

ASPIRE MONTESSORI SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK



MISSION

Our mission is to empower our children to achieve their full potential intellectually, spiritually, and physically by creating an enlightening and nurturing environment built on the Montessori Philosophy that fosters student's curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking and by partnering with parents (children's first teachers) in this endeavor.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ASPIRE MONTESSORI SCHOOL INFORMATION.....	3
LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL	4
OUR STAFF.....	4
MONTESSORI EDUCATION.....	7
OUTCOMES OF MONTESSORI EDUCATION.....	7
LICENSING.....	8
SCHOOL-HOME PARTNERSHIP.....	9
Communication	
Parent Communication Brightwheel	
Parent Conferences	
Parent Visitation Policy	
Family Involvement and Fundraising	
ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT	11
Admissions Policy	
Non-Discrimination Policy	
Enrollment Contract	
Placement of Students	
Withdraw Policy	
Daily Schedule & Operations	
Tuition & Fees	
Paying Tuition Through Brightwheel	
Add Family, Approved Pickups and Emergency Contacts	
Early Arrival & Afterschool Program	
ATTENDANCE, PICK UP & DROP OFF.....	17
Attendance Expectations	
Inclement Weather Procedure	
Drop Off & Pick Up Expectations	
Late Drop Off & Pick Up Expectations	



Sign-in/Sign-out
 Authorization to Drop Off or Pick Up

HEALTH AND WELLNESS19

Health/Illness Policy
 Medication Policy
 Immunization Policy
 Daily Rest Periods
 Personal Belongings
 Items Needed from Parents to Ensure Quality Care
 Lunch
 Snacks
 Food Allergies
 Potty Training
 Clothing
 Photography
 Birthdays
 Water Play & Animals
 Separation Anxiety

SAFETY POLICY.....23

Child Abuse or Neglect
 Freedom Within Limits
 Behavior Management Policy

PARENT POLICY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....26

ASPIRE MONTESSORI SCHOOL, LLC

7202 Dee Street Austin, Texas 78745

www.aspiremontessori.org

(512) 447-8258

- At Aspire, we are committed to providing quality, affordable child care in a safe, healthy and nurturing environment.
- Our curriculum offers a variety of activities that encourage physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. We respect and believe in each child as a unique individual with the ability to construct knowledge about themselves, others, and the world around them through active learning.
- Our teachers help foster the development of children's creative thinking skills by giving them opportunities through play to experiment, explore, question, and discover.
- Our goal is to teach children to relate to others with respect, to value friendships and to believe in themselves as successful individuals.
- Aspire does not discriminate against national origin, creed, disability, religion, or any other basis. We believe that diverse backgrounds enrich the lives of our children and our staff.



LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Parents,

Aspire Montessori School is a dream made reality! My aim is to provide your children a montessori education without encouraging the montessori price. Every child deserves a foundation of life skills based on self- care, connectedness to the world around them, grace and courtesy . Here at Aspire our talented and devoted staff, our amazing location and our passion for education provides just that! I am constantly in awe of this space! I welcome you to our community and I am honored to be with you on this journey!

Love always,

Morgan



OUR STAFF

At Aspire Montessori School, our staff consists of a Director, Assistant Director, Director of Education, an Administrative Assistant, and teachers in every class, experienced and trained assistants, support staff, and substitutes. You are welcome to review the backgrounds and qualifications of our staff members on the Meet the Staff page of our website at www.aspiremontessori.com.

All staff (including substitutes) must pass criminal background history checks and FBI fingerprints as required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) as well as have current CPR and First Aid certification, a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education each year including training in awareness, prevention, and action steps in the area of suspected child abuse and neglect.



Morgan Whitley
Owner & Director

Morgan@aspiremontessori.org



Veronica Maier, Director of Education
Children's House Lead

Veronica@aspiremontessori.org



Nancy Flores
Young Children's House Lead

Erika Martinez
Nido Lead



Alyssa Losoya
Nido Co-Lead



Helen Peck
Floater & Assistant



Ann Whetstone
Nap Room Lead

MONTESSORI EDUCATION

At Aspire Montessori School, our teachers are lead, trained and overseen by a certified Montessorian to assure their pedagogy, practice and preparation of dynamic learning environments encourage each child to reason, to cooperate, to collaborate, to negotiate, and to understand. Each teacher's goal is to guide the development and competency of the individual child by serving as the facilitator for learning. The teacher is the child's link to the environment, someone who gives a lesson and steps back to allow the child to work, while observing and directing each child forward to the next appropriate material and key educational experience. Children operate within a balanced structure of freedoms and responsibilities, free to follow their inspirations with work that stimulates and satisfies their inner motivations, while remaining responsible for tackling challenging and difficult work head-on. This balanced structure of freedoms and responsibilities is created and maintained through the ongoing observations, inspiration and redirection of the classroom teachers. The Montessori curriculum is organized as a continuum with one step building precisely on the previous one. The concept of mixed ages promotes an atmosphere of cooperation, teamwork, and peer teaching. The design of the materials and the structure of the tasks lead children to the development of self-discipline.

OUTCOMES OF MONTESSORI EDUCATION

Independence

The social and physical organization of the Montessori prepared environment as well as the guiding actions of the teacher promote individual independence. Each child develops independence through a balance of freedoms and responsibilities. These include self-selection of opportunities for constructive work, care of environment, and care of self and others in the community. With the support of a meticulously prepared environment and the consistent nurturing guidance of the teachers, this balanced structure of freedoms and responsibilities leads to the development of concentration, inner discipline, internalization of the learning and learning strategies, and metacognition (thinking about thinking).

Confidence and Competence

Confidence is built upon success. A Montessori environment creates many occasions for success. In the spiraling framework of the Montessori curriculum each educational experience builds towards another. Each lesson and activity prepares the child for more complex learning to come, providing greater chances of success for the child throughout his experience. Confidence and perceived competence are also built upon mistakes made. The teacher's respect for each child's efforts and the realization that each child constructs his or her own intelligence create a supportive learning culture where it is also safe to fail. Mistakes and difficulties are seen as valuable stepping stones to the development of perseverance, self-perceived competence, (I can do that.), and, ultimately, individual confidence. A child growing in success is growing in confidence.

Autonomy & Collaboration

Grace and courtesy in the classroom contribute to the students' understanding of each individual's desire to work alone or with others. In a Montessori setting children are able to hone their collaboration, cooperation, and negotiation skills in working through choices of work partners. Children develop from the earliest ages the vocabulary and skills needed to accept or decline inclusion in others' work with equanimity, ask for and accept help graciously, and resolve conflicts peacefully and respectfully.

Intrinsic Motivation

The Montessori teacher knows that each child possesses the natural desire to know and the "work" is "its own reward" in a Montessori environment. External rewards such as gold stars, stickers, or "smile" stamps and other forms of praise undermine the child's development of intrinsic motivation and are not present in a Montessori environment. Instead, the Montessori curriculum and materials stimulate each child's natural curiosity and promote engaged exploration and discovery. The child's freedom to choose his or her work (within limits) nurtures individual initiative and personal responsibility. And, the teacher's focus on acknowledging the elements of the child's work, e.g. their effort, their approach, etc., encourages the child's concentration and effort on the process of learning not just the end products.



Social Responsibility

Independent and autonomous persons are always a part of a group and must attain independence and autonomy through participation in group activity. Children in Montessori classes are “free” within the carefully crafted, mutually agreed upon limits of the group. These limits are articulated in the course of the school experience through clearly defined class agreements which are modeled by the teacher and the children. The physical organization of the classroom contributes to the successful conformance to the class agreements by all members of the classroom community. Social responsibility develops from the child’s willful adherence to and enforcement of these agreements. Children in a Montessori environment attain independence and autonomy and, at the same time, develop social responsibility.

Academic Preparation

In Montessori education, children learn to learn by doing. Academic preparation is achieved by nurturing each child’s natural curiosity into a life-long love of learning. The spiraling nature of the Montessori curriculum, one experience building toward successively complex experiences, scaffolds learning for the child. Through the use of the Montessori didactic materials the child achieves first perceptual and then cognitive understanding of concepts. The interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum allows the child make connections between disciplines, leading to deeper understanding and application of skills and knowledge. As an active participant in his or her education, each becomes the builder of meaningful knowledge helping her or him learn how to learn.

Spiritual Awareness/Cosmic Education

Dr. Montessori’s distinctive notion of the child as a “spiritual embryo” emphasized her key principle that the growing human being is not simply a biological or psychological entity, but a spiritual energy seeking expression within the physical and cultural world. The Montessori curriculum develops in children, the awareness of ecology of existence that gives every living thing a meaningful function in the larger system and encourages each child to make his or her own unique contribution to the world.

Global Citizenship

From the earliest experiences of negotiating and adjusting one’s behavior with other students through the study of people of various cultures, Montessori education teaches children to move far beyond the family and school, towards global citizenship. Personal responsibility is configured for the child in successively broader terms to include an awareness of the importance of stewardship of the planet. Children acquire civic virtue and an understanding of the natural world and of the necessity to cherish it, respect it, sustain it, and to live harmoniously within it.

LICENSING

We are licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). Contact our local DFPS office at 834-3195 or <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us> for questions or more information. You can view our most recent licensing report either on the DFPS website or view the one posted in the office on the bulletin board. A copy of the DFPS Minimum Standards is also available for review in our office or on the DFPS website.

Holidays and Vacation Periods We use the AISD school calendar as a guide from August to June and offer an optional six-week summer camp program beginning a week and a half following the last day of school. We will be closed:

- Labor Day
- Columbus Day (Fall Teacher Work Day)
- Thanksgiving
- Winter Break
- New Years Eve & Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
- Spring Break
- Teacher Training Week in June
- Memorial Day
- 4th of July

In addition, at least two days are scheduled during the school year for parent conferences, and additional days scheduled for staff professional development and teacher work days. School is closed for the children for a few weeks following summer camp for repairs, remodels, staff training and preparation. Aspire Montessori School reserves the right to alter the



calendar in order to meet the needs of the school. Please be sure to get a copy of our school calendar, which is included in your Enrollment Packet, on the website, and in the administrative office.

SCHOOL-HOME PARTNERSHIP

The school and parents must have mutual trust and respect if they are to work together effectively for the education of the child. Maintaining this trust requires clear continuous communication between staff and parents. It involves parents understanding and applying the same pedagogical approach that the school uses in interactions with their child. To develop this mutually supportive relationship, Aspire Montessori School provides opportunities for parent participation and partnership in many ways.

Communication

When you need to communicate with your child's teacher during the school day the following methods are available:

1. Voicemail: Call the school 512-447-8258 and ask for the teacher's voicemail to report information, ask a question, or request a meeting.
2. Notes in writing: Written messages will be placed in the appropriate mailbox for the teacher to find at the end of the day. Messages may be given to the office staff for delivery, or your teacher may have a box outside the classroom.
3. E-mail: Email is a powerful communication tool and is used to enhance our school-home partnerships. We recommend that classroom-related email be used almost exclusively for notices, announcements, changes in schedule, and the like. Email is not the way to discuss concerns or issues; such discussions are better done in person in a collaborative dialogue.
4. Brightwheel: This is the best method to communicate directly with your student's teacher. You will also have access to your child's day as delivered in real-time (page 8)

Please check with your teachers about what time of day they anticipate being able to check messages and respond to any questions. As teachers' attention is focused on the children, please assume that teachers will not receive or respond to emails during the school day. Our email distribution list is to be used only to disseminate notices, announcements, changes in schedule, etc., related to your child or school activities. It is not to be used to advertise or solicit for personal needs.

Please understand that trying to communicate important information while standing at the classroom door at drop-off or pick-up time is not effective. Teachers need to focus on the children at those transition times and cannot give parents full attention or appropriate response. A school-wide community update will be sent by email regularly. It will include information about school programs and activities and a calendar of events. A classroom newsletter will be sent home regularly via email. Items may be sent home via backpack when necessary. In addition, our school-wide Notes & Reminders will be sent out regularly with updates and reminders about upcoming school events.

Parent Communication-Brightwheel

Aspire Montessori School uses Brightwheel. Why do we use Brightwheel?

Because your child's day is delivered in real-time. You get:

DAILY UPDATES: Real-time feed of activities throughout the day.

PHOTOS: Watch your child's day unfold with snapshots delivered to your mobile device.

STAY CONNECTED: Stay in touch with your teacher and strengthen school learning with activities at home.

DIGITAL CHECK-IN: Easy digital check-in with personal passcodes. Add approved adults to pick up your child, and see when your child is checked in or out.

PAPERLESS BILLING: Digital payments directly from your bank account or credit/debit card. Paperless invoices and email receipts. (this will be implemented in the future)

YOUR CHILD'S COMMUNITY: You can Invite grandparents, nannies, and friends – with control over what they can do and see on brightwheel.

How to Create an Account

- Install brightwheel app from the Apple App Store or Google Play
- Create a parent account and enter your parent invite code (this will be sent to you upon enrollment)



- By entering your invite code, your account will automatically be linked to your school & child.
- If you do not have an IOS or an Android device, you can create an account via www.mybrightwheel.com

Check-In Passcode

Schools have the option for parents to use a numeric four digit passcode during drop off and pick up. Your check-in passcode will be emailed to you after you create your account. You can change your passcode anytime within your profile settings.

Next Steps:

- Login and make sure your contact information and your child's information is up to date.
- If you have additional kids at the school or other schools you can enter additional invite codes.
- Add additional guardians to brightwheel within your child's profile. For example, a nanny or friend who has your approval to pick up your child from school, or grandparent that would like to see daily photos on brightwheel. Once you add them, you can control their permission setting within their profile.

Questions? Please contact the brightwheel team at support@mybrightwheel.com or visit www.mybrightwheel.com/support

Parent Conferences

Parent Conferences are scheduled for each family with the child's teachers in February and May each year. We will try to accommodate a parent's or guardian's schedule as much as possible. At least two days are reserved for scheduling conferences where there is no school for the children. We schedule as many conferences as is feasible on these days when school is closed. These bi-annual conferences are designed for discussions regarding a child's social and emotional development and academic progress at Aspire Montessori School. You, as a parent or guardian, will gain insight into your child's Montessori experience, and we will also learn more from you about your child. Your teacher will also guide you in your placement decisions for when your child is ready to graduate from Aspire.

In addition to the bi-annual conferences, we are always available to meet with a parent or guardian who has a concern he or she would like to address. If you would like to schedule any additional conference(s) with your child's teacher or the Director, please call in advance to make an appointment during office hours. Please do not try to have an impromptu conference with your child's teacher or the Director when you are dropping off or picking up your child. At drop off and pick up times the teachers are still responsible for all the children and cannot be distracted by a lengthy conversation with a parent. Teachers have group lesson plans and activities posted each day in their classrooms and they keep files and notes on every child's individual lessons and progress. You are always welcome to browse this information if you want to know about your child's work on any given day. Your child's teacher and/or the Director will also make themselves available for a telephone conference if scheduling a face-to-face meeting is too difficult for a parent or guardian's schedule. Every effort will be made to resolve concerns that a parent or guardian might have with Aspire Montessori School's policies. We appreciate your cooperation regarding scheduling additional conferences.

Parent Visitation Policy

Aspire Montessori School welcomes parents or guardians to visit their child(ren) at school at any time. In order to minimize disruptions, we ask that you please call ahead and let us know that you are coming for a visit.

Visiting with your child on the playground or at lunch is less disruptive than during class. If you would like to formally observe your child's class, please make an appointment with your child's teachers and notify the office upon your arrival. We encourage parents to observe prior to parent conferences to prompt questions and provide a context for better understanding your child's environment. While observing in the classroom, the teacher will show you where to sit. Please observe quietly without interacting with the children so as not to disturb the lessons and flow for the children. There are copies of our guidelines for observing, entitled Guide to Observing in the Classroom, located in the office.

Family Involvement & Fundraising

We aim to build a tight community of children, staff and families and encourage parent involvement wherever possible. We will host parent nights, open houses, educational workshops and volunteer work days on occasion to educate, share information, show off your child's progress, discuss topics of interest to our community, enjoy gardening or beautifying our



environments, and share our varied interests. We welcome suggestions for topics of interest or classes and invite you to share your expertise with us.

Throughout the year we host family events and adult-only events to celebrate our community and raise money for specific goals to enhance our programs and to purchase materials for the classrooms that fall outside the school budget. Your participation in any of the volunteer opportunities or fundraising events is invited and very much appreciated but never required. We understand that budgets and time are precious, and that nights and weekends are special to share quality time with your family and friends.

If you are interested in getting involved in our volunteer parent committee to participate in event planning, fundraising efforts, and staff appreciation please visit Get Involved section of our website or join our facebook group by sending an email to the address below: giving@aspiremontessori.org. You can also visit our Wish List Page through Amazon (<http://a.co/6hQtaO8>).

ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT

Admissions Policy

Aspire Montessori School is committed to bringing young people together from a broad spectrum of ethnic, national, socio-economic and religious backgrounds. We welcome diversity and encourage our students to broaden their perspective of the world through friendships, mutual respect, and understanding. Applications are considered on an individual basis. Our goal is to ensure that our school will be able to offer the applicant the best possible learning environment to meet his/her specific needs. We are committed to helping families make the best match between family, student and school by striving to ensure that the goals and values of each student and family are in alignment with our school. Each family is asked to carefully read our school literature, especially our Blueprint, a document outlining the school's core values. You can find our Blueprint on our website, www.aspiremontessori.com

Non-Discrimination Policy

Aspire Montessori School admits students of any race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin to all 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, nationality or ethnic origin in administration of the school's educational policies, admission policies, and other school-administered programs.

Enrollment Contract

At the time of enrollment, parents sign a legally binding contract agreeing to pay tuition for the full school year. The enrollment fee and tuition deposit is non-refundable. Several payment plans are available.

Placement of Students

When current students are rising to a new level or new students are enrolled, the Admissions Committee undertakes a thoughtful and detailed process for determining classroom placements. Our aim is to create classrooms that are optimally balanced in various aspects: age, gender, learning style, etc. For rising students, we do this by gathering input from the child's current teacher, then combining it with all the knowledge we have about each of the classrooms. For new students, we factor in the information gleaned during the school tour and subsequent communication, information on the child's application, as well as input from the child's visit.

Withdrawal Policy

Aspire Montessori school reserves the right to require a parent to withdraw a child from the school if it is the opinion of the School that either the child or the parents are not adhering to the policies of the school or if the School determines that withdrawal is in the best interest of the child or the school.

DAILY SCHEDULE & OPERATIONS

Aspire Montessori School is open Monday – Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.



Nido Rooms are open from 7:00am to 5:15pm.

AS OF AUGUST 2018 THE NEW DAILY OPERATION WILL BE:

Early Arrival Program	7:00 am – 8:30 am
Young Children's House Half Day (2-3 years)	8:30 am – 12:15 pm
Young Children's House Full Day (2-3 years) (Includes a nap or rest time)	8:30 am– 3:00 pm
Children's House Half Day (3-6 years)	8:30 am– 12:30 pm
Children's House Full Day (3-6 years) (The full day program includes Nap, Creative Day or Extended Montessori Day depending on development and readiness)	8:30 am – 3:00 pm
After School Program (Aspire students only) *Drop-off and pick-up times vary on a staggered basis depending on class to provide ample room for parking for all families. You will be informed of your drop-off and pickup times before school starts. Hours vary during summer camp. For the safety of the children remaining in our After School Program, we kindly ask families to leave with their child(ren) promptly upon picking them up from school	3:00 pm – 6:00 pm



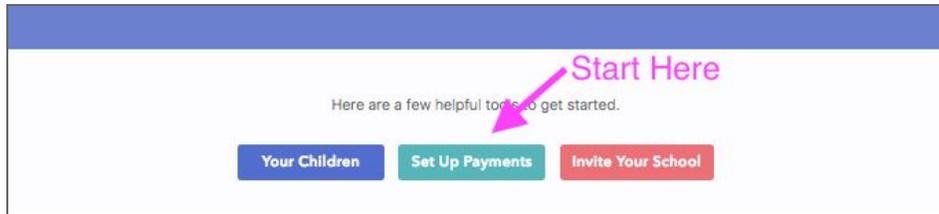
TUITION & FEES		
EARLY ARRIVAL PROGRAM 7 AM - 8:30 AM (18 months-6yr)	ADDED PRICE OF \$50 MONTHLY	
	FULL DAY 8:30 -3:00 PM	ONE PAYMENT FULL-TIME STUDENTS
NIDO I (6 WKS- 18 MONTHS) 7am-5:15pm	\$1,200	YEARLY \$11,400
YOUNG CHILDREN HOUSE (18 - 36 MONTHS)	\$1,000	YEARLY \$9,500
CHILDREN HOUSE (3-6)	\$900	YEARLY \$8,550
AFTER SCHOOL: 3 PM -6 PM	ADDED PRICE OF \$100 MONTHLY	
YEARLY SUPPLY FEE ALL STUDENTS	\$150	
ENROLLMENT FEE (1 TIME NON REFUNDABLE)	\$100	
APPLICATION FEE (1 TIME NON REFUNDABLE)	\$50	
PHOTO & EVENT FEE	\$50	
LATE PICK-UP	After 6:00pm pickup will be charged \$5 for the first 5 minutes and \$1 /minute thereafter.	
DEFERRED ENROLLMENT	A deposit equal to 2 weeks tuition plus all registration fees is required to reserve a space. Deposit will be applied to the first 2 weeks of care. Note: The deposit and registration fees are non refundable in the event that the child does not enroll.	
TUITION POLICY See Account Agreement for more information	At Aspire Montessori School tuition can be paid: A. Yearly B. Monthly installments A - Payment is due on the 1st day of classes. B - Monthly tuition is due by 10:00 am on the 1 st of each month. If the 1 st falls on a weekend or holiday, tuition is due no later than 6:00pm on the last business day prior to the 1 st of the month.	
RE-ENROLLMENT	Re-enrollment fee of \$50.00 is charged when a child is dropped from the program by the parent or Center and re-enrolled at any given time within the same year. If a client wishes to continue services and if the slot is still available, the \$50.00 re-enrollment will be requested upon entering the program	
LATE PAYMENT PENALTY	Late Payment Penalty of \$18.00 will be charged to all accounts on the Wednesday and every Wednesday thereafter as long as the account is delinquent. Aspire Montessori School may discontinue services if tuition is two weeks or more delinquent.	
DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS	If accounts are two weeks or more delinquent, Aspire Montessori School Director has the right to discontinue services. All unpaid accounts will be turned over to a collection agency. Parents will be notified prior to this procedure. Any balances left unsettled will be sent to Online Collections after 30 days.	
WITHDRAW POLICY	If a parent decides to withdraw from the program, a months' (30 days) notice is required. Any parent failing to do so, will be charged their normal tuition rate for the month. All balances will be sent to Online Collections after 30 days of the last day the child attends the program.	



Paying Tuition Through Brightwheel: Parents Setting Up Billing Instructions

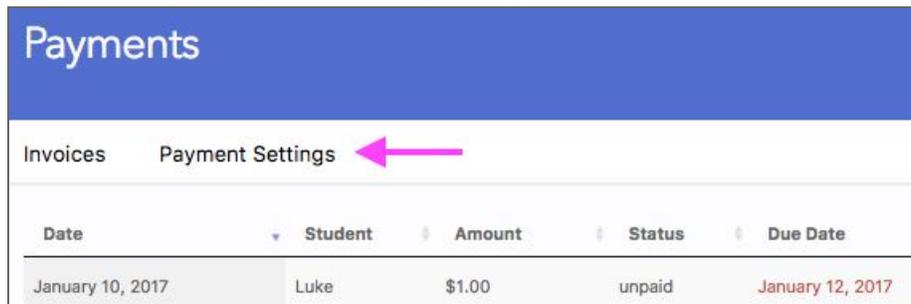
Bank Transfer: Please note this process can sometimes take up to 3 days, please give yourself time to set up the account so that you can pay on time!

STEP 1: Sign into your account and click “Set Up Billing”

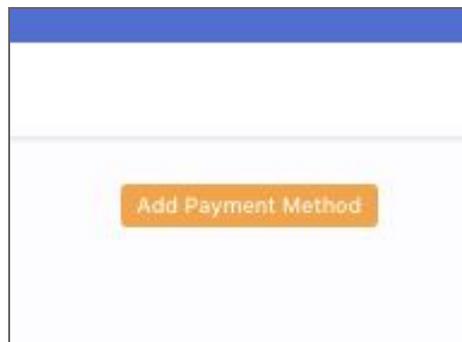


STEP 2: Click “Payment Settings”

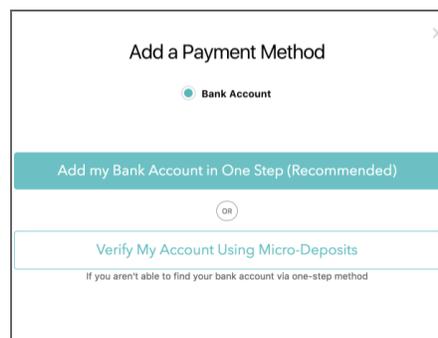
If your school has send invoices to your child, they will appear here



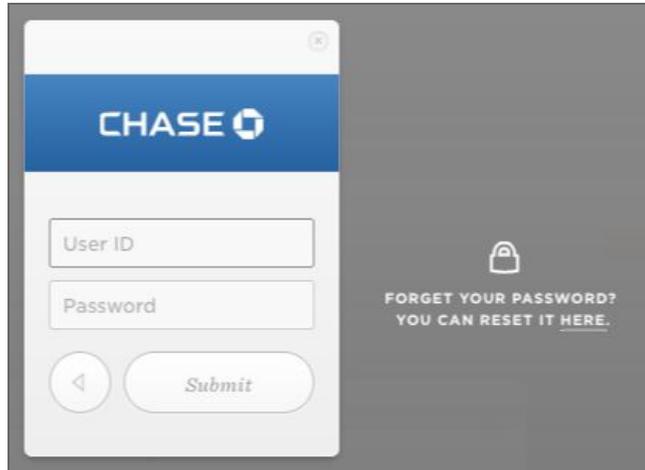
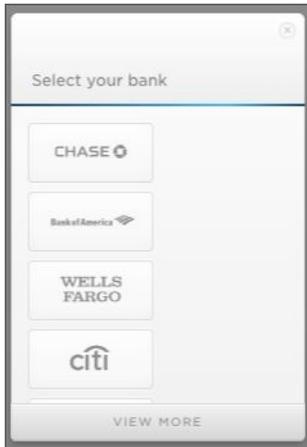
STEP 3: Click “Add Payment Method”



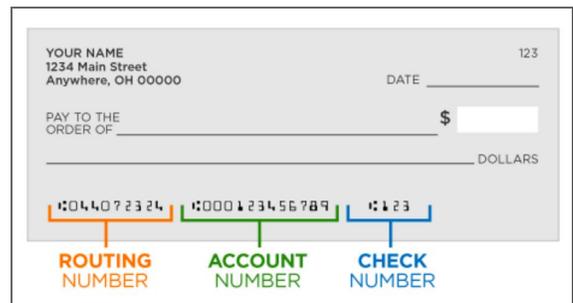
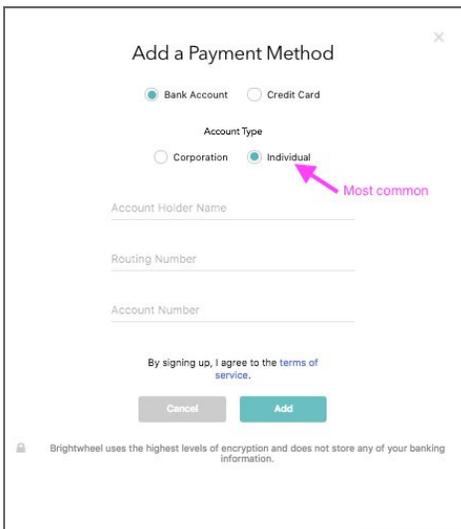
STEP 4a: If adding a bank account, click “Connect Your Bank Account”



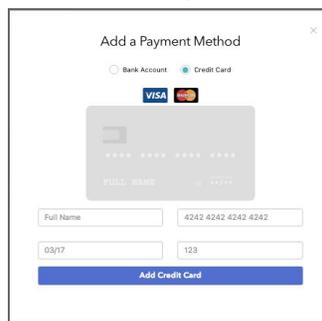
Follow the steps listed to select your bank account and sign in.



STEP 4b: If your bank is not listed in the options in that pop-up, navigate back to the main “add payment method” window and click “add your account manually”



STEP 4c: If your school is accepting credit cards, you will also see the credit card option listed. If you want to add your card, toggle to the credit card view. Discover and American Express cards are not accepted in brightwheel at this time.



Add Family, Approved Pickups and Emergency Contacts

How to add family members & approved pickups to your child's profile

Parents who are already connected to their child on brightwheel can add additional approved pickups, family members and emergency contacts to their child's profile.

To do this on the web:

- Login, and click on My Children at the top
- Select your child's account by clicking on their name
- Scroll down to the Contacts section and click Add Contact
- Select the appropriate Contact Type from the dropdown menu
- Add the new contact's information & click Save
- An invitation to join brightwheel will be sent to their email

Contacts and Access

Contacts

CONTACT	EMAIL	PHONE	CAN PICKUP	SIGNED UP	BILLING INFO
There are no recorded contacts.					
+ Add a contact					



Contact Type

Select...

- Parent
- Family or Approved Pickup**
- Emergency Contact

Phone Number

Cancel Save Contact

Contact Type

Family or Approved Pickup

First Name

Happy

Last Name

Pickup

Phone Number

###-###-####

Email Address

happypickup@mybrightwheel.com

Cancel Save Contact

Contacts and Access

Note that each Contact Type has a different level of access to a child's profile and brightwheel features.

Parents:

- Can see all updates in the Daily Feed
- Can access all Billing and Payment information
- Can add or remove other adults from the child's profile
- Can edit child's profile information
- Can message the school, and receive messages in an inbox/sent box that is shared between only Schools and Parents

Approved Pick-ups



- Can see all updates in the Daily Feed
- Cannot access all Billing and Payment information
- Cannot add or remove other adults from the child's profile
- Cannot edit child's profile information
- Can message the school, and receive messages in an inbox/sent box that is separate from the Parent's.

Emergency Contact

- Has no access to the child's profile within brightwheel. This is simply a reference for contact information.
- Is the only Contact Type that does not get an invitation to join brightwheel upon being added.

Early Arrival & After School

In addition to our Half Day and Full Day Montessori programs, we provide quality educational care for your children before and after school in our Early Arrival Program (EAP) and After School Program (ASP). Our primary goal is to care for your children in a nurturing, creative, playful, and flexible environment while honoring Montessori philosophy, before and after regular school hours. You may either enroll in the Early Arrival Program or After School Program for use on a daily basis, or call ahead to use on a drop-in basis provided there is room on that particular day.

We begin accepting children at 7:00 a.m. in our Early Arrival Program and provide a calm, engaging morning for students before the regular school day begins. The teachers deliver the EAP children to their respective classrooms at 8:25. If you plan on utilizing the After School Program on a drop in basis, please inform your child's teacher AND notify the office by calling the main office. If you need to leave a message the same day you will be needing after school care, please know that messages will be checked before each pick-up window and we will relay the message to your child's teacher. The \$15 drop-in fee can be paid on the day you drop-in, or included with your next tuition payment. Reminders for any Early Arrival or After School fees will be emailed to you.

Any child not enrolled in Aspire who is still at school after 3:00 p.m. (or after an Extracurricular Program if not picked up) will be signed in to the After School Program. In addition to outdoor and/or indoor play, we will offer activities involving art and self-expression, body movement, reading, puzzles, games and manipulatives. Each afternoon we provide a healthy snack for all the children. There will be an emergency contact binder and attendance clipboard with the sign-out sheet with one of the ASP teachers at all times. It is essential that when you come for pick-up that you make contact with that team member before leaving with your child, so that we can make sure your child gets signed out (required by law) and to ensure that all of our little ones are accounted for and taken care of.

Occasionally, on days with inclement weather, we may choose a DVD for the children to watch. We respect each family's decisions on media and we welcome any questions or concerns you may have. We also invite you to share any favorite titles that you feel would be appropriate for two to six year olds.

ATTENDANCE, PICK UP & DROP OFF

Attendance Expectations

Programs are scheduled for five days a week. Regular attendance is of the utmost importance. Please notify the school in the event that your child is ill or unable to attend class. Absenteeism will have no effect on tuition and fees. If your child is going to be absent from a scheduled school day, we ask that you inform your child's teacher and call the office (512.447.8258) to notify us of the child's name, and the reason the child will not be attending school that day. If your child will be arriving late (outside of the designated drop-off schedule), we ask that you notify us by calling the office. When you arrive, you may check in to the front office where administration will make a decision about who will escort the child to class. We will either deliver your child to class for you or escort you and your child to class. If your child has an appointment and you plan on arriving after 10:00 am, you must bring a note from the doctor or dentist when you drop off your child.



Inclement Weather Procedure

Our school follows AISD's closing and delay decisions. If we decide to close school or to delay opening due to hazardous winter weather conditions, information will be emailed to parents preferred email address, posted on our school facebook group and our voicemail. Opening changes may be posted as late as 6:45 a.m., so please check back often. Our decision to open or close will take into consideration travel conditions and general safety of our staff, students, and parents. We ask that parents make their own travel and attendance decisions based upon weather and road conditions in their vicinity.

Drop Off and Pick Up Expectations

Unless your child is participating in the early arrival program, please park on the side street by the portable and drop your child off at school between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m. to your child's teacher. We ask that all parents be off campus no later than 9:00 a.m. Creating a peaceful environment for your children can often be disturbed by late arrivals and unexpected changes to the children's schedules. The Lead teacher for your child's class will outline the policies for late arrival for that classroom at your scheduled Pre-Visit prior to your child's first day of school. The half day pick up window is between 12:15 and 12:30 p.m., and the full day pick up window is between 2:30 and 3:00 p.m. If you arrive later than your scheduled pick up time, you will be charged a drop-in rate of \$15 for the after school program.

Late Drop off & Pick Up Policy

Parents must sign their child in and out each day, and are required to bring children to school no later than 9:00 am. A child who arrives when other children are cleaning, participating in an activity or involved in structured play can feel frustrated and usually have a more difficult day. Being on-time is a significant contributor to the job satisfaction of all of our teachers and the happiness of our children.

Aspire Montessori School's academic day begins at 9:00 a.m. Please be considerate and try to be on time. When a few children arrive late, the whole process is thrown off. In the majority of our classes, the arrival, greeting and responsibility period is extended past the point of being a pleasant lead-in to the day. It becomes so long that it fragments the children's attention and creates irritability in them. They need to settle into their work and not be interrupted and distracted by the late arrivals. The children work in groups of two, three or more. They wait for the arrival of their work partners in the morning, because the work depends on collaboration and companionship. If late arrivals are the norm and therefore expected, the children cannot judge whether a child is absent or will be arriving late. A child cannot decide whether to join another work group for the morning, recruit a new partner or merely sit and read for fifteen to thirty minutes. Meanwhile, all around the classroom others are settling into their first work, groups have consolidated. Still the child doesn't know what to do and so becomes restless and tense.

The few children who arrive late are out of harmony with the others. They see their partners settled into work with others and forget to put away their things; they forget to tend to their morning responsibilities; their greetings and chit chat are an interruption to the concentration of others, and they see that the work groups have formed without them. They may spend the rest of the day trying to catch up and fit in. If the child has settled in and the work partner arrives, everything is up in the air again. Should the child abandon the newly joined group or remain with them and leave the late arriver on his own?

We must ask for your help in keeping this serious responsibility for meeting our children's needs. You can begin to arrive at 8:15 am, without paying any Morning Program fees; this helps ease congestion at 9:00 a.m. if you arrive prior to your scheduled drop off window and leave your child in our care, you will be charged a \$15 Early Arrival Fee. If you arrive after 9:30 you will be charged a \$1.00 per minute fee late. It is also important to arrive on time for pick-up. Depending on your schedule, you can begin arriving at 12:45 p.m. or 2:45 p.m. for pick-up. Arriving after 3:00 p.m. and your child isn't in the Afterschool Program will be considered late and will result in a \$15.00 per day participation in Afterschool Program. This late fee will be added to the next month's tuition installment. Late pick-up after 6:00 p.m. will result in a \$2.00 per minute charge.

Sign-In/Sign-Out

DFPS Licensing requires that each child be signed in and signed out each day. The staff member in charge at drop off or pick up will be responsible for signing in and signing out your child every day. It is the responsibility of the person picking



up or dropping off the student to connect with the teacher to make sure the child gets signed in or signed out. Because these times of the day can be very busy, it is imperative that you make direct contact with the teacher so that your child's presence or departure can be accounted for.

Authorization to Drop Off or Pick Up

The only people authorized to drop off or pick up a child from Aspire Montessori School are the child's parents or guardians. If you desire to designate another person to pick up or drop off your child, you must list that person on the child's Enrollment Agreement. If a change in plans does not allow you or a designated person to pick up your child, you must notify the office prior to pick up time. You must also provide the person's first and last name, phone number, and his or her relationship to the child (e.g., grandmother, friend of the family, etc.). This person must bring a valid driver's license or state-issued ID showing their full name and photo. In case of emergencies, or illness, all parents and guardians will be notified immediately to come pick up their child(ren). All parents and guardians may also feel free to come pick up their child(ren) at any time due to unforeseen events, family or weather emergencies. We appreciate a call ahead of time, so we can prepare your child for an early departure.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Health/Illness Policy

Aspire Montessori School follows DFPS recommendations and Texas Health Department Requirements in case of illness. A child may not attend Aspire Montessori School or may be sent home if he or she:

- Has an illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities including outdoor play. If your child is not well enough for outdoor play, you will need to make arrangements to keep your child at home until he or she is fully recuperated and can join the other children.
- Has an illness that results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in our care.
- Has an oral temperature of 101 degrees or higher, or an armpit temperature of 100 degrees or higher, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness in the past 24 hours.
- Has symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores, behavior changes or other signs that the child may be severely ill.
- Has sore or discharging eyes, or yellow/green discharge from the nose or ears.
- Has urinary problems.
- Has head lice and/or nits.
- Has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation confirming that the child is no longer contagious.

Out of concern for the health of all of our children and staff, Aspire Montessori School unconditionally reserves the right to notify you should any of the above symptoms occur and ask that you pick up your child as soon as possible. We hope that parents and guardians appreciate our call if your child is exhibiting symptoms of illness.

If a health-care professional has diagnosed a child with a communicable disease, not only will we notify the parents and guardians immediately, but we will also report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and the Travis County Health and Human Service Department. Return to School After your child's illness, he or she may return to school:

- Twenty-four hours after your child's temperature has returned to normal WITHOUT THE USE OF MEDICATION.
- Twenty-four hours after antibiotics have been started (including topical ointments).
- When the child has not had diarrhea and/or vomited for at least 24 hours.
- When the child's pediatrician provides a note that the child is well enough to return to school.

Medication Policy

Aspire Montessori School will administer medication to children on a case-by-case basis and ONLY with a complete Medical Authorization form including a signature from the child's parents. Medical Authorization forms can be picked up in the office.



The only exception to the above policy will be in the event of a severe allergy or asthma attack. Under these circumstances, the staff of Aspire Montessori School will only administer the following type of medication:

1. An inhaler used for severe asthma
2. An EpiPen for severe allergy (such as peanut)

If a child has one of the above-mentioned conditions, we require written instructions signed and dated by the parents on recognition of symptoms and administration of medication, a record of which will be kept on file. In the event of administration of the above-mentioned medication, parents will be notified immediately. Permission to administer medication must be updated in writing every year by the anniversary of the first authorization date.

Immunizations Policy

We are required by DFPS to keep a copy of each enrolled child's immunization records on file. You can review the Recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule included in your enrollment packet, or retrieve one from the Department of Health and Human Services—Center for Disease Control and Prevention, or go to www.immunizetexas.com.

We are also required by DFPS to keep a copy of each enrolled child's annual hearing and vision results for children four years old or older on September 1. At the time of enrollment you will be asked to provide documentation of immunizations with a doctor's signature, or, if you choose not to immunize your child, you must provide the State of Texas Immunization Waiver form (notarized), as well as hearing and vision results (if required). At this time, Tuberculosis testing is not required in this region.

Daily Rest Periods

Provisions will be made each day for each child to rest. A minimum of 2 hours per day and maximum of 2 ½ hours rest time will be available for each child. Please provide 2 crib sheets and a small blanket to cover cots at nap-time. The linen should be picked up every Friday afternoon to be laundered and brought back to the School on Monday mornings. Please label your child's linen and all personal items with his/her name or initials.

Personal Belongings

- Toys and money should not be brought to Aspire Montessori School unless it is requested for a special occasion.
- Bottles are only allowed in the infant class.
- Pacifiers are only allowed in the infant and toddler classes.
- All parents are asked to bring 2 extra sets of seasonal clothing to be left in their child's cubby. The extra clothes should include socks and underclothes. (Note: When a child is being potty trained, several pairs of training pants should be brought to Aspire Montessori School on a daily basis. Please be considerate of the type of bottoms your child wears during training. Clothes should be easy to remove by the child & the teacher.
- Please put your child's name or initials on all items left at Aspire Montessori School.

Montessori teaches independence and care of one's own belongings. We are not responsible for any lost or damaged personal items. We have Lost and Found boxes in each classroom and in the main office. Labeling items helps in recovery of lost items and we make every effort to return a lost item to its owner. Unlabeled items left for long periods of time will be taken to Goodwill.

Items Needed from Parents to Ensure Quality Care

We want to assure your child is properly cared for while in our Center. Parents are responsible for providing the following items:

Infants: 6 weeks to 15 months

Diapers – weekly

Wipes – weekly

*Breast milk or formula (up to 12 months) *Must be brought in COLD everyday and labeled with the child's name and the date



2 sets of seasonal changing clothes – at all times

2 Sets of clean crib linen – at all times

1 cup- to be taken home every night and cleaned

Note: Aspire Montessori School provides meals for infants that eat from the table.

Toddlers: 15 months to 24 months

Diapers or Pull-Ups and Wipes – weekly

2 sets of seasonal changing clothes – at all times

2 clean sets of linen – at all times

2 cups-labeled with their name

(Pacifiers are not allowed)

Clothes to avoid: Overalls, Jumpers, & Body shirts

Twos: 24 months to 36 months

Pull-Ups (With side opening only)/Training Underwear (if child isn't potty trained)

2 sets of seasonal changing of clothes – at all times

2 clean sets of linen – at all times

(Pacifiers are not allowed)

Note: When potty training begins, please dress children in clothes that will help increase independence of this new skill. Clothes to avoid: overalls, Onesies, jumpers, & body shirts.

Threes to Six years

2 sets of seasonal changing clothes, socks and underwear included – at all times

2 sets of clean linen – at all times

1 water bottle labeled with their name

Note: Please dress children in clothes to have fun in. Children should not have to worry about getting clothes dirty while they are playing, learning, and having fun.

Lunch

In keeping with Aspire Montessori School's mission to cultivate and nurture your children's healthy bodies, parents and guardians are asked to send their children to school every day with a nutritious packed lunch that will not spoil without refrigeration. Please do not send food in cans or frozen meals. Also, please note that we have a "no added sugar" policy at Aspire Montessori School and we appreciate you enjoying sweets with your child at home. You can find some great lunch ideas [here](#).

To help preserve our environment, please attempt to send your child's lunch in reusable containers rather than throwaway containers such as paper or plastic bags. Insulated lunch boxes and bags with ice packs work well to keep lunches fresh. Please be sure to label your child's lunch box or bag. The children will eat lunch with their classmates and teachers who will utilize the opportunity to model appropriate table manners and etiquette in addition to discussing good nutrition and health practices.

Snacks

We ask parents/guardians to volunteer to provide snack on a sign-up basis for one to three weeks during the year. You will have the opportunity to sign-up for your week at your Pre-Visit, or beginning of each semester, and the sign-up sheet will be available in the classroom with the dates that you are responsible for providing the children's snack. When selecting your snack items, please include at least one option from each category: fruit/veggies, carbohydrates and proteins. On the Friday before your week, we will send home a snack suggestion list for you with options from each category. Please bring the snacks with you Monday morning with a sufficient amount for your child's class for the designated time period. We ask that you kindly keep our peanut-free and added sugar-free policies in mind when planning your snack and provide snacks that are fresh and nutritious. Snacks are served in the mornings during work period, as well as in the afternoons during the After School Program. Flowers are used by the children for flower arranging in the



classroom.

If you have further questions regarding snacks or allergy restrictions, please don't hesitate to discuss this matter with your child's teacher. We greatly appreciate your willingness to volunteer and donate snacks! When parents choose to provide the child's meals and/or snacks, Aspire Montessori School is not responsible for the nutritional value of the food brought from home or for meeting the child's daily food needs.

Food Allergies

Please inform us in writing, on your child's Enrollment Agreement, of any food allergies or sensitivities that your child has. Allergies for each child will be posted in every room and every staff member will be made aware of the child's allergy. It is all of our responsibility to ensure a healthy environment for every child. Remember to keep us current with any changes in your child's health, allergies, or dietary restrictions.

Potty Training

Children in the TOTs program will be introduced to the potty from day one. Though children are encouraged towards independence in this area, they are never forced or coerced to use the potty. Children still in diapers will be changed regularly and introduced to the process of using the toilet, including hand-washing. A separate personal cubby will be provided for children still in diapers to store diapers and wipes that we ask you to provide. Should you have more specific questions regarding this process, please don't hesitate to discuss this matter with your child's teacher. Students must be independent with potty and no longer wearing diapers to enter the Primary program.

Clothing

Please send your child(ren) to school in clothing that will help foster independence. Remember that we aim to encourage independence in self-care, so anything that will limit or frustrate your child's independence is discouraged. Please avoid buckles, difficult snaps or "onesies" that will limit their movement or cause distraction. Your child(ren) will also be engaged in MESSY, hands-on activities (i.e. art and gardening), so we request that you please dress your child for WORK. Learning to drink from an open cup, planting seeds, tending garden, and painting are just a few examples of these types of activities.

We request that you send an two extra set of clothing in case we need to assist your child in a change of clothes. Though each child will have a personal space for items, we ask that you label all of your child's clothing and belongings. Regarding shoes: flip-flops and hard-soled boots are not safe for the playground and are not ideal for freedom of movement. Keep in mind that we do not interfere in children's exploration of puddles, mud, etc., when selecting footwear. Closed-toe shoes are ideal.

Photography

We often take photographs of the children engaging in various activities. These photographs will primarily be used for sharing with parents, or for display in the classrooms, office, in school scrapbooks, and in albums for the children. Occasionally we will use these photographs on our school website, brochures, advertisements or other promotional material. You can either authorize or not authorize use of your child's image for promotional purposes for Aspire by your signature on your Enrollment Agreement.

Birthdays

In honor of your child's special day we recognize him or her by singing a traditional Montessori song and sharing a Birthday Circle. We encourage you to prepare, with your child, a poster with several photographs highlighting milestones of each of their years of life (i.e. birth, year one, year two, etc.). You are welcome to bring healthy snacks to share, such as muffins or fruit, for the celebration. Please refrain from sending cakes, cookies, sugary drinks, or favors. In lieu of a snack you are welcome to donate a book to your class in honor of your child's birthday. Parents are encouraged to attend their child's celebration in the classroom. If you plan to send invitations to school for a birthday party, please ensure that there are enough for the entire class. We will then be happy to put them in student folders/mail tubes.



Water Play & Animals

Occasionally and weather permitting, the children will engage in water play such as sprinkler play or water tables. The children will also be responsible for watering their gardens with watering cans. If, in the future, we plan any other water activities such as swimming, each parent and guardian will be notified well in advance and asked to sign and return a Letter of Permission to be placed in your child's file.

Animals, such as caterpillars, hamsters, butterflies, cats, tortoises, and fish, are part of the Montessori environment. Children will learn about the natural world through observation and care of these animals. We will ensure that our caregivers and children practice good hygiene and hand washing after handling or coming into contact with an animal and items used by an animal, such as water bowls, food bowls, and cages.

Separation Anxiety: The Separation Routine

- Share with your teachers. Share any information with your teachers that may be helpful in easing the transition for you and your child. For example consider what comforts your child. Animals, bubbles, art?
- Create a Consistent Routine. Create a goodbye routine with your child and be consistent. For example, watch then go down the slide once each day or wave to them from the gate each day. We will work on this together and often the child will let us know what they prefer. Consistency is the beginning is key and will lead to smoother goodbyes in the long run.
- Explain your Routine. Explain routines to your child so they will know what to expect. Remind them that you will see them later that day. When you pick them up, remind them that you will always return to pick them up and that this routine will take place everyday.
- Give Yourself Time. Allow yourself enough time for a smooth goodbye. If you feel rushed or anxious, your child will too. We have provided you with a 15 minute window of time to do so. We recommend keeping your routine under 10 minutes, although remember, consistency and follow-through is always more important.
- Acknowledge your Child's Feelings. This is a big step for your child and also a very excited one! While it may be confusing or upsetting for them in the beginning, remember these feelings are absolutely natural. A calm, soothing voice convert confidence that they are safe and that they can handle it. If the child is crying, for example, you might say, "I know you miss me. I will miss you too and I will be back after your nap."

Remember, above all, that they will be looking to us as adults for cues on how to handle this transition! If we feel good about it, they will learn to feel good about it too!

SAFETY POLICY

Aspire Montessori School places a high priority on safety and cleanliness. The school will keep current on all annual health, fire and gas inspections and will keep an emergency evacuation plan posted in each classroom. We will also conduct monthly fire drills and periodic severe weather drills.

First aid supplies are kept in each classroom and playground at the school, and all staff members on each shift are trained in Infant-Child CPR and Emergency First Aid. If a minor accident occurs, the school will provide basic first aid for your child.

If there is a more serious event or more extensive treatment is required, the Director, or her qualified appointee, will make all decisions about the care of the child. Aspire Montessori School will immediately notify the child's parents or guardians (and/or emergency contacts and/or the child's physician, if necessary). We will also call an ambulance or the paramedics if the need arises. Your responsibility as parents and guardians is to keep Aspire Montessori School current on all phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information.

For any type of accident, the attending staff member or Director of Aspire Montessori School will fill out an Accident Report (minor accidents) or an Incident Report (more severe accidents), and parents and guardians will receive a copy. A



copy will also be kept on file at the school. If your child requires medical attention, a copy of the incident report will be filed with the Department of Family and Protective Services.

Child Abuse or Neglect

Texas State Law requires the staff of Aspire Montessori School to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or a law enforcement agency. The toll free phone number to make confidential reports is 1-800-252-5400. Failure to report is a Class B criminal offense, punishable by a \$2,000 fine and/or imprisonment for up to 180 days. Failure to report could also subject you to considerable monetary liability in a civil rights action.

We provide annual training in awareness, prevention, and action steps in the area of suspected child abuse and neglect. For more information about warning signs, prevention, awareness, community organizations, and resources for your family, please visit the following website: <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/itsuptoyou/>.

Freedom Within Limits: Montessori Discipline

Expectations of the child:

- Respect for the environment
- Respect for each other
- Respect for the adult(s)

Discipline Strategies out teachers utilize:

- **Connect and redirect**
 - Pull the child aside, get down on their level, make eye contact and explain what their part in the problem is.
 - Discuss resolution with the child and offer a chance to apologize to the wronged child. (This is optional. We only want them to apologize if they mean it.)
 - Have the child connect with the wronged child and ask “what can I do to help you feel better?”
- **Natural Consequences**
 - Being unsafe or repeatedly using something the wrong way with tells us that object is unavailable to them for:
 - An hour
 - A day
 - A longer defined period (extreme cases only)
 - It also tells us the child has an unmet need. Ex: If they are taking screws out of something, they need a nut and bolt work
- **Gradual loss of freedoms**
 1. Hand holding
 2. Loss of choice of work
 3. Loss of choice of where to sit

Behavior Management Policy

Aspire Montessori School believes that our student’s behavior is an important component for classroom harmony. Therefore, The Following Discipline Procedures Will Be Enforced:

First Offense:

Communicate the offense to the child and help them solve the problem with whatever people were involved in the incident.

Second Offense:

The child is offered a place in the classroom under direct teacher supervision to “cool off”. That can be a peace corner or just a work space with calming materials.

Third Offense:



The child will be removed from the classroom and the assistant director or director will help the child prepare for re-entry to the classroom

Fourth Offense:

Parent will be contacted for immediate pick-up, by the administrator. The owner, administrator, teacher, and parents will discuss a solution to the particular offense. A conference will be set up for an upcoming date where a plan of action will be agreed upon by all parties.

We ensure a safe space for all children under our care and love working with parents for the best solutions



PARENT POLICY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

By my signature below, I acknowledge that I have been provided with an Aspire Montessori School Parent Policy Handbook, dated June 2018, that I have discussed its contents with the Director, and she has answered or addressed any questions and/or concerns that I have. I understand that if any policies in this handbook are changed or updated, I will receive written notification of those changes prior to their effective date.

Parent/s Signature/s:

Date:

Printed Name of Child Attending or Staff Member Working at Aspire Montessori School
This signed page must be turned in and kept on file at Aspire Montessori School.

