



### **Mission Statement**

*The mission of the Bloomington Montessori School (BMS) is to guide students from self-discovery to global citizenship through Montessori education.*

### **Vision**

*Our vision is to become a center for peace and education within our community.*

### **Values**

*At Bloomington Montessori School, we value...*

- *A love of learning*
- *Nurturing peaceful, self-reliant, empowered citizens*
- *Care for ourselves, each other, and the Earth*
  - *Open and honest communication*
  - *Working hard and working together as a welcoming community*
- *Awareness and appreciation of all the ways in which humans are diverse and actively work toward equity*

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## **WELCOME**

Welcome to the Bloomington Montessori School; we are glad you are a part of our community! This handbook of policies, procedures, and philosophy is designed to help acquaint you with the workings of your school. We hope it provides a picture of our school culture, unique to our home here in Bloomington, and our pedagogy, shared by over 7,000 certified schools in 110 countries worldwide with a shared vision for nurturing independent, compassionate critical thinkers. Please reach out if you have any questions.

Bloomington Montessori School (BMS) is a privately funded, non-profit (501[C]3) school founded in 1968. Since 1971 it has been a member of the American Montessori Society (AMS) and became an accredited school in 2021. Our teaching faculty consists of a unified group of highly trained certified Montessorians, and we continue to focus on organizational learning, reflection, and improvement. The school offers equal opportunity to all and is non-discriminatory.

## **MONTESSORI PEDAGOGY**

### About the Montessori Method

Montessori education is a child-centered approach based on scientific observations of children's interests and development. Maria Montessori, an Italian scientist, activist, and educator, developed this educational philosophy. The key components of a Montessori classroom include highly trained teachers, a carefully prepared environment, the hands-on materials central to Montessori, multi-age classrooms, and child-directed work throughout an uninterrupted work period. Throughout our nine-year program at BMS, we focus on building 21st-century skills such as executive function, social and emotional intelligence, critical thinking, creativity, and work habits. This is done through a spiraling curriculum that builds upon prior knowledge and adds complexity and depth of concepts throughout the phases of children's education in the school. Concepts include all typical academic areas as well as the Early Childhood sensorial curriculum and a nine-year peace curriculum that includes age-appropriate lessons and practice in areas such as self-care, mindfulness, grace and courtesy, conflict resolution, living in a community, stewardship of the Earth, and community and global social and environmental issues.

Montessori was, perhaps above all, a brilliant and insightful observer. Many of the principles authored by Montessori have since been supported through modern

sociological, psychological, and neurological research, including the following (Lillard, A. S. 2005. *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*. Oxford University Press).

- Montessori's theories of child development include the concept of "Sensitive Periods", when neurological development and innate interests are most attuned to certain types of learning.
- Montessori once wrote that "the hands are the instrument of man's intelligence", and believed that movement and cognition are connected and enhance each other.
- Humans thrive most when given freedom within limits.
- Curiosity and interest enhance learning and spontaneous exploration of ideas should be encouraged.
- Extrinsic rewards negatively impact independent motivation, and instead, intentional support should be given to the lifelong development of intrinsic motivation.
- Social learning is beneficial, and the four primary mechanisms of learning from peers include incorporation, distributed cognition, active learning, and motivation.
- Adult interaction should be carefully designed for optimal support of learners. The role of the teacher includes preparation of and link to the environment, kind and firm accountability, careful observation and interpretation, engaging guidance through the curriculum, and non-invasive assessment.
- Concentration and self-regulation are learnable and vital tasks.
- An organized, beautiful, and orderly environment is beneficial to children.
- Children are spiritual and capable beings; thus, the whole child should be attended to by the curriculum.
- Concrete learning with scaffolding to deeper and abstract concepts aids children's comprehension and engagement (this is often visualized as a spiral).

For more information on the Montessori Method, please visit the American Montessori website:

<https://amshq.org/Montessori-Education/Introduction-to-Montessori>

For more information on modern research related to Montessori, we recommend *MONTENESSORI: The Science Behind the Genius* by Angeline Stoll Lillard.

For more information on Maria Montessori and the history of the Montessori movement, please visit:

<https://amshq.org/Montessori-Education/History-of-Montessori-Education>

### American Montessori Society

Several well-respected Montessori organizations exist. Bloomington Montessori is affiliated with the American Montessori Society (AMS), a not-for-profit organization with over 13,000 member schools. We use the AMS Standards of Excellence as an organizational evaluation tool and AMS parent and professional development resources. For more information on AMS, please visit <https://amshq.org/About-AMS>. The office also has a Parent Lending Library with resources on Montessori, Positive Discipline, and child development. If you want to borrow a book, please stop by the office.

### Learner Outcomes

In our effort to offer the highest-quality Montessori educational experience, Bloomington Montessori has adopted the following Learner Outcomes (as outlined by the American Montessori Society [Standard 4.2]). These Learner Outcomes serve as a framework for discussing our vision for and efforts toward the holistic development of the children we serve.

Our stakeholders need to be aware of these Learner Outcomes for many reasons, including:

- To better understand the mission of Bloomington Montessori School and the role it serves in our community
- To prepare families for BMS's expectation of support by families in the development of these skills and values
- To better understand the context within which teachers will be discussing a child's progress through our curriculum

These six learner outcomes are complex topics, each involving multiple stages of growth and learning. Our spiraling curriculum aims to develop these skills to an age-appropriate level throughout a child's nine-year experience here. Bloomington Montessori graduates build the tools necessary to continue this developmental journey long after graduation.

### Autonomy and Independence

The word "autonomy" finds its roots in the concept of "self-governing." In a Montessori context, this includes maintaining control over one's actions, feeling confident in making independent choices, and having a strong sense of self.

### Confidence and Competence

The self-assurance that comes from recognizing and having faith in one's abilities and talents is one of the most empowering tools we can offer children. Through a greater sense of ownership of their achievements, children become energized by their capability.

### Academic Preparation

As in most schools, we strongly believe that children need to be prepared with knowledge and skills to enable them to navigate education and life success. This includes a well-rounded language, mathematics, biology, physical science, geography, and history curriculum. Additionally, we focus on process-centered goals such as developing critical thinking skills, problem-solving, work habits, and creativity. (See Scope and Sequence for detailed information.)

### Intrinsic Motivation

To find the work of life internally satisfying creates a drive that propels children toward productivity and success in all areas as they grow. By avoiding extrinsic motivations (such as rewards and punishments), we leave space for this vital inner development of the child.

### Social Responsibility

The idea that we should strive to benefit society and care for ourselves, each other, and the Earth instills a sense of stewardship in children. Our Cosmic Curriculum explores the interconnection of all living things, encouraging the development of environmentally aware global citizens.

### Spiritual Awareness

Spiritual awareness is a process by which we explore our own being and thoughts. We help children develop a sense of mindfulness, purpose, and possibility. This includes developing a growth mindset and comfort with self-reflection.

## **COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY**

To ensure the continued vitality of the BMS community, applicant families and currently enrolled families agree to work with the school and staff to foster values central to Montessori philosophy. Parents/Guardians are required to read and sign all enrollment forms, including the Parent/Guardian Agreement, as a condition of enrollment.

All members of the BMS community, including staff members, students, parents, other caretakers, and visitors to campus, are expected to demonstrate mutual

respect and abide by the core values of grace, respect, peace, and community-mindedness central to Montessori education. Examples of expected behavior include, but are not limited to, using respectful language and tone and maintaining a peaceful physical presence.

Examples of undesirable behavior include, but are not limited to, harassment, making threats, spreading rumors, and attacking someone physically or verbally.

A family's commitment to fostering these values and supporting the teacher(s) in their endeavors is a primary consideration for enrollment. Staff members who do not uphold these values will be subject to staff disciplinary policy at the discretion of the Head of School and by review of the Board of Directors. Family members and visitors to campus who do not uphold these values may be subject to corrective action at the discretion of the Head of School and by review of the Board of Directors.

## **STUDENT SERVICES**

Bloomington Montessori is a school that thrives on its ability to fulfill Maria Montessori's vision through individualization and meet the needs of each child whenever possible. This can include a large team of support and various accommodations. The Student Services administrator can help you understand and navigate this process.

Student Services typically fall into the following categories:

- Academic Accommodations
- Behavioral Accommodations
- Physical Accommodations

There are three tiers for all student service areas, denoting the extent of intervention needed.

For more information on our Student Services practices, please contact our Head of School at [headofschool@montessori.k12.in.us](mailto:headofschool@montessori.k12.in.us) or Assistant Head of School at [assistanthos@montessori.k12.in.us](mailto:assistanthos@montessori.k12.in.us).



## **OBSERVATION**

### Teacher Observation

Observation is the tool with which Montessori teachers gain insights that inform their lessons, interactions, and environmental design. Your child's educational experience is tailored to their unique needs through careful observation, record keeping, and informed teacher interpretation. This method collects non-invasive data on your child's interests, behaviors, and progress.

### Parent Observation

We encourage parents of students and prospective students to develop their practice of observing their child(ren) at home and school. For this purpose, we provide observation rooms with a one-way mirror in each classroom. This method provides parents with "no-impact access" to the classrooms, and observers can call the office to schedule a 15-30-minute window to observe their child. These rooms are meant to provide a reflective space to focus on your child and his/her classroom and development. Using the observation room, you agree to honor the privacy of those you observe by keeping your observations respectful and confidential.

### Professional Observations

Visiting teachers or students may come into the classroom with the Lead Teacher's approval to observe. Visitors will be introduced to the Lead Teacher and given information on observation etiquette specific to the classroom they visit. No pictures of children may be taken during observations.

## **BMS BENCHMARKS**

Our school's learner benchmarks are found on our website: [BMS Parent Resources](#). It is important to remember that children move at their own pace through the curriculum; thus, concepts are not broken into specific months of the year or grades. Children move through concepts as they show readiness in the classroom.

## **MONTESSORI RESOURCES**

BMS is committed to Parent Education and provides forums and events throughout the school year designed to answer parent questions and give information on Montessori and our school. We are always interested in suggestions for new topics and partnering with parents with backgrounds in Montessori, child development, or education.

The BMS main office also offers a parent library where parents can borrow copies of recommended books; available topics include Montessori, Positive Discipline, Social Justice, and Child Development. If you want to borrow a book, please stop by the office. If you have a specific question, please contact teachers or administrators, and we will do our best to answer your question or link you to resources!

## **NONDISCRIMINATION**

### General Nondiscrimination Policy

Bloomington Montessori does not and shall not discriminate based on race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, or any other legally protected characteristic in any of its activities or operations. These activities include but are not limited to hiring and firing staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, provision of services, admission of students, and administration of educational programs or policies. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, children, parents and caregivers, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors, and clients. We will make all hiring and firing decisions based on merit, qualifications, and abilities.

Individuals with questions or concerns about discrimination or harassment at Bloomington Montessori are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of someone in the administration. Individuals can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. All reports will be investigated. Anyone engaging in unlawful discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action.

### Disability Nondiscrimination Policy

a. Bloomington Montessori School does not discriminate against any individual based on disability, including against applicants or members of their families, students, or members of their families.

b. Applicants and students with disabilities and members of their families have an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations provided by Bloomington Montessori School.

c. Bloomington Montessori School may not deny admission to or disenroll a child based on the child's disability or because Bloomington Montessori School regards the child as having a disability.

d. Bloomington Montessori School will make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, and procedures when the modifications are necessary to afford

goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations to individuals with disabilities.

e. Requests for reasonable modifications beyond the scope of daily classroom accommodations may be directed to Bloomington Montessori School's Head of School, either formally (as in writing) or informally (as in orally), and will be addressed in collaboration with the Director of Montessori Programs within three (3) business days.

f. Bloomington Montessori School will not make decisions about admission, continued enrollment or re-enrollment, or needs for reasonable modifications based on assumptions, myths, or stereotypes about people with disabilities. Before making any enrollment decision where disability or behaviors associated with a disability is considered as part of the decision-making process, Bloomington Montessori School administrators will engage in an interactive process that includes consultation with or consideration of information provided by the following individuals: the child's parents or guardians, current teacher(s), anticipated teacher(s), and any persons providing support, therapy or other services to the child, to determine whether reasonable modifications to Bloomington Montessori School policies, practices and procedures could allow the child to attend Bloomington Montessori School;

g. If Bloomington Montessori School denies admission, continued enrollment, or enrollment to a child with a disability, Bloomington Montessori School shall outline in writing its reasons for the denial, including the names and titles of all persons consulted, any modifications proposed or considered, and the reasons, if any, why Bloomington Montessori School decided reasonable modifications were not available or would not allow the child to attend Bloomington Montessori School.

h. Bloomington Montessori School will not retaliate against or coerce in any way any person trying to exercise the rights of any person under this Agreement.

## **ADMISSIONS**

Bloomington Montessori will accept any child within its licensed capacity, provided its facilities and staff are adequate to meet the child's needs and the child's admission does not adversely affect the care given to other children.

At Bloomington Montessori School, we use our Enrollment Policy to prioritize applications to make enrollment offers. Factors used in this process include previous family attendance, previous Montessori experience, and date of application. For a complete summary of our Enrollment policy in our Policy Handbook, please visit the website or your FACTS Family portal under Resources.

### Re-enrollment Process

Families receive an Intent to Return form in mid-January, which is due within two weeks.

- If an Intent to Return form is received after the deadline, the seat will be opened to the Wait List.
- Enrollment packages are generated and distributed to families by the end of January.
- Signed contracts and deposits are due in mid-February. If a contract is not returned by the due date, a seat is opened to the wait list.

### Parent/Guardian Agreement

Bloomington Montessori has a clear mission to provide the highest-quality education, including a curriculum and values centered on Montessori philosophy. This is most effective when we partner with families sharing our children's vision.

The Parent/Guardian Agreement serves to facilitate this partnership by

- Clarifying expectations between the school and parents
- Conveying the need for a respectful, open, and trusting relationship between staff and parents
- Solidifying a common purpose in service of the child

For a copy of the Parent/Guardian Agreement, please visit our website: [BMS Parent/Guardian Agreement](#). The Parent Guardian Agreement must be signed by all caregivers assuming primary responsibility for the enrolled student(s).

### Financial Matters

Every returning family enrolling a child in BMS for the fall term will receive an enrollment offer in February. For the current tuition rates and fees schedule, please visit our website at [BMS Tuition Rates and Fees Schedule](#).

## **SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAMMING**

### Elementary After School Care

BMS elementary students can participate in Aftercare, an after-school program organized by BMS. Lower Elementary has 22 spots, and Upper Elementary has 24 spots. The aftercare program is offered on regular school days when school is open, from 3:30-5:30 pm, and is enrolled monthly and charged to your FACTS account. Children can enjoy free play or join a group activity.

### Summer Camps

BMS offers (4) two-week summer sessions. These summer enrichment classes cover thematic topics such as mind and body, Spanish, nature, cooking, camp

challenges, music, and artistic expression. Specific information regarding these sessions (dates, classes to be offered, etc.) will be provided each school year in February.

## **NUTRITION**

### Nutritional Policies

Our genuine concern for your child's development and health is the primary reason behind the BMS nutritional guidelines. As a participant in the National School Lunch Program, BMS serves hot lunches that meet the nutritional requirements of the program, providing 30% of the FDA-recommended daily nutrients. Also, classrooms offer daily healthy snacks. We strive to model lifelong healthy eating habits by limiting refined sugars and encouraging a balance of whole foods, including proteins, whole grains, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Any food brought to school (lunches, classroom celebrations, etc.) should adhere to this model. Please do not bring candy or sugary drinks to school; use your best judgment for all other items.

For more information on our nutritional guidelines, please visit

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/> or

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp>.

**Please note we are a *nut-free campus*, which includes all peanuts and tree nuts. We ask that parents not send these items to school for lunch or Aftercare snacks.**

### Nut-Free Campus Policy

BMS recognizes that nut allergies represent a health and safety hazard, which can have serious consequences for those who have such an allergy and the health of the School Community. In order to protect those students, staff, employees, volunteers, visitors and guests of the School Community from an environment that may be harmful to them because of such an allergy, the school hereby prohibits the use, serving, or selling of nuts, nut butter or any product containing nuts or nut oil by staff members, employees, volunteers, visitors, or guests in the BMS building, grounds, or off-campus at school sponsored events. The only exception to this will be trees on the school grounds.

The Board hereby directs the Head of School to formulate any other necessary rules and procedures to ensure the enforcement and implementation of this nut-free free policy.

For more information, visit [www.foodallergy.org/allergens/](http://www.foodallergy.org/allergens/), a resource recommended by local allergists.

### Lunch Program

#### Elementary

BMS serves lunch every day that school is in session. Menus are published in advance. All students may participate in the BMS elementary lunch program. Parents may select lunches in their FACTS Family Portal from the 8th through the 18th of each month. Students are responsible for bringing their own lunch to school on days not selected. Billing for the lunch program will be charged to your FACTS account. The administration, teachers, and kitchen staff cannot change your menu selections after the menu closes.

#### Early Childhood

All-day Early Childhood students are not eligible to bring their own lunch to school and must enroll in the school's hot lunch program.

Half-day Early Childhood students may choose to participate in the lunch program, which meets daily from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; however, there is only space for 20 students to participate. Spaces are available on a first-come, first-served basis, with students enrolled in the lunch program during the previous school year and their siblings are given priority. Students new to the lunch program will be enrolled based on their date of application to the lunch program. Early Childhood half-day lunch participants are required to pay a deposit of one month's fee, which is due with the May 1st deposit.

If your child has any dietary constraints, please speak to someone in the administrative office. We will require a physician's written documentation of these constraints to keep on file in the office and kitchen.

## **SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL**

### Parent Volunteer Opportunities

"It takes a village," and BMS is excited to collaborate with you in caring for your child. We want your insights from home and encourage parents to become involved here at school. We strive to provide various opportunities so that parents can contribute in ways they feel most comfortable. Opportunities include:

- Serving on the Board of Directors
- Serving on the Parent Action Committee (PAC), helping at school events, etc.
- Giving presentations to classrooms based on your special talents or knowledge

- Supporting classrooms by hauling away recycling, sewing projects, or washing and returning laundry
- Helping maintain the campus with your skills such as carpentry, painting, or landscaping
- Have another idea? We'd love to hear it!

### Parent Volunteer Hours

There is a **10-hour/year minimum** volunteer requirement for each family. For families who have not met this minimum requirement, a **\$350** inactivity fee will be charged to your FACTS account on May 1st. For this reason, please track and log your volunteer hours and report them to the office at [officeassistant@montessori.k12.in.us](mailto:officeassistant@montessori.k12.in.us) or your child's teacher.

### Philanthropic Opportunities

BMS is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that supports a philanthropic culture. We encourage families to give their time, talents, and dollars in ways that best suit their interests and resources. To do this, we strive to offer numerous opportunities for families to give back to the school and the Bloomington community. Please check out our development flyer to learn more here: [BMS Fundraising and Development Information](#).

A few of these opportunities include:

- Donations to the annual fund: Like other schools and colleges, BMS relies on donations to help meet annual expenses and provide funding for critical projects.
- Dine Out Series: Join other BMS families at local restaurants for a fun evening out while raising money for the school!
- Montessori Spirit Wear: Show your support (literally) with the purchase of BMS logo gear.
- Shopping classroom bake and craft sales to help children raise money for service projects.
- Participate in school community events such as the Fun Run or Parent Night Out!

## **COMMUNICATION**

### School Communication

Clear communication between the school and parents is vital to BMS's success. As a parent, you are responsible for reading the BMS bi-weekly newsletter and all emails from the school, including those from the Lead Teacher, Head of School, Board, and other school personnel.

In addition, vital information is provided on the classroom bulletin boards and at parent meetings. Please make every effort to attend all relevant meetings and inquire if you are unsure whether your attendance is mandatory.

We also encourage all parents to attend Parent Forums and classroom events. While these are not mandatory, they provide valuable information about BMS, Montessori education, and your child's time here.

Communication is a constant opportunity to model our values. It is also vital to meet the needs of all stakeholders. BMS understands that families are busy, and we will work hard to streamline information and respect parents' time. We also expect parents to respect staff's time by reading communications and responding when appropriate.

**Respect**-Modeling respect is at the forefront of all communication. This includes active listening, peaceful conflict resolution tools, and an appreciation for diversity of all kinds.

#### BMS Newsletter

Every other Friday, you will receive an email that includes vital information for the following two weeks of school, including current calendar items, specific classroom special events, celebrations, volunteer needs, information about meetings, fundraising opportunities, general information, and reminders. The email also educates parents with tidbits of Montessori information. **You are responsible for reviewing the bi-weekly newsletter and updating your family calendars accordingly.**

#### Facebook and Instagram

Like us on Facebook! The all-school page is

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bloomington-MontessoriSchool/156703431035885>.

Follow on Instagram! The all-school page is

<https://www.instagram.com/bloomingtonmontessorischool/>

Your classroom also has a private FB group for parents. Please email [headofschool@montessori.k12.in.us](mailto:headofschool@montessori.k12.in.us), and the Head of School will help you join your child's group.

#### Classroom Communication

**Classroom Communication**-Classrooms communicate in a variety of ways. There are variations between classrooms based on teacher or need; however, there is a general framework that you can expect to be demonstrated throughout the school:



- Weekly communication: Early Childhood students do not yet use weekly work plans and bring work home as they finish it or when they are done displaying it. At the elementary levels, you can expect to see some work, work records, and portfolios traveling home each week. **Read your classroom's customs and welcome information for more details.**
- Quarterly communication: Lead Teachers send a curricular update in your child's progress report each quarter. While many language and math lessons are individualized, this information will explain themes covered during the quarter, such as in the cultural areas. More individualized curriculum progress will be discussed at conferences (see below).
- Parent/Teacher conferences: Formal conferences occur once each semester. In this format, teachers provide detailed information about a student's progress through the curriculum.
- Parent Forums: Because we are not a system that gives grades and reduces child progress to a percentage or letter, parents must understand the larger context of the data that will be shared with them. Educating yourself about our school and philosophy is the best way to do this.

Opportunities include:

- Parent Orientation nights when you are entering a new classroom. These events explain the systems of communication specific to your classroom, customs to expect, etc. One will occur in the spring before your transition to help prepare you for what generally to expect and in the fall of your transition to give more practical and immediate information.
- Parent Education Forums: At least two forums are held annually on various topics. We usually offer a philosophical forum in the fall and an academic forum in the spring. Additional forums may be scheduled throughout the year as opportunities or interests arise.

We highly recommend you attend all Parent Forum opportunities to establish a strong partnership with the school and prepare yourself to offer your child the best possible support.

**Parent/Teacher Conferences**-Parent/Teacher Conferences occur in the fall and spring. Sign-up times and procedures are announced through the office, and you are responsible for signing up for a time that works best for your family. Conferences will be held via Zoom. Teachers will work hard to stay on time, end and begin conferences promptly, and honor parents' schedules.

As children are transitioning into our school during the beginning of the Early Childhood program, this is a casual team meeting in which teachers and parents share their observations regarding the child's development. This begins to be a more formal process in kindergarten through sixth grade. You will be sent a progress report before your conference time. It is very important to read this document in advance and come prepared with any questions or concerns. Conferences are 15 minutes long, and each moment should be used effectively. All of a child's parents are encouraged to attend the conference, and the discussion should stay focused on the child.

**As Concerns Arise**—One of the benefits of a smaller school to which parents transport their children daily is the opportunity to discuss important issues with staff as they arise. Your teacher is usually available daily for quick questions, notifications, or comments at drop-off and dismissal times. **Read your classroom's daily schedule.** More complex discussions can be emailed or brought up in person to schedule a meeting around teacher and parent availability.

#### Parent Action Committee

BMS is fortunate to be supported by an active group of parent collaborators, the Parent Action Committee (PAC). Every parent at BMS can be a member of the PAC. The PAC organizes yearly projects, including school-wide service projects and family events. Some typical events include:

- Teacher Appreciation Week—children are invited to bring small tokens of appreciation throughout the week. Donations are collected for staff gifts and a staff luncheon.
- Fall Festival--the school comes together each fall for a pitch-in/pot-luck meal, games, and crafts.
- Spring Fling--the community comes together each spring for a pitch-in/pot-luck meal and fun activities.
- A school-wide family service project in our greater community.
- Occasional parent night-outs and whole family craft events

The newsletter and signs around campus provide information about the PAC monthly meetings. Participation in planning or staffing PAC events counts toward family volunteer hours.

#### Use of FACTS Directory Information

Access to the FACTS directory information is a privilege for families who want to share their contact information with the BMS community. Providing this access facilitates communication among families, which positively impacts the school community. For example, families can use FACTS directory information to help plan events, discuss class projects, and as part of volunteer obligations for the

school. The FACTS directory information should not be used to facilitate unwanted or disrespectful communication toward any member or members of the BMS community. Examples of this unauthorized use include using the FACTS directory information to spread gossip (internal or external to the school), distribute information to families about political or religious issues, share confidential or negative information about BMS staff and students, and circumvent the established chain of communications as outlined in Article 1, Section 6 of the Policy Handbook. In general, families should keep in mind when using the FACTS directory information that many families want their contact information to be used sparingly and, therefore, limit their use of the FACTS directory information to cases where it is challenging or impossible to obtain contact information directly from families.

The use of the FACTS directory to set up an alternate communication channel (e.g., text messaging, instant messaging, SMS, live chat) is permitted; however, BMS is not responsible for communication sent or received through a channel not owned or managed by the school.

Additionally, any unauthorized use of the FACTS directory information may subject a family to consequences as outlined in BMS's Anti-Bullying found in Article VIII, Section 5 of the Policy Handbook or Collaborative Community policies found in Article III, Section 7 of the Policy Handbook.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### Attendance Policy

A student's success at school is dependent upon regular and consistent attendance. At BMS, we embrace educating the whole child, particularly the idea that special times away with parents provide a unique bonding and learning essential to a child's development and well-being. We understand that field trips can enrich a child's education, so we include them in our curriculum. This document should provide you with clarification about our school policies regarding attendance, absenteeism, and tardiness.

According to the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Attendance Guidelines (October 7, 2014) and the Indiana Code (IC) 20-20-8-8, which was recently amended, habitual truancy was defined to include students absent ten (10) days or more from school within a school year without being excused or without being absent under a parental request filed with the school. Chronic absenteeism was defined as a student absent from school for ten percent (10 percent) or more of a school year for any reason.

Unlike public schools, private schools can set their policies regarding how many reasonable days a student may miss during the academic year. BMS certainly takes individual situations into account, such as health issues, travel, etc.. Still, in

general, we agree with the current IDOE recommended ten (10) allowed days absent and ten percent (17 days) during an academic year when it comes to defining habitual and chronic situations. When a child is frequently out sick or arrives late consistently, a negative impact on the child's ability to stay current with lesson concepts and targeted areas of study occurs and impedes academic progress.

BMS expects that trips will be planned to occur as much as possible within the scheduled holiday dates, teacher work, and professional days as listed on the school calendar. If you schedule a trip or a day off other than during the posted breaks, a written/emailed note from the parent or guardian stating the reason for the absence should be submitted to the office. If your child is out sick, please call (812-336-2800) and notify the office the morning the child is out. Parents need to understand that the school and Lead teachers cannot be held accountable for the quality of their child's educational experience when the child has excessive tardiness or absenteeism. If your child exceeds the acceptable amount of absenteeism, you will receive a formal letter stating that we are concerned about this area.

### Illness

To protect the school community's health, a child who appears ill upon arrival will not be admitted. Should a child become ill while at school, parents will be contacted to make arrangements for their immediate pick up (within 30 minutes) of the child. BMS will attempt to contact the parents first and then attempt to contact the emergency contacts listed on the Enrollment Agreement.

If your child tested negative for COVID and has a contagious illness or an illness that interferes with their ability to function at school, please follow the guidelines in the table below. Symptoms include, but are not limited to, a fever of 100.4 degrees, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, or significant behavioral changes.

A slight cold, runny nose, or persistent cough is usually not reason enough for a child to miss school. While unclear nasal discharge indicates a possible infection, it is usually not contagious to those around the child. Any child too ill to participate in indoor *and* outdoor activities should be kept home from school. If your child is well enough to attend school, we (BMS) will consider the child well enough to go outdoors to play. **Please call the school each day your child is ill so that we can track attendance and any patterns of illness within the classrooms.**

The safe return date may vary based on the diagnosed illness. BMS will use recommendations from local, state, and federal health agencies. At a minimum, BMS must follow the directives of the Monroe County Health Department. When

there is a recommendation discrepancy, BMS reserves the right to go above and beyond those recommendations to ensure the community's safety.

Illness	Can Return to School
Fever of 100.4 or higher	24 hours fever-free without medication
Vomiting or diarrhea	24 hours symptom-free
Influenza	24 hours symptom-free
Strep Throat	24 hours after the start of antibiotics
COVID-19	24 hours fever free without medication and symptoms are resolving
Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease	When all lesions are crusted over
Lice	After treatment, all live lice and nits must not be present.
Impetigo	24 hours after the start of antibiotics and all open sores must be covered
Measles	4 days after the appearance of the rash
Pink Eye	24 hours after the start of antibiotics
Unknown Rash	After treatment by a doctor
Chicken Pox	When all lesions are crusted over

Winter Weather Policy - School Closings and Delays

BMS will make its own decisions regarding delays and will take into consideration the Monroe County Community School Corporation’s (MCCSC) decision regarding school delays and school closings under the following conditions:

- MCCSC is delaying or closing because its scouts have determined that the roads are icy and hazardous in the morning or, in some cases, in the evening before school.
- MCCSC opts to delay or close for extremely cold conditions.
- MCCSC is delaying or closing for the second consecutive day.
- Other conditions that may arise in which MCCSC delays or closes.

The Head of School will make the decision, and all BMS parents and staff will be notified by email of ANY school closing or delay no later than 6:30 am. Additional notifications will be placed on social media channels and the WFIU/WTIU website.

In the event of a delay, all classroom doors will open at 10:00 am. There will be a morning half-day preschool from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. BMS parents will be notified of the decision no later than 6:30 a.m. by email, the school's website homepage, FACTS Family Portal, social media channels, and WFIU/WTIU website.

Always make safe decisions about whether to come to school based on road conditions in your neighborhood. Parents are free to opt out at their discretion, and BMS will do its best to ensure any important learning goals of the day are noticed.  
*(Adopted February 2021)*

### Calendar

Please familiarize yourself with the school calendar, which can be found on the website. Holidays with no school, Teacher Professional Development Days, school events such as parent forums and community celebrations, classroom events such as Children's Evenings and performances, and Parent/Teacher Conference Days will be marked. Updates are made to the calendar throughout the year, and notices are posted in the school newsletter.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### Health Summary

After completing their enrollment packet, parents were asked to upload their child's health and vaccination records. If you could not upload this document during enrollment, please submit it directly to the office by emailing [officeassistant@montessori.k12.in.us](mailto:officeassistant@montessori.k12.in.us). This form communicates to staff any medical information they should know of and ensures treatment of your child by a physician or a hospital should the school not be able to reach you in an emergency. If your child has any allergies or other serious medical problems, please return additional related forms, completed and signed by your child's doctor, before the first day of school.

### Injuries

Minor accidents occurring during the school day, such as cuts and scratches, receive prompt attention from the BMS staff. In a serious accident, every attempt will be made to immediately contact the family or the backup person specified on the emergency medical form so that arrangements may be made for the child to be taken home, brought to a physician, or taken to the hospital. If necessary, a teacher will accompany the child in an ambulance.

### Medications

Children may be administered prescription and non-prescription drugs only after their physician has authorized it and the school has received the completed permission forms (available in the office). The parent must deliver all medicine and instructions to the appropriate staff member in the original, pre-packaged, or pharmacy-labeled container.

### Security Protocol

#### Door buzzers/cameras

The entrance doors of the Main and Annex Buildings will be locked outside the designed arrival and dismissal windows stated below. Parents/guardians coming to school to pick up or drop off their child/children outside of the arrival and dismissal windows MUST come to the main entrance and ring the bell. Parents/guardians will remain in the office while an office staff member will retrieve the child or children from the classroom/s. NOTE: Please allow extra time for this additional step in security. Additional time can be saved if the parents/guardians inform the classroom teacher/office staff of the plans for an early pick-up that day.

#### Building Locked/Unlocked Time Schedule

8:00 am-9:15am	Unlocked (Main)
8:15 am-8:30am	Unlocked (Annex)
8:30 am-3:15 pm	Locked (Annex)
9:15 am-11:15 am	Locked (Main)
11:15 am-12:30 pm	Unlocked (Main)
12:30 pm-3:15 pm	Locked (Main & Annex)
3:15 pm-3:35 pm	Unlocked (Annex)
3:15 pm-4:00 pm	Unlocked (Main)
4:00 pm-5:30 pm	Locked (Main & Annex)

BMS policy requires that an Early Childhood student may leave the building only when accompanied by an adult. Please exit the building with your child; do not let them run ahead. No Early Childhood students should leave the building at any time unless supervised by their parents or another adult designated explicitly by the parents. Teachers will release children into the care of any other person with express instructions from the parents. Children dismissed from the classroom at the end of the school day must be carefully supervised to ensure their proper respect for their own safety, that of others, and for property in the commons and the parking lot.

If an intoxicated or impaired person arrives to pick up a child from school, the lead teacher or Head of School will suggest that another person be called to transport

the child. If the intoxicated or impaired person insists on removing the child from the school, a staff member will immediately report the incident to the local police.

The school's driveway is one-way. Please enter the parking lot from the north and exit from the south.

**PARENTS: Please inform the school of any changes in your home and/or work telephone number(s) and cell phone number. Also, if the telephone numbers for your backup persons change, please inform the school.**

#### Evacuation/Lockdown

Fire (evacuation) drills are held monthly throughout the school year, and Tornado (lockdown) drills are held in the fall and spring. Children are thoroughly educated about the appropriate procedures in case of emergency.

**In the event of a fire, tornado, or other emergency:** In the case of fire, the Fire Alarms in the building will be activated, and the Head of School shall be responsible for contacting 911 Emergency services to dispatch the appropriate Emergency Personnel and ensuring that all staff learns of the emergency imminent evacuation. Teachers shall instruct the children in their classroom to calmly line up at the exterior exit of their classroom, and evacuation can proceed. Once outside and at their classroom-specific designated meeting place, one teacher will do a roll call to ensure that each child is accounted for and safely out of the building. In the case of a tornado, the Head of School will alert the classrooms using the intercom system. Teachers shall instruct the children to proceed to the designated lockdown space and remain there until they are notified. The Head of the School and local law enforcement review BMS's Emergency Action Plan annually to ensure the school is current on best practices.

#### Sun and Insect Exposure

Please apply sunscreen and insect repellent at home before school. If your child needs reapplication, please send non-aerosol sunscreen and/or insect repellent to your child and inform the teacher of his/her requirements. Please label the sunscreen with your child's name.

#### Guidance and Discipline Policy

The Montessori Method of education works to develop a child's internal discipline and self-guidance. The atmosphere fostered in the Montessori environment is one of order and respect for people and things. The Montessori classroom is a small society that encourages self-control and responsibility for one's own actions; this is the foundation that facilitates the freedom teachers are able to give children in a Montessori environment. This is referred to as "freedom within limits". The goal of



discipline is to help a child learn the skills they lack to achieve belonging and success in the community in appropriate ways. We strive to help children develop a positive self-image and respect for themselves, others, and the environment. This policy outlines the systems Bloomington Montessori will use to support children in developing internal discipline and to ensure the safety and experience of the Montessori environment for all community members.

### Classroom Expectations

The Montessori environment includes a fine balance between structure and freedom. The concept that freedom carries responsibility is gradually introduced from the beginning of school. Freedom does not mean being able to do solely what you want to do. It involves being able to identify what is constructive and beneficial for yourself and the community. BMS teachers guide students to understand their rights and responsibilities in the community. Faculty shall establish guiding principles according to the school's guidelines to maintain an orderly, productive, respectful, and peaceful environment and consistently expect all children to adhere to them. Each classroom spends considerable time discussing and teaching students the guiding principles and models those principles in different situations. Please see our Student Services document for more detailed information about classroom expectations, supports, and accommodation systems within our Tier 1 services.

### Additional Disciplinary Action

For most children, these modeling and culture-setting lessons are enough. However, other disciplinary actions may be necessary when children continue to struggle. If additional discipline is necessary, natural and logical consequences are used. Disciplinary concerns will be addressed with parents and caregivers and may result in the development of a Behavior Plan.

Faculty will immediately stop any behaviors that are:

- Disruptive
- Dangerous
- Damaging

### Disruptive, Potentially Dangerous, & Damaging Behaviors

Exhibiting occasional disruptive behaviors is age-appropriate for children. However, if children are not able to be redirected by teachers or peers and repeatedly or continuously engage in disruptive behavior, this has a significant negative impact on the classroom and students. In addition, intended, unwanted, and/or

inappropriate physical contact such as kicking, hitting, biting, verbal abuse, or “bullying” of any kind will not be tolerated. (Please see our Policy on Bullying). If children behave in a way that may be harmful to themselves or others or is consistently disruptive, our policy may include responses such as:

- The nearest staff member removes the child from the situation and stays with the child until he or she regains control.
- The child then returns to the group with the staff member and stays with the staff member until the child engages in an activity.
- The staff member then stays nearby to ensure the behavior does not reoccur.
- If there are injured parties, another staff member attends to their needs.
- Incident/accident reports (when necessary) will be completed and signed by a parent/guardian, teacher, and administrator.
- Students may be brought to the office if the classroom teachers cannot help reset the child(ren).

Incidents of disruptive, potentially dangerous, or damaging behavior are typically considered Tier 2 behaviors in our Student Services unless patterns of these behaviors persist.

#### Repeated Incidents of Disruptive or Potentially Dangerous or Damaging Behaviors

When a pattern of concerning behavior occurs (this may be defined as 3 or more times in a two-week period), we seek consultation with the Parents, and BMS Team to communicate our concerns and create a Behavior Plan. This may include a requirement for consultation with an outside professional. This is considered Tier 3 behavior (see Student Services for more information on Tier 3 supports).

#### Dangerous Incidents

When serious incidents of physical harm to self or others occur, we must ask that the student not attend school while the behavior is being addressed. We may limit the child’s participation in our program and/or rescind the offer of enrollment until the child can demonstrate observance of the school’s ground rules.

For serious problems for which an extended reset period is needed for the student, a student may be sent home. This should not be viewed or communicated as either punishment or a solution to the long-term problem. It creates needed space between the student and their triggers and may help the classroom or other students feel safe. It is the first step before a conference can be held to create a plan to resolve the problem. The classroom lead teacher or an administrator should discuss this with the parent.

We put considerable thought and effort into helping each student learn skills that will make it possible for them to contribute to the group and feel a part of it. Our goal is to help all children be successful without significant disciplinary action. If you have any concerns regarding our Guidance and Discipline Policy and how it pertains to your child, please contact your child's teacher or Head of School. In accordance with Article II, Section 1 of the Policy Handbook all student information and records are kept confidential.

### Anti-Bullying Policy

Bloomington Montessori is founded on principles of education, love of learning, peace, respecting oneself and one's peers, and fostering a love for the community. As a part of our mission, we do not allow bullying and take it very seriously. Bullying creates a climate of fear and hostility, disrupts the educational process, inhibits the ability to learn, drastically affects student participation in their learning environment, and is ultimately harmful to both the aggressor(s) and the victim(s).

The first step in addressing bullying is learning and understanding what bullying is and what form it may take in various situations. Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a *real or perceived power imbalance*. The behavior is *repeated*, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. (StopBullying.gov)

We additionally are in a world in which we must also address cyberbullying. Cyberbullying may be a single incident that is damaging to one or more students. Although cyberbullying may originate off BMS premises, it can still significantly and widely impact the classroom.

In addition to understanding what bullying is, teachers, staff and students need to learn how to identify bullying. As noted above in the definition, bullying can take several forms, and the following are examples of the four (4) most general types:

#### 1) Verbal Bullying:

- Teasing
- Name-Calling
- Insulting
- Gossip
- Threatening to cause harm

## 2) Social Bullying, sometimes referred to as Relational or Emotional Bullying:

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone in public
- Embarrassing someone in public
- Retrieving someone from one group in order to join another group

## 3) Physical Bullying:

- Hitting/kicking/pinching
- Pulling hair or clothing
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude faces or hand gestures

## 4) Cyberbullying:

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, tablets, and communication tools, including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites. Sending mean text messages or emails, posting negative comments on social networking sites uploading embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles on social networking sites,

Bloomington Montessori takes a proactive stance in regards to bullying. BMS understands that in its role of educating young children, it is in a position to provide them with tools for handling anger, frustration, and impulsiveness. Often, frustration can result in bullying, and BMS hopes to provide a learning environment without fear, intimidation, and bullying.

Should an incident of bullying become identified or reported to BMS teachers, staff, parents, or the Head of School, care must be taken in aiding both the bullied student and the student who is bullied. BMS will make sure both students are supported.

### Weapons on Campus

Montessori pedagogy emphasizes the importance of peace education and a peaceful environment in which children can learn. To ensure that Bloomington Montessori School maintains an environment that is safe and free of violence for

all students, staff, and visitors, the school prohibits possessing or using dangerous weapons on its property or at school-sponsored events, regardless of location.

All persons on campus or representing Bloomington Montessori School in another location are subject to this policy, including students, staff members, service providers and temporary employees, parents, and other visitors to the school's buildings or grounds. Any staff member in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action according to Employee Disciplinary Policy and be reported to law enforcement. Any student in violation of this policy will be subject to student disciplinary policy, up to and including dismissal from campus. Any parent, visitor, service provider, or temporary employee in violation of this policy will be asked to leave Bloomington Montessori School's campus and may be subject to the school's community conduct policy and be reported to law enforcement. This policy is not intended to supersede state law regarding the carrying requirements for law enforcement officers.

The Bloomington Montessori School's campus is defined as all buildings, sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, walkways, playgrounds, and other physical areas belonging to or leased by Bloomington Montessori School. "Dangerous weapons" include firearms, explosives, knives, and other weapons that might be considered dangerous or that could cause harm. Employees and visitors, including temporary employees and service providers, are responsible for making sure that any item possessed by themselves is not prohibited by this policy. The parents and/or guardians of enrolled students are responsible for making sure that the items in their possession or in the student's possession are not prohibited by this policy.

When there is reasonable suspicion, Bloomington Montessori School reserves the right at any time to search the personal containers, briefcases, bookbags, purses, packages, and people entering the campus, as well as all areas on campus, for the purpose of determining whether a weapon has been brought onto campus in violation of policy. Individuals who refuse to permit such a search under this policy will be subject to removal or disciplinary procedures according to their role within Bloomington Montessori School. Searches will be conducted with respect for the privacy of the individual whose belongings are being searched in a separate room when possible. Searches will be conducted with a minimum of two staff members. If the individual whose belongings are searched is a student, the administration will notify that student's parents as quickly as possible. Staff members will notify law

enforcement or the Department of Children's Services if the search results in the identification of a weapon on campus.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### Dress Code

BMS Elementary School's dress code supports a peaceful, learning-centered environment. Thus, clothing typically worn at the beach or for loungewear is not appropriate at school, nor is clothing promoting commercial media images, violence, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual innuendo, profanity, obscenity, etc., or gangs. Beyond this, clothing should be comfortable and suited to the season and cover areas of the body commonly known as "private," including the midriff. Undergarments may not be exposed nor worn as outerwear.

Parents are asked to dress their children appropriately for outside play during winter. Hats, mittens, scarves, and boots are required when the weather dictates. If a child does not come to school with appropriate clothing, that child will not be allowed to play outside. Please label all outerwear with your child's name; we finish yearly with many unclaimed pieces. Below is our recess clothing policy based on temperature and weather conditions:

#### Degrees(F) Clothing Requirements

60's and above Short sleeves are fine

50's Long Sleeves

40's Jacket or sweater

30's Coat

20's and below Coat, hat, gloves, or mittens

### Standardized Testing

Our once-yearly standardized testing affords third through sixth-grade students the practice of taking tests, something Montessori children do not often do. It allows parents to get standardized feedback on their students' performance and the data they need for public school placement upon graduation. As BMS students do not experience the pressure of a testing culture and are educated to be critical thinkers, they generally do very well on the test. If you do not want your child to participate in standardized testing, please contact our assistant head of school at [assistanthos@montessori.k12.in.us](mailto:assistanthos@montessori.k12.in.us).

### Transportation

Parents are responsible for providing transportation for their children. The school furnishes a roster of names, phone numbers, and addresses within the parent directory in the FACTS Family Portal to help parents make carpool arrangements.

If someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, they must be on your pick-up list on file with the office to be released. Unfamiliar adults will be asked to check in with their child's teacher or at the main office to show ID before picking up the child. It is helpful for you to prepare unfamiliar adults for this before they arrive. For more information, please see the section on security.

Students in every program take field trips. We will walk for those a short distance away, such as the Community Orchard. For others, we may take city buses or ask parent volunteers or teachers to drive.

Elementary children with parent permission to travel to or from school without an adult must have a written and signed directive on file, including days, times, and destinations the release should cover.

#### Social Media

Bloomington Montessori School recognizes that the Internet and related technology can enhance learning if such technology is appropriately accessed. Although BMS does not support the use of social media within our student population, we recognize that it is a form of communication used outside of school by our students. The school prohibits bullying through the use of data or computer software accessed through any computer, computer system, or computer network. Students using social media to bully or harass other students are subject to the Bullying Policy and disciplinary procedures. Students should alert teachers or staff members if they see threatening, inappropriate, or harmful content online (including messages, posts, and images).