



**HEART OF TEXOMA
MONTESSORI
ACADEMY
EST 2022**

**2024-2025
Parent and Student Handbook**



Welcome to the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy Family!

Dear Families,

We are pleased to welcome families to Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy for the 2024-2025 school year. We pride ourselves on being a strong and connected community; as members of that community, we all have an important part to play.

This Parent Handbook is designed as a reference for you to access information about our school's policies and procedures. We firmly believe the partnership between parents, teachers, and administrators is key to a successful relationship, and our goal is to provide the tools and resources for good communication from the start.

Please take time to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook and refer back to it as needed throughout the year. If you lose your copy, an up-to-date version will be available on our website at www.texomamontessori.org. Additionally, if you have questions or comments, please reach out to our Director, Travis Johnson, at director@texomamontessori.org.

We look forward to an exciting, productive, and fun school year. Thank you for allowing us to know and educate your children and welcome to the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy family.

Best Regards,
Travis Johnson, M.Ed
Director

Contents

About Us.....	6
Mission Statement	6
The Philosophy	6
Accreditation	7
Operations.....	7
Hours of Operation	7
Admissions	7
Attendance	11
Absences	12
Release of Children	12
Carpool/Dropoff/Pickup Policy	12
Carpool/Dropoff	12
Carpool Rules and Regulations	13
Pickup	14
Early Pickup	15
Late or Non-Pick-Up	15
Field Trips.....	16
Standardized Testing.....	16
General Operational Policies and Procedures	17
Toys	17
Videos and Music	18
Electronic Devices	18
Naps	18
Skin and Sun Protection	19
Water Play	20
Holidays.....	20
Holiday Celebrations	20
Celebration of Life and Birthdays	20
Extra Clothing.....	21



Emergency Weather Procedures	22
Tuition & Payment Methods	22
Registration Fee	23
Supply Fee	24
Additional Costs and Fees	24
Withdrawals	24
Summertime at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy	24
Food & Nutrition Policy	25
Nut Policy (We are NOT a Nut-Free School)	26
Communication	26
Conferences	28
Correspondence with Teachers and Staff	28
Parent–Teacher Relationships	29
Visits and Volunteering	29
Visits	29
Volunteering	29
Cell Phones and Conducting Personal Communications (parents)	29
Safety	29
Emergency Preparedness Plan	30
Relocation	30
Evacuation	30
Intruders	31
Medical Emergencies	31
Documentation	31
Behavior Management	33
Biting	42
Suspension or Expulsion	44
Dismissal	44
Child Protection	45
Child Abuse Reporting Policy	45
Health & Illness Policies	46

Health Check	46
Exclusion From Care	46
When a Child Becomes Ill While in Care	47
Readmitting a Previously Ill Child	48
COVID-19 Policy	48
Vaccination Policy	48
Staff TB Test and Vaccination Requirements	49
Vision and Hearing Testing Requirements	49
Medication	49
Medical Emergencies	49
Procedures for Major Injuries	50
Procedure for Minor Injuries	50
Allergies.....	50
Infants and Safe Sleeping	50
Nursing	50
General Other Policies.....	51
Guide to Parent's Rights	51
Students with Special Needs.....	51
Licensing	52
Firearms and Weapons.....	53
Gang Free Zone	53
Policy Changes	54



About Us

Mission Statement

At Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy, our mission is not just a statement but a commitment to your child's future. We are dedicated to providing a nurturing, educationally rich, and developmentally appropriate Montessori-based early childhood, elementary, and middle school learning experience. This experience is designed to empower students to build life skills and embrace their full potential. Our ultimate goal is to prepare our students for a life of purpose, integrity, and academic accomplishment. We do this by fostering independent learners, critical thinkers, and tomorrow's leaders.

The Philosophy

As a Montessori educational facility, we believe in the power of collaboration. Our goal is to equip students with knowledge and training across various subjects. Our program aims to create a supportive atmosphere that helps each student develop as a whole person. Students are challenged to think and observe, coached to handle facts and interpret ideas, taught to interact appropriately with others, and encouraged to express their feelings and attitudes respectfully. These objectives can only be achieved through a collaborative partnership that involves parents, students, teachers, and the school. Each member of this community is an active participant and must accept their individual responsibilities and work together to ensure the success of our students, staff, and school.

Our philosophy is rooted in the Montessori method, which fosters self-motivated growth for children and adolescents in all areas of their development with the goal of nurturing each child's natural desire for knowledge, understanding, and respect. Our goal is to facilitate the development of the whole child so he or she may reach his/her full potential and achieve personal success and satisfaction throughout life. We strive to develop critical thinkers, independent learners, and problem solvers of the future. We also believe the relationship between the family and the school is essential for children's success, and we strive to keep open communication and partnerships with each of our families.

During the school day, our programs focus on the development of each child's full potential, facilitated by teachers specially trained in the Montessori method and philosophy. Our lessons are based on children's natural curiosity and love of learning, using both concrete lessons and activities through individual instruction. This allows our students to associate abstract concepts with hands-on learning. The three-year age range in each classroom provides numerous benefits that are immediately apparent when observing our classrooms. Our younger students have an opportunity to observe and imitate the older students as they work. In comparison, older students are provided opportunities to reinforce their education and mentor and assist younger students.



Each child also has the ability to learn and develop at their own pace within a classroom that accommodates various levels of abilities and complexities.

Our curriculum, policies, and procedures are annually reviewed and revised as necessary.

Accreditation

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will strive to distinguish itself as one of the top Montessori academies by seeking outside accreditation. We are currently a 4 Star—Texas Rising Star Accreditation program. This is the highest level in TRS and was achieved on the first attempt. We must be in operation for three years before becoming eligible for a Montessori Accreditation program. For more information concerning this, please see our director.

Operations

Hours of Operation

The academic school day runs from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Drop-off is at 7:30 a.m., and pickup is no later than 3:15p.m. The aftercare program requires pick up no later than 5:30p.m.

For the 2024-2025 School Year, we offer the following classroom options:

Pre-Primary: Ages 2 through 3

Primary: Ages 3 through 6

Lower Elementary: 1st Grade through 3rd Grade

Upper Elementary: 4th Grade through 6th Grade

Middle School: 7th through 9th Grade

Inclement Weather:

We follow the Sherman ISD calendar for severe and inclement weather notifications. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy's school calendar can be found on our website, which details days closed and school events.

Admissions

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy admits students of any race, color, and national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate based on race, color, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-administered programs. Every Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy student is encouraged and expected to participate appropriately in the general privileges, programs, rights, and responsibilities accorded to all students through the school's various activities.



Furthermore, children of any religion, national, cultural, sexual orientation, or racial background are welcome to enroll in the school as long as they and their parents accept the primary position of Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy in its efforts to provide a Montessori-based education program. Admission to the school constitutes a sincere acknowledgment by students and their parents to comply willingly with the school's regulations in all matters of personal conduct, respect for authority, and the philosophy of Maria Montessori's educational curriculum.

Application Process

1. The admission application is an online process that can be accessed through ChildPilot. We do not accept paper applications. The application will require a non-refundable Registration fee and a twice-a-year supply fee. Applications that are not fully completed and submitted electronically will not reserve a placement in the applied grade level. In addition to the completed application form, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy must also receive previous school records, immunization records, and other documentation as indicated on the application prior to the child's start date.
2. Previous school records must include report cards and copies of standardized test scores. Home-schooled applicants must provide the appropriate documentation for all work done. In addition, the application should include any information that provides insight regarding the student's qualifications for admission, such as school activities, honor organizations, athletics, community service involvements, and special awards. This information will be used to create an individual lesson plan for your child.
3. Recommendations will be requested and will be treated confidentially.
4. If available, financial assistance requests must be made at the time of application and are confidential. Incomplete scholarship forms may delay the admission process. **Only** after all the above requirements are fulfilled will an application be considered complete and ready for consideration.

Interviews

1. When all student application information and examination results are available, the Director will schedule a family visit for the parents and students.
2. Parents will be notified of the final decision concerning admission. Parents will be kept advised of the application status if an opening is unavailable.
3. Upon the student's acceptance, the parent must contact the Director to complete the arrangement of tuition and fees.



Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students will be automatically re-enrolled and charged the Registration Fee in February. Families have until February 15th to notify the school that they will not continue with our program. Once we receive written notice, your student's spot will be offered to a student on our waiting list. In March, registration of new families will begin.

The State of Texas Health and Human Services requires us to have current and updated information on each child in our school. This is also for your child's safety. Prior to the start of each year, we will ask you to confirm that all vital information on your forms is correct or that you update and renew all your paperwork and forms.

Academic Integrity

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students are expected to maintain high standards of personal and academic conduct. Students are presumed to pursue academic excellence by being disciplined, applying themselves, and cultivating the talents, opportunities, and abilities given to them. Teachers strive to teach in a manner that encourages and engages students to reach their full potential within a prepared environment conducive to academic growth and development. If a student chooses to compromise his or her integrity through deception or academic dishonesty, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will address the academic misconduct, seek to reconcile the student with the misconduct, and rectify the situation. Teachers who have reason to believe that a student has engaged in cheating or any other act of academic dishonesty are required to communicate their suspicions with the student and the Director, who, after investigation, will recommend the appropriate action to be taken.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Cheating** is defined as copying from another student's written work, computer files, or material from devices, including the unauthorized use of cellular telephones, calculators, and other electronic tools. Cheating also includes knowingly buying, selling, stealing, or using the contents of a test or other unauthorized assignments and submitting the work as the student's original work. Teachers who have reason to believe that a student has engaged in cheating or any other act of academic dishonesty are required to communicate their suspicions with the student and the Director, who, after investigation, will recommend the appropriate action to be taken.
- **Plagiarism** uses another person's original thoughts, ideas, software, and intellectual property. It includes writing as one's own without crediting the actual author or creator. Universally, plagiarism is considered cheating or lying, and students who engage in plagiarism will be subject to a range of academic disciplinary action that includes, minimally, the loss of credit for the questionable work; the maximum penalty could result in the student's expulsion from Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy.
- **Questionable Behavior:** Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy believes everyone has unique perspectives and accepts different behaviors accordingly. However, in cases where specific practices are considered questionable, the school administration holds the authority and responsibility to decide the appropriate course of action if a behavior comes into question. The administration will review the behavior in question and take necessary disciplinary action, which may include the removal of any student who participates in the questionable behaviors. For this reason, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy expects all students to willingly abide by the school's rules, policies, regulations, and guidelines. Parental cooperation and student compliance are essential to ensure that every student achieves the goals and objectives of the school mission statement to prepare our students



for a life of purpose, integrity, and academic accomplishment. We do this by fostering independent learners, critical thinkers, and tomorrow's leaders.

Conduct

Trust: This is a relationship that develops slowly between students and other students, between students and teachers, and between faculty members and their colleagues. Trust increases when people are honest with and considerate of each other about everything said or done. Trust is quickly destroyed when someone does or says something to breach that trust.

Compliance: Every student and family is expected to willingly accept the policy and procedure presented in the Student and Parent Handbook.

General Expectations

Attending Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy is a privilege, and it is assumed that, upon admission to Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy, every student not only desires to attend Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy but also seeks to uphold and maintain the school's high standard of personal conduct. Parents and students are expected to realize that maintaining an orderly atmosphere in the classroom and school is critical to the learning process, and they should support the order and discipline necessary to succeed in the educational process. In our partnership with parents, the school administration and faculty are committed to addressing all patterns of student misbehavior and assisting parents in correcting problems positively and constructively. Thus, only a minimum of disciplinary action should ever be necessary at any time.

All Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students are expected to behave and conduct themselves in a way that promotes a positive learning environment, the physical well-being of all, and opportunities for personal character development.

Students are expected to come to school and class ready to work. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students should focus on preparedness for learning — the ability to attend class consistently with the proper preparation, all assigned homework papers completed, and notebook paper, pens, pencils, etc. In addition, students are expected to demonstrate care for their school in the classroom, hallways, restrooms, playground, and throughout the campus at all times. Students should maintain neat and orderly work areas, classrooms, lockers, cubbies, and backpacks.

Attendance

While Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy feels regular attendance is important at all stages of school enrollment, we also feel real-life experience teaches great life lessons, too. We require

notification when a student is not in attendance and why. We encourage families and students who take time off during the school year to prepare a report for the student to present as part of their academic experience. Excellence in education requires continuous instruction, student participation, classroom interaction, shared learning experiences, and study for students to reach their maximum academic success.

Absences

It is important that children are in class for as much of the academic year as possible. Each child plays an essential role in the classroom dynamics, and individualized lessons are planned each day for the children. However, we do not expect a parent to send their child to school when they are sick or recuperating. Please reference our illness policy and COVID-19 operating plans in this

handbook. Absences are also understood to be during a family death, funeral, religious holiday, educational vacation, opportunities, or doctor's appointment. We ask that you please notify our office through ChildPilot when your child has an unexpected absence for sickness or other reasons.

Excused Absences

When an elementary or middle school student is absent due to illness or family emergency, parents **must notify the office through ChildPilot as soon as possible**. After two days of illness, parents should arrange to pick up missed class work and assignments from the teacher if applicable. Special projects and homework should be worked on as the child is able.

Much Montessori work must be done in the classroom with Montessori materials, and it is not available to go home. Special project work with set deadlines will be expected to be completed on time unless special arrangements are made with the teacher, including meeting all deadlines promptly. As with all absences, classwork should be completed as soon as possible, and it is the responsibility of the student to do all the work. The teacher is not responsible for providing class work in advance, as most Montessori work must be done in the classroom, except the homework supplied and scheduled out a month in advance. The student will be expected to continue working according to his/her individual work plan upon the student's return.

Release of Children

Carpool/Dropoff/Pickup Policy

Parents and authorized caregivers may drop off and pick up their children in two ways: they may enter the school and escort them to and from their classroom upon arrival and dismissal or participate in the carpool line.

Carpool/Dropoff

Carpool drop-off runs from 7:30 am – 8:00 am. To ensure a speedy and safe carpool process, we ask the vehicle to be placed in “park” while the staff is helping. **Please drive along the back of the building and stop at the front entrance to drop off your child. If you use the carpool line, please do not leave your car. Please put your car in park, and a staff member will help your child out of the car and walk them to the door.** If you are walking in, please park along the back of the parking lot near the monument wall. This is for the safety of the students and staff being dropped off and picked up during carpool. Additionally, we ask drivers not to use their cell phones (including hands-free) while in the carpool line. (This process is subject to change if needed. You will be notified via email of a change).

For any arrival or departure outside of staffed carpool times, the parent must park his/her vehicle in designated parking places and escort his/her child to his/her classroom, ensuring there is a safe hand-off to the teacher or the director and sign in or out in ChildPilot. If you expect your child to arrive late, please send a note to your child’s teacher in advance via ChildPilot or call the school so we are aware.

In addition, it would be beneficial if parents would refrain from visiting each other in the parking lot at arrival or dismissal time. Not only does this increase congestion in the parking lot, but such activities also increase the potential for inadequate or improper supervision of Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students and can lead to accidents during that time. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy especially appreciates parents who understand and cooperate with this request to minimize the risk of accidents.

Please note: Parents must ensure their child does not enter or leave the facility without notifying a staff member.

Carpool Rules and Regulations

- No cell phone use during drive-through for the safety of the children.
- Speed should not exceed 5 mph when entering the parking lot.
- Please drive slowly and be aware of all staff members who are assisting children.
- Use turn signals.
- Please follow the designated carpool path to turn your vehicle around so that you enter the drop-off area correctly.
- Upon entering the drive-through, cars must move in the forward direction only. Backing up is not allowed.
- As traffic allows, please pull all the way forward to allow traffic to advance behind you.
- Please put your car in "PARK" when your children are being escorted to your vehicle, and do not drive off until the car door is completely closed.
- Parents must always stay in the car during carpool. Carpool pickup is a drive-through service only. Our staff will unbuckle your child and assist them in getting in/out of the

car. By law, we are not authorized to buckle or harness a student into a car seat, booster, or car.

- Never leave your car unattended in the drive-through line.
- Parking is prohibited in the drive-through line
- Children will be released only to persons listed on the enrollment form.

Pickup

The academic day ends at 3:00 pm. Staff will assist in dismissing students by sending them to the carpool supervisor as they are called. The supervisor will walk each student to their vehicle between 3:00 pm and 3:15 pm. All children must be picked up by an adult and/or person approved by the parent. All children must be clocked out **before** being picked up from their classroom. Anyone, including parents who are allowed to pick the child up, must be listed in the Authorized Pick-Up section of the enrollment form or approved in writing by a parent via email or text. In an emergency, parents may call the school and give verbal approval to an alternate individual. However, this is strongly discouraged.

We make every effort to know all parents' and guardians' names. Anyone not recognized by sight will be asked for a picture ID. If anyone out of the ordinary is to pick up the child, please alert the office before that time.

The school reserves the right to refuse to let any individual onto Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy property for drop-off or pick-up if they have created a problem.

Authorized Pick-Ups: Upon enrollment, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will obtain the information for a child's parents and any individuals authorized to pick up that child. If other subsequent individuals are to receive pick-up authorization, the child's parents must give it in writing by filling out the applicable authorization form in ChildPilot. Unexpected, last-minute authorization may be granted by receiving an email or phone call from the parent stating the person's name and phone number. This person will be expected to provide their ID before leaving the building with your child. If this person becomes a regular authorized release caregiver, the applicable authorization form will be required to be on file, and the person will be added to ChildPilot.

All authorized caregivers must have the proper safety seats accessible for their child. The state mandates that all childcare workers report if a child's life is endangered if they are not provided with the proper safety seat. Also, if anyone authorized to pick up is smoking, vaping, or using corporal punishment on school property, we are again mandated to report such incidents.

The regular pick-up designer should have the ChildPilot app accessible to complete check-in and check-out procedures. The first time a child is picked up by one of the authorized parties, the administrative staff will review the driver's license (or other valid, government-issued photo identification) to ensure it matches the information provided on the authorized pick-up form. C



Custody Issues

Unless a court order is presented to Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy, no restrictions will be placed on a child's parents regarding visitation, drop-off, or pick-up. In divorce or custody disputes between parents, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy's policy is not to take sides. The primary interest of our faculty, staff, and owners is to ensure the child's well-being. Our policy is that no employee will testify or give an opinion on such matters except under subpoena.

Early Pickup

If you need to pick up your child early, please send a message through ChildPilot to the teacher in advance so that lessons can be rearranged before dismissal. When picking up a student early, you must sign them out in ChildPilot at the front office, and your child will be brought to you."

Late or Non-Pick-Up

Any late pick-up after 3:15 pm (and 5:30 pm for those enrolled in after-school care only) is subject to a late fee of \$1.00 per minute. You will be notified of any fee being added to your account balance. If a parent knows they will be late, notification of the expected time of pickup or other arrangements that have been made for the child's pick up must be provided to the school as soon as possible and within the first 30 minutes after the regularly scheduled pickup time. If the parent

or other authorized person has not picked up the child, and the parent has received no additional communication within a half-hour of the child's regular pick-up time, the following people will be called, and arrangements will be made for the child: emergency contacts listed in the student's file and the director (if not on-site). If you are more than one hour late and we are unable to contact anyone on the pick-up list, the law requires that we contact CPS, which will pick up your child for safekeeping. Our staff members are not permitted to take your child(ren) home with them. If late pickup becomes routine for a family, Heart of Texoma Montessori reserves the right to request an

in-person conference and to provide timely notice of disenrollment from our programs with forfeiture of paid tuition.

Open Door Policy

Parents are always welcome to visit Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy during the school day, to visit their child's classroom, and to have an occasional lunch. All parents are advised to follow the appropriate protocol for any school or classroom visit. Visits to a classroom or conferences with teachers should be scheduled. For security reasons, all visitors (including parents) who wish to visit must first register at the main office and obtain a visitor's badge before visiting a classroom or other part of the campus. In advance of their anticipated visit, all parents are expected to call the school and schedule an appointed time to ensure their visit does not occur during a review or other non-teaching activity.



Parents are advised to respect teachers' needs for daily preparation time, which is limited. Parents should refrain from interrupting a teacher during class time. Conferences with teachers (either before or after school) should be scheduled by each individual teacher.

Please note: Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy teachers are on duty at daily dismissal time, and they should not be distracted from providing for the safety of their students.

Field Trips

Field trips are an integral part of the academic curriculum. *Since field trips are a privilege, students may be prohibited from attending based on their conduct and academic standing.* When students enroll at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy, their parents must complete a permission form for field trip transportation. This form is kept on file in the school office. Parents will be informed in advance of any field trips that might be scheduled. **In compliance with the state law, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy requires that students use a booster seat when traveling on a school field trip. Once a child is 4'9" or 100 pounds, they may use the adult safety belt if it fits them properly.**

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy Middle School, Upper, and Lower Elementary students participate annually in JOLT camp (environmental education). Middle and Upper Elementary students attend for two nights and three days, Wednesday through Friday, usually in May. Lower Elementary attends the day camp on Friday. Parents will be notified in advance, and the applicable paperwork will be collected. Parents will provide transportation to and from Texas Elks Camp on Texoma.

Should any other field trips be planned, parents will provide transportation. At this time, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy does not transport students.

More information about the JOLT program can be found at: <https://elkscampdexoma.com/science-classes/>

Middle School students will visit multiple locations throughout the year to participate in hands-on learning practices within the community. These field trips will be planned in advance; parents must sign authorization forms before each trip.

Standardized Testing

Academic progress is a priority at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy. In August of each year, our staff proctors the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) exam for all first through ninth-grade students. The ITBS is a nationally standardized exam that will guide teachers in designing individual student work plans.



The test is conducted in a no-pressure environment to accurately assess each student's academic performance and progression. It will be conducted over the span of one week.

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will promptly communicate testing dates and other information before the exam. At the parent's request, results will be reviewed with parents/caregivers. If you have any questions or concerns related to standardized testing, please get in touch with the director or your child's lead teacher.

General Operational Policies and Procedures

Resolving Differences:

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy is committed to supporting parents, students, and staff when differences or unresolved concerns arise. In case of any dispute, all students, staff, and parents related to the dispute must be willing to work together to resolve the issue in a positive manner. Before criticizing or gossiping about the school or any member of the Heart of Texoma community, including parents, students, board members, administration, faculty, and staff, we ask each individual to evaluate their actions and determine whether they have made an effort to address the issue. If you have been offended, it is your responsibility to approach the person privately and attempt to resolve the issue amicably. We ask you to strive to speak with kindness and understanding, considering different perspectives and experiences. If a mediator is required, please contact the front office to schedule a meeting with a member of the administration. During this meeting, all students, parents, and staff associated with Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy are expected to communicate openly and honestly with each other with respect and decorum.

Clothing and Supplies

Dress for a fun day! The children's day is filled with activity and hands-on learning, and children often use floor space to play and learn. Clothing should be simple, comfortable, and provide appropriate coverage. If leggings are worn, the child's backside should be covered by their top while standing, bending over, and crawling. Please do not dress your child in clothing that cannot

get dirty. Since our learning extends to the outdoors, please dress your child appropriately for the weather. Belongings should be carried to and from school in a backpack or bag labeled with the child's name.

Toys

We ask children not to bring toys from home. Children sometimes have a hard time sharing toys from home, which tends to cause disruption in the classroom. Toy guns and other toy weapons are forbidden. If your toddler or primary child does bring a special naptime friend, this item will



be brought out at naptime only and put in their cubby at any other time during the day. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy is not responsible for lost or broken toys.

Videos and Music

On special occasions, videos or movies are selected for a school event, and we strive to supply wholesome entertainment or academic-related videos that are age-appropriate for the age group of children viewing the video/movie. All videos viewed in the classroom will be appropriate in supporting the learning within a subject area, and holiday or special event movies will be G or PG, depending on the age of the audience.

It can be difficult to find music with lyrics appropriate for children, and that is also not religious in nature. Inappropriate music will not be played, so we often make nursery or instrumental music selections.

Electronic Devices

With the exception of Middle School and Upper Elementary students who are required to bring their laptops to school for schoolwork, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy prohibits children from bringing any electronic devices such as cell phones, MP3 players, iPods, or handheld games from home to school. If such a device is brought onto campus, it will be held in the director's office until dismissal.

Naps

Maintaining compliance with the minimum standards for the State of Texas, all students aged four and a half years and under will have a nap/rest each day while in care. Primary students aged 4.5 years and younger will nap from 12:30– 2:30 pm Monday through Friday. Students should bring a small roll-up nap mat for use at nap time. They must be attached if the nap mat includes a pillow and blanket. All nap items should be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name and will be sent home each Friday to be washed. A book or other quiet, calm activity will be provided for students who do not fall asleep.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play benefits children beyond the physical activity it provides. It helps them socialize, understand their bodies better, engage in imaginative play, and enjoy the outdoors. Maintaining compliance with the minimum standards for the State of Texas, students will have no less than one-half hour of outdoor play in the morning and one-half hour of outdoor play in the afternoon (applicable to after-school care). These students will enjoy the play equipment as well as an open field to run and play. The students will be encouraged to participate in organized play, like soccer,

football, hopscotch, and 9 square. They will also be encouraged to engage in imaginative and free play. These activities will take place on the playground at the back of the school. The playground will be sectioned off to enable teachers to maintain a visual of all our students.

Minimum standards for the state of Texas require all students to be allowed outdoors in inclement weather, even if it is to walk from one door to the next. We will refer to the news and Weather channel to determine if it is safe to play outdoors. We will reference the apparent weather, wind chill factor, and heat advisory per our guidelines.

We will consider the following when going outdoors to play:

1. Our students' needs. Children, especially younger children with some chronic medical conditions, lose body heat more quickly than adults.
2. Is the child dressed appropriately for the weather? Parents, please provide layers of clothing during cold seasons to maximize comfort indoors and out. Essential items include jackets, long pants, hats, gloves or mittens, socks, and warm shoes or boots. Be cautious about using scarves and jackets with strings because these can present a strangulation hazard.
3. If a time limit should be placed on outdoor play.
4. Are the students well hydrated? Plenty of warm fluids will help maintain body temperature and prevent dehydration.
5. Qualify that the student did not forget to apply sunscreen before being dropped off in the morning.
6. Do all children have water bottles, and are they being kept hydrated on hot summer days?

We will limit the duration of time outdoors if it is too hot or too cold if:

1. The "apparent weather" and wind chill goes below 15°F.
2. Children will be taken inside for breaks every 20 to 30 minutes when the wind chill is below 32°F.
3. The National Weather Service will issue a wind chill advisory or warning when wind chills are low enough to pose a threat to human life. If our area is under such a warning, we will keep the students inside. If we experience extreme weather and cannot go outside, we will use the classroom to play.
4. We will not go outside in extreme heat or modify our outdoor time to the morning. Our students stay indoors when temperatures are over 95°F —100°F and play in the classroom as a form of exercise.

We ask all parents to provide season-appropriate clothing for their children. It is highly likely that the children will be allowed to play in the rain and will be changed out of wet clothes. At dismissal, wet clothes will be sent home for cleaning in a plastic bag.

Skin and Sun Protection



Students are welcome to bring hats, but no sunglasses, to wear outside during playtime. Parents may also supply sunscreen and insect repellent for their children. The parent should apply sunscreen and insect bug repellent in the morning, and the teacher will apply sunscreen again before afternoon playtime if requested in writing through ChildPilot. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will not provide sunscreen or insect repellent. Because of possible allergic reactions, no

sharing of suntan lotion or insect repellent is allowed. Each student will need Parents are required to provide a bottle of their own, preferably in a spray form. All items should be clearly labeled with the child's name. Outdoor activities are to be held in shaded areas whenever possible. Parents are required to sign a form authorizing Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy to apply sunscreen and insect repellent spray.

Water Play

At this time, no water play activities are planned. We will send a notification if and when water play is planned. (No pools will ever be used)

Holidays

Our annual calendar will post our holiday closure schedule before each school year.

Holiday Celebrations

The Montessori curriculum includes learning about the world's diverse people and cultures. Celebrations, including birthdays and religious, cultural, and national holidays, are celebrated at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy. We respect, celebrate, and discuss many traditions and holidays that may or may not be a part of most families' lifestyles. Staff will not teach a particular religious belief, although general, fact-based descriptions and explanations may be provided. This will allow the students to understand other cultures and become more accepting of the diverse world around them.

Celebration of Life and Birthdays

Each student will have an opportunity to celebrate their birthday with a Celebration of Life. This activity is optional but encouraged, as it is an exciting day for the child and helps build relationships and familiarity among peers. Parents interested in participating in the Celebration of Life will need to reach out to their child's teacher to schedule the celebration.

This celebration may occur on the child's birthday; however, if the child's birthday falls on a weekend or outside of the academic calendar, the Celebration of Life may be held another day during the week. Please coordinate the date with your child's teacher so we do not have multiple celebrations or other scheduling conflicts.

Depending upon the classroom, children will have the opportunity to prepare a Celebration of Life poster, book, or Google slide show in which families/children may document the stages of



the child's life. This may be one of the first timelines lessons a young child will have as they begin to see how things in life progress through time. During the Celebration of Life, the child will be asked to show the poster, book, or slides to the class and share their joy about the special moments of their life.

Parents (or up to a total of four special guests) may attend their child's Celebration of Life. The child's family may provide the morning snack or lunch for their child's class. Please consider any food allergies or sensitivities among your child's classmates. The school can provide this information. Frosted items such as cupcakes and party favors are not permitted.

Please coordinate all plans with your child's lead teacher. If a snack or meal is provided, the class will be notified no later than 3:00 p.m. the day before.

A child may distribute birthday party invitations during class time, but all classroom peers must be included and invited.

Extra Clothing

Each student, regardless of age, requires one sessional set of extra clothing twice a year. If your child is not reliably potty trained, please provide two sets of clothing. Any extra clothing worn from the extra set must be replaced with additional items the next school day.

- Please send the following items that are season-appropriate in a labeled, large plastic zipper baggie that may be kept at school: shirt, bottoms, underwear, and socks
- One pair of weather-proof rain boots to be kept at the school throughout enrollment, so children may play outside when the ground may be wet with muddy conditions
- Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will not be responsible for any soiled or lost clothing
- All items brought to Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy must be labeled with your child's name
- Should water activities be planned, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will communicate appropriate clothing requirements and procedures in a timely manner. We will never plan enrichment involving swimming pools.
- All items will be returned to the family upon the conclusion of the academic year.

Emergency Drills

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy practices drills for fire, tornado, lockdown, and other emergencies. Students are evacuated to the parking lots for fire and the classroom bathrooms for Tornadoes. Students remain in their classrooms during a lockdown situation. Fire drills are practiced monthly; a tornado drill and lockdown drills are practiced four times a year.



Emergency Weather Procedures

If Sherman ISD closes due to inclement weather, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will also close. However, if there is an inclement weather day on which Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy feels the safety of the students and staff members is at risk, we reserve the right to close. All attempts will be made to provide as much advance notice as possible.

Tuition & Payment Methods

Tuition is due on the first day of each month by check, cashier's check, credit/debit, or scheduled ACH / draft payment. Cash is not accepted. If the first day of the month falls on a day school is not in session, tuition will be due upon class reopening. Tuition will be considered late on the fifth of each month. A late fee of \$5.00 a day will be added to your account for every day tuition is late. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy is not responsible for providing reminders of tuition

due dates. Please refer to the current Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy tuition schedule for tuition rates. Parents are reminded that tuition is assessed annually and payable monthly exclusively through check or ChildPilot. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy tuition is non-refundable.

Tuition for the academic year is due from August through May. Tuition is based upon the total number of instructional, paid teacher in-service, and parent conference days throughout the academic year. Tuition is not determined by the monthly days due to holidays and breaks; some months have more on-campus days than others. For your convenience, tuition is averaged and divided into ten equal payments regardless of the number of days your child is on campus. Tuition credits or refunds will not be made for any reason, including extended illnesses.

Enrollment is understood to be for one year of the school year and renewed in February each year. No fees are refunded. We require 30 days written notice before your child withdraws from the school. Once notice has been given, the tuition must be up to date every day until the last date mentioned on the written notice. Fees for two weeks will be added if a 30-day written notice is not given before your child leaves the school. Failure to notify the school will cause all fees to continue until written notification is given. When notification is finally given, 30 days will be added.

In the case of special circumstances, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy may consider an arrangement to divide tuition into two equal payments due on the first and fifteenth of each month. This request must be made in writing to them. If such accommodation is approved, the "late date" of the fifth does not apply to this payment plan. Parents should make the on-time payment on the first and fifteenth of each month (or the soonest day class is in session. For Example, if the 15th is on a Saturday, or on the Friday before.) Heart of Texoma Montessori



Academy reserves the right to end such an arrangement at any time without notice, especially if tuition is not received on time.

Each academic year, a limited number of financial scholarships may be available. Please speak with the Director for more information.

The annual calendar will detail the number of instructional, in-service, and conference days. This number may vary slightly yearly, and a tuition adjustment should not be anticipated.

Non-Payment of Tuition

The school depends entirely on the regular and timely payment of all tuition and fees, which are used primarily for operational expenses and teachers' salaries. Parents must understand that the school cannot operate without paying each student's tuition promptly. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy expects its families to pay their tuition/fees responsibly and when they are due. In cases of anticipated financial stress, the parents should visit or write an explanatory letter to the Director without delay.

Parents whose accounts are 60 or more past due seriously jeopardize their children's opportunity to remain at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy. In such a situation, parents will be required to meet with the Director to address and discuss this issue. Failure to pay overdue accounts will

result in the removal of the affected student, and all student progress reports, transcripts, and other applicable records will be withheld until the accounts are settled.

Gifts

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy is funded entirely by tuition, grants, and gifts. Gifts of any amount are tremendously appreciated, and parents are always encouraged to make such tax-deductible gifts. If you are interested in donating for a specific purchase, please let the director know, and accommodation will be provided. Your gift will be greatly appreciated.

Registration Fee

A \$100.00 non-refundable registration fee is due once per academic year per child, along with registration forms for the academic year. This fee covers administrative costs associated with preparing each child for the upcoming school year. The child's classroom reservation will not be finalized until the registration fee is paid. The registration fee is non-refundable regardless of whether a child attends as scheduled.

Deposit

A \$400.00 deposit will be required to hold your child's spot at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy. This deposit will be applied to the first month's tuition. If, for any reason, you do not



start with Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy on the mutually agreed-upon start date, the deposit will not be applied to the first month's tuition and will be non-refundable.

Separate summer program registration fees will apply and be communicated and due before the beginning of summer classes.

Supply Fee

A \$150.00 supply fee will be due twice a year, once in August and once in January; your account will be billed through ChildPilot.

Additional Costs and Fees

Additional fees may include late pick-up fees. As previously detailed in this handbook, such balances should be cleared promptly. Unpaid fees may result in dis-enrollment from the school without advance notice.

Other expenses that may be proposed throughout the school year are fees related to special activities or costuming for a school celebration or program. Participation will be optional, and any such proposals will be made in a timely manner. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will be mindful to minimize extra expenditures and assure you that any request that asks families to incur additional costs is thoughtfully requested to enhance your child's enrichment and school spirit.

Withdrawals

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy families in Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, and Middle School are obligated to commit to a complete academic year of enrollment. Tuition is a carefully budgeted annual charge for an entire school year. It helps to pay salaries and expenses.

If a family finds it necessary to withdraw a student before the end of the school year, tuition fees are still owed for the rest of the uncompleted year.

If a Pre-Primary or Primary child is withdrawn, payment is due for the entire month the child was withdrawn. A 30-day written notice is required when a Pre-Primary or Primary student withdraws so that the child's vacancy may be anticipated and filled as quickly as possible.

Summertime at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy

The summer months are fun and exciting. Children often need care and social interaction with their peers. Our summer program has special activities to enrich and educate during the hottest of our months. Summer plans will be communicated to families during the spring semester and require a separate enrollment process.

Food & Nutrition Policy

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will not provide lunch or snacks. Our school encourages healthy, nutritious snacks and lunches. When preparing your child's lunch and snack foods, please provide a variety of nutritional selections that support his/her ability to have a successful school day filled with activity and learning.

Desserts, candy, pudding, and sugary snacks are not allowed Monday - Thursday. A sweet treat as a part of the child's lunch is permitted on Fridays. Candy and sodas (regular or sugar-free/diet selections) are prohibited at all times.

Any food allergies must be documented using the TXHHS Allergy and Action Plan form that the school office may provide. Documentation of a child's food allergies will be required, as well as a healthcare provider's signature and completion of the proper form provided to you by the director.

Parents are responsible for packing meals in a secure lunchbox that provides the proper insulation for the child's food. Please label all lunch boxes, containers, bags, and cups with the child's full name. Please provide utensils and napkins. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy cannot heat or refrigerate food items provided from home.

Daily expectations:

- Filled, labeled water bottle/cup with lid: Please do not send juice or milk. Only water, please.
- Morning snack: recommendations are yogurt, cheese stick, cereal bar, fruit, or vegetable.
- Lunch: please consider nutritious choices and avoid/minimize added sugar
- Afternoon snack: for after-school care students only; recommendations are yogurt, cheese stick, cereal bar, fruit, or vegetable.

Please cut high-risk choking foods such as hot dogs, grapes, and olives lengthwise (longways) to eliminate the round shape that could lodge in a child's throat.

During drop-off and morning greetings, teachers will strive to do a snack and lunch check to ensure each student has that day's food in his/her possession, but that may not always be possible.

If, on rare occasions, a child's snack or meal is not present, the staff will make every attempt to contact the child's parents to make arrangements promptly. If contact and arrangements are not made, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will provide your child with a snack or lunch from available resources, including fast food, which will be billable to the parent's account. If it



becomes routine that a child's food is missing, staff will request a conference with parents to address any issues and formulate a plan to ensure their child is fed daily.

The staff will notify parents if we observe any significant change in a child's eating behaviors and appetite.

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy reserves the right to modify its food policy, restrict the types of foods allowed on campus, or request a conversation with parents regarding food choices we believe are affecting a child's ability to have a successful, focused, and energetic school day. Any modifications to our policies will be distributed to parents in writing with 10 days' notice via email and posted outside each classroom on the bulletin boards.

Nut Policy (We are NOT a Nut-Free School)

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy recognizes that many nutritional selections contain nuts. **The campus and classroom's nut policies and restrictions will be based on information on students' and staff's known allergies.** The director will notify parents if a restriction of peanut or nut items is required for the safety of our students and staff.

All students and staff will be asked if they have any known (food) allergies, and this information will be maintained in their records. Nuts/peanuts may or may not be restricted from a particular classroom, depending on the information received. The director will evaluate all information and will determine policies accordingly.

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy reserves the right to amend its nut/peanut policy to ensure the safety of all persons on campus. All efforts will be made to provide timely notification of our policies and each class's restrictions, but in some circumstances, there may be short notice of any changes/restrictions. Any modifications to our policies will be distributed to parents in writing with 10 days' notice via email and posted outside each classroom on the bulletin boards.

Communication

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy believes education begins at birth (or before) with the parent in the home environment. With this in mind, we believe parents play a vital role in a child's education and are the child's first and most influential teacher! We believe parent involvement is critical for your child's learning success and that a strong relationship between home and school is essential when building a solid academic foundation. Our goal is to guide your child through a learning journey, a lifetime of discovery, enhanced with active parent involvement.

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy believes that open communication between parents and the school is vitally important. The school desires and intends to keep the lines of



communication open and free-flowing at all times. Official information is communicated in various forms, including Newsletters, ChildPilot, MRX, handbooks, the annual school calendar, and the website.

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy has established a designated line of authority for the appropriate treatment and solution of communication problems. In order for the school family to operate in harmony, should your child come home with concerns about a policy or a matter of discipline, please follow this procedure:

1. Do not discuss the matter with another parent or individual without attempting to resolve the issue first and directly with the responsible person.
2. Don't let the situation become a problem, and don't lash out before attempting to resolve it.
3. Try to support your child's teacher and the school; please call the teacher for any information that might help to clarify all the facts.
4. If necessary, make an appointment with the teacher to resolve the issue.
5. If you cannot resolve the matter with the teacher, please make an appointment with the appropriate administrator. The administrator will make every effort to resolve the situation.
6. If the issue cannot be corrected at that level, all affected parties should visit the Director.

Please remember that students do not always have full access to all the facts or complete information surrounding the situation. Your child's report may be incomplete or possibly emotionally biased. Please remember that the school has specific reasons for its rules. The rules apply to all students, and the school makes every effort to enforce them without favor.

Apps Used

We will use ChildPilot and MRX apps to communicate with parents frequently and share school-wide information. MRX will be from your child's teacher, who will provide information about their academic work. These programs will keep you informed of your child's progress and function as check-in and check-out systems to ensure your child's safety and well-being. Notifications will also be posted on the bulletin board outside each classroom.

Confidentiality

The staff of Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy values the privacy of each family enrolled in our program and will keep personal and confidential information secure. The school will not give out phone numbers, birthdays, addresses, or family information without their permission. Additionally, staff, parents, or guardians at Heart of Texoma Montessori's Academy are expected to respect the privacy of each child, family, and staff member.



The school also respects the privacy of our staff. We will not give out home phone numbers or addresses of our staff. Teachers may elect to do so but are not required to do so. During the school

During the day, the staff will receive messages when you call. If it is an emergency, please notify the person answering the phone, and the teacher will be called to the phone as soon as possible.

Conferences

Formal in-person conferences between a child's family and teachers are scheduled once every academic semester and noted on the school calendar. From time to time, the parent or the teacher may ask for an additional conference to discuss issues that may arise.

Correspondence with Teachers and Staff

Open communication between staff members and parents is essential. If questions or concerns arise at any time, we urge parents to bring them to the attention of the classroom teacher or the facility's administrative staff.

To facilitate open discussions, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy uses multiple methods of staying in touch with our families, including email through our MRX app and weekly and monthly newsletters updating families on activities in your child's classes and the school at large. These will be sent by email to the primary address on file.

Contact made outside regular schedule hours will not be addressed until the next school day's operating hours.

If a medical or safety issue must be addressed outside of available hours, please call or text the director at 903-218-2070.

At Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy, we trust the partnership between the school and caregivers; if there is a homework challenge or project deadline that has become unachievable in the evening or outside of operational hours, we trust that the family has handled the situation to the best of their ability. There will be no consequences to your child for roadblocks and incompletions; we will work together the next school day to resolve any questions and establish a path to ensure the student may successfully move forward.

If you would like to voice any problems or concerns, please feel free to discuss the situation with our director, who can be emailed at director@texomamontessori.org or reached by phone or text at 903-218-2070. Parents are also encouraged to stop by the office with any concerns.



Parent–Teacher Relationships

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy recognizes that, on occasion, families and staff will become acquainted and develop personal relationships outside of school. Please remain mindful that professional relationships and boundaries must be maintained. Staff may elect not to engage in personal relationships outside of school.

Lifestyle Statement

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy seeks to provide an environment consistent with traditional values. As such, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy has certain responsibilities and concerns that other schools may not address when considering a student's conduct or attitude.

Visits and Volunteering

Visits

Parents are encouraged to visit the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy anytime as part of our Open-Door policy. Nevertheless, we ask that parents understand that teachers are responsible for the safety and well-being of the students and may need to move around to supervise. We also request that detailed conversations with teachers be kept to a minimum during these visits.

Volunteering

They say it takes a village to raise a child; as such, we welcome parent volunteers who wish to participate in school-day activities. If you are interested in volunteering at the school, you will be required to undergo a background check and be cleared of any communicable health issues. The background check may include fingerprints determined by TXHHS, and the expense will be the volunteer's responsibility.

Cell Phones and Conducting Personal Communications (parents)

Please do not conduct cell phone communications inside the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy campus or during carpool. Please silence all devices while inside the school. If you must have a phone or text conversation, please do so inside your vehicle while parked in a designated parking spot.

Safety

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy requests that all individuals within the facility follow the school's policies for the safety of the students, families, and visitors. These policies include but are not limited to the following:

- Students, parents, and staff walk in the hallways
- While inside, please use inside voices

- An adult must always accompany students and cannot walk themselves to class or anywhere else in the building.
- Students 18 or older cannot exit the building without their parents or adult-authorized pick-up. This includes siblings, relatives, and other caregivers. Please speak with the director if you face circumstances related to this policy.
- **Exit doors should be opened by adults only.** Please do not allow anyone else to come in the door behind you, and do not allow children besides your own to exit through an exterior door. We understand you want to be polite and hold the door for others, but you cannot be sure the person you are allowing into the building has a legitimate reason to access the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy.
- Parents shall safely supervise children in the parking lot while in their care. The school is not responsible for children's welfare in the parking lot and surrounding areas while they are under their parent's supervision.
- Once you have checked out your child, you are responsible for your child. Please always keep your child with you and do not allow them to run around the buildings, the grounds, or the parking lot.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

The following is the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy Emergency Preparedness Plan, a summary of which is provided below this section and posted in each classroom:

Relocation

The staff's first responsibility is to move the children to a designated safe area or an alternate shelter with all employees, caregivers, and volunteers. In case of a tornado or other severe weather, the children in each class will take refuge in their classroom bathrooms.

If a small child is disabled, a teacher will pick up the child and carry them to the designated area. If an older child is disabled, additional staff will assist in safely transporting the child to the designated area. An additional staff member will come to assist as soon as possible.

Each staff member will have an attendance sheet with them during the emergency. The children will either be seated as their names are called or stand up for face-to-face recognition adherence.

The Director will evacuate with essential documentation, including parent and emergency contact numbers and authorization for emergency care. The Director will also have the master list of who is in attendance to compare with the staff's attendance sheet. The Director will contact authorities, Child Care Licensing, and parents and designate an additional person as needed to contact the parents in case of emergency.

Evacuation

In case of fire, carbon monoxide detection, or other situations that require the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy buildings to be evacuated, the children and all staff will evacuate the



building immediately and meet in the designated area by age group, in the back of the parking lot away from the street. An evacuation plan is posted in each classroom, and teachers will take attendance and wait for further instructions from the director. The children with special needs will be evacuated, as mentioned above.

Intruders

The safety of our children is our first concern. Although we have an open-door policy and parents are welcome to visit their children, we also have a commitment to the parents of other students ren in the program to keep them safe. Individuals who do not submit to our safety policies concerning “Visitors” and “Volunteers” will be considered intruders. Appropriate steps will be taken to protect our students and staff. In case of a hostile intruder, each teacher is instructed to secure their children immediately, and the safety protocol will be initiated.

Medical Emergencies

Every child will be observed for the symptoms of illness and injury. Any child showing symptoms of illness or injury will be separated from the other children, and their parents will be notified. Once the parents are notified, they have 30 to 40 minutes to pick their child up.

If a healthcare professional has diagnosed a child with a communicable disease, medical documentation must indicate that the child is no longer contagious before returning and can return to school.

If a child is injured or becomes seriously ill, the lead teacher will take appropriate steps to meet the child’s immediate needs and inform the Administration regarding the situation. The following steps will be included:

1. Contact 911 or other emergency medical services
2. Administer CPR and/or First Aid if necessary.
3. Contact the parent immediately
4. Contact the child's doctor listed on the admission form
5. Contact the Child Care Licensing

Parents and Child Care Licensing will be emailed no later than 48 hours after Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy is notified of a child having a communicable disease. The notification will also be posted outside the classroom on the bulletin board. Examples of communicable diseases include lice and chicken pox.

Documentation

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy keeps all children's emergency records in a three-ring binder in the custody of the Admin/Director, who will accompany her when evacuating the

school building. The emergency record includes the child's information, parent and emergency contact numbers, and authorization for the child to receive medical treatment.

During monthly drills, the procedure described below is strictly followed:

Each classroom teacher prepares a daily attendance sheet for their class and will take it with her during the evacuation to ensure all children are in attendance. A headcount is performed before leaving the building and after reaching the relocation site.

This section has been intentionally left blank.
See the Emergency Preparedness Plan below.

Name of Facility	Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy	OTHER IMPORTANT CONTACTS	
License/Permit #:	1747726	Emergency	911
Street Address:	4805 N. FM Heritage Parkway	Local Police	911
City / State:	Sherman, TX 75092	Fire Department Direct Line	911
Phone:	903-218-2070	Poison Control	800-222-1222
P r o v i d e r Emergency Phone#:	810-335-2277	Local Red Cross Office	877-843-7090
Email:	info@texomamontessori.org	Local Health Department	903-416-4000
Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline	800-252-5400	Childcare Licensing 550 E. 15 th Street, Suite 120 Plano, TX 75074	469-229-6900 Ext. 6901
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES			
Fire:	Call 911- evacuate the building.		
Tornado/Severe Weather:	Relocate all children to both bathrooms in the hall.		
Gas/Chemical Leak	Call 911- evacuate the building.		
Bomb Threat or Explosion	Call 911- evacuate the building.		
Intruder/Hostile Situation	Relocate all children to bathrooms		

Loss of Power	Locate flashlights and contact the power company and parents
EVACUATION LOCATION SITES	
Fire:	Designated Area – in front of the school away from the building
Shelter-in-Place (i.e., Severe Weather)	Designated Area –in the interior classrooms, with no windows
Walking Distance	Name of Facility/address and telephone Number Leap of Faith Church 4805 N. FM 1417, Sherman, TX 70592 Phone Number 903-821-4505
Away - from - Neighborhood Evacuation:	Name of Facility/ Contact Person: Manager on Duty Hilton Garden Inn 5015 S Hwy 75, Frontage Rd, Denison, 75020 Phone: 903/463-3331 Mode of Transport: car or school van

Emergency Preparedness Chart

Each classroom will have the following information posted in a visible area for ease of use.

Behavior Management

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy believes setting limits for behavior is essential for the safety and protection of children, staff, and the learning environment. Consistency is important in helping children orient themselves in the world, and an atmosphere of clarity and consistency also enhances the staff’s ability to help children learn and be safe and secure. Our teaching style aims to help children learn the consequences of their behavior so that they understand how their actions affect themselves and those around them. Children who become self-disciplined and self-directed become aware of their needs and interests as well as of the needs and interests of those around them. By setting appropriate and consistent limits relating to behavior, we provide a secure environment in which all the children may explore their physical and social worlds.

Children have an enormous capacity for social learning, meaning they absorb information all around themselves, including social and cultural “cues” regarding themselves, others, and the environment in which they live. Awareness of self, others, and the environment are vital qualities for all children to develop and live harmoniously. Discipline is a means by which children are helped to develop that awareness. Our staff is trained in using positive reinforcement as a means of discipline, and we believe that if an interesting and challenging program is offered to a student, then discipline problems are at a minimum. Occasionally, repetitive discipline problems arise, which will be documented to develop workable solutions and patterns to assist the child best.

Underlying Principles of Behavior Management

- We respect ourselves and other people.

- We trust staff to observe and guide behaviors to ensure a positive environment.
- We demonstrate kindness, patience, and age-appropriate expectations.
- We provide a stable, consistent, and safe environment that supports the child's ability to self-regulate behaviors.
- We are careful with our own work and our friends' work and belongings.
- We are respectful to insects, animals, and plants.
- We keep ourselves and our surroundings clean.
- We respect our school building and property.

When Discipline is instructive

- It supports the development of the child's self-esteem and allows children to feel capable, competent, and behave in a pleasant manner with others.
- It considers a child's developmental level of understanding and ability.
- It changes as children's needs and behavior change (there is change and growth).
- We acknowledge the importance of age-appropriate communication and resolution methods.
- It acknowledges caring, cooperative, desirable behavior.
- It is expressed positively. We speak of what we "do" and not what we "don't do".
- It guides, gives simple explanations, and offers alternatives so that the child may make good choices. In time, this will aid the making of appropriate choices.
- It is consistent.
- It is based on self-discipline and self-control (not coercion).

Setting Limits Helps Children

- Feel secure and orient themselves in the world.
- Find appropriate expressions for feelings that are hard to control.
- Build confidence in the self-management of one's own behaviors, feelings, and expression.
- Initiate the joy of lifelong learning.

Prevention Strategies of Behavior Management Used by Our Staff

- Knowing the children: this helps to tailor disciplining instruction to each child.
- A thoughtfully prepared environment accommodates the developmental needs of the children, creating security, continuity, familiarity, and comfort within the classroom.
- Awareness of transition time: teachers help children move from one activity to another without disruption.
- Modeling good behavior.

If Prevention Does Not Work

- Try to redirect or defuse the situation first, giving children a different activity to pursue.
- Use "do's" (rather than "don'ts") and give brief explanations.

- Respond in a calm but firm manner, indicating what is expected from the child and what choices the child has.
- Help the child to realize the consequences of his or her actions. Consequences may include:
 - Redirection is the preferred disciplinary action that Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy employs.
 - “Time Away” is avoided unless necessary and limited to one minute for each year of the child's age.

Behavioral Policies and Conduct

Students are expected to exercise neatness and cleanliness in their use of the building, the classrooms, all work areas, and restroom areas. Monitors may be assigned in each class to carry out routine duties as required by the teachers. Students must keep their worktables and areas clean, neat, and orderly in appearance. School property and furniture are not to be marked on or defaced in any way. Without permission, no unauthorized posters, drawings, or pictures may be used to decorate student areas (inside or outside). The school administration reserves the right to periodically check or inspect student lockers or cubbies without any announcement.

Students are expected to show respect for the teacher and for other students and to refrain from making any unnecessary and annoying disturbances of any type. Mutual respect and maturity should characterize all relationships between students and teachers. Students are expected to treat all Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy faculty and staff members graciously, courteously, and with professional respect. This applies to all secretaries, elementary and high school teachers, administrators, facility and cafeteria workers, parents, volunteers, etc. Students should not address Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy personnel by their first names. Teachers are to be addressed as “Mr., Ms., Mrs., Miss, or Dr.,” as applicable. Students are required to respond appropriately and with good manners to teachers and administrators (i.e., to say “yes sir” or “no sir,” and “yes ma’am,” or “no ma’am”).

Students are prohibited from chewing gum anywhere on campus. This rule applies in all classrooms, the library, the gymnasium, the cafeteria, the playground, the parking lot, and the schoolyards.

Students are expected to demonstrate care and respect for all school resources, textbooks, library books, computers, equipment, appliances, and facilities, as well as to care for the property of others. Damages must be reported immediately to the teacher or the Director. Charges may be assessed to students responsible for damaging any Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy property.

Body and mind change as your child progresses through adolescence; Maria Montessori's entire approach to education is based on a child being born whole. They already have their road map to



who they are; our role is to give them opportunities to grow into that. In adolescence, this is even more profound because there is more depth to who they are as a person and their identity and more room for them to discover, learn, and stretch into themselves. At no point is there talk that if a new idea is introduced, a youth will abandon who they are and dive into the new concept. If anything, it will allow them to dig deeper into who they are in either direction.

Some of these changes will cause students, parents, and educators to question themselves and their views. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will openly discuss concerns with students, parents, and our educators to the best of our ability. We ask that parents keep open dialogue with all parties to keep channels of communication open to help support the social/emotional growth of the child and academic achievements.

All Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students must be mindful of their character and reputation when socializing on the internet and maintaining personal websites. Communication of any kind posted by Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students on the internet or on their personal web pages that are found to be questionable, offensive, or that produce a negative reputation for them, or the school may be suspended or expelled from school. Students also understand and agree that Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy shall have the right to monitor or examine any electronic device at the school or any Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy activity. Additionally, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy may monitor or examine any postings on the Internet or other electronic medium, which includes but is not limited to text messages and postings on personal websites, social networking, for example, “Facebook” or

“Instagram” or other private or public domains. Such monitoring includes but is not limited to all verbiage, pictures, depictions, graphics, and videos.

Possession of pornographic materials in any form is inappropriate and unacceptable for Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students. Students who use school computers to access the Internet for illicit purposes may be expelled. Fighting is not tolerated at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy. Students who fight may be suspended or expelled.

All Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students are required to abstain from the use of alcohol, any form of tobacco, and any drugs not prescribed for them by a physician. Students at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy are expected to abide by our no-drug use policy, which includes abuse of prescription and/or illegal drugs. The school is required by law to report any abuses or drug violations to the local authorities. No student may sell, distribute, administer, give to, or share any drug or medication with another student. If a physician prescribes any medications for a student, parents are responsible for informing the school, which maintains a record of such prescriptions in the main office. Any abuse or violation of this policy may result in the student’s expulsion.

Personal Possessions

Students are required to leave any personal possessions unrelated to learning at home. All weapons, including ammunition, clubs, chains, guns, rifles, paintball guns, air guns, shotguns, stun guns, zip guns, short-barrel firearms, aerosol cans, electric shock equipment, explosives, fireworks, chemical dispensing devices, ropes, knives (including pocket knives), daggers, swords, razors, dice, playing cards, dominoes, laser pens or pointers, and any other devices that might be used to threaten or injure anyone are strictly prohibited anywhere on campus, including in student cars.

While on Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy campus, students may not be in possession anywhere on campus of any alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, marijuana, controlled or volatile substances, or chemicals, glues, liquids, gels, aerosols, or vapors that can be abused as a drug.

Cell-Phones, Smart Watches, and Similar Devices

Cell phones, Apple or Android watches, and other similar devices are distracting in a school setting. Because cell phones and Smart watches can be used to access the Internet and transmit messages, pictures, text, etc., both for good and questionable purposes, their use must be restricted. The use of cell phones is prohibited anywhere on campus during the hours of school operation (i.e., when classes are in session). Students who possess cell phones and/or similar items must keep them turned off during school hours. The only exception to this policy is when a student seeks specific permission to communicate with a parent/guardian for a limited time and purpose. Students must put their cell phones, and Smartwatches in a basket or other area designated by the teacher at the beginning of each class period. Cell phones and Smart watches may be picked up at the end of the class period.

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in confiscating and examining applicable devices. Confiscated devices will be turned into the administration office and returned to a parent/guardian at the end of the school day.

In addition to the current policy regarding cell phones, please be advised that students videotaping or recording with his/her cell phone or any other device without the classroom teacher's permission will be required to turn the device with the video or recording over to the administration. The student(s) involved will be required to check their phone in the office before school each day and pick it up at the end of the day for up to 4 weeks.

Parents: please cooperate with this policy. Please do not allow your child to talk with you or text on his or her cell phone during school hours. Students may obtain permission to call their parents from the school's main office if necessary. As previously stated, failure to adhere to this policy may result in confiscating and examining applicable equipment. Confiscated devices will be turned into administration and returned to a parent/guardian.

Other Possessions



All student-owned personal equipment (i.e., laptops, iPads, Kindles iPods, MP3 players, CD players, radios, televisions, skateboards, electronic games, toys, other games, cards, balls, etc.) should not be brought to school except with the permission of the classroom teacher or at the written request of a teacher who agrees to supervise the use of such items. If students are found in unauthorized possession of personal equipment unrelated to school or learning, faculty members may, for a limited time, confiscate student property considered inappropriate for school. Confiscated student property will be turned into administration and returned to a parent or guardian. Repeated offenses will result in parent/student/Administration conferencing.

Appropriate discipline and order must be maintained for the benefit of all. The majority of all discipline problems are to be handled by the teacher at the classroom level. Teachers are required to manage their students with respect and be age-appropriate. Appropriate forms of teacher discipline include informing students of the classroom rules, reminders, counseling, verbal warnings, reproofs, reprimands, and parent conferences. However, if routine disciplinary measures are ineffective or insufficient, or if serious problems with any given student occur, the classroom teacher will refer the matter to the attention of the Director.

If the problems with the student persist, the Director will notify the student's parents. Should a student's conduct become disruptive and uncontrollable or physically endanger others in the classroom, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy reserves the right to remove and/or dismiss that pupil from school without a refund. Parents should always advise the school if a child's normal routine at home is disturbing or upsetting to the child or if their usual routine has been altered, causing distress.

Discipline for misbehavior should be fitting and administered in light of the student's problem and attitude. In some cases, it may be necessary for the Director to determine the nature of the discipline applied.

Conduct Infractions

Serious behavioral infractions may result in suspension, withdrawal, or expulsion of the student from school. Such problems include:

1. Any intentional form of dishonesty or deception.
2. Disrespect for all persons (including other students, teachers, and parents) and any property, including the property of others and Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy property. It is disrespectful to hit, kick, punch, push, or shove other students, to tease them spitefully, or to pull their hair. Students are expected to follow a teacher's instructions and school rules daily.
3. Rebellion, insolence, unnecessary noisemaking, constant interruptions, blatant disobedience, not listening, or not paying attention in class, including complaining, fighting, displaying negative attitudes, repetitious scolding, mocking, sarcasm, rudeness, ignoring a teacher or another student, and showing contempt toward others.
4. Inappropriate speech, obscene language, swearing, and cursing.
5. Any immoral conduct (including written or verbal references), offensive physical gestures or contact, requests for sexual favors, or any wanted, unwanted, or intimidating sexual overtures directed toward another person are strictly forbidden.,
6. Students should be advised that public displays of affection by Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students toward other Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students anywhere on campus at any time are inappropriate (i.e., including hugging, holding hands, kissing, improperly touching another person whether wanted or unwanted, etc.).
7. Any student who criminally assaults another student or Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy employee verbally or physically will be referred immediately to the administration for disciplinary action and/or maybe subject to criminal prosecution in appropriate situations.
8. Harassment will be referred immediately to the Director or authorities. Harassment may be, but is not limited to, verbal attacks, signs, offensive jokes, inappropriate cartoons, pictures, posters, email jokes or statements, pranks, arrogance, intimidation, physical assaults, contact, or violence.

Disciplinary Probation

The Director may place a misbehaving student on disciplinary probation, intended to give that student sufficient time and opportunity (i.e., from nine to eighteen weeks) to correct his or her problem. Disciplinary probation may be given for any of the following types of misconduct:

1. Continued disobedience after repeated warnings.
2. Disrespect, which is unchanged even after counseling.
3. A continuing negative attitude or a negative influence among other students in the school.
4. Chronic negligence concerning classwork and/or homework.

5. A serious breach of conduct that adversely affects the school's reputation.
6. Failure to comply with the disciplinary procedures of the school.

The school administration decides to place a student on disciplinary probation. An administrative conference will be scheduled with parents to notify them and the student of the reason for probation. If the student fails to make satisfactory progress during probation, the administration may recommend suspension or expulsion.

Administrative Discipline

In some instances, the Director will determine the nature of the discipline applied.

Parent Chaperone Guidelines

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy appreciates the participation of its parents in all activities throughout the school year. Schools cannot function effectively without the participation of their parents and friends. The following guidelines are designed to establish consistency across grade levels regarding parental involvement and the school's expectations of their responsibilities.

Officially and legally, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy teachers are in charge of field trips and all extracurricular activities. They will establish or approve itineraries and agendas for all trips. Teachers will collect all monies in advance, and a school check will be issued. For legal reasons, parents must comply with these regulations. The school must have a photocopy of a valid driver's license, proof of valid insurance, and a completed background check form in the office before any parent may drive for a school trip. **Parents who plan to accompany their child's class on a field trip but are not driving are still required to complete forms for a background check and be approved prior to the trip.** All vehicles should operate on the "buddy" system, and car phone numbers should be exchanged. All drivers should follow the approved route as outlined on the map given to them prior to departure. Field trips are designed for the education and enrichment of the students. Teachers are responsible for assigning students to individual cars. Any parent who provides assistance is expected to cooperate fully with teachers to ensure a safe and enjoyable time for all participants.

Only pre-approved DVD/video tape movies (through the same process for showing DVDs in the classroom) will be approved for long-distance field trips in cars driven by parent volunteers. Movies other than G-rated movies will not be allowed for field trips around town and to the metroplex.

Younger students are not permitted to accompany parents on field trips. Please respect this, as siblings can distract teachers and students; they may take away from the trip for the intended sibling and cause liability for the school.

Homework

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy operates as an academic institution that educates students to prepare them for university, trade school, and/or entrepreneurship to ensure they are confident and capable as they enter the world as young adults. We maintain high standards in the academic program, including homework, which is expected to be completed on time. While we recognize the inherent value of homework, we understand our students have many extracurricular activities that limit their time after school. In addition, we value the family's time together. We endeavor to assign homework that effectively supports the learning area the child is working on, providing extra practice that will assist the student in mastering concepts and not become a burden to the student or family.

Bullying Policy

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a bully is a person who hurts, frightens, or tyrannizes those who are smaller or weaker. [The dictionary](#) defines bullying as the "abuse and mistreatment of someone vulnerable by someone stronger, more powerful, etc." Bullying occurs when someone decides to repeatedly exercise dominance over another person by harming them emotionally, verbally, or physically. Research has discovered three types of bullying, and we are committed to educating our students about them.

The three types of bullying are listed below with examples:

- **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
 - Teasing
 - Name-calling
 - Inappropriate sexual comments
 - Taunting
 - Threatening to cause harm
- **Social bullying**, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships through ongoing behavior. Social bullying includes:
 - Leaving someone out on purpose
 - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
 - Spreading rumors about someone
 - Embarrassing someone in public
- **Physical bullying** involves repeatedly hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
 - Hitting/kicking/pinching
 - Spitting
 - Tripping/pushing
 - Taking or breaking someone's things
 - Making mean or rude hand gestures

Three major factors must be present for a situation to be considered bullying:

1. The person who is bullying someone else must be doing it intentionally.
2. The person who is bullying someone must have been doing it repeatedly for a significant amount of time.
3. The person bullying someone else must be stronger or in a higher position of power than the target.

While general rudeness and other situations involving conflict can seem like bullying, it must meet these three requirements to be considered bullying.

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy takes this term seriously. If a parent states their student is being bullied at the school, an investigation will ensue. Developmentally appropriate action will be taken to ensure that all children feel safe, connected, and valued while attending Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy.

Biting

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy's policy is to collaborate closely with the parent and the child when the child behaves in a manner that is harmful to him/herself, other people, or property. Most behaviors are short-term and correctable if the parent works with us and other professionals when necessary.

Biting can be normal behavior during certain developmental ages. When a child bites, a report will be sent home to the parents of the child who bit and the child who was bitten. Office copies will be kept in a permanent file. This serves as a notice of the incident and the circumstances surrounding the bite. Due to our confidentiality policy, neither child's name will be revealed by the school. This applies to all incidents/accidents involving other children.

When a child bites, he or she will be sent home for the day if:

1. The child bites more than twice in one day
2. The child bites the face
3. The bite breaks the skin

If a child continues to bite people or themselves despite the teachers' and parents' efforts to stop the biting, the parent may be asked to seek consultation with his/her medical practitioner, have an in-person meeting with school administration, and/or be disenrolled at the discretion of the director.

The director's discretion determines what constitutes continual or chronic biting, which will be handled on a case-by-case basis. The final decision will consider age, the severity of bites, temperament, parents' cooperation, and the lead teacher's opinion.



Generally, if a child bites three days in one week, the child will be suspended until a plan for behavior modification is determined. All factors will be considered, and Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy reserves the right to modify this policy and plan at any time with 10-day written notice to ensure the safety of all people on campus and maintain a comfortable school atmosphere.

If a disenrollment has occurred, readmission will be considered after 3 months on a case-by-case basis if space is available at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy. The possibility of readmission will depend upon all the factors in the preceding paragraph.

Suspension or Expulsion

As previously stated, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will not allow violent and/or physical, emotional, or verbal bullying behaviors on campus. School staff will address all incidents with applicable parents and guardians. While a suspension or expulsion is the last resort for Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy, for the safety and well-being of all students enrolled, we reserve the right to suspend or expel a child who is physically hurting, biting other students and staff, knocking down furniture, hitting teachers, physically destroying school property, demonstrating any other violent behavior, or exhibiting physical or emotional distress that cannot be resolved and is not typical for the child's developmental age.

By definition, "suspension" means removing a child from ongoing instruction on the campus for a limited, stated amount of time so that the parents can seek assistance with assessing and resolving the concerning behaviors.

An "expulsion" means the indefinite removal of a child from all programming and staff supervision. There may or may not be a plan to re-enroll the child.

If behavior is problematic and we are unable to resolve it following the above procedure, we will suspend the child for one, three, or five days. If the behavior continues after the suspension, we may choose to allow more time for behavior modification, depending upon the parent's plan, or to terminate our childcare/school services with that child. We will work with any parent who is willing to support our efforts to help benefit their child's growth and development; however, it is our obligation to consider the entire school community, and any plan for improvement must be a team effort and include the willingness of everyone directly involved to be supportive and open-minded.

Any suspension or expulsion forfeits any tuition already paid. No refunds will be issued.

Dismissal

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy reserves the right to discontinue care for any student and family whose needs we cannot meet. These decisions will be made based on the child's and family's ability to succeed in the environment. Furthermore, if the student presents a danger to him/herself, the teacher, or other students, or if their needs are out of

the range of what Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy can provide, we reserve the right to ask the family to make alternative arrangements. We also reserve the right to dismiss any family member who becomes belligerent and hostile toward any staff member, towards the administration, for non-payment of tuition, or for behaviors that are disrespectful, inappropriate, and a detriment to the school environment. All attempts will be made to provide timely notice, but this may not always be possible. Dismissal will result in the forfeiture of tuition paid if it is related to a safety or behavioral issue.

Child Protection

All childcare workers are mandated to report to the Office of Children and Family Services if they have “reasonable grounds to suspect” that a child has been physically, emotionally, or sexually

abused or neglected. It is highly recommended that the Director is notified; however, it is not mandatory. All childcare workers are required to complete one-hour training every year to update themselves on Child maltreatment and Neglect. The staff meetings and training are used to increase awareness for both parents and staff regarding noticing and the importance of reporting child abuse.

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy staff are encouraged to openly discuss ways to prevent such events from happening to children. We encourage an open dialog with the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy family to help facilitate an open-door policy on reporting child abuse within our community. We also encourage staff to attend seminars to learn more about how they may help increase awareness. We also hold parent seminars to raise awareness in our community.

Child Abuse Reporting Policy

- The State of Texas requires that Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy and all members of childcare institutions be on the lookout for and report to the state and appropriate authorities all suspected cases of abuse and neglect of a child. All childcare workers are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. All incidents or suspected incidents will be reported directly to the Child Protective Services for investigation. We are not allowed to do our own investigation and are required by law to report anything of a suspicious nature. It is advised that families make the staff aware of any lingering bruising or other visible injury to minimize suspicion of possible child abuse or endangerment. Child abuse is defined as “a violation of a child’s body and mind physically, emotionally, or sexually.” Child neglect is defined as “continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, including, but not limited to food, clothing, shelter, emotional security, medical and dental care, and adequate supervision needed for the child’s growth and development.”

The following steps are to be taken if a staff member is suspected of child abuse:

- A staff member with a pending situation or investigation should immediately notify the Director or administrative staff member in the building.
- The supervisor will check on the complaint and if they agree that there may be abuse, the staff member will report the incident to Child Protective Services and our state licensing authority.
- We will then follow their advice regarding whether or not to suspend the staff member. If a staff member is found responsible in a case of child abuse, we will take the following steps:

- We will allow the staff member to appeal the decision
 - The Director or an appointed member of the leadership staff will meet with the individual, review the incident, and form an opinion as to its validity and/or consequences to the school and the individual.
 - Based upon the advice of our licensing agent, we will either suspend the staff member or allow them to continue their job until the appeal is completed.
- The staff member will meet with the Director or an assigned member of the leadership staff during this time, and steps will be taken to ensure that there are no problems.
- If, after the appeal, the decision is still founded, we will take one of the following steps based upon the advice of our licensing agent:
 - The staff member will be terminated from their position at the school or
 - We will inform the parents that we have a staff member with a child abuse record. We will also let the parents know what the charge was.

Please note that any authorized person who attempts to pick up a child from Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy must not be under the influence of any illegal substance. In the case of this occurrence, the school will consider this an act of child abuse/neglect, and staff will notify the local police department immediately and, within 24 hours, notify our state licensing representative.

Health & Illness Policies

Health Check

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy recognizes the need to maintain a safe, healthy, stimulating environment for children in our care and ensure practices are in place and implemented to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Children new to a childcare center or school environment will almost certainly contract more frequent colds and other ailments than they would at home. Be prepared for this, and be assured that as exposure and episodes of illness strengthen your child's immunities, they should become less frequent and less severe.

We visually check each child in our care daily. We look for any illness that prevents the child from comfortably participating in child-care center activities, including outdoor play. We also look for illnesses that result in a greater need for care than caregivers may provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care.

Exclusion From Care

There are circumstances that may call for a child to be excluded from care at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (including outdoor play).

- The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care.
- Temporal temperature of 100.0 degrees or greater.
- Oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater.
- Under-arm temperature of 99.4 degrees or greater
- Lethargy and fatigue
- Abnormal breathing
- Cough (including a persistent dry cough without documentation from a physician about a condition)
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours
- Diarrhea
- Rash with unknown cause
- Mouth sores
- The child's behavior changes or exhibits other signs that the child may be severely ill.
- If a child has returned to school following an illness and exhibits signs that the illness is reoccurring
- If the child experiences a sudden change of medical status and is showing other signs of illness, we have the authorization to take the child to the emergency room or call 911 at your expense

We are not able to honor requests that children be excluded from certain types of activities related to a temporary medical condition such as recovering from an illness. In the case of a physical difference, disability, or longer-term condition, such as recovery from a broken bone; please talk to the director about a plan for your child. School staff must always assess the impact any modifications and accommodations may have on other students' safety and activities. We reserve the right to deny any requests we deem infeasible.

When a Child Becomes Ill While in Care

If any one of the previously listed signs or symptoms occurs, the following procedure will be followed:

- The child will be removed from the classroom.
- The child's parents will be called to pick up a child
- The parents will have a maximum of 40 minutes to pick up their child
- If the child's medical status declines quickly, including rapidly increasing temperature, we have the authorization to take the child to the emergency room or call 911 at your expense.
- The child will be given appropriate attention and supervision until the child's parents arrive



- Extra attention will be given to hand washing and sanitation.
- The environment will be disinfected and sanitized as soon as possible.

Readmitting a Previously Ill Child

Before a child returns to school, the following must take place:

- Fever-free without fever-reducing medication (Tylenol, Motrin, and generic equivalents) for at least 24 hours. (Please note your exact thermometer device's normal/elevated ranges.)
- No vomiting and/or diarrhea for at least 24 hours
- Fatigue and malaise are no longer present
- Child has resumed normal eating, drinking, and toileting routines
- At least 24 hours since the first dose of antibiotics if prescribed
- Resolving signs and symptoms. While congestion and coughs often persist, the other signs and symptoms of illness should be resolved.
- Please follow the guidance of your healthcare practitioner and any illness-specific guidance
- Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy reserves the right to request a medical release from an MD, DO, or nurse practitioner before the child returns to campus.

COVID-19 Policy

COVID-19 is an endemic virus that our community should monitor, similar to the flu. If students or staff have symptoms, they should use an at-home test or see their doctor to rule out the presence of the COVID-19 virus.

Accidents & Mishaps

Minor scrapes or bruises will be handled at school, and an accident report detailing the incident will be given to the parents at pick-up. Head injuries or any more serious injuries will be reported to the parent by phone, and an accident report detailing the incident will be given to the parent at pick-up. The parent must sign all accident/incident reports and will be kept in the child's student file; you may request a copy.

Vaccination Policy

Vaccination records or exemptions will be kept on file as part of your child's records per state-mandated minimum standards. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy honors vaccine exemptions, which must be obtained by the Texas Department of State Health Services. If you wish to obtain an exemption, please begin the process at least one month before enrollment to allow for processing time.

More information can be found at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov>



The Coronavirus vaccine is not on the current vaccine schedule for school attendance in Texas. An exemption related to the Coronavirus vaccine is not necessary.

Staff TB Test and Vaccination Requirements

While we encourage all staff members to stay healthy and get their annual check-ups, we do not require specific vaccines or TB Tests before working at our facility.

Vision and Hearing Testing Requirements

Any child 4 years and above must have a Vision and Hearing test completed and submitted to Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy before their start date or within the first 4 months of enrollment. Please turn it into the front office or upload it to ChildPilot so it can be placed in your child's file. These tests are most often obtained during the child's annual well-child visit with your healthcare provider, and we may periodically provide the screenings on campus for a fee to be paid by the child's family.

Medication

Parents will be expected to complete and sign a Medicine Authorization Form if their child is to receive any **prescription medicine**, inhalers, or breathing treatments while in the care of Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy. The medication must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name and with directions to administer the medication, and must be an Rx prescribed by a Physician. **(Over-the-counter medication cannot be administered without an Rx)**. Prescribed medication must also include the date and name of the physician. All requests must have a start and end date. No medicine should be taken to the classroom by the parents or students. All medication will be given according to the label provided.

When the child is to be given medication, a designated member of the administrative staff will take the medicine to the child or discreetly call for the child to leave the classroom. Using gloves, the employee will dispense the medication to the child and sign off on the Medical Authorization Form. All medication forms will be kept in a binder in the front office.

Medication cannot and will not be administered through a child's food or drink.

Medical Emergencies

At the beginning of every school year, as part of registration, each student must provide documentation for Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy to keep on file, including the following:

- name, address, and phone number of the child's doctor



- name, address, and phone number of a hospital where the child may receive emergency medical attention

Procedures for Major Injuries

- Administrative staff members will call 911
- Parents will be notified via telephone
- A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and will stay until the parent arrives.
- Parents will receive written documentation of the event once the situation has been handled and the child is safe with his/her parents.

Procedure for Minor Injuries

- Parents will be notified via telephone
- Parents will receive written documentation of the event upon arrival at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy.

Allergies

Upon enrollment, each family must give written details of any allergies their child may have. This will be kept on file and a copy will be given to the staff members who care for that child. If allergies develop after enrollment, parents must submit a copy of formal documentation from the child's physician.

If a child has a diagnosed food allergy, a Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan form must be completed and signed by the parent and physician/healthcare practitioner. Please request this form at the front desk if applicable. This form must be signed by a physician/licensed healthcare practitioner BEFORE a child may start with our program.

Infants and Safe Sleeping

Currently, we do not offer care for infants.

Nursing

We offer a designated quiet place for nursing mothers (family or staff) to sit to feed their infant.

General Other Policies

Guide to Parent's Rights

- Enter and examine the child-care facility during its hours of operation and without advance notice.
- File a complaint against the childcare facility.
- Review the childcare facility's publicly accessible records.
- Review the child-care facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child.
- Receive inspection reports and information about how to access the childcare facility's online compliance history.
- Have the facility comply with a court order that prevents another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the child.
- Be given the contact information for the childcare facility's local Child Care Regulation office.
- Obtain a copy of the facility's policies and procedures handbook.
- Review the facility's staff training records and any in-house training curriculum; and
- Exercise these rights without receiving retaliatory action by the facility.
- Inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving their child provided that:
 - Video recordings of the alleged incident are available.
 - The parent or guardian does not retain any part of the video depicting a child that is not their own.
 - The parent or guardian of any other child in the video receives prior notice from the facility.

Students with Special Needs

If a student needs an adaptation to our regularly scheduled activities program, the parent needs to provide a written instruction plan (IEP) provided by the child's physician or qualified professional affiliated with a local school district or early childhood intervention program. If the student needs adaptive equipment, the parent is responsible for providing such equipment to the school while the student attends the school.

The Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy's materials and curriculum will be modified, when possible, to support the documented special needs or learning differences to meet these students' social, emotional, and/or academic needs. If an outside contractor/specialist is needed or requested, the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy is open to the specialist providing services on campus as long as they pass the background check, meet the Minimum Standards requirements, and it is at the parent's expense.

1. Children with special needs (i.e., physical, emotional, social, or learning problems) may be considered for admission on an individual, case-by-case basis. Parents who wish to enroll such children must understand that Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy admits children with special needs only as long as faculty and staff members can meet the prospective student's regular academic needs without impeding the learning process of other students in the class. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy Director has authority in making the final decision. Special needs children admitted to Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy are admitted provisionally.
2. The following guidelines are to be followed when considering a child with special needs:
3. Parents of children with special physical needs or handicaps must not expect the school to provide any additional or special equipment.
4. Parents of children with special needs must not expect Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy to provide additional personnel or staffing needs (i.e., if the child is incontinent and needs special care, the parents would be responsible for providing that care).
5. Every child attending Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy must be able to participate in the majority of the school's activities and be able to experience success within the framework of the school's academic and social expectations.
6. The presence of any child with special needs must not detract from the daily program offered in all classes or negatively affect the high achievement standards expected of other students.
7. Currently, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy has no specially trained staff hired to handle children with special needs, learning disabilities, psychological or emotional handicaps, or other exceptional requirements.

Required Notifications

- The childcare facility must provide written notice to the parent or guardian of any other child captured in a video before allowing a parent to inspect a recording.
- The childcare facility must provide a parent or guardian with a written copy of the rights no later than the child's first day at the facility.

Licensing

We understand the importance of being in compliance with the Texas (HHS) state licensing regulations in order to ensure a quality environment for your children. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy complies with the applicable state licensing regulations and policies. These requirements cover staff qualifications, facilities, playgrounds, health and safety guidelines, and child/staff ratios. A copy of the minimum standards for Licensed Child Care Centers may be reviewed in the school office. Our recent inspection report is posted in the front office lobby. If you have any questions or concerns regarding child-care licensing or minimum standards rules, please contact the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or Texas Health and Human Services.



Local Licensing Office
550 East 15th Street, Ste 120
Plano, TX 75074
512-424-6500
Website: www.dfps.state.tx.us and txchildcaresearch.org;
Abuse/Neglect Hotline: 1-800-252-5400
HHS Website: www.hhs.texas.gov.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited anywhere on school property. When entering the parking lot all smoking must be stopped. This includes but is not limited to cigarettes or any tobacco products, e-cigs, vapor cigarettes, etc.

Firearms and Weapons

Firearms and weapons are prohibited on school property. If you have a license to carry a concealed weapon, you must leave your weapon in your locked vehicle unless you are an officer on duty.

Gang Free Zone

By law, all childcare facilities are required to include this information in their Parent Handbook. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy is in a gang-free zone.

What is a gang-free zone?

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang-related activity is subject to increased penalties under Texas law. The specific locations include daycare centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your childcare center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

How do parents know where the gang-free zone ends?

The area within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The local municipal or county engineer may produce and update maps for the purposes of prosecution. Parents may contact their local municipality or courthouse for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so.

What is the purpose of gang-free zones?

Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.



Lost and Found

Students should mark all personal items with their names. Money and other valuable items should not be brought to school as Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy cannot be responsible for student's belongings left around the school. Items found items will be placed in a Lost and Found

area. Students may check the office to determine if their lost items have been turned in. Lost and found items not claimed within one month may be donated to a shelter.

Policy Changes

If Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy changes any policies, we will notify you in writing no less than ten days before the change. Policy changes will be emailed and posted at the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy.



Operational Policy

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy is operated by a private, legally constituted, self-perpetuating, independent Board that possesses sole authority for setting the policies that govern the school. In addition, the Board is responsible for the employment of administrative, faculty, and staff personnel; for oversight in all financial matters and fiscal affairs; for providing and maintaining a suitable physical plant; and for ensuring the quality of academic and curricular programs of the school. The Board accomplishes this through its professional representative, the

Director of Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy, who has authority and responsibility for the daily management and operation of every aspect of the school.

Implied Completion and Agreement

Please complete and sign the attached form confirming you have read this handbook and agree to abide by Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy's policies and procedures. Regardless of receiving the signed form, your child's enrollment and participation in programming imply that you have thoroughly read and agreed to the guidelines within.

This page has been intentionally left blank.
Please see the signature page below.

Please see the last page of the Parent Handbook. Print, sign, and return.



HEART OF TEXOMA MONTESSORI ACADEMY

Parent Handbook

All parents and students of Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy are required to read and comply with the complete contents of the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy Parent-Student Handbook. Please be reminded that, at the point of initial admission to Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy, every student and his/her parents are committed to supporting all the policies, rules, and regulations of the school. Consequently, it is very important that you take time to read this handbook carefully and completely and make every effort to discuss this information thoroughly with your child(ren).

I agree to receive and abide by the Operational Policies outlined above. I have read and agree to abide by the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy's policies and procedures and agree to all the statements below. I also accept responsibility for sharing this information with any other authorized caregivers, especially those who may be dropping off and picking up my child(ren).

- I agree that I received and will abide by the Operational Policies outlined in the Parent/Student Handbook.
- I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with the Operational Policies outlined in the Parent/Student Handbook.
- I acknowledge it is my responsibility to ensure all authorized caregivers are aware of Operational Policies.
- I will keep a copy of this handbook accessible for my reference.
- I have read and agree to abide by the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy Agreement.

Print Name _____ **Date:** _____

Signature: _____