

# PARENT HANDBOOK



Damariscotta Montessori School  
93 Center Street ~ Nobleboro, ME 04555  
Phone (207) 563-2168 ~ Email [info@damariscottamontessori.org](mailto:info@damariscottamontessori.org)



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## VISION AND MISSION

### MARIA MONTESSORI: THE WOMAN, THE EDUCATOR

The Montessori experience is the result of the observations and genius of Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952). Upon graduation as the first woman medical doctor in Italy, Dr. Montessori became interested in the education and training of young children.

Dr. Montessori's observations of children convinced her that each child carries within themselves the person they will become. Each child's potential is reached through a process of striving, aided by a growing sense of order and self-discipline. Every child must be free to develop at his or her own rate. Montessori designed materials and techniques that allowed her students to work in a way previously considered beyond their capacity. She quickly saw a new and valuable relationship develop within the classroom. No longer was the student dependent on the teacher. The child was now free to use the environment and other children as tools in his or her learning.

In a Montessori classroom, the teacher, through the study and observation of children, prepares the environment to attract the child. As the child is drawn toward learning, the teacher is free to provide small lessons and observe each child. In turn, each child is free to choose enticing work and repeat it continuously, if desired, until he or she is satisfied. Thus fostered at an early age, concentration and self-discipline become the cornerstones upon which the child's confidence and competence as a learner are built. Montessori children grow learning, to observe, to think and to judge. Natural curiosity and tendencies toward learning become the roots from which the older child evolves and emerges as a socially confident and intellectually disciplined adolescent.

Dr. Montessori died in 1952. Today, after over 100 years of international application, the Montessori Method thrives in many countries. In the United States, more than 3,000 schools have been established since 1957. In addition to the national Montessori certification now available to ensure quality Montessori care and education, the National Independent Schools are preparing to include Montessori schools in their certification process.

## MISSION

The mission of the Damariscotta Montessori School (DMS) is to provide a carefully planned, stimulating Montessori environment which will help children develop within themselves the foundation for a lifetime of learning, thinking and living. We are a child-centered community that honors individuality and encourages respect for one another and oneself. We believe that the deep commitment and dedication of our small community, which is made up of our school's children, parents and staff members, is vital in the fulfillment of this mission.

## VALUES AND OBJECTIVES

Our program rests on these core values and objectives:

**Respect** – Self-respect, respect for others, tolerance, honesty, integrity and responsibility.

**Compassion** – Concern for one another, for humanity, kindness, peacefulness, understanding, acceptance, and warmth.

**Love of Learning** – Discovery, exploration, working together, curiosity, and ownership.

**Service** – A lifelong commitment to give something back through service to others who are in need.

**Independence** – Doing for oneself, understanding one's own capabilities.

**Interdependence** – Responsibility to and healthy dependence upon one another, a love of community.

**Excellence** – Quality in all that we do to serve the children, and the cultivation of the pursuit of excellence within our students.

**Universal Understanding** – A global perspective, and an understanding of being part of something bigger than oneself.

## COMMUNICATION

### TO FAMILIES FROM SCHOOL

#### WEB SITE

Although the school's web page is a source of school information for *prospective* families, we don't use it as a method of communication with *current* families. The website contains the school blueprint, our vision and mission, the history of the school, and basic staff biographies. Our main forms of communication with our current, enrolled community are now digital, including Educate, Facebook, and Email. The website: [www.damariscottamontessori.org](http://www.damariscottamontessori.org).

#### EDUCATE (& TADS)

TADS is our enrollment website. Educate is a separate, but related website that is devoted to classroom, school, and student information. You should receive an email with log-on information. If you need help with this, please contact the office. We adopted this platform during the 2021-22 school year.

#### FACEBOOK (FB)

**Public FB Page:** This group is viewable to the public. We might post general updates, exciting news, or link interesting news articles about education, alumni, or current families.

**Closed, Private Parent Group:** This is for all of the adult DMS community members. Members might post things like an interesting place to take children, an open-invitation playdate, or ask questions about upcoming events. Only members of the Damariscotta Montessori community may join this group. Posts are not visible to the general public.

**Closed, Private Classroom Group:** Each classroom will have a FB group so that the teachers can share pictures, Montessori information, and classroom updates. ONLY current families will be allowed to join. This is a private group and is not visible to the general public.

**All FB groups are monitored by a DMS staff member.** They are places for encouragement and sharing. They are not places for airing grievances. Please communicate directly with the classroom teacher or Head of School if you have concerns.

DMS recognizes that there are many preferred styles of communication in our school community. We also recognize that we cannot cover them all, so we had to choose. We ask for flexibility and understanding if our communication style does not match your preferred platform.

#### EMAIL & "THIS WEEK AT DMS"

The school provides parents with information about classroom activity, upcoming events, important announcements, and activities through a weekly email called, "This Week at DMS" and other occasional emails. The school depends on this weekly memo to convey vital information. Please be sure to read "This Week at DMS" each week.

#### MESSAGE BOARD

Announcements and reminders will be posted on the message board/kiosk in the parking lot.

## COMMUNICATIONS TO SCHOOL FROM FAMILIES

### BLACK MAILBOX

Please deposit all communications to the school in the black mailbox that is located at the gate where you enter the school. To avoid lost or forgotten communications, please do not hand communications directly to school personnel when outside of the office as they may get lost in the morning or afternoon shuffle. Rest assured, we check the mailbox frequently.

### OFFICE

Of course, feel free to bring written communication, payments, forms, book orders, etc. directly to the front office.

### EMAIL

You may email your classroom teacher, the administrator, or the Head of School directly. All staff emails follow this pattern: first name last initial @damariscottamontessori.org.

There is an Office & Teacher Directory at the back of this handbook.

## PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/teacher conferences are held three times annually and are scheduled as part of the school calendar in the fall, winter and spring. If an emergency on conference day makes an appointment inconvenient, please call to schedule a different time. The Head of School or teacher may invite a child to a conference when appropriate. Special meetings may be scheduled at any time during the year as desired by the school or the family.

Please be respectful of the fact that the teachers' responsibility during school hours is to the children. During school hours their attention is to be focused on the children. Please understand the teachers will excuse themselves from conversations to rejoin classroom activities. Teachers are happy to schedule a time to meet with you so they can give you their full attention and answer your concerns thoughtfully.

## PARENT EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

DMS offers multiple options for Parent Education and Development through the year. Topics change every year, but might include curriculum, child development, parenting tools, or Montessori concepts. We also offer information nights about the movement from Primary to Elementary and an information session on our Middle School program and how it prepares the child for high school.



## DAILY SCHOOL ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

#### Primary & Elementary Arrivals

8:30-8:45 a.m. Arrivals/Carline

\***Morning Car-line** is convenient and helps the flow of traffic move smoothly through the parking lot.

Class begins promptly at 8:45 a.m. for Primary and Elementary students. Please call if your child is not enrolled in the extended day program and needs to be dropped off early or late. The morning greeting and plans for the day are a valuable part of your child's experience.

**Tardiness is disruptive to the children and the teachers. If your child will be tardy, please call the school so that we can be prepared for his/her arrival. Please bring your child directly to the office, not to the classroom.**

During the morning arrival, students will be dropped off at the walkway leading to the school entrance. A staff member will be at the walkway to help students out of vehicles. Cars entering and leaving should proceed around the half circle drive in a single file, counterclockwise direction. If your child needs your assistance or you need to exit your vehicle for any reason, please park in the parking lot. If you are leaving the parking lot during car-line, please stay to the left of the exit drive and proceed with caution.

#### Middle School Arrivals

Class begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. for Middle School students. They should begin arriving at 8:15 a.m. so they can be prepared for class. All other arrival and departure information is the same as the other classes.

#### Departures

Dismissal for the half-day program is at 12:15 p.m.

Dismissal for the full day program begins at 3:10 p.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m.

During afternoon departures, there will be a staff member posted by the gate. For your convenience, they will call your child up for you.

**SAFETY NOTICE: No child will be allowed to leave the school with someone other than the driver authorized by parents. Permission may be provided through email, in-person, or by calling the school office. Please let the authorized person know to bring a photo ID that will be checked before the child is released.**

We appreciate your understanding of this policy. However inconvenient it may seem; it safeguards your child against an unexpected or confusing incident.

#### Early Dismissal

Parents are requested to inform the office in advance if they plan to pick up their child prior to his or her scheduled dismissal time. This will help the teacher to prepare the child in a timely way without disturbing the classroom. Parents should come to the office, not the classroom, to pick up your child. We will call the classroom or have them waiting for you in the office.

## ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS

Regular and punctual attendance is critical to ensuring a positive experience for your child. Consistency and routine are essential elements in a child's Montessori experience. Erratic attendance can lead to missed lessons and interruptions in the child's natural learning process, a sense of alienation from the classroom activities and routine as well as a feeling of social isolation.

Please notify both your child's teacher and the Office of any extended absence of your child (anything more than 2 days).

If your child is in the Upper Elementary and Middle School programs, the student is still responsible for the weekly assignments even if they are not physically at school. Work that your child can complete at home will be arranged for pick up for these extended absences. If you know in advance that your child will be out, please arrange for a work plan with your child's teacher before the absence begins. If after two absences your child is unable to come back to school, please contact your child's teacher to arrange a work plan to get the student caught up on their work.

Punctual attendance is expected of all children. Regular tardiness disrupts the classroom and shows disrespect for the teacher and other students. It is not uncommon for children who regularly arrive late to school or miss school frequently to exhibit negative behavior. If a family is consistently arriving late, you will be asked to conference with your child's teacher so they can help you come up with some solutions.

If you do arrive late to school, please bring your child to the office for drop off. He/she will be escorted to the classroom at an appropriate time to minimize disruption to the teacher and other students.

## SAFETY PROCEDURES

- Late arrivals [after 8:45 a.m.] should come into the office, not the classroom.
- Children who are picked up at 12:15 p.m. will have their belongings with them on the playground. If a parent needs to enter the classroom at this time they will need to be let in by a staff member.
- Visitors to the school are required to check in at the front desk.
- Security cameras and remote entry locks are installed at the main entryways to school buildings. To enter the doorways, please ring the "doorbell". Only visitors who have checked in may enter the other buildings.
- All visitors will be required to wear a pass while on the premises.
- **Reminder:** *Children will only be allowed to leave with an authorized person.*
- Please advise whomever you have authorized to pick up your child that they should have photo identification with them in case a staff member does not know or recognize them. If a staff member does not know or recognize the person picking up your child, they will not release them without photo identification, even if we have written authorization.
- If there is a court order regarding custody or visitation rights regarding a student and a parent, we need to be notified immediately and have a copy on hand for staff members. Upon receiving the order, the school may require the primary caregiver to fill out new emergency contact forms and pick up authorization forms, if there is any change.

## PARKING LOT GUIDELINES

Cars entering and leaving the school driveway for regular arrival and departure should proceed around the drive in a counterclockwise direction. The traffic should be single file at all times. Be prepared for cars to stop, park or pull out to exit.

If it is necessary for you to park and exit your vehicle for any reason, please pull into one of the parking spaces to the left/right of the driveway that leads through the parking lot. In this way, we can more easily control traffic on the circle during arrival and departure. It is important to move traffic through the parking area smoothly in order to avoid lines or traffic jams. Please follow the general rules of the road when entering and exiting the parking lot (i.e. traffic should stay to the right when entering and exiting the lot).

If you need to leave your car, please do not leave it running. **Children must always be supervised in the parking lot.** Never leave children unattended in cars.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS POLICY:

At Damariscotta Montessori School we accept learners from all ethnic backgrounds. The primary language we communicate in is English. If your child communicates more comfortably in another language, please let us know. We will make every effort to make our materials and communications accessible for your child in your home language.

## SNOW DAYS

DMS's policy concerning snow days considers the safety of families who must travel a distance through many snow zones to reach us. Please do not make assumptions about the weather! Announcements for school closings and late openings can be found on all local television stations and on the internet at [www.wgme.com](http://www.wgme.com), [www.wmtw.com](http://www.wmtw.com) or [www.wcsh6.com](http://www.wcsh6.com). You can also sign up online to receive text messages from WCSH for AOS93.

- If AOS93 announces a cancellation, DMS also has a cancellation.
- If AOS93 announces any delay, of any time, **DMS will open at 10:00 a.m for all children.**
- Delays mean no early morning care.
- Early closings mean no extended afternoon care.

Travel to school in any bad weather with poor road conditions is always up to parental discretion. Should you choose to stay at home due to bad conditions, please notify the school.

There may be days when DMS needs to close early or for the full day (i.e. power failure) when the school district (AOS93) does not. We will notify parents via e-mail and via phone as quickly and efficiently as possible. Please avoid making calls to the school during an early closing unless it is absolutely necessary (the phones can get rather busy at these times!)

## **CLASSROOM PROCEDURES**

### **DISCIPLINE**

Damariscotta Montessori School uses positive discipline, which is implemented in a developmentally and age-appropriate fashion to meet the needs of the individual child. Our focus is on how to help children resolve problems and empower them to have a successful experience in the classroom and school community. The goal of our discipline policy is to provide an environment that promotes respect and safety for each person as well as the space we share.

The need for discipline within a Montessori classroom is greatly reduced by the prepared environment. The teachers make a point of keeping engaging activities available for the children so there is never a lack of something interesting for each student to do. The teacher may also redesign the work areas, jobs available, number of children allowed in a work area, etc., in response to classroom behavior.

For younger children, the primary method in a Montessori classroom is redirection – moving the child from a disruptive activity and engaging him or her in something more productive. Emphasis is put on directing a child to what they may do (making appropriate choices) rather than telling them what they may not do. For elementary aged children, the primary method used in a Montessori classroom is involving the child in making respectful and constructive choices. This may be done using mini-conferences, reflective listening and questioning, giving limited choices, making agreements, helping to resolve conflict, etc.

The classrooms also utilize a peace area. This is a comfortable area in which the child may relax and calm down, or to try to resolve conflict with another child. The child may choose to go to the peace area her- or himself or may be requested to visit the area by a teacher, or, in the case of conflict resolution, by another child. On occasion, in the event of unsafe physical or verbal behavior, or a persistent problem, a child may be removed from the classroom for a period of time to collect him or herself and to give the staff an opportunity to help resolve the situation.

Parents will be notified of significant or persistent disciplinary problems at school in a timely manner. If it is necessary to involve parents in the resolution of a problem at school, it will be done with a spirit of cooperation and with the aim of helping the child. Parental support during that time is very much appreciated. Through conferences, goals will be mutually agreed upon. If the goals are not able to be met within an allotted time, further professional help or other school placement will be considered for the child. Parents or faculty may call upon the Head of School to act as a facilitator at any time. Should it become apparent that a family cannot be supportive of the school's missions or goals, it may be necessary for the Head of School to consider whether it is in the best interest of the school to keep the child enrolled at DMS.

DMS staff and administration communicate about important matters, such as discipline, through in-person meetings and phone calls. The school will use email to set up in-person meetings. However, email is used sparingly because of potential miscommunications and the lack of ability to hold a true conversation.

DMS will protect the confidentiality of all students.

In order to provide an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for all children, suspension or expulsion procedures may be executed in the event of serious and/or persistent behavior problems. Such behavior includes but is not limited to: defacing or damaging property (school or other), profanity (verbal or written), triggering a fire alarm, violence, threats of violence, blatant disrespect, disorderly conduct, and endangering safety of self or others. This kind of disciplinary action will be determined by the Head of School upon consultation with the faculty. The Board of Directors will be notified in the event that such disciplinary action is taken.

## **OBSERVATION OF THE CLASSROOM**

After the first few weeks of school, parents are invited to make appointments to observe the classroom of their choice. One observer is welcome in the classroom at a time, so be aware that impromptu class visits may not be possible. Please check in with a staff member before visiting the classroom. An observation sheet will be given to you with guidelines for your stay. The teacher will call you to answer questions concerning your visit.

## **HOLIDAYS**

Holidays and celebrations can be a challenge for young children. All the distractions, noise, and pressures can leave a child feeling out of sorts. Montessori's approach to holidays is to honor and respect the celebrations of all cultures but to keep holiday activities to a minimum within the classroom. While it is appropriate to study religious and cultural events from a historical and cultural perspective, the school discourages celebrations that cannot be enjoyed by the whole school community.

## **TOYS & EQUIPMENT**

Please check with your child's teacher before sending in sporting equipment. All equipment brought to school will be available for community use. Children should not bring toys to school. Such items can easily be lost or broken. Parents are asked to carefully monitor what their children bring to school. Objects from nature or educational items can be brought in to share with the class. Check with your child's teacher for classroom-specific show & tell information.

## **TRANSFER OF BELONGINGS**

Please be sensitive to your child and to the faculty. If your child is involved in a regular transitional schedule between homes, please remember that how and when items are transferred can make a big difference in a child's day. Items should be carefully packed and contained to minimize bulk and confusion. If at all possible, changes of clothing and toys should take place outside of school and the classrooms. This avoids loss and confusion of precious items. If necessary, items may be stored in the office. Children can retrieve them prior to dismissal. Parents should not expect teachers to handle the exchanges of toys and clothing that have been misplaced during social engagements.

## **MARKING OF ALL BELONGINGS**

Parents are advised to mark clearly all of their child's belongings including sweaters, jackets, extra clothing, educational items brought to share, books and personal supplies. Each child must keep track of his or her own possessions as the school is not responsible for lost items. A lost and found is located in the coatroom area. An effort is made to empty the lost and found prior to major school holidays. At the end of the year, remaining items are donated to charity.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Misplaced items will be placed into the lost and found. We try to place them out by carline at least once per week, but you are welcome to look through the lost and found at any time. Labeling all items will help them get returned to you quicker. Unclaimed lost and found will be donated over the summer.

## **CHANGE OF CLOTHING**

Each child six years and younger must bring a complete change of clothing. For Primary students, the change of clothing will be kept in a plastic shoe box in the classroom. Elementary students will keep theirs in their DMS bag or their backpack. If the child uses the clothing, it will be sent home and the change of clothing must be replaced the following school day. It is the parent's responsibility to replace the change of clothing as a child grows into a new size.

Some extra clothing is stored in the school for emergencies.

## **SCHOOL DRESS**

School dress guidelines apply to all students, regardless of gender.

Clothing worn should allow for independence (i.e., overalls with easy fasteners, elastic waist bands for younger children and child user-friendly shoes and boots), art projects and outdoor play. Stains cannot be avoided without limiting your child's participation.

Children wear slippers inside the school. When purchasing slippers, please opt for plain and simple designs, as this helps minimize classroom distractions. Slippers should have hard, non-slip soles. Many students choose crocs or a pair of light slip-on shoes.

In order to enable all children to participate in outdoor activities, appropriate outdoor shoes for running, climbing and playing should be worn. Shoes must include a heel strap for safety purposes. For example, no thongs, jellies, elevated heels and clogs are appropriate.

Please make sure that during the winter months and on rainy days that your child has appropriate outerwear for outdoor activities. It is not unheard of to take a nature walk in the rain or to build a snowman on a nice winter day! For your child's protection, winter clothing must include a coat, hat or hood, mittens or gloves, snow pants, and boots. If your child, due to illness, is unable to participate in outdoor activities, please keep him/her home or come pick up your child early from school. Additional staff are not available to supervise a sick child indoors while the rest of the class is outdoors. Child supervision is of the utmost importance and we cannot be short a staff member outside to watch one or two children inside.

### Elementary and Middle School Students

The primary goal at DMS is to provide a safe and positive learning environment. Student clothing and footwear should be safe, healthy, non-discriminatory, modest, and free of distractions to oneself or other students. Students will spend time outside every day that the weather permits, and all students should be dressed in accordance with the weather and outdoor activities to be performed. Student dress not following these safety guidelines may be asked to contact parents for a change of clothes or to wear a set of clothing provided by the school.

- Clothing should keep midriffs, cleavage, back, and underwear (visible bra straps are to be considered underwear) covered at all times.
- Shorts, dresses, and skirt's length should be at a length that allows for discretion when students are active or sitting on the floor.
- All clothing should be free of messages or graphics that are inappropriate for the school environment, including promoting illegal activity or discrimination of any kind.
- Hats, hoods, and sunglasses may only be worn outside the building.

## **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

The school will provide all school supplies for the children. Please do not send in special notebooks, workbooks, pencils and pens.

## **BRINGING ANIMALS TO SCHOOL**

Different types of animals are very interesting and often provide an extension to lessons taught in the classroom. Parents are welcome to bring in animals to share, provided they follow a few guidelines. Always check with the Head Teacher of the class. Do not bring animals to school without making prior arrangements. Only small animals in cages can be left at school for the day.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

The educational program at DMS may be expanded by participation in purposeful, informative field trips. All field trips are organized by the teacher and are supervised at all times. Parents are often requested to accompany the class to provide additional supervision, depending on the type of field trip. If a parent volunteers to help, that parent must be prepared to assume the responsibility of supervising a number of children just as if he or she were another staff member. Field trips will be scheduled as far in advance as possible and notices will be sent home. Field trip expenses are covered by the Activity Fee paid by families.

Whole school field trips usually involve the rental of a school bus. For smaller trips, vans and family vehicles may be used. Car seats are not needed for school bus rides, but are required in cars and vans as per Maine State Law:

- A child who weighs less than 40 pounds AND who is less than 4 years of age must ride in a Child Safety Seat.
- A child who weighs at least 40 pounds but less than 80 pounds AND who is less than 8 years of age must ride in a federally approved child restraint system.
- A child who is less than 12 years of age AND who weighs less than 100 pounds must be properly secured in the back seat of the vehicle, if possible.

When private transportation is used for the transportation of children to and from field trips the following guidelines must be followed:

- All children must be in car seats and seatbelts in compliance with state regulations.
- If multiple vehicles are used a convoy should be used.
- A first aid kit will be available for children being transported.
- Emergency Contact forms will be available for each child being transported to and from a field trip.
- Children riding in vehicles need to maintain a quiet atmosphere for the safety of all. The driver should pull over or contact other members of the convoy in the event that the noise level is too loud, and the children are not responding to correction.
- Children should face the front of the vehicle at all times.
- Drivers must have a valid drivers' license.
- Drivers must have up to date automobile insurance. The school carries non-owner liability insurance that covers the school in the event of an accident. This insurance does not cover the driver or driver's liability.

- Staff members may not transport children to and from field trips as most insurance carriers do not cover employees using their personal vehicles for their employer's needs. Again, the school's insurance policy covers only the school's liability and does not cover driver's liability.

If a school bus or public transportation is used:

- Authorized buses do not provide for seat belts or car seats as per state regulations.
- If multiple vehicles are used a convoy should be used.
- A first aid kit will be available for children being transported.
- Emergency Contact forms will be available for each child being transported to and from a field trip.
- Children riding in vehicles need to maintain a quiet atmosphere for the safety of all.
- All children must stay in their seats facing the front of the bus or vehicle at all times.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Your child is invited to celebrate their birthday or ½ birthday with his/her class.

Please, check with your child's teacher for guidance about procedure, times, and the optional treat. **DMS has a no-nut policy. All shared food needs to be from a nut-free facility. (see section Food: Allergies/ Nut Policy below).**

Parents/guardians are invited to participate. Check with your child's teacher for details.

Families are encouraged to donate a book to the school library on their child's birthday with a personal inscription (i.e. "Presented to the DMS library for all to enjoy, in commemoration of Kevin Brown's 4th birthday, May 22, 2005"). This has proved to be a wonderful way for the children to leave their own legacy at the school and to build the school library in a personal fashion. The book will likely be read to the class at a separate time so that we can keep the birthday circle shorter.

## **SOCIAL ARRANGEMENTS AND PARTY PROTOCOL**

As a community we must be sensitive to each of the children's feelings, putting our own convenience aside. Please do not send party invitations or gifts to school. We do not have the facilities to hold and transfer *sleep over* party gear and paraphernalia. These items should not come into school with the students.

After the party, if you wish to send thank you notes, please send them through the mail. Do not send these to school for the same reasons that we don't allow the invitations to be handed out at school. We know this may add an extra step for you, but please understand that this helps our school be an inclusive environment for everyone. Thank you.



## **REFERRAL PROCESS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS**

DMS recognizes and values the academic potential of students of diverse learning abilities. Although our program is not designed specifically for students with learning disabilities or attention difficulties, some such students can experience success at DMS when supported by an open and cooperative teacher-student-parent-professional relationship, and a carefully structured learning plan.

DMS encourages and promotes an environment where the teachers support each other with difficult behaviors and engage in structured, solutions-based problem-solving. In the event that a child is exhibiting learning challenges or behavior patterns that interfere with a normal learning pattern, the teacher will document the patterns observed and begin the Referral Process:

1. Teacher informs the Head of School of observations regarding learning discrepancies or behavior patterns that interfere with a normal learning pattern.
2. Teacher documents patterns and begins the Referral Process.
3. The Head of School and/or teaching staff make observations.
4. Observations and data are evaluated by the teaching team and Head of School.
5. If outside diagnostic testing and/or evaluation is *not recommended*, a meeting is scheduled with the parents to discuss the observations and the plan that will be implemented by the team to facilitate student improvement and success.
6. If outside diagnostic testing and/or evaluation is *recommended*, a meeting is scheduled with the parents, the teacher, and the Head of School to discuss the options for evaluation or further testing.
7. After outside testing and/or evaluation is completed, a copy of the results must be reviewed by the teaching team and Head of School with the parents and the professional who conducted the testing and/or evaluation.
8. The teaching team and the Head of School will evaluate the test results and any accompanying recommendations to determine what support and accommodations are needed to serve the student.
9. If the teaching team and Head of School determine that the student's needs will be better served in a different educational setting, recommendations will be made at this time.
10. If the teaching team and Head of School determine that the student's needs can be served within DMS, a formal Personal Learning Plan (PLP) will be developed and implemented with input from parents, and guidance from the diagnostic professional. The PLP will consist of:
  - a. Student strengths and areas of challenge
  - b. Specific objectives and goals
  - c. Teaching strategies to be implemented to meet the goals
  - d. Accommodations made for the student
  - e. Measurement methods and frequency to determine progress
  - f. Roles and responsibilities of the PLP team
  - g. Communication plan for monitoring student progress and PLP effectiveness

DMS is not staffed with a special education department, nor does the School diagnose or evaluate students for learning differences or special needs. The School does employ a reading specialist to support students that need additional direct reading instruction and is able to make some accommodations within the regular classroom to support these students. The reading program provided by the specialist includes an extra fee. Please communicate directly with the Head of School regarding the fee or involvement with the reading specialist.

## **FOOD: ALLERGIES**

A food allergy is an immune system response to a food that the body mistakenly believes is harmful. Reactions to the allergen range from mild to severe and can be life-threatening. For some individuals, symptoms may develop when the food comes into contact with their skin, or after smelling the vapors of the food. Ingestion of the allergenic food is not necessary for some highly sensitive individuals. Avoidance is the only way to prevent an allergic reaction.

Our priority is to try, to the best of our ability, to avoid the allergic child's exposure to the offending food. The second goal is to have an emergency plan in place if an accidental exposure occurs. This plan will provide for immediate treatment and medical support to prevent progressive symptoms, stabilize the individual, and provide for the necessary transport to a hospital.

The parents of any food-allergic student are the experts about that child's allergy. The school will work in partnership with the child's parents, physician and the student who has food allergies to develop a plan to ensure the safety of each student.

### **SCHOOL-WIDE PREVENTION PLAN**

The school will assure that all staff who interact with the student on a regular basis understand food allergies, can recognize symptoms, and know what to do in an emergency. These staff members will include (but are not limited to) classroom teachers, specialists, and office staff.

EpiPens and other emergency medication will be stored in an organized fashion in the classroom. Emergency action plans will be kept on file and updated annually. The student may carry his/her own EpiPen with written permission from parent, physician and school nurse consultant.

### **NUT POLICY**

**DMS is a nut-free campus.** Due to occasional nut allergies, the DMS campus has instituted a No Nut Policy (peanuts, peanut butter, almonds, cashews, walnuts, etc) that helps ensure students are safe.

**Food for Individual Consumption:** Food that is just for the child may not have nuts listed as an ingredient, but does not have to be made in a nut-free facility.

**Shared Food:** Shared food must be made in a nut-free facility. Look in the ingredients area. If it says that it \*may\* contain nuts, it cannot be shared with the class.

"Shared food" includes birthday treats, holiday celebration food, hot lunch, snack, or any other food that is meant for more than one individual student.

Parents of children with food allergies need to notify staff immediately of your child's condition and provide the school with either antihistamine or an EpiPen prescription specifically for your child. If your child has other food allergies, you may be asked to provide your child's own snack and make us aware if your child has any other food exposure reactions. Please note this food policy is not fail-safe. The school and the staff will take all the precautions possible to keep your child safe while on campus. If you have any concerns, please contact the Head of School at 563-2168.

### **ON FIELD TRIPS**

The teacher and the parent of an allergy student will review plans for field trips when indicated. The teacher or other trained adult will be responsible for emergency medications and action plans during a field trip.

### EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The school will have an Individual Emergency Action Plan available in the office for those students with known serious allergies. This form will be updated annually and cosigned by the parent. The plan will include medications to be administered, physician's name and emergency contact numbers.

Classroom staff are trained in First Aid, including the use of an EpiPen. In the event of accidental exposure, the office should be notified immediately. Classroom staff will assess symptoms of food allergy and administer emergency medications if necessary, as directed in the emergency action plan. Rescue will be called, and the parent will be notified in that order.

### FAMILY GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING SEVERE FOOD ALLERGIES

- Notify us of all your child's allergies and their treatments.
- Provide written medical documentation, instructions and medications as directed by a physician.
- Send in to your child's teacher some safe food substitutions for your child to eat when food is brought into the classroom for a special occasion (gluten-free, etc.).
- Work with your child to develop independence in identifying what foods are "safe and unsafe". This is one of the best precautions.
- Let your child know not to share snacks or food with other children. The classroom teachers will do the same.
- Review food allergies and emergency plan with your child's teachers, and office staff.

## FOOD: SNACKS & LUNCHES

### SNACK PROGRAM

Families take turns providing simple, nutritious snacks for their child's class. A snack basket/bag is sent home with the child who is responsible for classroom snack the following day. Food that is wholesome, low/no sugar, trans-fat free, and non-processed is appropriate. Snacks, which expose our children to interesting and appealing foods originating from other countries, are welcomed! Please send in nutritious food that supports learning and development.

**Please remember that all shared food must be NUT FREE and processed in a nut-free facility.**

#### Snack Ideas

Vegetables and fruits (cut to child's finger size)

Dips (not too runny)

Crackers and cheese

Raisins or dried fruit

Sandwiches: cut into fourths or in different shapes with cookie cutter. Tuna, Sunbutter, hummus, honey, cheese, etc. on various kinds of breads.

Different baked breads (banana, zucchini, carrot, etc.)

Nutritious cookies (oatmeal, carob, etc.)

Yogurt

Sunflower or pumpkin seeds

Cheese cubes

Applesauce

Hard boiled eggs

Check with your classroom teacher for a student headcount.

### LUNCHES

Children bring their own lunch to school. A reasonably sized lunch box should be used unless there is an all-day field trip. In this case, the children should bring a completely disposable lunch in a labeled lunch bag. Lunch boxes should be clearly marked with your child's name.

We encourage you to use reusable containers as much as possible. It cuts down on trash and buying larger containers of food (such as yogurt) can be more affordable for you.

To support the student's learning and physical activity through the day, please send a nutritious, balanced lunch for your child each day.

When making your food choices try to choose whole, healthy foods, including fresh fruit and vegetables. Avoid overly processed items and high sugar items. We encourage you to include your child in the choosing and packing of food. Use this as an opportunity to teach them about health and nutrition.

In order to respect individual family food choices and allergies, children may not share or trade food.

Avoid artificial colors, artificial sweeteners, candy, and gum. **No gum is allowed at school at any time.**

## HEALTH

### EMERGENCY CARE

In the event of an accident or sudden onset of illness, the school will not hesitate to seek proper care for a child. The child's individual emergency instructions (on file in the office and in the child's classroom) will be consulted immediately, and the parents will be called. If necessary, the child will be transported to the hospital by emergency vehicle. The consent statement, signed by parents, will accompany the child so that treatment can be given immediately in the absence of the parent. It is **imperative** that you keep the emergency contact information (we can update TADS and EDUCATE for you, if needed) up to date!

### ILLNESS

For the sake of others as well as the child, parents must keep any child at home who has a fever (or requires medication to control a fever) or other symptoms of illness. Parents (not the child) should make the decision on when a child should go to school and when the child should stay at home. Once at school, the teacher or the Head of School will make the decision to send a child home due to illness. Before returning to school, the student should be fever free for 24 hours (without medication).

We also ask that parents please take a moment to call or email the school and let us know your child is ill. If your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness such as strep throat, conjunctivitis, or chicken pox, please tell the school so that we may inform parents of illnesses their child may be exposed to. This helps parents and their medical professionals target treatment and save office visits and money. The DMS staff cannot adequately inform parents of what is going around unless the parents take time to let the staff know.

Should a child become ill at school, he or she will be isolated. Parents will be notified and will make arrangements to take the child home.

Those parents whose children are exempted from immunization will be notified when communicable illness is present in the school. The children must be kept home until officially notified to return. In order to maintain a state of wellness in the school community, the school may exercise the option to exempt any child from attendance due to illness.

"In accordance with MRS 20-A §6355, a student covered by an Individualized Education Plan on September 1, 2021 who elected a philosophical or religious exemption from immunization requirements on or before September 1, 2021 pursuant to the law in effect prior to that date may continue to attend school under that student's existing exemption as long as: A. The parent or guardian of the student provides a statement from a licensed physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant that the physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant has consulted with that parent or guardian and has made that parent or guardian aware of the risks and benefits associated with the choice to immunize; or B. If the student is 18 years of age or older, the student provides a statement from a licensed physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant that the physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant has consulted with that student and has made that student aware of the risks and benefits associated with the choice to immunize."

<https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec6355.html>

**\*COVID guidelines are published separately due to their changing nature.**

## MEDICATION

Medication (both prescription and non-prescription) should be administered outside of school hours whenever possible. Medication can only be given at school if it is part of a physician's established medical plan of care and is accompanied by a physician's note. Medication policies follow Maine State Law, Chapter 40.

<https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/05/chaps05.htm>

### Administering Medication

- a. Medication is kept in a centrally located, locked area in the front office, and is labeled with the child's name, name of medication, dosage, number of doses provided, and when it is to be administered.
- b. Medication should be transported to and from school by parents and brought to the front office by parents.
- c. No medication is to be kept in a classroom or in a student's possession, except for inhalers, epi-pens and diabetic medication, when appropriate.
- d. All unlicensed personnel who administer medications shall receive training in medication administration prior to administering any medication to any student. This training shall be done in accordance with Department of Education guidelines for Medication Administration in Maine Schools.
- e. Permission from the child's physician, parent, and school nurse-consultant is required if a student is to keep an inhaler, epi-pen or diabetic medication in his/her possession. A student who has permission to possess and self-administer medication must demonstrate their ability to properly carry and use the medication.
- f. An "Authorization for Dispensing Prescription Medication" form (staff or self-administered) must be filled out completely and turned into the front office and accompanied by the following written information: child's name, name of medication, dosage, number of doses included in the prescription container, date prescribed, expiration date, doctor's name and possible side-effects.
- g. The staff will administer prescription medication only upon written order from a physician or according to the labeled instructions on the original medicine container and with a written, signed and dated request from the parent, which includes the following information: child's name, name of medication, dosage, date prescribed, expiration date, doctor's name and possible side-effects.
- h. A medication label is only valid for up to 15 days, after which a written order is required.
- i. The first dose of a newly prescribed medication should be given at home (except EpiPen injectors)
- j. Children who require medication to control a fever should be kept home.
- k. Medication administered on field trips will only be administered by trained school employees. The original medication bottle and medication sheet for documenting the administration will be taken on the field trip secured by the trained employee assigned to administer the medication.
- l. The Head of School recognizes that this policy, which has been constructed to meet Maine Department of Education regulations, is somewhat rigid. There may be times when it will be in the best interest of the student who is to receive medication and the parent, who is requesting an exception, that some flexibility be extended. Exceptions may be permitted through consultations with the Head of School and the school nurse-consultant and/or the school physician-consultant, on a per case basis.

## IMMUNIZATIONS

In the absence of disease history or a valid exemption pursuant to 20-A MRSA 6355, the following immunizations are required for attendance in Maine schools, K-12, public and private:

- 5 DTP/DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis)\*
- 4 Polio\*
- 2 MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)

- 1 Varicella (chicken pox) Chickenpox vaccine or disease history is required for gr. K-12. Students under age 13 need only 1 dose, age 13 and over require two doses given 4-8 weeks apart.
- 1 dose of MCV4 (meningococcal vaccine) prior to a child entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade
- 1 dose of Tdap prior to a child entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade

*\*Alternate dosing schedule is acceptable (4Dtap and 3 polio, if the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> doses, respectively, are given on or after the child's 4<sup>th</sup> birthday).*

Parents must present a complete, signed record of vaccination history from a healthcare provider. A note from the physician's office stating "all immunization up to date" does not comply with State requirements and will not be accepted as proof of vaccination. In order to maintain an accurate health record for your child, please provide the Office with documentation when your child receives any regular or booster immunizations. Documents can be uploaded to the Educate platform, emailed to the Office, or you can provide the Office with a hard copy.

#### Exemptions:

"In accordance with MRS 20-A §6355, a student covered by an Individualized Education Plan on September 1, 2021 who elected a philosophical or religious exemption from immunization requirements on or before September 1, 2021 pursuant to the law in effect prior to that date may continue to attend school under that student's existing exemption as long as: A. The parent or guardian of the student provides a statement from a licensed physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant that the physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant has consulted with that parent or guardian and has made that parent or guardian aware of the risks and benefits associated with the choice to immunize; or B. If the student is 18 years of age or older, the student provides a statement from a licensed physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant that the physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant has consulted with that student and has made that student aware of the risks and benefits associated with the choice to immunize."

<https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec6355.html>

#### INJURIES

In the event of a minor injury, first aid will be administered by a qualified staff member (teachers and assistants are certified in first aid) and the child will be made as comfortable as possible. An electronic accident report will be sent out for any injury requiring first aid. On occasion, parents will be called regarding accidents or injuries that do not require emergency care, but may require a parent's further attention, or for which a parent may want to seek non-emergency medical care.

Please note that while every effort is made to fill out an accident report in a timely manner, there may be situations when an accident is communicated verbally before the report is completed (e.g. a minor injury occurring on the playground just before pickup time).

#### EMERGENCY PLAN

Damariscotta Montessori School maintains an emergency preparedness plan for emergencies that may affect the school. The plan is reviewed annually and submitted to the Lincoln County Emergency Management Agency. The emergency plan is kept in the office and can be viewed by any member of the school community.

## REQUIREMENT TO REPORT ABUSE/NEGLECT

The staff at Damariscotta Montessori School is required, by Maine State Law and licensing regulations, to report immediately to the police or the Maine Department of Human Services any instance when there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or child neglect or exploitation.

The staff may not be able to notify parents when the police or Maine Department of Human Services are called about possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. This depends on the recommendation of the Maine Department of Human Services.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

### VOLUNTEERISM

To support the education of the children of our school community, we encourage parents to become active participants in the school through volunteering and by becoming familiar with the curriculum of the school and its underlying Montessori philosophy. Such participation is not only rewarding for parents but supports our mission of setting an example for the children of building and serving our community.

### PARENT COMMITTEES

The mission of the DMS Committees is to create a collaborative community by which Montessori parents, teachers, and friends can become purposefully and meaningfully involved in supporting Montessori education and the values of our school. Joining a committee is a great way to feel connected to DMS and to meet other families. All parents of children in the Damariscotta Montessori School are welcome and encouraged to participate in any of our committees. The main committees are Building & Grounds, Events, and Fundraising.

#### How to Join a Committee

To join one, or more committees, you can email the office and we will forward your information to the current chair of that group, or you are welcome to just show up to a meeting. Watch for meeting information to go out in our school communications. *\*SAG participation is by invitation only.*

#### BUILDING & GROUNDS

The Building & Grounds committee supports the physical aspects of the school grounds. They communicate with the Head of School about the tasks that need to be done and either find ways to accomplish them on their own time or as part of our Saturday Clean Up days that are held a couple of times per year. This is a great committee to join if you like yard work, gardening, carpentry, or enjoy odd “fix-it” jobs.

#### EVENTS

The Events Committee helps support our community events so that families can gather on campus, socialize, and enjoy themselves. There are a number of larger events through the year, but there are also smaller events that could use support. Many of our events include setting up for food and games. We also need help cleaning up afterwards. Do you like organizing, decorating, and coordinating? Do you enjoy socializing? This might be the committee for you!

#### FUNDRAISING

There are really two Fundraising Committees: The Auction Committee and the Annual Fund.



DMS believes that we should be deliberate and careful when planning fundraisers in an order to be respectful to all stakeholders. To accomplish this, we hold only two fundraising events during the school year. One is the Annual Fund and the other is our Annual School Auction. They are both important events that help support the school. These are great committees for parents who enjoy details, out-of-the-box thinking, planning, strategizing, collaborating, but also being autonomous....really these committees are great for many types of people.

**OTHER: Stakeholder's Advisory Group (SAG)**

This is sort of like a committee. It is made up of a group of parents, teachers, and board members. The members are selected to provide the perspectives from each classroom, the parents, and the staff. The SAG's purpose is to advise the Head of School on overall school atmosphere, areas of strength, areas for growth and areas for improvement. It is a closed committee so that confidentiality can be honored, and discussions can be open. The SAG also serves as liaison between the parental community and the Head of School. Any SAG member can be approached with a question or item to bring up at the next SAG meeting. The SAG has been working on projects like diversity, equity, and inclusion, how to increase family engagement, and other projects. Although the meetings are closed, the SAG publishes the overall notes from the meetings.

### **CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION**

Parents who have a talent, career or hobby that they think would be interesting to the children are encouraged to make arrangements with the class teacher to set up a time to share this information with the children. Parents are also encouraged to share anything they may have to aid in our different curriculum studies. Please work with the class teacher to develop your talent, information or hobby into a presentation that will be developmentally appropriate for the children. The teacher will discuss with you the guidelines for working in a Montessori environment. It's quite different from a traditional educational environment and you will be given tips on how to gear your presentation that is complementary to the Montessori Method.

### **PARENT EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT**

The school has several parent education workshops during the school year. These get-togethers are a way to continue to help parents better understand what their children are doing in the classroom each day and to help parents carry out the Montessori philosophy in their own home. There are also meetings to familiarize parents with the different curriculum areas of the classroom, and workshops at the beginning of the school year to help new Montessori parents to get acquainted with the Montessori philosophy. Many of the questions that come up during a given school year are answered at these events, so we encourage your attendance. These events are structured as "Bring your Parents to School Nights" so your child also can act as an "educator", teaching you the materials that he/she is learning to master. All staff will also be on hand to add depth and answer your questions about the materials and/or curriculum.

### **POSITIVE DISCIPLINE PARENTING CLASSES**

DMS hosts a special set of classes in Positive Discipline. This class is taught over seven weeks, usually near the beginning of the school year. This class will teach you some of the history, philosophy, and techniques that are specific to Positive Discipline. This is essentially the same training that the staff take, but with a parental focus, rather than a classroom one. It's very helpful for learning the why's and how's of what your classroom teacher does while also helping you learn some techniques to bring into your own household. There is an extra fee for this class that includes materials. When it is taught by the Head of School, that fee is donated to the school scholarship fund. When another staff member teaches it, it goes to them. We can usually offer childcare for an additional fee.

## **CURRICULUM & PROGRAMS**

### **PRIMARY CURRICULUM (AGES 3-6)**

The Montessori preschool classroom is a “house” for children. Children choose their work from among the self-correcting materials displayed on open shelves, working in different academic areas. Through their time in the classroom, the children develop into a “normalized community,” working with high concentration and few interruptions. Normalization is the process whereby a child moves from being undisciplined to self-disciplined, from disordered to ordered, from distracted to focused, through work in the environment. The process occurs through repeated work with materials that captivate the child’s attention. For some children, this inner change may take place quite suddenly, leading to deep concentration. In the Montessori preschool, academic competency is a benefit of repeated use of the manipulative materials.

In the Montessori preschool, five distinct areas constitute the prepared environment:

- **Practical life** enhances the development of task organization and cognitive order through care of self, care of the environment, exercises of grace and courtesy, and coordination of physical movement.
- The **sensorial** area enables the child to order, classify, and describe sensory impressions in relation to length, width, temperature, mass, color, pitch, etc.
- **Mathematics** makes use of manipulative materials to enable the child to internalize concepts of number, symbol, sequence, operations, and memorization of basic facts.
- **Language arts** include oral language development, written expression, reading, the study of grammar, creative dramatics, and children’s literature. Basic skills in writing and reading are developed through the use of sandpaper letters, alphabet cut-outs, and various presentations allowing children to link sounds with letter symbols effortlessly and to express their thoughts through writing.
- **Cultural** activities expose the child to basics in geography, history, and life sciences. Music, art, and movement education are part of the integrated cultural curriculum.

The preschool environment unifies the psychosocial, physical, and academic functioning of the child. The primary objective of the classroom is to provide students with an early and general foundation that includes a positive attitude toward school, inner security, a sense of order, pride in the physical environment, abiding curiosity, habit of concentration, habits of initiative and persistence, the ability to make decisions, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility to other members of the class, school, and community. This foundation will enable them to acquire more specialized knowledge and skills throughout their school career.

### **ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM (AGES 6-12)**

The elementary program is made of two sections: Lower Elementary (ages 6-9) and Upper Elementary (ages 9-12). Together they offer a continuum built on the experiences and lessons in the Primary (ages 3-6) program. The elementary environment reflects a new stage of development and offers the following:

- Integration of the arts, sciences, geography, history, and language that evokes the native imagination and abstraction of the elementary child.
- Presentation of knowledge as part of a large-scale narrative that unfolds the origins of the earth, life, human communities, and modern history, always in the context of the wholeness of life.
- Presentation of the formal scientific language of zoology, botany, anthropology, geography, geology, etc., exposing the child to accurate, organized information and respecting the child’s intelligence and interests.
- The use of timelines, pictures charts, and other visual aids to provide a linguistic and visual overview of the first principles of each discipline.

- A mathematics curriculum presented with concrete materials that simultaneously reveal arithmetic, geometric, and algebraic correlation.
- Montessori-trained adults who are “enlightened generalists” (teachers who are able to integrate the teaching of all subjects, not as isolated disciplines, but as part of a whole intellectual tradition).
- Emphasis on open-ended research and in-depth study using primary and secondary sources as well as other materials.
- Community building through regular class meetings where children help each other solve problems, individually and collectively.
- Regular guidance and structure in resolving social conflict in a peaceful and effective manner.
- “Going out” to make use of community resources beyond the four walls of the classroom.

As in the preschool, the Montessori materials are a means to an end. They are intended to evoke the imagination, to aid abstraction, to generate a worldview about the human task and purpose. The child works within a philosophical system asking questions about the origins of the universe, the nature of life, people and their differences, and so on. On a factual basis, interdisciplinary studies combine geological, biological, and anthropological science in the study of natural history and world ecology.

The program is made up of connective narratives that provide an inspiring overview as the organizing, integrating “Great Lessons.” Great Lessons span the history of the universe from the big bang theory of the origin of the solar system, earth, and life forms to the emergence of human cultures and the rise of civilization. Aided by impressionistic charts and timelines, the child’s study of detail in reference to the Great Lessons leads to awe and respect for the totality of knowledge.

Studies are integrated not only in terms of subject matter but in terms of moral learning as well, resulting in appreciation and respect for life, moral empathy, and a fundamental belief in progress, the contribution of the individual, the universality of the human condition, and the meaning of true justice.

### **ADOLESCENT/MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM:**

The Damariscotta Montessori Adolescent Program provides an innovative, land-based, educational program in which adolescents can excel academically, engage in meaningful work, acquire leadership skills, and learn to care for themselves, their peers, the environment, and their community.

Montessori philosophy views adolescence as a period of great transformation and extraordinary potential. The primary mission of the adolescent program is to serve the vital needs of adolescents through work that challenges both the mind and the body. This is carried out through a supportive teaching staff that creates a prepared learning environment that empowers adolescents to set and exceed their own goals, to engage in real community experience and meaningful, noble work; all of these contributing to their sense of purpose and worth.

The Damariscotta Montessori School Adolescent Program provides:

- individualized instruction within small classes
- logically integrated, challenging and rich curriculum
- development of life and learning skills: self-direction, critical thinking, time-management, collaboration, and personal responsibility
- development of community: respect, responsibility, democratic problem-solving and interdependence.
- development of critical thinking and creativity
- integration of technology
- a learning environment that helps adolescents to discover their capabilities through meaningful work and real-life problem solving

## **SUMMER PROGRAM**

The summer months bring a change of weather, schedule, pace and activities for children. The Summer Program is a nature-based camp with different areas of focus each week for eight weeks. The children spend more time enjoying outdoor activities as well as arts and crafts projects. The Summer Program is for children who attend, or will attend, one of our Primary classrooms.

Summer Hours:

Half-Day	8:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
Full Day	8:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.
Extended Day	8:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m..

## **3-DAY PRIMARY PROGRAM – REGULAR ACADEMIC YEAR**

This option in our primary program is designed for **first year students only** to help in the transition from being at home to being in a school environment. Second year students will be considered for this program only if 1) space is available after first year students have had the chance to apply and 2) a conference between teacher, parents, and director deems that the program is in the best interests of the child or is necessary for the parents.

## **EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM – REGULAR ACADEMIC YEAR**

The extended day program is a service to parents who need care for their children before and after regular school hours. It is available for all current students. The hours of this program are as follows:

- Morning – 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.
- Afternoon – 3:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Parents may contract for this service at the beginning of the year or use it on a per day basis (see Fee Schedule for rates). All requests for per diem morning care, after care, or full day stay (for half day students) must be approved through the office. Please contact or stop by the office to sign up for care.

## **LATE PICKUP**

For parents' whose children attend the **afternoon extended day program** (3:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.), children must be picked up no later than 4:45 p.m. A charge of \$1 per minute will be required from parents for pick-up after 4:45 p.m.

For parents' whose children attend the **half-day program** (8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.), children must be picked up no later than 12:30 p.m. A charge of \$1 per minute will be required from parents for pick-up after 12:30 p.m.

# ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

## ADMISSIONS

Children, two and a half to fourteen years of age may be considered for admission. Admission shall be determined after consultation between the Head of School and the teacher of the appropriate class. An Open House takes place each year in the spring to allow prospective families to meet with the staff and parents of DMS.

Families wishing to be considered for admission are requested to come in for an informational interview and tour our campus. This first visit is for *adults only*. Following the initial visit, a second appointment allows the teacher to meet with the student candidate and talk with the parents. To be considered for acceptance, each family must apply and pay a one-time application fee.

Admission priorities are in accord with the following school policy:

Primary:

1. Current students at DMS.
2. Siblings of current students at DMS.
3. Montessori transfer students.
4. Children between three and four years old.

Elementary/Middle School:

1. Current Children with satisfactory DMS experience.
2. Siblings of DMS students.
3. Montessori transfer students.

Because a complete Montessori education is built on a series of three-year cycles from preschool through the elementary program, admission to the elementary program without prior Montessori experience is considered only after careful discussion with parents. [Lower Elementary (ages 6-9) and Upper Elementary (ages 9-12)]

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

DMS does not discriminate on the basis of race or color, sex, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, age, ancestry or national origin, or any other unlawful basis with respect to student admissions or employment. We consciously teach children to accept, respect, and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of the global community.

In accordance with Federal Law and USDA policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to the: USDA, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call 1-800-795-3272 (voice) or 202-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## TRUTH IN ADVERTISING

As a member of the American Montessori Society, we pledge to represent our school truthfully and accurately to the general public and internally to our parent community.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

### STEP ONE

Contact us at [admissions@damariscottamontessori.org](mailto:admissions@damariscottamontessori.org) to request an initial phone conversation or call (207) 563-2168. This call will be an opportunity for you to ask questions and learn more about our school and the Montessori philosophy.

### STEP TWO

Schedule a visit to our campus to explore our classrooms and grounds and see the magic of Montessori for yourself. These visits will take place on the weekends or after school hours.

### STEP THREE

If, after our initial conversation, you are interested in applying to the school, you may do so here: <https://mytads.com/a/damariscotta>. Please note there is a one-time application fee.

### STEP FOUR

After receiving your application, our Head of School will contact you to schedule a "student visit" to the school. For our primary students, this visit about 30 minutes long. For our elementary students, this visit would be anywhere from 1 to 3 days, depending on age. For our Middle School, this visit is typically 3-5 days. Parents will meet with the Head of School during or at the end of the student visit.

### STEP FIVE

After assessing the number of openings available in our programs, the school makes its decision on enrollment for the current and following school year. It is at this time that you will be notified about acceptance or waiting list status in one of our programs. There is a one-time New Family Enrollment Fee of \$200 that will be added to tuition total for the first year. Please see our Admissions policy for priority enrollments in each of our programs. Damariscotta Montessori School is an equal opportunity provider.

## ENROLLMENT AND RE-ENROLLMENT

### Enrollment

All enrollment and re-enrollment is completed through TADS after being accepted. We understand that enrolling in a school program requires quite a bit of paperwork. Please call the office if you have any questions or get stuck along the way. We want to help the process go as smoothly as possible.

### Re-Enrollment

Re-enrollment for currently enrolled students begins on February 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year and ends on February 28<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>. During this period, re-enrolling families have first priority in securing enrollment for their children. Parents or guardians must return an enrollment agreement and applicable deposit to the school to secure enrollment for the fall. Open enrollment begins on March 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year. If the dates for re-enrollment change, we will send out a notification.

During open enrollment, the school will consider all spaces for which it does not have an enrollment agreement 'open' and will begin filling these openings with new applicants. If extenuating circumstances do not allow a returning family to secure enrollment for the fall during the re-enrollment period, please speak to the Head of School.

## ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL POLICIES

### TUITION POLICY

#### Enrollment Agreement

Parents/guardians assume responsibility for the entire school year's tuition when a signed enrollment agreement is turned in to and accepted by the school with the applicable deposit and registration fee. At this time the school considers the space in the classroom, for which the child is being enrolled, 'filled'. DMS makes its admissions decisions and financial commitments based upon these tuition obligations assumed by the families of its students.

The school year is considered to be continuous from September through June. Parents enroll their children for that period of time. The September to June tuition may be divided into equal payments according to one of the published payment plans (annual, semi-annual, monthly) agreed upon and committed to through the school's enrollment agreement.

The school's budget and operations depend on fulfillment by all parents and guardians of their agreement to pay the tuition; if you have elected to pay monthly or semi-annually, this is for your convenience and does not limit the obligation to pay all installments in a timely manner. Allowances or refunds will not be made for phasing-in, illness, vacations, withdrawal, and dismissal or otherwise. **Early withdrawal from the year's program, prior to or during the school year, does not terminate a parent and guardian's tuition responsibility. Enrollment in the program entails responsibility for the entire year's tuition.**

Accounts must be up-to-date to be considered for enrollment or re-enrollment.

#### Payment Plans and TADS

Damariscotta Montessori School uses TADS for our tuition payment program.

Tuition is found on our website and is also visible when you enroll through TADS. If you incur additional charges throughout the school year, we will simply add them to your account as they come up.

The system, administered through TADS, offers many features including:

- Transactions/statements in an all-email format, including payment reminders
- Option for postal mail statements if you prefer a paper copy
- The flexibility to select 1, 2, or 10 installments for tuition payments
- Automatic payment through bank account or online check
- Online live chat and live customer support

If you have any questions throughout this process please don't hesitate to contact TADS support at 800-477-8237 or [support@tads.com](mailto:support@tads.com), M-F 8am-8pm CST.

*Custom Payment: Please contact the office if you need to create a "custom" payment plan based on seasonal income. We are happy to work with you to come up with a payment plan that fits how your family earns income.*



### Late Payments

In order for us to meet our financial obligations we depend upon prompt payment of tuition. A late fee of \$55 will be assessed for payments made after the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month in which the payment is due.

If your tuition becomes 90 days, or more, delinquent, the school will reach out to you to arrange a payment plan. Overdue accounts can affect a family's ability to re-enroll and, in some cases, it may affect a family's ability to continue enrollment for the current year. If the school is required to initiate legal proceedings to enforce this agreement, the parents or guardians will be held liable for the school's legal cost, including reasonable attorney fees as stated in the enrollment agreement.

Late payments will affect a family's eligibility to participate in installment plans and scholarship aid in the future.

### Tuition Rates

Tuition and fees are adjusted annually by a percentage to meet increasing "cost of living" expenses. The school strives to maintain reasonable and affordable tuition rates in order that our school community can be reflective of our broader surrounding community.

## WITHDRAWAL

Any withdrawals from the school must be requested in writing 30 days in advance of the final date the child/children will attend.

Exit interviews may be requested by the Head of School or the family that is withdrawing. Either party may decline.

Children are admitted for the duration of the academic school year and parents/guardians are obligated to make the tuition payment for the entire year. The student's withdrawal or absence for any cause, prior to or during the school year, will not reduce obligation for the full annual tuition. Obligation to pay the full annual tuition begins when a signed enrollment and applicable deposit and registration fee is turned into and accepted by the school. The school's budget and operations depend on fulfillment by all parents and guardians of their agreement to pay the tuition, and that if you have elected to pay monthly or quarterly; this is for your convenience and does not limit the obligation to pay all installments in a timely manner.

## FINANCIAL AID/SCHOLARSHIPS

### Philosophy

The Damariscotta Montessori School is committed to the policy of providing quality Montessori education at as reasonable a cost as possible. Nevertheless, our tuition is beyond the means of some interested families. In keeping with Dr. Montessori's philosophy that all children could profit from exposure to this environment, DMS seeks to provide financial aid to families who otherwise could not afford to offer this educational advantage to their children.

### Process

Any family in need is encouraged to submit an application for scholarship help. The deadline for submitting a scholarship application is in February of the previous year. Scholarship applications may be completed online at <http://www.tads.com>. A processing fee is required when applying for scholarship aid. If a family has extenuating circumstances that may need to be considered, please fill out the online Application for Financial Aid form on TADS.

### Awards

Damariscotta Montessori School's Board of Directors will make award decisions based upon the financial information received (need), individual circumstances, and the availability of funds. Family tuition accounts must be up-to-date to be awarded a scholarship. Priority for awarding scholarships is as follows:

- Families who currently have scholarships
- Re-enrolling students in grades K through 8
- New students

An application for scholarship will not affect the admission decision in any manner. Acknowledging that family circumstances change and that the financial resources of our school vary, no family is guaranteed aid indefinitely. Annual application is required. A family that is awarded a scholarship must sign an enrollment contract with the school.

## **BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS**

All business transactions should be conducted with the administrator or Head of School, not a student's teacher or other staff member. Please contact the office directly.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

All student records are confidential. Parents have the right to review and add comments. Upon request of a school administrative unit, DMS will release copies of all student records for a student transferring from the DMS to the school administrative unit. Please give the office sufficient notice if records are to be transferred. We uphold FERPA, or the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (see below, and follow Maine State Law (Title 20, Chapter 221, Section 6001).

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students." If you'd like more information about FERPA, visit the following link: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

## **OFFICE DIRECTORY**

Head of School	Shawnaly Tabor	<a href="mailto:shawnalyt@damariscottamontessori.org">shawnalyt@damariscottamontessori.org</a>
Administrator/Front Desk	Natalie Blake	<a href="mailto:natalieb@damariscottamontessori.org">natalieb@damariscottamontessori.org</a>

## **TEACHER DIRECTORY**

Loon's Nest: Primary	Kathleen Rock	<a href="mailto:kathleenr@damariscottamontessori.org">kathleenr@damariscottamontessori.org</a>
Puffin's Nest: Primary	Kristen Robinson	<a href="mailto:kristenr@damariscottamontessori.org">kristenr@damariscottamontessori.org</a>
Heron's Nest: Lower Elementary	Alison Wells	<a href="mailto:alisonw@damariscottamontessori.org">alisonw@damariscottamontessori.org</a>
Osprey's Nest: Upper Elementary	Ross Richins	<a href="mailto:rossr@damariscottamontessori.org">rossr@damariscottamontessori.org</a>
Eagle's Nest: Middle School	Samantha Mehlhorn	<a href="mailto:samantham@damariscottamontessori.org">samantham@damariscottamontessori.org</a>

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Email: [dmsboard1@gmail.com](mailto:dmsboard1@gmail.com)

President:	Kimberly Tolley
Secretary:	Kimberlee Sweetser
Treasurer:	Marcia Clark
Member:	Michael Mayne

## RESOURCES

### MONTESSORI

The following resources may be helpful to you or your extended family as you learn more about Maria Montessori's work with children. Many of these books are available at the school or through individual staff members.

*Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*, Angela Lillard  
*Montessori, A Modern Approach*, Paula Polk Lillard  
*From Childhood to Adolescence*, Maria Montessori  
*Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook*, Maria Montessori  
*Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom*, AMS Publication  
*Maria Montessori, Her Life and Work*, E.M. Standing  
*The Secret of Childhood*, Maria Montessori  
*Discovery of the Child*, Maria Montessori  
*The Hidden Hinge*, Rosa Packard  
*The Absorbent Mind*, Maria Montessori  
*The Montessori Controversy*, John Chattin McNichols  
*Children the Challenge*, Rudolf Dreikers  
*To Educate the Human Potential*, Maria Montessori  
*The Hurried Child*, David Elkind  
*Education for Human Development*, Mario Montessori, Jr.  
*Maria Montessori, a Biography*, Rita Kramer

### POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

*Positive Discipline*, Jane Nelson, Ed.D.  
*Positive Discipline: A-Z*, Jane Nelson, Ed.D  
*Parents Who Love Too Much*, Jane Nelson, Ed.D  
*Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self Indulgent World*, Jane Nelson Ed.D. and H. Stephen Glenn, Ph. D.

### WEBSITES

American Montessori Society [www.amshq.org](http://www.amshq.org)  
Association Montessori International [www.amiusa.org](http://www.amiusa.org)  
Montessori Foundation [www.montessori.org/mfa/](http://www.montessori.org/mfa/)  
Positive Discipline [www.positivediscipline.com](http://www.positivediscipline.com) and [www.positivediscipline.org](http://www.positivediscipline.org)

### DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES & SCREENINGS

[https://maineddc.org/images/PDFs/Track\\_Development\\_brochure.pdf](https://maineddc.org/images/PDFs/Track_Development_brochure.pdf)

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

<https://www.maine.gov/earlylearning/standards/infantsandtoddlerguidelines.pdf>

[https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/inline-files/Infant%20and%20Toddler%20MELDS\\_2021.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/inline-files/Infant%20and%20Toddler%20MELDS_2021.pdf)