

# Meadow Montessori School

## Middle School Class

Welcome to the Middle School Class (Senior) for the 2010-2011 school year at Meadow Montessori. The following outline should give you the information you will need to make this school year successful.

If you have any questions that are not answered after reading this, or any others that emerge throughout the school year, please do not hesitate to contact us. The best and most effective form of communication for both of us is through email.

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### *I. Attendance*

- School begins at 8:00 a.m. each day with a community meeting. This meeting serves as a daily anchor for our students where we share affirmations, discuss news and solve problems. Please drop your child off at least ten minutes early so that he/she can be ready for this important meeting at the start of the day. Students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. are marked tardy.
- If your child arrives before 7:45, he/she must be “signed in” with the ETC program.
- If your child is going to be absent, please call the school before 8:30 a.m. The office will contact families who do not call before this time.
- Please plan family vacations around the school calendar. Michigan state law requires that students do not miss more than 10 days of school.

### *II. Dismissal*

- Although students enrolled in the Extended-Time Care (ETC) sign in at 3:30 p.m., many prefer to return to the Senior Classroom to study. It is a privilege to return to the classroom, so it is expected that students behave responsibly; otherwise they will need to return to ETC and remain under the supervision of an ETC staff person. Please make contact with either the ETC staff person or the teacher in the Senior classroom when you pick up your son or daughter.
- All middle school students who are not ETC will be dismissed at the front door at 3:30. Please remain in your car and wait for your child. The teachers will sign your children out. Any students who are not collected by 3:45 p.m. will be signed into ETC.
- When picking up after 3:45, remember to make contact with the staff person supervising your son or daughter.

### *III. Mailboxes and Communication*

- All families have mailboxes located in the lobby of the school. Please check your family mailbox for communication from the school. If you choose to have your child check the mailbox, be sure to ask him/her for any information collected.
- Each teacher has a staff mailbox. Any written communication should be made through these mailboxes. Appointment requests can be made this way, via email, or through Paula at the front desk.

- If you need to communicate with your children or the teachers during the day, please inform the front desk. This includes any messages, lunches, books, etc. The office will pass these on to the classroom.
- Parents or other family members are welcome to come into the classroom for the purpose of observing the Montessori environment. These appointments can be scheduled with Paula at the front desk.
- The students' hand calendars and weekly work plans provide regular communication between home and school. It is essential for parents to read, sign and return the weekly work plans to school with their child every Monday.

#### *IV. Clothing*

- Please ensure that your child is selecting clothing that they can work in comfortably all day yet does not distract from the learning environment.
- Many field studies offer the opportunity for students to dress their best.
- Our policy at MMS prohibits the wearing of any clothing that depicts violent images or words. The middle school community will be guided to discuss, discern and agree upon a common definition for what is deemed offensive or inappropriate.
- Students are expected to leave make-up, expensive jewelry, purses, money, electronic devices or gadgets at home. If absolutely necessary, cellular phones may be stored in the lobby in the student's family mailbox during the school day and during ETC.
- To be fully prepared for our Friday Farm Program students should have a warm coat, waterproof boots, hiking boots, rain gear, hat and gloves and a wristwatch. Students should always plan to work outside while on the farm, rain or shine.

#### *V. Schedules*

- All students at MMS have individualized schedules. Please make every effort to plan doctor and other appointments around this schedule. In general, your child's morning schedule will be very full.

#### *VI. Homework*

- At the middle school level, students are assigned approximately 1-2 hours of homework each night. Please let us know if your son/daughter is coming home with more than 2 hours of homework.
- Please be aware that students have open work time during the school day. We encourage student who know they have busy schedules at night to use this time to complete homework. These open times are an essential part of the Montessori classroom and enable students to learn organization, responsibility and independence.
- All students must come to school prepared with their completed work each day. Students who come to school unprepared (with unfinished or missing work and materials) will be excused from the relevant lesson. Students who still have incomplete work at the end of the day may be asked to stay in ETC until 5:00 p.m. in order to complete their work. Should this happen, parents will be billed for the time in ETC. We suggest that you pass this expense on to your child. If a pattern of incomplete work persists, the student will be sent home and a conference arranged before he/she is allowed to return to school.
- Parents can best support their child in completing homework by setting up a consistent time and place for the child to work each day.
- Students are expected to spend time at home practicing their musical instruments.
- Remember that we strongly believe that consistent and meaningful contributions to the needs of the family are important for the development of responsibility and connection. Home

chores such as helping with dinner or feeding pets are considered necessary for children of this age group.

#### VII. *Material Fees and Expenses*

- Each middle school student is charged \$270 for the materials he/she uses throughout the year. This fee should be considered a “rental” fee and in no way implies that a student has permission to deface, destroy or lose school materials. Students will be charged for any materials that are treated in such ways.
- We will distribute all reading books to our students as we move through the curriculum.

The fee covers:

- workbooks
- hand calendars
- paper
- pencils
- composition books
- textbooks
- folders
- art materials
- music materials
- pencil cases

The fee does not cover:

- materials for special projects
- extra binders
- journals
- field studies and field studies
- any other extra materials

Each student is asked to bring:

- 2 boxes of tissues (with lotion please)
- 2 boxes of organic granola bars

#### VIII. *Field Studies and Class Trips*

- Learning experiences outside of the classroom are an important part of our curriculum. Field studies that are scheduled during the day are considered mandatory for students. These unique opportunities are an essential teaching tool in terms of curriculum and practical life. Students are usually assessed on what they learned during a field study are responsible for the material even if they are unable to attend.
- We send home permission slips in advance of each trip, which must be returned to the classroom in a timely manner.
- Parents are welcome and needed on field studies as chaperones. Whenever possible, the school tries to cover the cost of the chaperone’s trip. However we cannot cover all parents who may want to join the group. The price for field studies will appear on your ledger statement or you may pay cash.
- Seniors take two big trips each year. In the fall we do an outdoor trip, and in the spring we travel to an urban area. The students are able raise approximately 50% of the costs by working in the Hot Lunch Program. We encourage all Seniors to think about saving for their trip by subscribing to the hot lunch program.
- The third year Seniors will spend time outside the continental United States during the year. We are currently seeking outside funding to help underwrite the expense of this travel.

#### IX. *Specials Classes*

- Please treat art, music, gym and foreign language as seriously as core academic subjects. Although we refer to these classes as enrichment, we feel that part of being an educated human being is being well versed in all of these areas.

- It is expected that students maintain the same high level of respect for these teachers that is given to the regular classroom teachers.
- Students at this level have the unique privilege of participating in our special Farm Program at the Calder-Piedmonte Farm. Because the farm is working farm, each student and their parents will be required to sign a waiver in order to participate. Please be sure to read this form over carefully.

#### X. *Special Activities*

- The History Fair and Science Fair are important aspects of the curriculum here at MMS and give the students a chance to share what they are learning in a more formal way. All middle school students participate in both fairs. We will discuss these events further as they approach but it is not too soon to be thinking of project ideas!
- Opera week is scheduled for February 21-15. We'll need volunteers!
- We have special clubs after school for anyone who wants to join, including chess, 4-H, Scouting, sports teams and others. Please check your newsletters for details once the year begins. In addition we would love to have any parents interested in sharing their gifts and talents with us to sign up for directing an activity.

#### XI. *Planning and Communication Tools*

- In order to support student responsibility for cycle completion, a green folder will come home every Friday. In it you will find tests and other written work from the week, as well as the weekly work plan. Please look at what comes home and use this as an opportunity for you and your child to discuss what they are doing in class. Please be sure to sign the work plan, return the papers to the green folder, and send everything back to school with your child on Monday.
- In addition to our weekly work plans, each student has a hand calendar in which to write all important events, projects and assignments. It is another form of teacher/parent communication and aides the student in developing important organizational skills.
- Just before the school year begins, families and teachers engage in goal setting conferences and attend the Senior Orientation. At the end of every quarter - in November, January, April and June - conferences are scheduled and written progress reports are sent home.

#### XII. *Newsletters*

- Please read your newsletters! The newsletters will keep you up-to-date on the school calendar and also on our activities in the classroom.
- The MMS website is another source of valuable information. Calendars, newsletters and other newsworthy information may be found there.

#### XIII. *Responsibility*

- At this age level, personal responsibility is a major goal. If we strive to teach anything, above all else it is that each individual is responsible for his/her own actions and words. If we allow young people to live out consequences of their choices, we are helping them develop the mental and moral independence that they long for. Please help your son/daughter by allowing him/her the dignity of accepting personal responsibility for all situations.

We look forward to an outstanding year!

Pat and Debi