primary Full-Day 4 Days (M-Th)	3 & 4 year olds	8:30 to 3:00 pm	\$6,315	\$2,842	\$632	\$142
Elementary-Lower	6 to 9 year olds	8:30 to 3:00 pm	\$8,940	\$4,023	\$894	\$201
Elementary-Upper & NCI	9 to 12 year olds	8:30 to 3:00 pm	\$9,790	\$4,406	\$979	\$220
Adolescent Program & NCI	12 to 15 year olds	8:30 to 3:00 pm	\$10,460	\$4,707	\$1,046	\$235
Support Programs	Childcare before and after school can be added to the other programs as needed.					
Before School Care	All ages	7:00 to 8:30 am	Daily Drop In \$6.75		\$87.60/Month	\$19.70/Week

After School Care	All ages	3:00 to 6:00 pm	Daily Drop In \$16.50		\$175.20/ Month	\$39.45/Week
Before & After School Care	All ages	7:00 to 8:30 am & 3:00 to 6:00 pm	Daily Drop In \$23.25		\$262.80/ Month	\$59.15/Week

Payment Policy – Delinquent Accounts

Fees for past due accounts are described above. Appropriate actions, including suspension of before/after care privileges or after school program registration or Nature’s Classroom attendance, may be enacted for continued non-payment of outstanding balances. Accounts in arrears for 60+ days may result in suspension of enrollment, until such time as accounts are made current. JMS reserves the right to engage legal counsel and/or collections professionals to assist with seriously delinquent accounts.

ALL accounts (including tuition, extended care, after school care, etc.) must be paid in full prior to the release of any student records to parents or to other educational institutions.

Please contact the JMS Business Manager for questions concerning invoicing, payment plans and other financial matters.

Student Withdrawal

End-of-session Withdrawal: Parents or guardians may withdraw and terminate their enrollment contract at the end of the current school year by notifying the JMS Head of School in writing on or before April 15 of the school year in question.

In-session Withdrawal: Parents or guardians may also immediately withdraw and terminate their enrollment contract after April 15 in any given school year. However, if the Parent or Guardian fails to notify JMS of their intent to withdraw on or before April 15 they will be responsible for the following year's tuition based on the following prorated schedule:

Notice of Withdrawal	Responsibility for Tuition
April 15–July 1	10% (Annual Deposit)
July 2–August 15	30%
August 16–November 15	50%
November 16–March 15	75%

March 16 or later

100%

Tuition Payment/Refund upon withdrawal: Once a Parent or Guardian provides JMS with written notice of their intent to withdraw and terminate their enrollment contract as noted in the In-session Withdrawal paragraph, above, the following shall occur, as applicable:

Further Tuition Payments: If the Parent or Guardian has not paid the full amount of tuition for which they are responsible (see In-session Withdrawal, above), they shall tender full payment of the balance due and owing within thirty (30) days.

Tuition Refund: If the Parent or Guardian has paid more than the full amount of tuition for which they are responsible (see In-session Withdrawal, above), JMS shall refund the balance of tuition previously paid within thirty (30) days.

Cause of Withdrawal: JMS understands that from time to time a withdrawal may be caused or necessitated by circumstance beyond the control of the Parent or Guardian (including but not limited to illness, re-location, suspension, expulsion, etc.). Nevertheless, the Responsible Parties agree and affirm (i) that they understand and acknowledge JMS's legitimate and substantial interest in maintaining an adequate understanding and stable expectation of tuition revenues in any given year and (ii) that the tuition responsibility policy outlined in In-session Withdrawal, above, represents an adequate and acceptable compromise between JMS's interests and those of the Parent or Guardian. The Parent or Guardian further understands and agrees that they shall not be entitled to any refund in excess of that to which they are entitled, in any circumstance, pursuant to Tuition Refund, above.

PARENTAL BEHAVIOR AND SUPPORT

For the best interest of the child, JMS believes that a positive relationship between the school and a student's parents or guardians is essential to the fulfillment of the school's mission. Effective relationships have the founding principles of clearly defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect and a common vision of goals to be achieved.

JMS understands and appreciates that parents and guardians may utilize different means to meet the expectations and responsibilities stated in this policy. Nonetheless, JMS, as all times, may dismiss a student whose parent, guardian, family member, or other adult involved with the student, in the sole judgment of the school, fails to comply with this or any other policy or procedure of the school, engages in conduct either on or off the school's property that could undermine the authority of the school's administration, and/or otherwise behaves in a manner that is unbecoming of a member of the school community. JMS may refuse re-enrollment of a student if the school, in its sole discretion, believes the actions of a parent or guardian on or off

the school's property makes a positive, constructive relationship impossible, or otherwise may interfere with the school's accomplishment of its mission and/or educational goals.

In order to create the most effective relationship, the school expects that parents will observe the following guidelines:

1. Share in the vision of JMS

- Support the mission of the school
- Support the school's philosophy, policies and procedures.
- Support the school's disciplinary process, and understand that the school's authority in such matters is final.
- Be supportive to a diverse and inclusive community.
- Acknowledge that the payment of tuition is an investment in the education of the student, not an investment of ownership in the school.

2. Participate in a healthy school community relationship built on communication, collaboration, and mutual respect.

- Support positive attitudes towards the school at home.
- Respect the school's responsibility to do what is best for the entire community, while recognizing the needs of an individual student.
- Help to build and maintain a positive school environment by not participating in or tolerating gossip.
- Support the school through volunteering and attending school events.
- Appreciate the value of the educational experience at JMS by making regular and timely school attendance a priority and scheduling non-emergency appointments outside the classroom day.
- Resolve problems through appropriate channels (i.e., teacher, Assistant Head of School, Head of School, Board, in that order).
- Financially support the school to the best of one's ability.

3. Support the intellectual, physical, and emotional growth of the student.

- Be a role model, especially when it comes to behavior at school and at school events.
- Be aware of the student's online activities and use of computers, television, and video games.
- Encourage integrity and civility in the student.

Involvement in Disciplinary Matters

If a student is having an issue with another student, parents should not attempt to deal with the other student directly about that matter. Doing so may put a student in an intimidating situation and is best resolved through a school administrator. All disciplinary matters and

student issues are handled directly by teachers, administrators and staff. If you need guidance in this, please speak to the AHOS or HOS.

Parent Involvement School-Wide

Joliet Montessori School has dedicated its efforts to serving children and families for over 50 years. The dedication from our parent body has served as the foundation for the School's success. Their gift of time and talent has continued to make a significant impact throughout its rich history. It is without a doubt that this kind of generosity creates a partnership that guarantees success for all the students attending JMS now and in the years to come.

As parents, it is important be informed and keep connected with the school in order to deepen one's understanding of the Montessori philosophy and how it correlates to child development. We recognize that the educational path at JMS is a choice, which is why it's vital to be intentional about the role of being a JMS parent. Several opportunities are offered throughout the year in order for a parent to gain more guidance and insight.

There are plenty of ways to be involved at the school. At the beginning of the year, parents are able to fill out ways in which they would like to volunteer their time and services to JMS while building community and better serving the students. If you have more questions on how to become more involved at the School, please contact the AHOS or HOS.

COVID-19

Phases of Re-Opening

Joliet Montessori School will prioritize for the 2020-21 academic year. If we regress to a more limited "phase" of the Restore Illinois plan, we will continue to prioritize in-person learning. Please read on for our current operating plan based on each phase of re-opening.

Phase 4:

Attendance and class sizes as normal with the following hours of instruction.

Arrival and Dismissal procedures follow below on page 2.

A 48-hour notice is mandatory to the teacher and Head of School when a child wants to switch their schedule between in-home and on campus learning.

- Primary:
 - Half-Day Students: 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM
 - School-Day Students: 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM
- Elementary: 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

- Adolescent: 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

Before and After Care

Before Care: 7:00 AM – 8:30 AM

After Care: 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Before and After Care will be available to families in need. Children will be divided into groups by program in the After Care room. Dividers will be in place to allow children to see their space. Table top dividers will be used to allow for more safety.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures:

Arrival

Classroom communities will be separated as much as possible, beginning the moment your child exits the vehicle. Each student will enter and exit a specific entrance according to their classroom.

Arrival procedures are as follows: All cars will follow regular carpool protocols.

- Willow Room: Students will be greeted by Ms. Lydia near the **peace garden gate** and enter door number 2 on the side of the building and go straight to their classroom.
- Oak Room: Students will enter through **side door number 3 by Ms. Heidi's office** and go straight to their classroom.
- Elementary: Students will **enter main entrance, door number 1**, and proceed upstairs to their classroom.
- Adolescent: Parents will park in Adolescent House carpool queueing area. Parents will walk child up to **Adolescent House front entrance**.
- Parents must wear a face mask during arrival
- Each child must confirm a health screening upon time of arrival.
- A staff member will take your child's temperature using a contactless thermometer prior to admitting your child to the campus.
 - If your child has a temperature of 100.4°F or over, the staff member will verify the temperature with another thermometer.
 - A child with a temperature of 100.4°F or over will not be admitted.
- After having temperature taken, children will be given hand sanitizer and proceed to their designated entrance.

Dismissal

- Half-Day Primary Students will be dismissed at noon from their designated entrance as stated above in the arrival procedures. Parents must pull up in carpool queueing area, park their car, and walk up to pick up their child. Parents must wear face masks.
- All School-Day Primary and Elementary students will be dismissed from their designated entrances. Parents pull up in carpool queueing area, put car in park, and walk up to their child's designated entrance. Parents must wear a face mask and maintain social distancing using designated markings.

- Adolescent students will be dismissed from the Adolescent House.

Late Arrival and Early Dismissal

If your child is arriving after morning carpool, between 8:45 and 11:45, please park in the carpool queueing area. Call the office upon arrival to inform a staff member that your child is waiting outside. A staff member will then signal you to approach the main entrance, door 1, with your child. From this point standard arrival procedures will be followed. Parents or guardians will be required to sign in their child.

If your child is leaving early, please call the school at least 15 minutes before your arrival. Staff will make sure your child is ready and waiting at the main entrance, door 1. Upon arrival, please park in the carpool queueing area and walk to the main entrance door to collect their child. Parents will be required to sign their child out.

Materials

Children will have their own individual materials such as pencils, colored pencils, scissors, glue sticks, etc. that they will keep in a closed container provided by the school. Each child will have their own cubby to place their lunch box, water bottle, outdoor shoes, and jacket. No other belongings are allowed to enter the building. Each child will also need a separate pair of indoor shoes while they are on campus. No flip-flops, open toed shoes, or large slippers will be allowed.

Phase 3: In-person learning with limited class sizes.

- Primary:
 - All Primary Classes will be divided into groups of no more than ten.
- Elementary:
 - All Elementary classes will be divided into three smaller groups on campus with in-home learning options. Students will attend school-day hours.
 - Three stable groups will rotate on a daily schedule between certified teachers and a team assistant. For example, Groups A and B will be with a certified teacher receiving lessons in separate classrooms while Group C will be with a team assistant doing practice and follow up work. Throughout the week these groups will rotate between teachers. Group D will be made up of students who are participating in in-home learning.
 - Each smaller group will be separated into three different classroom locations pursuant to Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. The aftercare room and Parent Child room will be used for classroom space.
- Adolescent Community:
 - Students will be divided into two separate groups if necessary to abide with IDPH and CDC guidelines, with the Adolescent guide teaching between groups.
- Students will attend for school-day hours, 8:30 AM-3:00 PM.
- Before and After Care will be available to families in need.

Phase 2: Learning at Home (Remote Learning):

Through our experiences this spring during Illinois' closure and in-home learning, we learned a tremendous amount about connecting with families and young students. Because of this experiential learning, we are prepared to support parents through offering parent education, helping establish routines during learning at home, and maximizing connections through live virtual meetings and lessons, as well as recorded lessons students can watch repeatedly.

Attendance

Students will be marked present each day they are in attendance for their daily online classes. If a student shows no attendance during their daily online classes, they will be marked absent for that day. After several absences a teacher will be in contact with the family.

Oak Room Remote Learning Schedule

TIME	ACTIVITY	COMMENTS
10:00-10:30	Daily Group Meeting	Calendar, Songs and Books, Show and tell, Friday dance parties, etc.
9:00-10:00 10:30-11:30	Daily Individual or Small Group Lessons	15-30-minute lessons scheduled for the following week depending on students' needs and readiness
11:30 – 1:00	Office Hours and Additional Help for Kindergarteners	Scheduled <u>Zoom</u> calls with students and/or parents for support and questions. Additional individual lessons for Kindergarteners, as needed.
Our virtual classroom will be Google Classroom where I will be posting materials and work packets.		

Willow Room Remote Learning Schedule

TIME	ACTIVITY	COMMENTS
9:00 – 9:30	Daily Group Meeting	My Favorite Thing, Songs and Books, Virtual Wednesday Walkabouts
9:30 – 11:30	Daily Individual or Small Group Lessons	15-30-minute lessons scheduled on Friday for the following week depending on students' needs and readiness

11:30 – 1:00	Office Hours and Additional Help for Kindergarteners	Scheduled Zoom calls with students and/or parents for support and questions. Additional individual lessons for Kindergarteners, as needed.
Our virtual classroom will be Google Classroom where I will be posting materials and work packets.		

Elementary Remote Learning Schedule

TIME	ACTIVITY	COMMENTS
8:00-8:30	Community Meeting Whole Group	Student council — students will run this. Topics will include issues at hand, feelings, community building, and social/emotional learning
8:30-9:00	Short story read aloud Whole Group	Read a short story and have a share out after
9:15-10:15	Grade Level Lessons	
10:15-11:15	Grade Level Lessons	
11:15-12:00	Office Hours	Parents and Students can reach me LIVE via <u>Zoom</u> . Emails, phone calls. Extra assistance
12:00-12:45	Lunch/recess	
12:30-1:30	Read Aloud/Discussion Whole Group	Read from chapter book. Discussion to follow.

- Monday:** 1st grade lesson at 9:15
2nd grade lesson at 10:15
- Tuesday:** 3rd grade lesson at 9:15
4th grade lesson at 10:15
- Wednesday:** 5th grade lesson at 9:15
6th grade lesson at 10:15

Thursday Theme Day: Hat Day, Pajama Day, Favorite Sport Day, etc. **Whole group 9:15-11:15**

Friday Fun Day: Guest Speaker Madison Audubon, Magic School Bus Video (water cycle, plants, thunder, etc.), Kahoot learning games, virtual field trips, etc. **Whole group 9:15-11:15**

**When children are not in a lesson from 9:15-10:15, they should be working on independent work such as ongoing research (independently or with a classmate via Zoom), math practice, independent reading, etc. They will have plenty to focus on for the week after their lesson.

Adolescent Community

TIME	ACTIVITY	COMMENTS
9:00-10:00	Class meeting Group lessons Assignments given Check in on assignments	
10:00-12:00	Individual/Small group work Office hours	
12:00-1:00	Recess	
1:00-2:00	Reading	

Health and Safety Action Plan and/or Procedures

Face Coverings

Face Coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment. Please note that due to the nature of some of the presentations given in our early childhood programs, face coverings may be removed for part of all of the presentation.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

1. Staff

Staff will be required to wear face coverings at the following times:

- Arrival and Dismissal
- When performing health screening of staff and children
- When working in the classroom except during presentations that require clear articulation and visibility, such as
 - language exercises and presentations
 - Social distancing will be taken as a precaution
- When assisting an ill child or staff member.

2. Children

Children in our programs are required to wear face masks any time social-distancing of six feet is not possible. Children will be encouraged and supported in wearing a mask properly, as well as

having the adults in their environment model proper mask wearing. Included in this approach is helping children understand that masks are worn as both a courtesy and a safety measure for ourselves and those around us as part of normal daily life.

Playground Safety

- Ensure hand washing immediately before and immediately after recess.
- Mask-free zones will be created for children to take off their mask with safe social distancing markings.
- Playground equipment will be sanitized daily.
- Masks must be worn outside when children cannot be six feet apart.

Increased Ventilation

Classroom windows will open as much as allowable depending on weather conditions.

Health Screening

Daily employee and child health screenings are important to help the transmission of COVID-19 at school.

This section covers the following Health Screening Topics:

- Health and Temperature Screening Protocol
- Staff Self-Screening Prior to Arrival at School
- Staff Screening at School
- Parent Screening of Child Prior to Arrival at School
- Staff Screening of Child at School

Health and Temperature Screening Protocol

All children and staff who meet any of the criteria below will be denied entry:

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher;
- Sore throat;
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline);
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain;
- New congestion/runny nose;
- Fatigue from unknown cause;
- Muscle or body aches;
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever;
- Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19

Staff Self-Screening Prior to Arrival at School

Staff members will conduct self-screening prior to arrival at school. If a staff member self-identifies as having symptoms listed in the screening criteria above, she/he will contact the designated administrator, not come into work, and follow the procedures in the section: COVID-19 Symptoms at School – Staff.

Staff Screening at School

A designated Administrative Staff Member will conduct and record Staff Health Screening for each staff member upon arrival at school.

Parent Screening of Child Prior to Morning Arrival

Parents are encouraged to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick. Parents are required to conduct the pre-screening each day at home. Parents who have not completed pre-screening prior to arrival must complete it prior to the child entering the program.

Staff Screening of Child at School

- Upon arrival, a staff member will take your child’s temperature using a contactless thermometer.
 - If the child has a temperature of 100.4°F or higher, the staff member will verify the temperature with another contactless thermometer.
 - A child with a temperature of 100.4°F or higher will not be admitted.
- Staff will conduct and log temperature checks of each child and adult in the community every day
- Staff will make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing, or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness. If the child exhibits any of these symptoms at arrival or at any point during the day, the child will be isolated and parents will be required to pick up their child.

COVID-19 Symptoms and COVID-19 Cases in School

This section provides details and procedures for the COVID-19 Symptom, Exposure, and Diagnosis within the school community:

- COVID-19 Symptoms at School – Children
- COVID-19 Symptoms at School – Staff
- COVID-19 Exposure – Staff and Children
- Positive Case of COVID-19 in the Classroom Community – Children or Staff

COVID-19 Symptoms at School – Children

If COVID-19 symptoms begin while at school, the child must be sent home as soon as possible. Sick children will be kept separate from well children and staff. Contact will be limited as much as reasonably possible, while ensuring the safety and supervision of the child until they leave.

- Classroom staff will follow these isolation procedures:
 - Classroom staff will take the child to the Isolation location in the main office:
 - Isolation location #1: Main Office Bathroom
 - Isolation location #2: Ms. Eileen’s Office
 - The classroom staff will inform the office staff of symptoms exhibited.
 - The office staff will contact parents to come to school to pick up the child.
 - Siblings to child showing symptoms will be removed from their classroom and placed in a separate isolation room.
 - The office staff will contact parents to come to school to pick up the child and their sibling.
 - Once a parent has left with the ill child, the isolation area will be shut down and sanitized 24 hours later.
- Materials, toys, and furniture touched by the child who is sent home will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Families are encouraged to coordinate decision-making around the child’s care with the family health care provider if there are specific health concerns, chronic disease, or complex social or emotional dynamics in the home.
- In the case of a child who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the child will be assumed to have COVID-19, and cannot return to the community until the individual has met the criteria for return under Children or Staff Positive Case of COVID-19. If a student does not provide a healthcare provider’s note documenting that there is no clinical suspicion for COVID-19 infection **and** indicating an alternative diagnosis with exclusion consistent with that diagnosis, they must complete 10 calendar days of isolation from the date of first symptom onset **and** be fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications **and** other symptoms have improved before returning to school.
- A child who has exhibited symptoms that could be COVID-19 can return to school if the parent has obtained a medical professional’s note clearing the individual for return based on a negative COVID-19 test or a medical note documenting that there is no clinical suspicion for COVID-19 infection and indicating an alternative diagnosis with exclusion consistent with that diagnosis. At a minimum, the individual must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication **and** have had no diarrhea or vomiting in the previous 24 hours. Other diseases have specific criteria for when a student or staff member can return to school. Follow school health policies and communicable disease guidance for those illnesses. A doctor’s note documenting the alternative diagnosis or a negative COVID-19 test result should accompany a student or staff member returning to school with an alternative diagnosis after experiencing COVID-like symptoms.
 - **If a symptomatic individual is a close contact of a confirmed case, if the school is experiencing an outbreak or if the local health department is requiring validation due**

to community transmission levels, symptomatic individuals may ONLY return to school with a negative COVID-19 diagnostic test if they have a negative “RT-PCR” COVID-19 test result. In other situations, a negative rapid molecular (rapid PCR) or negative antigen test is acceptable.

- **Negative COVID-19 diagnostic tests are valid only for the date on which they are collected; specimens collected 48 hours prior to symptom onset, after symptom onset, or while symptoms are present are acceptable for determining school exclusion status.**

COVID-19 Symptoms at School – Staff

Staff is encouraged to monitor their health and required to perform daily health screenings for symptoms of COVID-19. Staff is encouraged to stay home if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 and to contact their healthcare provider.

- Staff exhibiting new or worsening symptoms of possible COVID-19 at school should:
 - Leave the classroom
 - Obtain a COVID-19 test; and
 - Follow the recommendations of their healthcare provider.
- In the case of a staff member who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to work until the individual has met the return criteria for Children or Staff with Positive Case of COVID-19. If a staff member does not provide a healthcare provider’s note documenting that there is no clinical suspicion for COVID-19 infection **and** indicating an alternative diagnosis with exclusion consistent with that diagnosis, they must complete 10 calendar days of isolation from the date of first symptom onset **and** be fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications **and** other symptoms have improved before returning to school.
- If the staff member has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional’s note before clearing the individual for the return based on a negative nucleic acid COVID-19 test or a medical note from a healthcare provider documenting that there is no clinical suspicion for COVID-19 infection **and** indicating an alternative diagnosis with exclusion consistent with that diagnosis. At a minimum, the individual must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication **and** have had no diarrhea or vomiting in the previous 24 hours. Other diseases have specific criteria for when a student or staff member can return to school. Follow school health policies and communicable disease guidance for those illnesses. A doctor’s note documenting the alternative diagnosis or a negative COVID-19 test result should accompany a student or staff member returning to school with an alternative diagnosis after experiencing COVID-like symptoms.

COVID-19 Exposure – Staff and Children

If a staff member or child has been identified as having close contact to someone outside the classroom community who is diagnosed with COVID-19, that staff member or child will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days per the CDC guidelines. Close contacts are considered the following:

- Someone who was within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, starting from 2 days before illness onset (or for asymptomatic patients, two days prior to test specimen collection), until the time the patient is isolated.
- Individuals who provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- Individuals who had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them)
- Individuals who shared eating or drinking utensils
- Individuals on whom a person with COVID-19 sneezed or coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on

Positive Case of COVID-19 in the Classroom Community – Children or Staff

If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member in a classroom community, all persons regularly in that community will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days per the CDC guidelines. The following actions will be taken by school administration:

- Contact the Will County Health Department to report the presence of COVID-19 within our school community.
- Notify the Illinois Department of Public Health.
- Notify staff and parents/caregivers that a member of the classroom community has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Notify the school community that a child in the school (not their community) has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Close the specific classroom community for 14 days to allow self-quarantine for all children and staff in the classroom community who have been in close contact with the person diagnosed with COVID-19 (per CDC guidelines).
- Any classrooms with a sibling of a COVID-19 positive case will transfer to in-home learning for two days while the school cleans and disinfects the classroom. Siblings of students that have tested positive for COVID-19 must stay home during the 14-day quarantine.
- Complete disinfecting procedures.

*Decisions about extending any closure will be made in consultation with the Illinois Department of Public Health and Will County Health Department.

Children or Staff with a Positive Case of COVID-19, who have exhibited symptoms and who have stayed home (home isolated) can return to school/work when the following criteria are met:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.htm>

- At least 1 day (24 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); and
- The child or staff member has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and,

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, or Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collect >24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).

Quarantine and Isolation – Definitions

From the CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation.html>

Quarantine

Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.

Isolation

Isolation is used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific "sick room" or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).

Communication

Joliet Montessori School will communicate:

- With families, if their child has been in close contact with someone at school who has then tested positive for COVID-19.
- With staff, if they have been in close contact with someone at school who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- With the entire school community if a classroom community has been closed temporarily due to COVID-19 exposure.

Physical Distancing Strategies

Joliet Montessori School staff understands that young children cannot always distance themselves from other children or adults while at school. Young children learn by engaging with their environment, which includes the other people in it. However, Joliet Montessori School will employ the following strategies for limiting the spread of COVID-19 in our communities:

- Communities will consist of stable groups, limited in the number allowed by the State of Illinois. Stable means the same children and their consistent caregiver(s) are in the same group each day.

- Children shall not change from one group to another during the day.
- Groups shall not mix with each other except for Before and After Care.
- The guide and assistant will remain with a single group each day. Primary assistants will move between classrooms to sanitize materials in clean PPE when moving to a new classroom. In the case of illness, a designated substitute for the group will assist with caregiving.
- When possible, children will have designated work space to ensure distance between classmates.
- The physical distance between children will be increased in daily work locations, group gatherings, meals, and snacks.
- At nap time, children’s cots will be spaced out as much as possible, with alternating head to toe arrangements to reduce the distance between children.

Healthy Hand Hygiene

Washing hands can keep you healthy and prevent the spread of infections from one person to the next. All children and staff will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- Arrival to the classroom and after breaks
- Before and after each work choice
- Before and after eating or handling food
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid
- After playing outdoors
- After handling garbage
- Before and after touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because that’s how germs enter our bodies.

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

(<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>)

Follow these five steps every time.

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

After assisting children with handwashing, staff should also wash their own hands.

Use of Hand Sanitizer for Adults and Children When You Can’t Use Soap and Water

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations.

How to use hand sanitizer

1. Apply the gel product to the palm of the hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
2. Rub your hands together.
3. Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Joliet Montessori School has a detailed plan for cleaning and sanitizing each community.

These efforts include the following:

- Staff will routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially materials, door handles, and faucets.
- All bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected regularly throughout the day.
- All environments to be cleaned and sanitized nightly.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Materials

- Materials that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.
- Children will place a laminated red “x” card on the material, indicating it may not be used. Material will be sanitized by a supervisory adult.
- Materials that children have placed in their mouths or otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves. These materials will be sanitized prior to use by the next person.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Bedding

Each child’s bedding is kept separate. Mats are labeled for each child and disinfected daily. Bedding is cleaned at least weekly.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures if an infected person (staff or child) has been in a school building:

Close off areas used by the individuals with COVID-19 and wait 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize the potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.

Staff will clean and disinfect all areas used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces. Staff must follow [CDC’s guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting.](#)

Cleaning and Disinfecting Products

Joliet Montessori School uses disinfecting products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/ReOpening America Cleaning>

Food Preparation and Serving

- Each child will bring their own lunch from home. Children may use reusable lunch containers.
- For Primary, individual snacks will be provided and parents may send their child with their own snack.
- Elementary and Adolescent students may bring their own snack from home.
- Staff will ensure children wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.

Additional Policies and Procedures to Mitigate Spread of COVID-19

General Policies and Procedures and Planning

Joliet Montessori School has and will continue to collaborate, share information, and review plans with local health officials to help protect the whole school community. School plans are designated to complement other community mitigation strategies to protect high-risk populations and the healthcare system and minimize disruption to teaching and learning.

This document was compiled using the COVID-19 guidelines and recommendations for schools and childcare programs published by the CDC, state of Illinois, and Will County. Joliet Montessori School's procedures meet or exceed the minimum standards of care and will be updated as new information or additional guidelines are made available.

CDC Considerations for Schools

CDC Guidance for Schools and Child Care

COVID-19 Acknowledgement of Risk

Because of the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic, we are all living through some trying times. Yet this is also a time for us to stand united in our support for our precious students, families, teachers and our beloved school. We are determined to do all we can to continue our 55-year legacy of Montessori excellence in the 2020-2021 school year.

Be assured that we at Joliet Montessori School have made the safety and health of your children and our teachers our top priority. Because of this, we have implemented protocols and practices in accordance with guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the public health officials of the State of Illinois. As you know, this guidance has changed repeatedly throughout the past weeks and months. We know already that we all must anticipate further and repeated changes to this guidance as our public health officials learn more about this disease and the mechanisms by which it is transmitted. We are

fully committed to monitoring announcements about any such changes daily, and to modifying our protocols and practices on a timely basis to ensure that they remain in conformance with the most current guidance our public health officials provide.

Many have said that we are all in this together, and this is just as true here at Joliet Montessori School as it is anywhere else. There are important roles for all of us to play to protect our community, our families, and ourselves. For that reason, we ask that all families closely follow these procedures from our JMS Operating Guide:

If your child has any of the following symptoms, that indicates a possible illness that may decrease the student's ability to learn and also put them at risk for spreading illness to others. Please check your child for these symptoms:

- Sore throat;
- Loss of taste or smell;
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline);
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain;
- Fatigue from unknown cause;
- Muscle or body aches;
- New congestion/runny nose;
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever.
- Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19

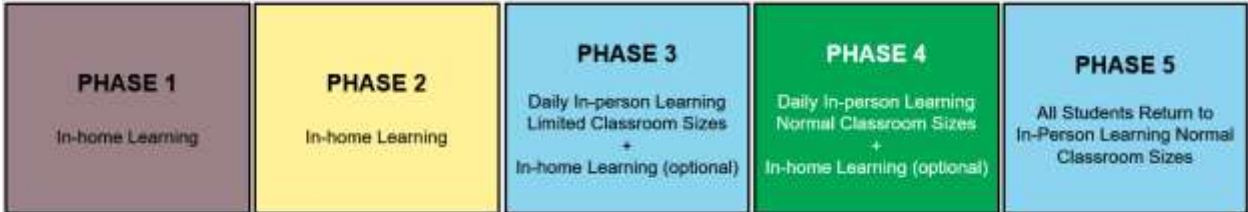
For our part, Joliet Montessori School will implement the measures outlined in our JMS Operating Guide, to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection for all our students and our staff until our public health officials recommend changes or give us reason to believe that it is safe to discontinue them:

- Classrooms and other areas to which students have access when at Joliet Montessori School will be carefully sanitized every evening or before students arrive to begin their school day in the morning. Any area observed to have come into contact with bodily fluids during the school day will be cordoned off and sanitized immediately.
- Upon arrival every day, all members of our staff and all of our students will be screened by having their temperatures checked using a non-contact forehead infrared thermometer and asked if they have experienced any of the common COVID-19 symptoms or have come into contact with anyone who is under quarantine for possible exposure. Any staff member or student who has a temperature greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, who has or reports any one or more of the common COVID-19

symptoms, or who has come into contact with someone known to have a COVID-19 infection or had close contact with a person under quarantine for possible exposure, will be sent home.

- All staff and students will be required to wear face masks or equivalent facial coverings throughout the school day. Students are required to bring masks/suitable facial coverings with them to school every day and will not be allowed entry into school facilities without them. Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment. Please note that due to the nature of some of the presentations given in our early childhood programs, face coverings may be removed for part or all of the presentation.
- To the greatest extent possible, social distancing (minimum 6 feet of separation) will be practiced throughout the school day.
- We will incorporate instructions on practices recommended to reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 infections into our classroom curricula. This will include instruction on frequent hand washing, the proper method for effective hand washing, avoiding touching one’s face, and covering one’s mouth and nose if one must sneeze or cough.
- In the event we have any reason to believe that any of our students, despite our best efforts, has been exposed to COVID-19, we will promptly notify the parents of the affected students of the suspected exposure.

We have also prepared a learning plan for how we will operate at each of the Phases outlined by our state government. To the extent that we can based on state and federal guidance, our plans are based on the Montessori principle of choice, because we know that people learn and live better when they can choose their direction. We understand and respect that each of our families has a unique situation, and we're working hard to provide choices for how our families can attend. In the event that we must shift to a different Phase, we will communicate changes swiftly and clearly with our families. Here is a high-level summary of how Joliet Montessori School will be open at every phase. Details of each Phase can be seen in our JMS Operating Guide, pp. 1 – 6 and our Parent Handbook, pp.



PLEASE NOTE: All of our policies and plans are subject to change depending on what the most recent guidance from the CDC or Illinois public health officials may be. These policies and plans are designed to best protect your child and the other students from COVID-19, but they are not intended to establish a standard of care.

The learning curve on COVID-19 since it reached the United States has been very steep, but there is still much about the disease that even our most highly qualified infectious disease physicians and researchers do not know. Despite all we are doing to prevent any exposure of our students and staff, we of course cannot guarantee that your child will not be exposed, whether at Joliet Montessori School or elsewhere, or if exposed, that your child will not contract the disease. You acknowledge that there is and will be an unavoidable risk of your child contracting COVID-19 despite our best efforts to prevent it.

In addition we at Joliet Montessori School have no control over governmental measures, such as stay-at-home or quarantine orders, that could interfere with our ability to provide the full educational experience for your child during this school year. In the event we are unable to provide the classroom experience because of such governmental actions, we will try to work with you and the parents of our other students to provide a meaningful, alternative educational experience through the period when normal classroom attendance is not possible. However, because tuition is fully committed at the beginning of the school year for such vital expenses as teacher and staff salaries, building maintenance and equipment, supplies, and overhead, you understand and accept that we will not be able to provide full or partial tuition refunds in such circumstances. Tuition refunds are available if you choose to withdraw your student, according to the tuition refund schedule noted on p. 36 of the Parent Handbook.