

# Parent Handbook



*“Enlightening the spirit of tomorrow by educating the child today.”*

## **General Operations:**

Tallulah Montessori (the “School”) will provide a Montessori education for children ages 2<sup>1/2</sup> through 6 from Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. from beginning of August to the end of May of the following year. Pre-Care and After-Care are also available during the school year. Pre-Care, or early drop-off is available Monday to Friday at 8:00 a.m. and After-Care is available Monday to Friday from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Fun and enriching summer camps are offered during the summer months. Dates, times and themes for summer camps will be posted on our website, [www.tallulahmontessori.com](http://www.tallulahmontessori.com). All children must be bathroom independent to attend the School.

## **Enrollment:**

The School shall not accept a child for enrollment or continue the child’s enrollment in the School where the School staff determines that services necessary to protect the health and safety of the child while at the School cannot be provided. No child shall be admitted for care to the School without enrollment records having been completed.

The following registration forms are required to be on file to complete a child’s enrollment:

1. Enrollment Form
2. Contract
3. Emergency Medical Information
4. Immunization Form for age appropriate immunizations or a signed affidavit against such immunizations within 20 days of child’s enrollment.
5. Authorization for Medication
6. Parent Handbook Agreement Form
7. Three-Year Program Recognition Form

The School must obtain the following parental authorization when a child is enrolled:

1. Authorization for the center to obtain emergency medical care for the child when the parent is not available;
2. Authorization for persons other than the parents to pick up or drop off their child, including the names of such persons and there relationship to the child.

The School agrees to keep the Parent/Guardian informed of any incidents, including illnesses, injuries, adverse reactions to medications, and exposure to communicable disease, which affect the Student.

Parents and/or Guardians hereby acknowledge that they have received a copy of the Tallulah Montessori Parent Handbook and agree to abide by the rules, regulations, policies and procedures therein. The School reserves the right to change or amend any rules, regulations, polices or procedures in the Parent Handbook at its discretion and will provide 14 days written notice of any such changes to the Parents and/or Guardians.

Parents/Guardians will be advised to their child’s academic, emotional and social progress twice a year during Parent/Teacher conferences. The lead teacher is available to set up conferences at any time during the year if a special concern arises that is specific to your child.

The School reserves the right, at any time, to terminate a Student's enrollment for academic or disciplinary reasons or, when in the judgment of the School, it is in the Student's or the School's best interest to do so. The School also reserves the right not to continue enrollment or not to re-enroll the Student if the School reasonably concludes that the actions of the Parents and/or Guardians make a positive and constructive working relationship with the School impossible or seriously interfere with the School's accomplishment of its educational purposes. The decision of the School in these regards shall be final.

Parents and/or Guardians are responsible to provide a full spare set of clothes (socks, shoes, underwear and weather appropriate clothes) that will remain at the school in a Cubby Bag that will be provided by the school. A \$7 fee will be assessed should the Student's Cubby Bag not have a spare set in the event that the Student requires the School to provide a replacement set.

A **\$10** fee will be assessed in the event that Parents and/or Guardians fail to provide a lunch daily for the Student. The school will provide a nutritious lunch to the Student in such an event.

A **\$15** late fee will be assessed if the Parents and/or Guardians fail to pick up the Students who are enrolled in the half-day program within 15 minutes of the pick-up time and then **\$1** for every additional minute after the first 15 minutes. In the event that the Parents and/or Guardians fail to pickup the Students who are enrolled in the full-day program within 15 minutes of the pick up time, the Students will automatically join the Aftercare program. The Pre/Aftercare Program rates are described herein the Parent Handbook. A **\$15** late fee will be assessed if the Parents and/or Guardians fail to pick up the Students at the end of Aftercare (6 p.m.) and then **\$1** for every additional minute after 15 minutes.

A **\$10 fee** will be assessed for each late drop-off (after 9:00 a.m.) after the third incident per semester.

The School has a nondiscrimination policy as to students and therefore does not discriminate against applicants and students on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin.

All deposits and enrollment fees paid to the School (the "Deposits") shall be maintained in an escrow account until the School is open to the public. In the event the School does not open to the public for any reason all Deposits shall be refunded promptly to the Parents/Guardian who made the Deposit.

### **Primary Program:**

Tallulah Montessori provides half-day and full-day programs. All students will receive a nutritious morning snack. Snacks will consist of a fruit, vegetable or whole grains. Tallulah Montessori serves only vegan foods and beverages.

**\*Each family will take a turn once or twice a year helping to provide for snack.** Each family will be assigned one or two weeks for which they are responsible to provide snack. A detailed list of what items should be purchased will be provided the week prior.

The half-day students' day ends at 12:30 p.m. and will include lunchtime. Full-day students that are under 5 years old will have resting time and will be provided with a sleeping mat and sheet. A blanket that is permanently labeled with your child's name should be brought in and kept at school. Sheets and blankets will be laundered once a week at school.

### **Lunch:**

When your child stays for lunch they will enjoy the enriching experience of having lunch in a Montessori classroom. The children will set their own place settings using attractive non-plastic dishes. Envision the children's lunchtime having soft lighting, classical music and fresh flower arrangements adorning the tables. The teacher takes this time to role model "eating etiquette" and to enjoy more intimate conversations with her students. The children will use cloth napkins (provided by the parents) and real silverware (provided at school). The children will also be shown which items are able to be recycled. A bin will be in the classroom for this purpose.

After lunch, the children will practice personal responsibility as they clean their own space, including the table, floor and dishware. The children will wash their own dishes, practicing self-construction. At the end of each day, the teacher will sanitize the dishware.

Parents are asked to provide a healthy lunch to aid their child's physical and mental growth. Per state requirements, the School will offer non-dairy milk at lunchtime. We recommend that your child's lunch have a "cool pack" inserted to keep perishables and drinks fresh and cold. Please prepare food in small-portioned, easy-to-handle servings by cutting sandwiches into quarters, slicing up fresh fruit, preparing bite-sized slices, and etc.

Please make sure that all lunch items are packaged/stored in such a way that the children are able to open them without any assistance from the teacher (foil wrap has proven to be easy, fun and recyclable!) so that the teacher is able to participate in this special time of fellowship rather than over-assisting children with their meals which can impede their development, self-confidence and independence. Please have your child practice opening their lunch boxes/containers at home to verify their abilities to do so.

Please try to prepare appropriate servings for your child, as providing too much food does not encourage your child to eat more, but rather ends up creating more waste. Drink boxes are discouraged, as they are very difficult to open, even for adults. Although "Lunchables" seem like a quick and easy option, they are high in refined sugars, preservatives and empty calories. Please do not send them.

We ask that you choose fresh, natural foods. Whole grain, quinoa, and brown rice choices will serve your child's mind and body much more than white enriched flour that quickly metabolizes into sugar in your child's system. For ideas on what to pack, check out recipes in the Parent Resource area of the classroom.

**DO NOT** send candy, sugary desserts, soft drinks or foods high in artificial coloring or additives. We do not allow desserts, as children will always eat dessert, but not always their lunch.

**DO NOT** send any food items that have sugar, high fructose corn syrup, dextrose, sucrose or other sugar alternatives that are in the FIRST THREE INGREDIENTS. Please

note that most of “Gogurt” type yogurt tubes have sugar or high fructose corn syrup as the second ingredient. Any of these items will be returned home in your child’s lunch box.

Please make sure you notify the school and your child’s teacher as to special dietary restrictions/food allergies your child may have.

As parents, we understand that you want to make lunchtime special for your child. A quick and loving note or a smiley face on your child’s napkin is more of a treat than a candy sweet.

### **Green Environment:**

We will be doing our part to protect the earth and your child by proving a safe and beautiful environment. Tallulah Montessori will only use non-toxic cleaning supplies. We will limit the use of plastic and paper throughout the classroom environment and we participate in recycling and composting to reduce waste.

Tallulah Montessori only serves vegan foods. A vegan diet is the healthiest diet for the body and the planet. PETA determined the animal agriculture industry to be the number one cause for global warming, which the Pentagon determined to be a proponent for civil unrest.

### **Morning Drop-off:**

**Morning drop-off is at 8:45 a.m. Class lessons begin promptly at 9:00 a.m.** Please make your best effort to be consistently on time. Each child’s day begins by receiving an individual greeting from the teacher. If they are late, they miss this intimate and special start to their day. Also, it is very distracting when a child arrives late to a classroom. Picture a classroom in which the children are engaged and focused at work and then a friend arrives late. Many children jump up to greet their friend, and their focus on their activity is completely lost. A \$10.00 late fee will be charged per recorded tardy after three late arrivals per semester. If you arrive late, please enter through the playground and through the second porch door where the assistant teacher will greet your child. You will be given a late arrival form to fill out with which you may provide any excused absence notes from doctors and/or etc.

Initially, it can be difficult for parents and young children to separate at the beginning of the school year. We have found that a short and positive good-bye is easiest for the child. We strongly recommend you set up a routine from the first day. A prolonged good-bye often makes the separation more difficult. For the first few weeks of school, there may be some anxiety towards the new situation and routine. It is our job as the parent-teacher team to convey this new experience with excitement and compassion. Talking to your child about what to expect and visiting the school and teacher beforehand will help alleviate some of those beginning-school jitters. If we can help our children approach new situations with courage and excitement, this will help set up a pattern for all future new experiences.

By all means, you will be contacted in the event of prolonged or persistent distress.

If your child is having a challenge of any kind that you think might affect his/her school day, then feel free to send in a little note to let us know. A sleepless night, a new sibling

or starting the day off with a boo-boo can be turned around with a quick hug or adjusted expectations for the day. With the power of the parent-teacher team, we can help your child thrive at home and at school.

### **Half-day and Afternoon Pick-up:**

Half-day pick-up is at 12:30 p.m. and full-day pick-up is at 3:00 p.m. A \$15 late fee will be assessed if the Parents and/or Guardians fail to pick up the Students who are enrolled in the half-day program within 15 minutes of the pick-up time and then \$1 for every additional minute after the first 15 minutes. In the event that the Parents and/or Guardians fail to pickup the Students who are enrolled in the full-day program within 15 minutes of the pick up time, the Students will automatically join the Aftercare program. The Pre/Aftercare Program rates are described herein the Parent Handbook. A \$15 late fee will be assessed if the Parents and/or Guardians fail to pick up the Students at the end of Aftercare (6 p.m.) and then \$1 for every additional minute after 15 minutes.

Unless we receive permission from you to do otherwise, we will only release your child to the people you have specifically authorized on your release form. We must also receive written notice from you telling us that your child is to ride home with someone other than his or her parent/guardian. Often, children will say that they are to go home with a friend because they want to do so without their parents' permission. Even if someone is on your list, we will not release your child without a note or a phone call. We will require photo identification of anyone picking up your child. Please make sure that all your carpool drivers are on your release form.

Do not leave other children (such as siblings) unattended in the car while picking up your Tallulah Student. By Georgia State Law, it is duty of the School to report any observed incidents of the like. Please contact the School if you would like to make special arrangements for assistance during pickup time.

### **Car Seats:**

Georgia law for children in car seats is as follows:

- All Children under eight (8) are required to be in a car seat or booster seat appropriate for their height and weight. Children are to ride in the rear seat unless there are no rear seats or if other children occupy the rear seats.

### **Early dismissal:**

Naturally, there will be occasions when you will need to take your child out of class early for a doctor's appointment or similar obligation. To ensure that your child will be ready, please send a note to the teacher to let them know what time you will be picking him/her up. We will do our best to have your child ready and waiting by the entrance, but if you do end up needing to come into the classroom during work time, please do so in a quiet, unobtrusive way so as to not interrupt the other children at work.

### **Attendance:**

All students (even our youngest) are expected to attend school on a daily basis at the start of the school day. Consistent attendance and prompt arrival is mandatory. Please contact us with notification of any planned absences.

Although our program is individualized, it still depends upon consistency and continuous progress. Every time a child misses a day or two of school here and there, the more detrimental it becomes to his/her educational development.

### **Tuition Plans:**

CURRENT TUITION RATES AND PLANS ARE AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE:

[www.tallulahmontessori.com](http://www.tallulahmontessori.com)

In the event that the Student is enrolled to begin attending School after the first month of the school year, Parents and/or Guardians are only responsible for the monthly pro rata share of the Tuition Schedule chosen above if and only if the Parents and/or Guardians also have completed enrollment for the following school year. In the event Parents and/or Guardians wish not to commit to the following year, a 10% mid-year enrollment fee shall be assessed to each tuition installment. Your child will receive special attention and support upon their arrival to Tallulah Montessori to assist them with their transition to the freedoms of activities in a Montessori environment. This fee is to account for the labor involved in setting up and acclimating a new student and to support the philosophy of a three-year cycle from which your family will benefit. This fee is waived with an early commitment for the following year.

A **\$150** late fee will be assessed to any Tuition Installments not received within 5 days of the Due Date, respective of the chosen plan above. Students whose Parents and/or Guardians are delinquent on tuition by two weeks (14 days) will not be permitted to attend School until full payment is received. There will be a **\$25** fee assessed for all returned checks.

Before any medication is dispensed to the Student, Parents and/or Guardians will provide a written authorization, which includes: date, name of student, name of medication, prescription number, if any; dosage; date and time of day medication is to be given. Medicine shall be in the original container with the Student's name marked on it.

The Student will not be allowed to enter or leave the facility without being escorted by the Parent(s), Guardian(s), person authorized by Parent(s) and/or Guardians, or facility personnel.

Parents/Guardians shall complete and maintain up-to-date all emergency contract

information and information regarding the student with the School. Parents and/or Guardians acknowledge it is their responsibility to keep the student's records current to reflect any significant changes as they occur, e.g. telephone numbers, work location, emergency contacts, Student's physician, Student's health status, immunization records and etc.

### **Pre-Care and After-Care Program**

Pre-Care and After-Care is available Monday through Friday on regular school days. Pre-Care drop off is at 8 a.m. and costs **\$8** per day. After-care is available from 3:15 p.m. to 6 p.m. and costs **\$8** per hour billed in fifteen-minute increments, rounded up. There is a **minimum charge of \$8 per day** for aftercare. Pickup times will be logged daily and Parents will be billed monthly. A **\$15** late fee will be assessed if the Parents and/or Guardians fail to pick up Students at the end of after care (6 p.m.) and an additional **\$1** will be assessed every minute after fifteen minutes until the child has been picked up.

### **Bathroom Independence**

All Students must be potty-trained AND bathroom independent to attend School. Bathroom independence means the Students must be able to use the facilities without any assistance with clothing, wiping and etc.

Accidents do happen! And, of course, the Students will receive assistance with cleaning up and changing clothes in the event of an accident. In the event that a child has two accidents in a single day or three within 7 days, the Student will be dismissed for two days so that the Parents and/or Guardians can reinforce potty-training and bathroom independence at home.

### **Montessori: A Brief Overview**

Montessori is a holistic, hands-on teaching philosophy based on years of scientific observation that was initiated in 1907 by the first female doctor of Italy, Maria Montessori. Through her years of experience with children around the world, Dr. Montessori proved that children are able to learn to read, write and calculate as easily and naturally as they learn to walk and talk. With the use of specialized materials, an enticing Prepared Environment and the observation of Sensitive Periods, the curriculum allows for each child to learn independently and at their own pace through individual and small group lessons. Areas of education include: *Practical Life*, which includes *Grace and Courtesy* lessons, *Sensorial*, *Language*, and *Math*. Cultural areas of study included in the Montessori curriculum are: *Geography*, *Science*, *Nature*, *Art* and *Music*. Maria Montessori was also nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for her development of a *Peace Curriculum* and she created a non-secular spiritual program.

### **Practical Life:**

*Practical Life* lessons are some of the first lessons given to children entering the

classroom. These lessons are used as a bridge between the home and school environment because the child has seen many of the activities at home. The child takes great pleasure learning how to care for themselves and the environment, while also developing their independence, focus and motor skills. It is beautiful to witness the unfolding pride that takes place when a child learns to prepare his/her own snack or make a flower arrangement. Lessons in *Grace and Courtesy* liberate the child to the world of social graces. We take for granted as adults that we know what to do when meeting someone for the first time or how to apologize when we accidentally hurt a friend. The children get to practice how to be gracious, as well as learn conflict management skills through fun role-playing lessons.

### **Language:**

An enriching environment filled with story telling, songs, biographies, and poems will enhance children's oral language skills. An individual phonics approach to language is used in the Montessori classroom. The *Sandpaper Letters* help children connect the sound of the letter with its corresponding symbol. Children's tactile memory aids them as they trace the shape of the letter while saying the sound. The language curriculum builds to create a moment in which sight, sound, and the pincer grasp all develop together and generate the amazing realization that the child knows how to read and write.

### **Sensorial:**

Learning is achieved through sensorial interaction with our environment. To enhance this natural process of learning, Maria Montessori developed groups of materials that sharpen the senses as the children work with them. For example, the *Sound Boxes* sharpen their auditory senses and the *Pink Tower* sharpens their visual senses. Through work with the sensorial materials, a child's senses are refined, allowing them to take in the lessons of their environment to the fullest extent.

### **Math:**

Children are gradually led by working with concrete math materials in order to understand abstract numbers and concepts. Children start by working on number sequencing, matching quantities with the appropriate symbols and then are eventually led to interactive group lessons working with the decimal system. Children internalize the concepts of math through manipulation of these concrete materials and are eventually able to explore math without the use of this manipulation.

### **Music, Art, and Nature:**

The study of *Music, Art* and *Nature* are interwoven throughout the Montessori curriculum. It is through these subjects that children develop an appreciation for all life and how it is interrelated on Earth. Responsibilities towards the environment and awe for the wonders of nature are also emphasized.

Art in the Montessori classroom focuses more on the process of creation than on the finished product. When a child asks for feedback, attention is directed toward the child's feelings when producing the art or how the child chose the colors and shapes, rather than commenting on the value of the piece. That said, a child's art would never be referred to

as “good” or “bad”. The child’s finished piece of art is original and expressive. Each product is a distinctive combination of the mediums used, the process of creation and the child’s own expression of spirit.

The nature table is a special part of the Montessori classroom that is dedicated to collecting the natural wonders of the world that the children find and bring in to explore and share. Objects such as: seas shells, rocks, insect and bird nests, snake skin, flowers ect... will be cherished and used as a teaching tool.

### **Montessori Spiritual Curriculum:**

The Montessori Spiritual curriculum is created to enrich every family’s belief system. Your child will be guided to:

- Learn to appreciate more fully the present moment
- Strengthen their connection between mind and body
- Learn to enjoy stillness
- Be encouraged to marvel the infinite wonders of the universe from the smallest ant to the depth of the cosmos

*“Religions are particular answers to the universal human questions about the creation and meaning of life. Spiritual refers to the universal personal concern for the questions.”*

~ Paul Byers, Anthropologist and Professor of Education; Columbia University

### **Montessori Peace Curriculum:**

We will be following the *Flower of Peace* model explained in depth in the book “Honoring the Light of the Child” by Sonnie McFarland. This book is available for short-term loan in the Parent Resource section of our classroom. There are six basic elements that fall under this model:

1. **Spirit of Love:** The interrelationship of all things is emphasized with the Spirit of Love as the common bond
2. **Basic Needs and Human Rights:** Under Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory we must have our basic survival needs met before we are able to concentrate on the higher level needs. This will help the children develop compassion and understanding for all cultures.
3. **Self-Awareness:** Some activities include but are not limited to deep breathing, responsible choice-making, emotional recognitions and expression, and empathetic understanding.
4. **Community Awareness:** These lessons focus on respect for others. *Grace and Courtesy* lessons and community outreach are two examples that fall under this category.
5. **Cultural Awareness:** One way to bring cultural awareness into the classroom is to emphasize the similarities among different cultures and then to explore the differences with reverence and wonder.
6. **Environmental Awareness:** Appreciation for the interconnectedness of our global environment will be expressed in our classroom.

**\*Every Friday please have your child bring in change to contribute to our donation jar. The children will learn that through working together small amounts can add up to making a positive difference.**

### **Work in the Montessori Classroom**

New parents are often surprised when their child does not bring much work home from school. The following will explain why:

In the Montessori classroom, a child's work is very manipulative (hands on). The nature of our learning materials is such that the actual learning takes place as the child works with the materials. For this reason, there is very little need for paperwork. In Montessori education, paperwork is always an extension of the manipulative work done with the learning apparatus. Some children enjoy and benefit from this type of extension, for others, it is tedious and unnecessary. Because we carefully observe and note the progress of the individual child, we are aware and sensitive to each child's academic preferences and needs. Paperwork is available to your child, but our curriculum is not based on it nor is the child unnecessarily encouraged to do it.

For these reasons, your child will bring home very little work throughout the school year. It is important to the learning process that the parents understand the rationale behind this and do not place unnecessary expectation on a child to bring work home. Adults in our society tend to place high value on tangible evidence of work. We work for the product - the end result. Young children have very different motivations. Children will naturally work for the sheer enjoyment of the process. If you observe a class in session, you will see this phenomenon. It is truly amazing. Children love to work and will go about it diligently - with only the purpose of work itself. It is this love for work that brings the child so far in the Montessori classroom. Because of it, the child becomes self-motivated and self-directed. Because of it, the child knows he can do anything. No goal is too high.

### **Key Benefits of the Capstone Year For Your Child (5 and 6 year olds)**

- **Maximize foundational learning:** Given the opportunity to explore, cooperate, and learn in this Montessori environment creates secure, confident children. The full benefit of the educational program accrues in the third year. The program and the educational experience for the younger students benefit from the gift of the leadership, mentoring, and instruction from the older children who have completed the first two years of the Montessori 3 year cycle.
- **Strengthen community:** The 3-year cycle provides a close community and the opportunity for younger children to observe and learn from older students. Mixed ages and the three-year cycle give depth to the program and to each child. Imagine the comfort of a 3-year old surrounded by older friends, the pride of a 4-year old celebrated by peers, and the confidence of a 5-year old who, with her peers, leads the young while repeating and strengthening important foundation building lessons.
- **Invaluable teacher student relationship:** Having three years with each child enables teachers to effectively leverage your child's strengths to create a baseline of success, instead of focusing on weaknesses which children view as failure. Since children do not progress at the same pace, being with a child for three years allows teachers to focus on where each child is regardless of where the whole class is. This creates an environment where your child receives individualized lessons.

### **Parent Participation Opportunities:**

All parents are asked to participate in at least 10 hours per school year, helping to enrich their child's school environment.

It is the parent-teacher team that helps to make a school great! Being involved in your child's school and helping facilitate its growth and betterment can be rewarding and fun. A current list of participation team leaders with their names and numbers is located in the parent resource area.

- Classroom Materials Assistant: Learn more about the Montessori philosophy first hand by helping to create materials. This would include simple activities such as: stapling, hole-punching, cutting etc.
- Outdoor Environment Assistant: Be part of helping to enrich the outdoor classroom environment by planting, assisting with gardening and other outdoor beautification projects.
- Special Events Assistant: Make the special events at Tallulah more fun for all by helping with organization and decorations. Special events will include: end of the year party and holiday events.
- Classroom Pets Assistant: An ideal Montessori classroom has a pet to represent each animal kingdom. Make this possible by helping to keep the classroom pet environments clean and making sure they have caregivers when school is not in session.
- Community Outreach: Your child will have the opportunity to appreciate the intrinsic rewards of helping others less fortunate. By participating in the community outreach team, you can help decide where the school is going to direct its efforts.
- School Fundraising Team: organization of events and related

## **Positive Behavior Support in the Montessori Classroom: Freedom and Discipline in the Montessori classroom:**

Maria Montessori created an educational philosophy that liberated the child. This approach allows the child the freedom to follow his/her own natural pattern of development. The Montessori teacher's duty is to be a guardian of the child's rights so each child may be free to follow natural patterns of development and to obey biological laws of self-construction. Only then can the child make use of his/her ability to create the adult that he or she will one day be. The freedom in the Montessori class creates for the children an atmosphere of fulfillment through work; through this the child's mind and body become harmonized. Through the power of the *Absorbent Mind*, the child can absorb the fullness of life, the richness of culture and the beauty of nature; but only if he/she is not confined and restricted to his activities. Children are forever inquisitive and

continually in motion. We must not confuse immobility with goodness or activity with naughtiness. There will be times of great quiet due to intense spontaneous concentration. This concentration brings about self-discipline and that is one of our aims for the children.

Freedom is the right to choose and is the essence of a free society. In the Montessori classroom, we must help the children learn to make healthy and conscientious choices. Freedom must be balanced with responsibility for the functioning of a harmonious society. This means that our choices must not interfere with the rights of others. True freedom is only possible when there are limits and structure. Without limits there is chaos. The Montessori teacher must make sure that a balance between freedom and rules for courteous behavior is maintained. Freedom must never be seen as the right to misbehave or to take liberties. Behavior that is unbecoming to the individual or harmful to others or material is unacceptable. Great care is taken to balance the freedoms and limits in the classroom. If the child is restricted too much or if the limits are too few, the child will not be able to integrate his personality and intellect. The freedom in the classroom must allow the child to not only work, but also to make mistakes. There must be freedom for the child to correct his own mistakes because this leads to self-discipline. Self-discipline is an act of will to do what is right. We cannot impose self-discipline on the child. I am sure we have all had the experience of a child following the rules only when we are watching.

### **Logical Consequences:**

Logical consequences are another way that a considerate school environment is maintained. If a child is misusing a material, he/she will be asked to put it away and then be allowed to try again the following day. The lesson with that material is reviewed and the child is given the opportunity to use the material properly.

Redirecting our child's behavior will never include the following:

1. Disciplinary actions used to correct a child's behavior; guidance techniques and any activities in which the children participate or observe at the center shall not be detrimental to the physical or mental health of any child.
2. Personnel shall not:
  - a. Physically or sexually abuse a child or engage or permit others to engage in sexually overt conduct in the presence of any child enrolled in the center;
  - b. Inflict corporal/physical punishment upon a child;
  - c. Shake, jerk, pinch or handle a child roughly;
  - d. Verbally abuse or humiliate a child which includes, but is not limited to, the use of threats, profanity or belittling remarks about a child or his family;
  - e. Isolate a child in a dark room, closet or unsupervised area;
  - f. Use mechanical or physical restraints or devices to discipline children;
  - g. Use medication to discipline or control children's behavior without written medical authorization issued by a licensed professional and given with the parent's written consent;
  - h. Restrict unreasonably a child from going to the bathroom;
  - i. Punish toileting accidents;
  - j. Force-feed a child or withhold feeding a child regularly scheduled meals and/ or snacks;
  - k. Force or withhold naps;
  - l. Allow children to discipline or humiliate other children;

- m. Confine a child for disciplinary purposes to a swing, highchair, infant carrier, walker or jump seat;
- n. Commit any criminal act, as defined under Georgia law which is set forth in O.C.G.A. Sec. 16-1-1 et seq., in the presence of any child enrolled in the center.

Authority O.C.G.A. Sec. 20-1A-1. History. Original Rule entitled “Discipline” adopted. F. Dec. 23, 1997; eff. Mar. 1, 1998, as specified by the Agency.

### **Grace and Courtesy:**

The Montessori curriculum offers lessons in *Grace and Courtesy* to teach the child appropriate behavior. Grace and Courtesy lessons are fun role-playing activities that are mostly given at group time. As adults, it is easy to take for granted our knowledge of expected behavior in social situations, but the child has not yet mastered those expectations. The positive experience of teaching the child minimizes the less positive experience of correcting behavior. Lessons in Grace and Courtesy include but are not limited to:

- How to introduce one’s self
- What to do if someone bumps into you or messes up your work
- How to express one’s feeling when upset.

We will be using the “I feel” message to aid in conflict management:

“I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_ and I would like you to  
\_\_\_\_\_.”

The children become quite proficient at using and feeling empowered by this phrase. It is amazing and beautiful to see two children working together to find a solution to a problem instead of tattling or resorting to physical actions.

### **Freedom to Make Mistakes:**

In the Montessori classroom, it is the teacher’s job to create an environment that gives the child the freedom to make mistakes. Children often act out when they make a mistake because they are feeling embarrassed. If we as adults role model that it is okay to make mistakes and show the child how we humbly take responsibility, or have a sense of humor with ourselves when we make mistakes, then the child learns the valuable lesson of learning from his/her own mistakes.

Freedom and self-discipline does not occur overnight, but through the use of consistent and clear expectations for courteous and safe behavior, the use of logical consequences, the participation in role-playing lessons of Grace and Courtesy, and with an accepting attitude toward making mistakes. The children will eventually enjoy a harmonious and industrious school environment.

### **Parent/Teacher Team and Problem Behavior Reporting Policies:**

If a child has had an especially challenging day following the expectations of the classroom, a *Problem Behavior Report* will be sent home to inform the parents. Upon receiving this report, the parents shall be responsible for filling out and returning the Parent Disciplinary Action Portion of the report, signed by all Parents/Guardians. If the problem persists at school and second Report is sent home for the same or similar behavior, a conference will be scheduled in order to establish a specific behavior plan.

- 1) In the event that a child receives two *Problem Behavior Reports* in one day for similar behavior, the child is dismissed from school for the day.
- 2) In the event that a child receives three *Problem Behavior Reports* in a school week, the child is dismissed from school for the day.
- 3) In the event that a child is dismissed from school for the day three times in a single semester, the child is suspended for an additional three days.
- 4) In the event that a child is suspended from school twice in a school year, the child is expelled from school.

It does not feel good for your child when they lose control of their behavior or act out of extreme emotion. It is our job as the parent-teacher team to help the child feel safe in knowing that a boundary or consequence will be in place to help guide them.

### **Behavior Support System Overview:**

- Consistent behavior expectations maintained by loving teachers and parents
- Logical consequences for behavior that is discourteous to others or material
- Grace and Courtesy lessons to demonstrate polite behavior for different social situations
- An accepting attitude towards making mistakes
- Communication and mutual support of Parent-Teacher team

### **Conflict Resolution:**

At Tallulah Montessori, we follow The Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” A very important aspect of the Montessori theory and educational approach is respect: respect for oneself, respect for others, and respect for the environment. Staff and students will treat one another in this manner everyday. We ask parents, as members of this Montessori Community, to display a respectful and tolerant attitude as well.

It is not appropriate to impose personal concerns and conflicts on other members of the community. If there comes a time when a concern needs to be addressed with any member of the community, including other parents or students, we ask that the situation be confronted individually and privately with respect. If a conflict or concern cannot be resolved, we ask that you address the situation with the Director of the school, again with respect and privacy as the situation is being resolved.

As parents and as human beings, it is our responsibility to role model to our children and others. Resolving conflicts in a calm, respectful manner is a very important way to teach your children to handle themselves as they mature.

### **When Your Child is Ill:**

Whenever your child is ill and will not be coming to school, please notify us by e-mail, text or a message before class has started for the day.

Students with infectious diseases, such as chicken pox or strep throat, must stay out of school until the contagious stage has passed. For the sake of the other children's health, it is vital that you inform us of the diagnosis as soon as possible.

We are required by the Georgia Department of Human Resources to notify the school population if students have been exposed to infectious diseases. Please be assured that your child will remain anonymous.

Your child shall not be accepted nor allowed to remain at the School if the child has the equivalent of one hundred and one degrees Fahrenheit (101° F) or higher oral temperature and another contagious symptom, such as, but not limited to a rash or diarrhea or a sore throat.

Your child should remain home if any of the following symptoms are evident:

- **Fever**
- **Eye infection**
- **Vomiting**
- **Diarrhea**
- **Head lice**
- **Constant runny nose**
- **Undiagnosed skin rash**

Tylenol will bring a child's fever down temporarily, but does not "cure" the illness. Please keep your child at home for at least 24 hours after the fever has broken. Parents will be notified via email or flyer when a communicable illness has been contracted in a student.

### **If Your Child Gets Sick at School:**

We will contact you by phone if your child exhibits any of the above-mentioned symptoms. Your child will be separated from the rest of the students as much as possible and made comfortable until they are picked up. We understand how difficult it can be for working parents to break free during the day, but all children get sick from time to time. Please do your best to make arrangements for emergency care with a friend or relative in advance, if you feel you would be unable to suddenly leave work. Everyone wants to be at home in his or her own bed when they do not feel well; your child is no different.

During class time we do give lessons on how to be mindful of germ transmission by washing our hands often, not drinking or eating after others, and "smothering" a cough. If weather is permitting, students go out to play every day. Please dress your child appropriately. If you feel that your child may be too sick to go out and play, he/she is probably too sick to be at school.

An email will be sent to Parents/Guardians informing an event that your child has come in contact with a communicable disease.

Tallulah Montessori is required to report any suspected child abuse, neglect, exploitation or deprivation to the Department of Family and Children Services.

### **Medical Emergencies:**

Your child's teacher has up-to-date training in first aid and CPR.

In the event of any emergency medical situation, we need to be able to get in touch with you immediately. Please make sure that all of the information in your file is up to date.

If your child needs immediate medical attention, and you cannot be reached, your enrollment agreement authorizes us to seek medical care in your name. Your child will be transported to Piedmont Hospital. Naturally, we will continue our efforts to contact you.

Please be sure to keep your emergency information up-to-date and inform us immediately if there is any change in your address or phone numbers during the academic year.

### **Medication:**

Unless absolutely necessary, we prefer not to be responsible for administering any medication to your child. Antibiotics and other medications should be scheduled so that dosages are due during the hours when the child is at home.

If your child is under a physician's care or on medication while attending school, you must notify your child's teacher in writing giving permission to dispense medications. Please include a copy of the prescription in case of emergencies. Teachers will notify the parent or guardian by phone if any adverse reactions are observed due to the medication.

### **Dress Code:**

Students are expected to dress in clothing that is neat, clean, comfortable and appropriate for school. Learning within the Montessori philosophy requires participating in activities that will get your child's clothes dirty. Please do not dress your children in clothes that you want kept clean. Comfortable play clothes are strongly encouraged. Younger children should dress in clothing that they can put on and fasten for themselves: pullover shirts, elastic waistbands, Velcro sneakers, etc. Independence is crucial to the development of self-confidence. It is very frustrating for young children to try and manage the straps of overalls, clothing that fastens in the back or belts when they are hurrying to the bathroom. When needed, your child will be given cheerful encouragement or assistance with dressing and undressing tasks until self-mastery is accomplished.

All children are required to have a pair of "indoor shoes" that will remain at school for the year. These shoes or slippers must be form fitting, and have non-slip soles. Ballet slippers or shoes like Tom's are a great solution.

### **What Not To Wear:**

- Flip-flops or cowboy/cowgirl boots – they are a hazard during gross motor development (rain-boots are permitted when it's raining)
- Dress shoes or party shoes
- Dress-up clothes or costumes or pajamas
- Jewelry, genuine or pretend
- Cleats
- Clothing that is too tight or too loose
- Crocs, their bulky, loose fit interferes with gross motor development and agility
- Light up shoes
- Super hero logos or other characters that use aggression as a way of resolving conflict are not allowed i.e. Batman or Spiderman shirts promote “fighting play” with peers.

Please be mindful of your child's extra clothing in their cubby bag. Replace clothing that has been used the next day and keep all clothing weather appropriate. In the chance that your child does not have appropriate clothing in their cubby bag a clothing set will be provided and a **\$15.00** charge will be incurred. The emergency clothing set only comes as a set and includes: one pair of socks, one pair of underwear, one pair of sweatpants and a t-shirt.

### **Birthday Celebrations:**

Children love to celebrate birthdays with their friends. Families may prepare a poster board with a picture representing every year and the child may practice sharing special information about that year. We also sing a special birthday song in which your child will get to walk around the sun candle for however many years old they are. We ask that you do not send in cake, ice cream or any other sugary sweets. Parents have been very creative, preparing sliced fruit, muffins, or similar birthday treats. Please advise your child's teacher in advance if you wish to bring a birthday snack so that snack preparations may be revised.

To avoid hurt feelings, please send birthday invitations to school only if every child is to receive one.

### **Bring and Share (Show & Tell):**

To ensure that sharing with the class is a meaningful and genuine experience, we will not have a designated day for sharing. Instead, please feel free to prepare a sharing item with your child at home on any day that something meaningful has happened. This can be a family vacation, memento or a found nature object. Prepare ahead of time what your child can say about the item. Ask them open-ended questions so that the information can be in their own words as much as possible. If certain names are hard to pronounce or remember, you can write it down and your child may bring it in with the item. We look forward to hearing about whatever interesting items your child is enticed to share.

**Please do not bring toys.**

### **Toys:**

Toys should never be brought to school. Children are saddened if their toy is broken or lost at school. You can help to avoid toy separation by leaving the toys at home.

### **Holidays:**

Here at Tallulah Montessori, we embrace each other's family belief systems. Only then can we have a true multicultural community, and only in this way may our children learn tolerance and respect for others.

An environment of respect and interest will be upheld so that we may learn from each other's belief systems. All families are welcome to share their customs with the class. Contact your child's teacher to help plan a meaningful group share time.

During the winter months, many people celebrate many different holidays: Christmas, Chanukah and Kwanzaa are just a few. To celebrate this time of giving and sharing, we will have a classroom community project, i.e. providing presents for children in the foster system. Our children will truly benefit from being involved in helping those that are less fortunate.

### **School Calendar**

Tallulah Montessori follows the Atlanta Public School Calendar, which is typically published by January of the prior year. Please note that there may be slight inconsistencies between our calendars and that certain Tallulah Montessori events (Valentine's Day Celebration, Pajamas Day, and etc.) and Summer Camp Sessions are only indicated on the school's website ([www.tallulahmontessori.com/calendar](http://www.tallulahmontessori.com/calendar)). Upon confirmation of the school calendar for the upcoming year, our website calendar will be updated and you will receive both a digital and physical copy of the calendar. For your convenience, the website calendar is a public calendar hosted by Google, and can be added to most calendar applications on computers and smartphones.

### **Weather Emergency Situations:**

#### **Fire/Tornado Drills:**

Fire and tornado drills are periodically conducted at the school. During the drill, teachers will:

- Sound the alarm
- The class will dismiss into the designated area and remain in their group in a pre-determined outdoor area. For tornado drills, this will be in a predetermined indoor area
- Your child's teacher will make certain that rooms are empty and the doors are closed
- Teachers will take roll to account for all students
- Students will remain grouped until they are informed to return to class

Every effort to prepare the children for the drills will be conducted in a manner as to not frighten our students. The school is equipped with a weather alert radio, which sounds an alarm if a tornado or severe weather is in our area.

Emergency plans have been developed and can be found posted on the parent notification board in the cubby room.

### **School Closings due To Inclement Weather:**

Tallulah Montessori follows the Atlanta Public School system for school closing due to inclement weather. There may be situations where APS schools are open, but due to conditions unique to our area we will be closed. In the case that school is closed due to inclement weather, the school will have school closing announcements on the telephone system. The message will contain information pertaining to our status. Every family will be notified by email in this event.

### **Communication with Second Families:**

Whenever parents are separated, divorced, or for some other reason not residing at the same address, we want to keep both parents informed of their child's progress and school matters. Given permission, we will email correspondence to any parent with whom the child does not reside.

When parent/teacher conferences are scheduled, we need to make every effort to avoid separate conferences. It is very important to be able to communicate the same information to both parents at the same time.

If one parent is restricted by court order to pick up your child from school, please turn in a copy of the court order mandating this action.

### **Open Door Policy:**

We here at Tallulah Montessori adhere to an open door policy. Any time you need to speak with your child's teacher, please feel free to call to set up an appointment.

As permitted by state law, the custodial parent(s) of the child shall at any time be permitted access to all childcare areas, while the child is at school. Parents must make their presence known prior to removing the child from the center.

### **Finding Out What Your Child Did at School:**

“How was school today?”  
“Fine.”  
“What did you do today?”  
“Nothing.”

Does this conversation sound familiar? Can you remember having the same conversation with your parents? Perhaps your child tells you they do the same thing every day such as spooning or painting. Take heart. Do not be alarmed. Young children lack the ability to spontaneously recall what happened during the course of the day. They have done so

many activities; they have a hard time sorting out the specifics. Sometimes they don't remember the names of the materials they used such as The Trinomial Cube, The Metal Insets, or The Addition Strip Board; that's a mouthful even for a grown-up!

In addition to the frustration you may experience from the above conversations with your child, you may have noted that not many papers come home. Your child can be doing complex math, word building, and geography or science lessons all with manipulative materials that have no paperwork to evidence their work.

So, how can you get your child to communicate with you? It is your job to help your child develop the skills of effective communication.

Here are some suggestions:

Role model: Speak to your child about the events of your day. Start sequentially. For example, one parent may say, "Today I went to the art museum with Aunt Lisa. She and I saw some pretty interesting artwork by an artist named Andy Warhol. One painting was all of soup cans! After the exhibit, we went and had lunch at Ruby Tuesday's. I had a yummy lunch. I ordered a grilled chicken sandwich. On the way home I noticed that the new park was open, and the tire swings looked pretty fun!"

Make sure you support your story with non-verbal cues also. Use your hands to gesture and accentuate conversation as well as your facial expressions. Make sure you maintain good eye contact.

Set aside a time daily, either after school, at the dinner table, or before bedtime to discuss the events of the day. Make sure the TV isn't on. Devote your attention to your child. Be an animated listener. Talk about the day's highs and lows.

Ask questions to help your child articulate, or to tickle their memory. For example, "What did you have for snack today? Did you do any lessons in counting today? Did you work in the art area today? What story did your teacher read you today? Did you do lessons with any of your friends today?"

Play school with your child at home. Let your child be the teacher and you, the student. We encourage parents to feel free to come in and observe their child in class. Call the office to set up a time to visit. You may also contact your child's teacher to discuss your child's activities. We are more than happy to return calls after school hours to speak with you. Reading a book on Montessori may help you to understand the materials your child will experience in the classroom.

Most of all: be patient. We assure you that your children are very busy during the day. In time, it will be obvious that your child is learning. Your child will surprise you by bursting out into song about the continents or spouting out a Spanish word or two!

### **Transcripts:**

By written request, a student's transcript will be issued to another school. Copies are sent directly to the requesting institution. Please allow the office staff at least one week's notice to complete this request. Transcripts will not be issued if a student has an outstanding balance on his or her account. They will be forwarded as soon as the account

has been brought up to date.

In the entranceway to the classroom you will find a bulletin board and parent shelf. This area will contain books and other fun resources that can be checked out and borrowed. Also this area will have the following: calendar of school events, copy of the centers current license, copy of rules, review of evaluation report, communicable disease chart, statement of parental access, names of persons in charge, current weekly menu, emergency plans for severe weather and fire, and a statement for visitors.