



ELEMENTARY COMMUNITY HANDBOOK

Daily Schedule

8:00 a.m.	-	8:15 a.m.	Morning Drop-off
8:15 a.m.	-	11:45 a.m.	Work Period
11:45 a.m.	-	12:45 p.m.	Recess and Lunch
12:45 p.m.	-	3:15 p.m.	Work Period
3:15 p.m.	-	3:30 p.m.	Afternoon Pick-up

Attendance

It is important that your child is in class every day. Each child is an essential part of the classroom dynamics. A child's absence for any part of the day impacts scheduled lessons as well as group projects with other children.

However, your child is not expected to attend school when they are sick or recuperating. Please see "When to Keep Your Child at Home" in this handbook or refer to the Parent Handbook regarding The Duluth Montessori School's health policy.

If you expect your child to miss any part of the day, please provide as much advance notification as possible via a note to your child's teacher or a phone call or email to the Sugarloaf Campus office.

Also, let the office know when your child has an unexpected absence for sickness or any other reason. After 9:00 a.m., the parents of children absent without notification will be called.

Tardiness - It is very important to be on time for school. Morning carpool is from 8:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. Children in the second plane of development are cultivating their social skills and the first fifteen minutes in the morning helps them re-establish relationships and can set the tone for the entire day. After 8:15 a.m., you must park and walk your child to the office to sign him in.

Early Pick-up - Children must be signed out and released to you in the office by a staff member.

Carpool

Traffic enters through both entrances. Please be extremely cautious while driving in the circular drive. Put your car in park while children are entering and exiting the vehicle.

Children are dropped off at the gate closest to the lower building. In the morning, toddler carpool begins at 8:30 a.m. A single line will be formed for both toddler and elementary vehicles. Be aware that some cars may stop at the gate with the arch to drop off their toddler children. Do not allow your child out of the car unless a teacher, an assistant or other staff member is present to open your child's car door. We cannot accept children before 8:00 a.m. **After 9:00 a.m., children may not be admitted without a doctor's note.**

In the afternoon, children are picked up at the same gate. Parents should form a single line on the *inner* edge of the driveway.

Dress Code

Clothing - Children are expected to wear comfortable, loose fitting clothing that is appropriate for gardening, painting, working with clay, etc. Clothing with cartoon characters, wordage or advertisements is not allowed. Shorts should be longer in length (walking short style). If girls wear skirts they must have shorts underneath. Tank tops must have shoulder straps of at least a two-finger width.

Shoes - Indoor shoes must be light, quiet and fit the foot well. "Keds" and "Vans" style shoes are ideal for the classroom. High heels, hard sole shoes, light-up shoes and clog-style shoes are inappropriate for the classroom and may not be worn to school. Please no sandals, open heel crocs, or croc-type shoes. Outdoor shoes must be stable, strong athletic shoes that completely enclose the foot, as children need to be safe on the uneven terrain of the playground.

Analog watch - Children should wear an analog watch to assist them in planning their work and keeping track of their day in their journal. Digital watches are not permitted.

Hair - Children with long hair are expected to keep it pulled back out of their face while at school.

Snack

Breakfast at home is VERY important. Snack is deemphasized in the classroom, however, a small snack of fruit and vegetables is available in the classroom during the morning work period if needed. Food prepared in the classroom will be purchased by students during planned “Going Out” shopping trips.

Lunch

Lunch is an important community time for the children. The Upper and Lower classes are having separate lunches this year to make room for the new Adolescent Program. We emphasize Grace and Courtesy and Practical Life activities during this time. The community tables are set with tablecloths, silverware, napkins, plates and/or bowls, glasses and a centerpiece. Children are expected to eat from their plates and return containers and plastic bags to their lunchboxes. Each table waits until everyone at the table is prepared to eat. This is a social time which is made to be pleasant and relaxing.

Healthy Meals - DMS has always promoted good nutrition in our school environment. Children learn about foods and their importance in building healthy bodies and minds. In elementary, the students are still expected to continue in this tradition. As a way of supporting the students in this endeavor, they may not bring pre-packaged or processed food. Choose foods that are as close to their natural form as possible. Fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products and whole grains are all good examples. Granola bars, chips, pretzels, goldfish, (and similar products), fruit drinks (such as Capri Sun, Fruitopia, etc.), sweets, white bread, and highly processed foods such as American cheese slices and “lunchables” are not considered nutritious and are not allowed. Foods such as “Gogurt” and “Fruit Rollups” are not permitted as they do not support our grace and courtesy practices at the lunch table. Soups, peanut butter, applesauce, yogurts and cereals should be all natural with no sugars (corn, syrups, honey, etc.), salt, dyes, or hydrogenated oils added. Students should have a balanced lunch that includes a protein, fruit/vegetable and grain. PLEASE READ LABELS.

Reduce/Reuse/Recycle - In an effort to cut down on waste and as a way of enhancing the child’s interest in being environmentally friendly, the students will return all uneaten food, containers and plastic bags to their lunchboxes. By returning all of these items, the students can see whether they are packing too much food, as well as how much waste they may have generated. Reusable containers are recommended to keep liquid items from spilling in lunchboxes during the return trip home.

There will be no microwave available for heating up food during lunchtime. Hot food may be sent in a thermos.

Birthdays

In celebration of a child's birthday, a special candle will be set next to the child's plate at lunch. Children may bring their own supplies to cook in class on their birthday. Please be sure to follow the school's nutrition guidelines and check with the office for any allergies.

Your child may also choose to give a "gift" of a plant for the classroom or a book to the school library.

Outdoor Play

Parents please review the following guidelines for outdoor play with your child.

Physical Contact : Respect the personal space of others.
Play cooperatively.
Use assertive but kind words to express your needs.
Only touch others in an appropriate manner.

Playground: Use playground equipment only for its intended use.
Remain where the teachers can see you at all times.
All balls and play equipment must be put away properly.
Keep your hands out of the soccer goal netting.
Do not hang on the soccer goals.
Walk to the playground from the classroom.
Protect the landscape.
Line up when called.

Going Outs

A Going Out is a planned outing from our campus that is organized by a small group of students. These trips are motivated by work or research interests of the children. This is part of the Practical Life work of the elementary class. A parent usually provides transportation and children may call parents to arrange these outings. Once you have received the "Safe Driver Agreement", please return it to the office. An email notification will be sent to parents when your child leaves for a Going Out, and another when your child returns to class.

Going Out School Shopping - Another part of the Going Out program is for the care of our school environment. The children visit various stores to purchase supplies we may need in the classroom.

Going Out Grocery Shopping - Grocery shopping for snack items is also included in this program. Shopping is generally done weekly and parents are asked to volunteer to take a small group of children to the grocery store to act as a chaperone. Each group may include older and younger children.

A few families will still be needed to volunteer to bring in snack items several times during the year. These times include the beginning of the year, end of the year, opera time and other busy periods during which shopping trips will not be possible. A sign-up sheet will be available for volunteers to provide snack or drive students to purchase the items needed.

Library

Each child should have a Gwinnett County Public Library card and PIN (personal identification number). Parents must obtain this card at the library with their child and send it to school. Cards and PINs are kept on file in our classrooms for the students. Children must have their own library card in order to visit the library as a Going Out. Library trips occur weekly, as needed. A parent usually provides transportation to the Suwanee Branch (approximately 5 miles away). A sign-up sheet for volunteers will be available.

Additional trips are planned as needed. Children may call parents to arrange this Going Out.

A system is in place to keep track of which books are due each week; however, parents are responsible for fines. Please use the library website gwinnettpl.org to monitor what books may be due. It is also recommended that you register your child's library card with "Library Elf" through the library website.

Homework

Homework takes a variety of forms in the Montessori elementary program.

The homework that is expected for *all* children in the program, regardless of age or academic ability, is that of performing daily chores and exploring – and, for older children, planning – cultural and scientific activities. Activities may include visiting a museum, seeing a play, attending a symphony performance or even helping to plan family vacations. The purpose of this work is to promote independence and social graces which enhance the children's ability to navigate the freedom and responsibilities of the classroom and prepare them for adult life.

The work the child does in the home helps the child feel he is a contributing member of the household. In preparing your child for these responsibilities, please discuss the steps of each chore and work with him to organize the chore so that he is successful. As your child becomes self-sufficient, continue adding chores, progressively increasing them in difficulty and level of responsibility. The first chore that each elementary child should master is to prepare their own lunch. In this way, your child's teacher can also monitor the progress of their level of independence and responsibility.

Subsequent chores can include but are not limited to the following:

- Using an alarm clock
- Making their bed
- Making their own breakfast
- Cleaning out their lunchbox
- Setting and clearing the dinner table
- Loading and unloading the dishwasher
- Feeding the household pet

Also, as the child matures, other chores could be but are not limited to:

- Helping plan the family's weekly dinner menu
- Preparing a shopping list of lunch needs
- Doing their own laundry
- Making dinner one night a week

Courier Packs

Courier packs will be sent home with your child to communicate important class and school information. The courier pack envelopes are an important part of classroom organization. You may return required classroom forms and any correspondence to your child's teacher in the courier pack. Envelopes must be returned the day after they come home. Please do not hand them to anyone in carpool. **Children are responsible for returning packs to the courier basket in their classroom.** Please handle with care.

Contacting Your Child's Teacher

Please notify the Sugarloaf campus office if you would like to meet with your child's teacher. Before you come in, it is extremely helpful if you give your child's teacher a note to let her know the topic you are interested in discussing. This allows her some time to observe your child in the classroom or to look at her records, resulting in a much more productive meeting.

You may contact the teacher's assistants for more information about going-outs, volunteering, library trips, family events, snack shopping and field trips via a note or a message through the office.

Email Communications

In an effort to reduce the amount of paper used by our school, as much communication (parent memos, reminders, etc.) as possible will be sent via email. Please be sure to add sugarloaf@duluthmontessori.com to your safe senders list or email address book. This will help to avoid missing any messages that may be automatically moved to your “junk mail” folder. Also, it is important that we have your correct email address.

Office Hours

Please contact the office to schedule a meeting with your child’s teacher.

When to Keep your Child at Home

We cannot admit your child to school if one or more of the following conditions exists:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in normal school activities, including outdoor play.
- The illness/injury requires more care than teachers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in the class.
- The child has an oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater.
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness, such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, vomiting, unexplained rash, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill.
- A health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.

Children should come to school healthy. Wait 24 hours after vomiting, diarrhea, or a fever over 100.4 degrees (without fever reducing medication) has subsided before bringing your child back to school.

If your child develops a fever, or shows other signs of illness during school hours, you will be called to arrange for him to be picked up. Parents’ specific instructions will be obtained and followed until the child is released.

Children with communicable diseases as defined by the Common Infectious Illness chart (found in the DMS Parent Handbook) may not come to school, nor be readmitted until the recommendations by the Georgia Department of Human Resources as outlined on the chart have been met.

Children's Opera Workshop 2015-2016

This is a very rewarding experience in confidence and personal growth for the children. The result of their work and dedication is exciting to witness when it all comes together for the Friday performance. Volunteer sign-ups will begin in January. Volunteers will be needed starting in mid-February to help with costumes, set production, and assistance during the week of the workshop and the day of the performance.

Opera Workshop Week:

Sanford and Judy Jones of Youth Opera International will work with the children for the entire Opera Week. The week is dedicated to rehearsals and preparation. For the last three days of the week, the children will be dropped off and picked up at the performance venue. Children must wear clothing in which they can move freely. Sweat pants and t-shirts are best. It is very important that the children get plenty of rest during this week.

The Opera Dress Rehearsal and Performance: TO BE DETERMINED