

2015-2016 School Year



*The Springs*  
A M O N T E S S O R I S C H O O L

THE  
SPRINGS, A  
MONTESSORI  
SCHOOL

# PARENT HANDBOOK

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# **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

## **ABOUT THE SPRINGS**

THE SPRINGS was founded in 1966 as a private school to provide Montessori classes for children in the Northern Virginia area. In 1984, THE SPRINGS expanded to include a licensed Full Day Program to accommodate the needs of children of working parents. In 2014, the school expanded to include programs for infants and toddlers. The school is licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and is required to follow certain regulations as outlined by the Fairfax County Department of Health and the VDSS. THE SPRINGS is a Full Member of the American Montessori Society (AMS). THE SPRINGS program consists of a traditional, authentic Montessori program as follows:

- Infant House (ages 6 weeks-20 months)
- Toddler House (ages 20 months – 3 years)
- Children’s House (ages 3-6 years)

This handbook sets forth THE SPRINGS’ policies and procedures. It is comprised of the Virginia Department of Social Services regulations, Health Department regulations, American Montessori Society best practices, and lessons learned through practical on-going operations. Parents of all enrolled children are expected to read carefully and review the policies and procedures set forth in this handbook. Adherence to this Handbook is agreed upon contractually between enrolled families and THE SPRINGS by the terms of each student’s Enrollment Agreement. The intention of this Handbook is to provide parents and other caregivers the information necessary to ensure a positive and harmonious school experience.

## **OBJECTIVES**

THE SPRINGS is dedicated to the Montessori philosophy and method of teaching. The faculty strives to create an environment that allows each child to learn and develop at his or her own rate and in accordance with his or her own needs, interests, and abilities. We work with the children to help them acquire a love of learning, respect for others, and self-discipline.

A Montessori class differs from the usual pre-school in several significant ways. The education is child-guided, classes are mixed ages and materials are designed to stimulate, challenge, and encourage curiosity, self-motivation and self-discipline. Children learn and develop new skills as they are ready rather than when they reach a certain age. Students move ahead as soon as they are ready or to repeat an activity as often as necessary for them to master it. Older children provide inspiration and motivation to younger children while younger children remind older children that they must lead and help care for their greater community.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

At The Springs, A Montessori School, we have a commitment to develop the whole child and their individual needs by allowing each child to experience the excitement of learning through purpose and peace using the proven Montessori philosophy of life learning.

# **PART II: MONTESSORI PROGRAMS AT THE SPRINGS**

## **INFANT HOUSE – AGES 6 WEEKS – 20 MONTHS**

“Growth comes from activity, not from intellectual understanding.” –Maria Montessori. The infant is the perfect example of Maria Montessori’s words. Intellectually, the infant understands little at first, but their growth and development blossoms from the very act of doing. It is not long before they understand so much and are able to do even more.

Maria Montessori believed that the development of the individual begins at birth, if not before. Infants are immediately born into the First Plane of Development that is defined by an absorbent mind, the acquisition of language, intense concentration, the development of self as well as biological and physical independence. We can see these tendencies in children, at different levels, until about the age of 6 when they move onto the Second Plane of Development: Childhood. However, these tendencies are often most apparent during the first year to year and a half of life as it is so easy to observe the babies absorption of the world around them since they do not yet have the distraction of words. We see the language come slowly, haltingly, but surely. We see the young infant deep in concentration rocking back and forth determined to roll. We see the older infant begin to mimic those around him revealing that he has been closely watching and examining his world and those in it. And most notably, we see the infant move through the first year of life, away from the comfort, immobility and complete dependence of the womb into a walking, crawling, eating, child that begins to yearn for independence. It is a miraculous and beautiful transformation; one that is fostered and encouraged by the Montessori Method.

Our Infant House is a unique environment designed entirely for the infant. It is a small environment with a 3:1 student to teacher ratio. The atmosphere feels warm, cozy, and safe for the infant, but within a regulated, predictable, school environment for the convenience and comfort of the parent. The constant basis of our Infant House is to provide a nurturing and loving place where children are encouraged to grow and develop at their own pace. It is also a place for parents to feel secure, welcome, and involved. We understand the privilege that parents grant us in being a part of this special time in a child’s life.

The Montessori Infant curriculum is entirely child centered and plays to the tendencies of the infant. The room is safe and secure, allowing each child to explore freely and to engage in movement. Infants in a Montessori setting are not confined to high chairs and other immobilizing devices. They are provided equipment at their own level that allows them to observe and absorb their surroundings. The environment is quiet and peaceful as infants listen to classical music, the sounds of nature, or the reading voices of their teachers. Stimulation is prepared thoughtfully and provided slowly and with focus. Montessori materials are introduced as the child becomes ready. Lessons facilitate the major milestones of the first year and a half of life. They include, but are not limited to rolling, crawling, object permanence, talking, weaning, walking, etc. Language development is a central focus of the Infant House. Our teachers read frequently from a mixture of picture and board books as well as classics of children’s literature like Charlotte’s Web and Little Women providing exposure to language usage, word formation, and new vocabulary. They encourage babbling and describe actions, pictures, and sing songs ensuring the infant’s exposure to different facial movements and expressions.

Nursery gyms with ramps and stairs are available to encourage movement and play. Rugs and blankets of different textures are available to encourage sensory exploration. Developmental toys like puzzles and blocks become available as the infant requires more stimulation. The infants explore basic musical instruments and begin to experiment with art materials. The basics of self-care and clean up routines are introduced to older infants. They work on pouring, sponging, sweeping, dusting, and even begin the basics of toilet learning.

For the most part, the Infant House is the infants’ world, but at times the infant enjoys watching and exploring older children. The infants will be given opportunities to watch and observe the Toddlers and even the Primary children from the safety of their classrooms or with their teachers. As infants become fully mobile and more communicative, they become free to explore the adjacent toddler classroom. At times, older children may be given the privilege to help the infants in tiny ways, allowing the infant the opportunity to see the possibilities of his or her growth.

Once the child is ready, with the consultation of his or her parents and teachers, the infant will make the leap to toddler and move on to our Toddler House. Generally, this happens between 16 and 20 months depending on the child's individual readiness. **Readiness is defined by a number of different developmental factors as opposed to a specific age or milestone.** However, at a minimum, a child must be walking confidently and be able to communicate needs on a basic level to be moved into the Toddler House.

## **TODDLER HOUSE – AGES 20 MONTHS - 3 YEARS**

The Toddler Program fully embraces the Montessori philosophy and aims to help children grow in independence, self-discipline, social and emotional awareness, and physical development of the body, ultimately preparing them for a smooth transition into a classroom in our Children's House. Our Toddler classroom offers a 1:5 teacher ratio. Typically, two assistant teachers work under the direction of a Lead Teacher holding a Montessori Infant Toddler Credential. Materials in the classroom are presented and designed to foster curiosity, exploration, self-sufficiency, and accomplishment with the flexibility and nurturing comfort of a small, attentive environment.

Our main goal for the Toddler classroom is that each and every child feels safe, happy and loved every day. Additionally, we strive to help each child develop, at his or her own pace, physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually.

- **Practical Life:** This area focuses on the toddler's ability to care for himself as well as to help him become aware of and begin to care for the environment around him. Through repetitive and precise exercise the toddler will learn concentration and order to gain independence. Examples include feeding oneself, dressing and undressing, toilet learning, hand washing, drinking from a cup, scooping, pouring, grace and courtesy, etc.
- **Movement:** Our Toddler classroom encourages the movement toddlers so desperately crave while helping children learn control of the body and develop spatial awareness, balance, and strength. Movement activities include yoga, dance, balance beams, climbing apparatuses and both indoor and outdoor play.
- **Language:** Exposure to the elements of language is critical for this age group. We provide activities designed to encourage expression, build vocabulary, strengthen word-mapping skills and promote linguistic understanding. Teachers encourage regular conversation in addition to reading, singing, rhyming, etc.
- **Sensorial:** Toddlers love nothing more than to explore, examine, and test. The sensorial materials encourage children to touch, watch, listen, taste, and smell, while helping them discriminate and classify, assign vocabulary, and problem solve.
- **Mathematics and Science:** Basic mathematical and scientific concepts will be introduced in preparation for entrance to the Primary classroom. Toddlers will explore the concept of quantitative description as well as the basis of experimentation and prediction.
- **Culture and Art:** Toddlers explore the different celebrations and traditions of the cultures represented in their classroom. They begin to understand and become aware of the world outside of themselves. Additionally, art and music are major components of the toddler curriculum with free expression and planned projects aimed at fostering creativity available all day, every day.

Toddlers transitioning into our Children's House, having experienced the roots of Montessori education, are excited and curious, eager to blossom into the next level of challenges. These children are evolving from side-by-side play into authentic, interactive play. They have solid problem solving skills and are beginning to problem solve collectively. Verbal communication and expression have become natural and comfortable for this age group. The transitioning toddlers have learned to use the toilet, care for themselves while doing so, and have mastered the necessary skills to feed and clean up after themselves. They are comfortable separating from their parents and transitioning to new activities. They understand the expectations of the classroom environment. Most of all, they are happy, confident and ripe



to burst into independence and further exploration. **Readiness is defined by a number of different developmental factors in addition to the ones listed above as opposed to a specific age or milestone.**

We encourage parents to work collaboratively with us throughout their toddler's Montessori experience and to trust that your child's care and safety are our first priority. Parents will receive a daily information sheet while their child is in the Toddler classroom. We welcome feedback about your child's interests, preferences, and habits. The parent is the child's first and lasting teacher and the consistency between home and school is crucial during this developmental stage. Security and nurture in this stage when it is most appropriate will make the leap to independence at the next stage easier for both the children and the adults. Furthermore, acceptance of the classroom goals and values and their promotion at home facilitate and even speed a child's adjustment and success in the classroom.

## **CHILDREN'S HOUSE – AGES 3-6 YEARS**

Our primary classrooms provide authentic Montessori education in a balanced mixed age group that aims to help children gain independence, self-discipline, confidence, curiosity and problem solving competencies. Lessons are given in accordance with the teaching philosophy developed by Maria Montessori and provide children with activities that help them grow socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.

The Primary Classroom functions on the traditional Montessori Three Year Cycle and culminates with the Kindergarten year. Students enrolled in our Primary Classrooms can expect to engage in the following Montessori lessons and activities:

- **Practical Life:** The classroom is the child's living room and the activities in the Practical Life section are designed to help students learn to care for themselves, care for others and care for their environment. The lessons, through repetition, foster order, concentration, fine and gross motor skills help children become contributing members of their classroom community. Many of these activities, such as polishing, dusting, pouring, scooping, washing, etc., are recognizable to the children providing them a comfortable place to begin their exploration of the classroom. Typically the goals of the Practical Life lessons are realized quickly thus encouraging children to attempt less familiar challenges. Practical Life remains integral through the Kindergarten year when children will accomplish sewing, embroidery, shoe tying and other necessary life skills.
- **Sensorial:** At the heart of the Montessori classroom, the majority of the sensorial materials were designed by Maria Montessori. These materials isolate the child's individual senses to promote refined discrimination and classification. Children will smell, taste, feel, look and listen while assigning vocabulary and learning to differentiate at more acute levels. For example, smooth vs. rough will be fleshed out to order smooth, smoother, smoothest and rough, rougher, roughest. Ultimately, children build spatial relationships, recognize and create patterns, assemble and disassemble, all while indirectly building the basic skills they will need for advanced academic work in both the language and mathematical areas.
- **Language:** The average child learns 14,000 words between birth and age six. Therefore, the language section is crucial to a child's early childhood education. From the moment a child enters the Primary classroom they are working towards the exciting goal of independent reading. Reading is taught phonetically and includes hands on experiences that help children learn sounds, form letters, recognize sight words, learn the parts of speech and ultimately builds to the full scope of reading that includes deconstructing and constructing words, reading comprehension, as well as writing with illustration.
- **Mathematics:** Students in the Primary Classroom are provided hands on mathematical experiences that provide children with a concrete experience of quantity and mathematical operations. Children work towards abstraction and upon completion of the Kindergarten year are

typically able to perform operations in their heads and often their mathematical work includes carrying and borrowing as well as more advanced concepts such as multiplication, division and fractions. Children also practice introductory geometry and even algebra.

- Science: Children are curious and the backbone of curiosity is experimentation. Our Primary students are introduced to various scientific concepts such as magnetism, buoyancy, color mixing, zoology, botany, astronomy, and chemistry. The Montessori science activities encourage prediction, evaluation, experimentation, measurement and reporting. Additionally, children learn classification and proper nomenclature. Children are always encouraged to explore and discover.
- Geography and Culture: Our children live in a global, connected and diverse world. For over 100 years, Montessori education has encouraged the study of and exposure to different cultural traditions, beliefs and customs. Primary students study the world closely beginning with the globe and moving locally as they progress. Families are encouraged to share their cultural and ethnic traditions. Our students celebrate many holidays and festivals experiencing cultural food, dances, clothing, goods, and beliefs with the aim of appreciating our difference and recognizing our oneness.
- Peace Education: Maria Montessori was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times and it is no wonder because Peace is at the heart of her teaching philosophy as she believed man's chances for peace start with the children. Now, more than ever children need to learn appropriate social and emotional skill. Our Primary classrooms always teach and promote self-control, independence, empathy, reflection, appreciation, adaptability, emotional self-awareness, and positivity. Children are encouraged to self-discipline through inner motivation as opposed to systems of rewards and punishments.
- Creativity and Expression: Our Primary classrooms encourage creativity and positive self-expression at all times. Art projects as well as free art activities such as painting, coloring, molding, etc., are always readily available in the classroom. Additionally, many traditional Montessori activities incorporate elements of art and creativity. Students are exposed to music through dance, singing and simple listening enjoyment throughout the day. Furthermore, times for movement to encourage balance, coordination and control of body are integrated throughout the day.

## **MONTESSORI KINDERGARTEN**

Dr. Maria Montessori based her teaching method on Three Year Cycles of education: Infant/Toddler (ages 0-3), Primary (ages 3-6), Lower Elementary (ages 6-9) and Upper Elementary (ages 9-12). THE SPRINGS offers a Primary program that includes Kindergarten.

Montessori Kindergarten is crucial to realizing the goals and outcomes that are touted by Montessori proponents. It is during this year that students complete the most advanced work in the classroom, activities they have been building towards since entering the Children's House classroom at 3. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, it is during the Kindergarten year that students develop leadership skills, confidence and social maturity that can only come from being the eldest in a group setting.

From time to time, as parents of Montessori students, you may run into skeptics who question the philosophy and students' ability to transition into traditional settings. This skepticism is largely due to Montessori students transitioning to tradition environments without completing the entire Three Year Cycle. The reality is that children, who transition prior to Kindergarten, often are academically advanced when compared to their peers in traditional settings, but they have not gained the social maturity and problem solving skills to handle their advancement. As a result, children who are not challenged or finish assignments quickly are not able to refocus themselves and often resort to inappropriate behaviors thus becoming labeled as behavior problems and giving Montessori education an unfair stereotype.

Additionally, research is beginning to show that children who transition prior to realizing the academic goals of the Montessori Kindergarten year are more apathetic and less confident towards future academic challenges.

On the other hand, children who complete the Kindergarten year, which includes specific activities and lessons designed to prepare the child for traditional environments, make a much more seamless and productive transition. Therefore, THE SPRINGS believes it is in the best of interest of our students to complete the Kindergarten year in a Montessori environment and THE SPRINGS does not recommend transition prior to the Kindergarten year.

# **PART III: ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS AT THE SPRINGS**

## **SUMMER CAMP**

Every summer, THE SPRINGS offers an eight to ten-week summer camp to children who are enrolled for the upcoming school year at THE SPRINGS. Camp is educational and theme oriented. The Montessori philosophy remains active during camp.

Families who want to enroll in Summer Camp must fill out a Summer Camp enrollment form the January before Summer Camp is to begin.

**Eligibility:** Summer Camp is only available to THE SPRINGS' students. Children who have completed Kindergarten at THE SPRINGS are eligible for Summer Camp before moving on to First Grade. Children who are eligible to continue enrollment at THE SPRINGS for the upcoming school year, but who have decided not to do so may not be eligible to attend Summer Camp (e.g., children planning to attend Kindergarten at another school.). Exceptions may be made for students who still have younger siblings attending THE SPRINGS, but only if there is space availability after all eligible children are enrolled. If families change their enrollment plans for the upcoming school year over the summer and fail to make the first tuition payment on August 1, THE SPRINGS reserves the right to dismiss the student, without refund, to facilitate the transition of new students to THE SPRINGS.

**Camp Classroom Assignments:** Generally, there are only two classes per House for Summer Camp. Children are assigned to class at the discretion of the Administration. THE SPRINGS has a reduced faculty for summer and does not guarantee that students will be placed with the same teachers as during the regular school year. Typically, children are mixed up to help promote the adaptability of the children and provide the children and staff with a new and fresh perspective as well as to provide children the opportunity to establish new friendships.

## **MUSIC CLASS**

THE SPRINGS provides a weekly music class to all enrolled children. Our music teacher spends about 30 minutes with each class. Music class consists of singing songs, introduction to different instruments and types of music, dramatic play, puppetry and much more.

The music curriculum culminates at the end of the school year with our Annual Music Concert, where each class preforms for the school and all of our families.

There is no additional cost for Music Class.

## **LIBRARY PRIVILEGES**

THE SPRINGS has an extensive library. The privilege of borrowing books is reserved for 5 and 6 year old children. They participate in library once a week. Children need a book bag or backpack to carry books home. Two or three books are allowed to be checked out at a time and may be kept out for one week. A child will not be allowed to check out books unless the books borrowed the previous week have been returned.

Any lost or severely damaged books must be replaced by the parents. We recommend bringing in a similar book from your child's personal collection.

The library has a section dedicated to parents and teachers as well. Please feel free to visit our library. Ms. Rebeccah is the school librarian and Montessori Reading Specialist.

## **ELECTIVE CLASSES**

THE SPRINGS offers a number of elective classes that parents may enroll their students in if they so desire. Elective classes may change from year to year. Generally, outside vendors partner with our school to provide their program on-site for your convenience. All fees and policies are determined and handled by the third party vendor.

Enrollment for elective classes takes place during the month of September and classes do not begin until the first week in October. Vendors are available to meet with parents at our annual Back to School Night.

Children enrolled in the Half Day program are free to return to school if they wish to participate in any of the elective classes.

At this time, THE SPRINGS is happy to offer Spanish, Mandarin, French, Violin, Piano, and JumpBunch (physical fitness).

# **PART IV: ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

## SCHOOL HOURS

THE SPRINGS is open from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.

### **--Infant House**

Hours are from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm for 6 weeks to 20 months old, Monday through Friday.

### **--Morning Montessori Program**

Class hours are 8:15 am to 11:45 am for 20 months - 4 year olds, Monday through Friday.

Kindergarten class hours are 8:15 am to 2:45 pm, Monday through Friday. Children must be 5 prior to September 30 to be eligible to stay until 2:45 pm. No exceptions will be made if your child's birthday is not prior to September 30.

Children who are enrolled for the above hours should arrive at school between 8:15 am and 8:30 am. Please be prompt. Children arriving after 9:00 am miss a significant portion of instructions and academic opportunity. Children are dismissed between 11:45 am and Noon, and 2:45 pm and 3:00 pm. Please be prompt in picking up your children. A \$1 per minute late fee is charged for children not picked up on time.

### **--Full Day Program**

Hours are from 7:00 am until 6:00 pm. Children enrolled in this program may arrive any time after 7:00 am and must be picked up no later than 6:00 pm. Children in the Full Day program should arrive no later than 9:00 am. Children arriving after 9:00 am miss a significant portion of instructions and academic opportunity. If your child is going to be late, please notify the office. **Children who are not dropped off by 10 am are not eligible to attend school that day without prior approval from the Head of School as such late arrivals are disruptive and hard for the faculty and the children.**

Children enrolled in the Full Day program have two outdoor playtimes and children under 5 are required, by Virginia regulation, to nap/rest for at least 30 minutes. Children who fall asleep are allowed to nap as long as their individual needs require. Children who would like to get up after resting for 30 minutes may continue to work quietly with classroom activities.

Montessori class hours for Full Day children are generally 8:15 am until 4:00 pm. During this time children will engage in activities in their Montessori classroom. From 7:00 am until 8:15 am and 4:00 pm until 6:00 pm children will engage in a variety of activities including: art, music, dramatic play, crafts, and self-initiated free play, indoors and outdoors. At these times, children may also continue Montessori work or practice previous lessons.

We are not allowed by the terms of our State and County licenses to operate before or after our approved, designated hours. A violation of these hours could result in the revocation of our permit to operate; therefore, children may arrive no earlier than 7:00 am and must be picked up by 6:00 pm. A \$1 per minute fee will apply to children picked up late.

## ADMISSION

We request that all parents visit the school before submitting an application for their child. This enables parents to make an educated decision as to whether a Montessori environment is the right choice for their child and also provides an opportunity to have questions answered.

After the application is received, the child visits school to determine his or her readiness for school and for parents to determine if our program is right for their child. For applicants to our Children's House, this would involve a visit in one of our classrooms. For a toddler applicant, we suggest a home visit closer to the start of school, but it is not required. The application fee must accompany the application or the application will not be accepted. The tuition deposit is paid at the time the child is accepted. This



deposit holds your child's space for the following school year and is applied to the last tuition payment of the school year.

If space is available, the individualized nature of the program allows for children to be phased into the classroom at any time during the year.

THE SPRINGS admits children ages 6 weeks-6 years of age. All children must be fully toilet-trained and demonstrate a readiness for school to be accepted into our Children's House. Children not toilet-trained and/or not showing a readiness for school may be placed in our Toddler House. The decision to admit a child is made by the school administration. **Children must be 3 years old by September 30 to be eligible for acceptance to our Children's House.**

**APPLICATION**

The application that you submit on behalf of your child is also your enrollment agreement. When signing and submitting the application you agreed to the following policies and procedures listed on the back of the application (old application) or on pages 3-6 (new application):

**PERMISSIONS:**

**SCHOOL DIRECTORY:** My child's name, address and phone number may be included in THE SPRINGS School Directory. \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ (initial)

**MEDIA RELEASE AND PHOTOGRAPHS**

My child's photograph may be taken within the classroom and on school grounds for use within the school community (e.g., bulletin boards, newsletters, etc.) \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ (initial)

My child's photograph may be taken and used for publications, videos, social media and other mediums for public use associated with THE SPRINGS. \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ (initial)

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**PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** I have received THE SPRINGS' Parent Handbook (available at [www.springsmontessori.com](http://www.springsmontessori.com)). I understand and agree to abide by the policies, procedures, rules and regulations set forth in the Handbook and will keep it for future reference. The policies set forth are to protect and ensure your child's safety. Understanding and complying with the Handbook will help to make your school experience more enjoyable and seamless.

Parent Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**PICK UP AUTHORIZATION:** I understand that for any individual other than the parents listed on this form to have approval to pick up my child from school, I must complete a Yellow Pick Up Authorization. All individuals picking up children will be required to present ID. Pick up authorizations will not be approved by telephone. \_\_\_\_\_  
(initial)

**PICK UP RESTRICTION:** The individuals listed below are restricted from picking up my child. Please provide appropriate legal documentation, if applicable.

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**CUSTODY AGREEMENTS:** If there is a custody agreement for my child, I agree to provide a copy to the school prior to the first day of school. \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

Please list the names of those individuals having custody (if different from the two parents listed on this application):

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**COMMUNITY HEALTH AGREEMENT:** I understand that my child is joining a school community that, in addition to my child, consists of other students, teachers, and family members of students and faculty. THE SPRINGS works very hard to protect the health of all members of our community and reserves the right to send ill children home at the discretion of the School Administration, each of whom has completed the Virginia Daily Health Observation Training. However, these individuals while trained to identify potential illness are not medical personnel and cannot diagnose illnesses. Therefore, I agree to the following:

- To pick up my child immediately upon receiving notification of my child's suspected illness. If children are not picked up within an hour of notification, I understand that the school will have to report to the appropriate state authorities \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- To notify the school within 24 hours if my student or any immediate family member is diagnosed with a communicable disease. In the event of a death, due to a communicable disease, I will notify the school immediately \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- That an anonymous notification of a communicable illness reported by my family will be posted for the school community to see \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- To provide a doctor's note, when requested, for my child to reenter school or to keep my child home from school until he or she has been entirely symptom free for a full 24 hours \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

**INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY:** I understand that at times the school must be closed due to inclement weather and other emergencies. THE SPRINGS does not possess the resources or technology to determine widespread weather conditions. Additionally, the school must ensure property conditions are safe for students and faculty and that we can be fully staffed to provide care for your children. Therefore, THE SPRINGS follows FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS for school closings, delays and early closings. THE SPRINGS makes every attempt to make up any snow days as determined by Fairfax County Public Schools. However, the school year will not be extended in any way. \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

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**TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ENROLLMENT**

- Tuition fees are annual, but may be paid in monthly installments one month in advance \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- This contract is automatically renewable each year with re-registration of your child \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- Students are considered enrolled for the entire year. 30 days written notice must be given of intent to withdraw and must contain an original signature. Fax, email, or verbal notice is not accepted \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- Upon withdrawal, refunds will be issued, if applicable, on a prorated basis determined by weeks enrolled. No refunds or discounts are given for absenteeism \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- THE SPRINGS reserves the right to dismiss a child without notice at the sole discretion of the Head(s) of School \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- Classroom assignments are made at the discretion of the School Administration. While parents may make requests at the time of application, THE SPRINGS is under no obligation to honor such requests. Classroom assignments are not finalized until August (after the first tuition payment is received) \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- THE SPRINGS reserves the right to charge a fee for any changes of contract \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- All tuition payments are due on the 1st of each month. They are considered late after the 3rd and a late fee will apply. Failure to make payment will result in the immediate dismissal of your child from the school \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- Tuition rates can change with a 30 day written notice to parents \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- Accounts payable are assigned to the child and the parents listed on this application are considered the responsible party. In the event a third party will be responsible for tuition, written notice must be given to the school office. Otherwise, refunds, credits, late fees, etc., will be charged to the individuals listed as parents on this contract \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- A \$100 application fee must accompany this application and is not refundable under any circumstances \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- Upon notification of acceptance, a tuition deposit of \$200 is due immediately. Enrollment is not guaranteed until receipt of the tuition deposit. The tuition deposit is refundable until August 1 with written notice. Otherwise, the tuition deposit is credited to your child's final month of tuition during the Kindergarten year. If your child does not complete the Kindergarten year, the deposit becomes non-refundable \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

THE SPRINGS admits students of any race, religion, creed, color, and national or ethnic origin. The records of all students are confidential and are available to parents or guardians by request. Requests for records will only be released to other parties upon signed request from the parent or guardian, and only after all accounts are paid in full.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of School Administrator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Infant House — Additional Terms and Conditions

- I understand that the Infant class is tentative and not guaranteed at this time. Once THE SPRINGS receives six commitments for Infant students, the opening of the class will be guaranteed \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- I understand that the deposit for the Infant class is the first tuition payment. The payment will be refunded in the event that the necessary enrollment is not achieved and the class is not opened. Otherwise, the payment becomes non-refundable \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- THE SPRINGS will notify parents by June 1, 2014 if the class will not be opened \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- All nutrition for children in the Infant class will be provided by the parent. Limited snacks may be provided by the school (e.g., Cheerios, bananas, etc.), but not without parental consent \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- THE SPRINGS will not introduce new foods to infants. All new foods should be introduced at home, over three consecutive days. Only if the infant shows no sign of allergic reaction, should the food be brought to school \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- The parents will provide labeled bottles, with premeasured nutrition on a daily basis. Parents should provide at least one extra serving per day to account for adjustments in intake \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- Parents will provide diapers on a daily basis. Destin and Pampers Sensitive Unscented wipes will be available. If parents prefer a different brand/type they will be expected to provide those items as necessary \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- Parents will provide at least three additional changes of clothes. They may be left at school, but the parent is responsible for restocking extra clothes regularly as the infant grows. We suggest monthly at least \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- Parents understand that their child will be assigned a color. All of the infant's belongings should be labeled in this color with the child's name. We suggest adhesive labels and bringing items (bottles, pacifiers, etc.) in that color (as much as possible) \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- The weaning process is an important transition for all students in the Infant House. THE SPRINGS will work closely with parents to facilitate this process according to the prescribed method outlined by the Montessori philosophy. This includes weaning children as they show a readiness, moving from a bottle directly to a drinking cup, and encouraging self-feeding. This is done at the child's pace. However, all children must be fully weaned prior to entering the Toddler House \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- Pacifiers are a useful, instinctual comfort to babies until 4-6 months. Beyond that they are proven to become unnecessary crutches as infants become capable of self soothing. They also contribute to the spread of germs as infants become more mobile at this stage. The Montessori method works to eliminate pacifier use at this age \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- I understand that under no circumstances will any item (other than a pacifier, if applicable) be placed in an infant's crib at any time, even by parental request \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- I understand that all babies will be placed in their crib on their back. No exceptions will be made, even by parental request. Once an infant is capable of rolling over, he or she will be free to roll at his or her will \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- I understand that all infants will be placed on their stomach for at least 30 minutes per day to strengthen neck and upper body strength as well as head control. This time will be broken down into age appropriate increments based on the child's individual needs \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- I understand that infants require human contact and comfort. All employees of THE SPRINGS are thoroughly vetted with background checks and are approved to work in childcare environments. Therefore, children will be offered physical comfort on a regular basis, as needed, each day \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)
- I understand that infants thrive on consistency and routine and agree to work in collaboration with the school to ensure that we, as a family, are consistent with the procedures and goals of the Infant classroom in our home \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

## **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

**All children must have a Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Health Form, an Emergency Information Card, a Pick Up Authorization Form and ID Verification of a birth certificate on file BEFORE they may start school.** The Health Department and Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) require that children be denied attendance if the required paperwork is not fully completed and on file in the office.

The Health Form must be completed for all new children as well as all children returning for Kindergarten. It must be completed by both the parent and the child's physician. In the event that a child has not been adequately immunized, proof of a medical exemption must be submitted to the school. Immunization exemptions on religious grounds must also be submitted to school, but must also be verified by a doctor on the Health Form. A child who can demonstrate an established plan to bring immunizations up-to-date may be allowed conditional admittance to school. The Health Form can be downloaded from Virginia Dept. of Education's website, the school website, or many doctors now complete the form electronically and provide you with a copy.

All children must complete an Identification Verification. VDSS requires this to aide in the prevention of kidnapping as well as to verify that the child meets the age requirements of the school's license. All documentation submitted for the Identification Verification must be original. Documents that can be accepted are a birth certificate, a US passport, legal adoption papers, or a certificate of live birth issued by an accredited hospital.

The Emergency Information Card must be submitted for all children, including returning students, at the start of the school year. All information must be complete. VDSS requires two additional contacts (non-parents) that can pick up and assume temporary care of your child in the event of an illness or emergency affecting your child when a parent cannot be reached. This information must be submitted on the card provided to you by the school. These cards are filed in a manner that allows them to be taken from the building during an emergency so parents can still be contacted.

The Pick Up Authorization Form is a list of individuals authorized to pick up your child from school. It remains in the child's file and can be added to or subtracted from at any time. Please list all individuals who may pick up your child including emergency contacts. Notify the school office any time a child will be picked up by someone other than the parent to verify the pickup person is listed. For your child's safety, no child will be allowed to leave with anyone not on file as authorized, in writing, by the parent. All unfamiliar individuals picking students up will be required to present identification.

Children who have allergies listed on their emergency card, health form, or application must have a completed Allergy Action Plan on file. The Allergy Action Plan is available in the school office.

All children must have an email authorization sheet on file. This email indicates which email you would like to use to access Montessori Compass as well as for general school mailings.

All children in the Children's House need to have a restroom form on file. This form authorizes teachers to help a child in the bathroom if needed and/or requested by the child.

## **TUITION AND FEES**

**ALL** tuition payments are made in advance. A tuition deposit is due at re-registration, each January, to hold your child's place for the following school year. This deposit is applied to the **LAST** tuition payment of the following school year and is refundable with 30 days written notice of intent to withdraw. New children pay the tuition deposit when accepted.

All children are automatically covered by accident insurance at the time they are enrolled. The cost of this insurance is included in the application fee.



**Tuition is a fee for either the academic year or full year**, which is paid in either 10 or 12 installments. The first tuition payment is due August 1 and the remaining payments are due on the first of each month. Payments not received by the 3rd of the month will be charged a \$20.00 late fee. A \$20.00 fee is charged for returned checks.

THE SPRINGS was founded on the principle of affordable all day Montessori education and continues to aspire to that goal. In doing so, the school must forego some modern conveniences to keep administrative costs as low as possible. This is most noticeable in our payment options which do not include credit cards. THE SPRINGS only accepts cash, check or money order. The parents are routinely polled to review school administrative procedure and tuition cost. Overwhelmingly, parents have voted to keep payment as is and tuition costs as low as possible.

All children are considered enrolled for the entire school year and **NO** deduction is made for absence due to illness or vacation. Rates are pro-rated for the actual number of weeks attended for children leaving or starting during the school year. No refund in tuition will be made when a child is withdrawn without 30 days written notice.

Tuition is credited to the account of the enrolled child. The individuals named on the application, typically the parents, are considered the responsible parties for the account. Any tuition payments made by third parties such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc., on the child's behalf are credited to the child's account. Any refunds or overpayments, including those involving a third party, are repaid to the individuals listed on the account as responsible parties. If you would like to change the responsible parties for your child's account, please notify the office.

THE SPRINGS is supported only by its tuition and fees so please pay promptly and be sure to review our payment and refund policies carefully. Tuition rates for each level (i.e., Infant, Toddler, and Primary) are largely influenced by state required student to teacher ratios that are determined by age. Therefore, your child's tuition rate is determined by his or her age prior to September 30 and not by the class level to which he or she is assigned.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

THE SPRINGS was founded on the idea of being an affordable Montessori program in Northern Virginia. As such we strive to maintain those ideals by trying to keep tuition as low as possible. THE SPRINGS subsidizes on tuition alone and as such does not have a financial assistance program.

## **LATE POLICY**

There will be a charge of \$1.00 per minute for children not picked up on time. Payment must be submitted no later than the following morning in order for your child to be admitted to school. Late fees must be paid in cash. All late fees are considered babysitting fees and are distributed to the faculty members who remained late with your child. Any parent who is repeatedly late will be asked to withdraw their child from school.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

THE SPRINGS' administration is headed by a Head of School and two Assistant Heads of School. The current Head of School is Daniel Clifford. The Assistant Head of School for Personnel is Susan Delaney. The Assistant Head of School for Curriculum is Rebecca Garretson. All questions and concerns regarding the school should be brought to the attention of the administration. The administration of school matters is left to the discretion of the Head of School and the Assistant Heads of School or in their absence, their appointed Designee.

## **SCHOOL FACULTY**

All faculty members are carefully chosen and references are checked carefully. All faculty members undergo a Virginia Department of Social Services background check as well as a Virginia State Police background check.

The Montessori teachers all have at least a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent programmatic experience and a teaching certificate from an accredited Montessori training program. Supporting faculty members are chosen for their experience, love of children, patience, and sense of humor.

## **CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS**

THE SPRINGS assigns children to their classrooms/teachers. Classroom assignments are based on classroom and school needs in keeping with the Montessori philosophy. The goal is to balance the different age groups as well as genders. In a Primary (Children's House) Montessori program, the goal is for the child to remain with the same teacher for the three (or in some cases, four) year Montessori cycle. The school administration has ultimate authority regarding classroom assignments.

We work diligently to ensure that student and parent experiences are consistent and predictable across all of our different classroom environments. Therefore, we are confident that no one class is better or superior to another. Certainly, the unique personalities of students and staff have significant bearing on the learning experience. Therefore, we use the child visit, the information gathered on the application and other feedback from the parent to make an educated and thoughtful classroom placement.

Parents may request to be considered for a certain classroom. THE SPRINGS does not guarantee classroom/teacher requests. Requests must be made at the time of application or, in the case of returning children, during the re-registration period in January. THE SPRINGS does not recommend switching classrooms from year to year. In no instance will returning children ever be "bumped" from their assigned classroom to accommodate the classroom requests of other families or to balance out age or gender. It is not school policy to move a child to a different classroom during the school year, even by parent request except in extenuating circumstances.

Final classroom assignments are made in August after the first tuition payment has been received from all enrolled families.

THE SPRINGS does not place siblings or other familial relations in the same class.

## **HOUSE TRANSITIONS**

Students, who enroll at the Infant and Toddler level, will reach a point where it is time to transition to the next House. This means the Toddler House for rising infants and the Children's House for rising toddlers. This step can be both exciting and intimidating for both students and parents alike. Our primary goal regarding House transitions is ensure that child's transition is smooth, when he or she is developmentally ready and that it is made for appropriate reasons. At no time will tuition costs be considered a reason to transition a child as tuition rates are determined by age, not exact house placement. Each transition is determined on an individual basis and is based on the child's needs. The majority of transitions occur at the start of the school year or the start of summer camp. Generally, it is in the best interest of the child to remain at his or her house level for a full academic year, unless developmental progress demands a sooner transition. If a mid-year transition is warranted, it will always occur on a Monday.

While certain basic criteria may need to be met to initiate a transition, a number of other factors are considered. Generally, a child must be of age (i.e., 20 months or 3 years old) to transition to the next

house. This does not mean that a child makes the transition the day he or she reaches the appropriate age. Rising Toddlers must be comfortably walking and rising preschoolers must be confident and proficient using the toilet. However, each child is different. Some potty-trained three year olds need a little extra time in the smaller, toddler environment to gain self-control or control of body before entering the larger environment. Similarly, some younger children show a readiness and warrant making the transition earlier to meet their needs. This child guided individuality is the heart of the Montessori philosophy.

As the time for transition approaches, parents will be invited to come in to observe the next level. The teacher from the next level up will come and observe the child in his or her current class. Additionally, the child may be invited to spend some time visiting in the next level before making the final transition. Your child's current teacher will conference with you throughout the process. Parent input is welcomed and encouraged. **Please remember that readiness is defined by a number of different developmental factors as opposed to a specific age or milestone.** Ultimately, the decision to transition a student to the next level will be made by THE SPRINGS' Head of School in consultation with a child's current teacher and the teacher of the class he or she will be entering.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

The Licensing Standards outlined by Department of Social Services requires that any center operating longer than 5 hours must allow children to play outside for one hour provided the air quality is safe for children and there are no severe weather advisories for our area. At THE SPRINGS, we divide this hour up between morning and afternoon play. Any other restrictions on playing outside (e.g., precipitation, temperature, etc.) are up to the school's discretion.

**At THE SPRINGS, children will go outside to play every day for fresh air and exercise unless it is precipitating, the wind chill falls below 25 degrees F, the heat index rises above 100 degrees F, or there is a Code Red advisory for air quality. Therefore, please make sure your child is dressed appropriately.**

**The children of our Infant House must also adhere to the Licensing Standards. As such they will be taken out for a walk at least twice a day, weather permitting. The teachers take the children in a stroller across the street into the Saratoga neighborhood. At least two children always accompany the children and they take a cell phone in order to remain in communication with the school at all times**

## **NAPTITUDE**

State regulations require that children under the age of 5 rest or nap daily after lunch. Cots or cribs and sheets are provided. Children's House and Toddler House students are required to bring a blanket (make sure it is marked with your child's name). Blankets will be sent home weekly to be washed. Children are welcome to bring a "lovey" or "cuddle buddy" for nap. However, this item will be stored with other sleeping materials or in the child's cubby during non-sleeping times.

**Please do not send full size bed pillows or sleeping bags as we do not have room to store these items.**

Students in the Infant House sleep on-demand. A crib and fitted sheet is provided and maintained by the school. Under no circumstances will THE SPRINGS allow any additional items, including but not limited to, cuddle buddies, blankets, etc. in the cribs. Sleeping infants will be checked every 15 minutes.



## **TOILET TRAINING REQUIREMENT – CHILDREN’S HOUSE**

All children enrolled in the Children’s House at THE SPRINGS are expected to be toilet trained. Toilet trained means that the child wears underwear, does not wet or soil him or herself except on rare occasions, can express to an adult when he or she has to go to the bathroom and can handle himself or herself in the bathroom independently. This includes being able to manage his or her clothing, operate a toilet, and clean his or her own body. Children are always supervised by a staff member at the bathroom. However, staff members do not enter the bathroom with a child and are prohibited from cleaning or “wiping” children without the direct written permission of the parents.

The staff at THE SPRINGS, in keeping with licensing regulations and best practices for the protection of themselves and your children, are not encouraged to clean and “wipe” children in the Children’s House without direct written permission from the parents. The staff will make every effort to help a child clean him or herself to the fullest extent possible. In the event, that a child is unable to clean his or her body completely, the administration will immediately notify the parents. The parents are responsible for making arrangements to come and clean and/or pick up their child if the teachers are not given written permission to clean the child.

The Children’s House classrooms are not equipped with diapering supplies or disposable mechanisms. Therefore, wipes and diapers cannot be used in these rooms. Children requiring such items will be sent to the Toddler House classrooms. It is up to the discretion of the school administration to decide if a child is sufficiently toilet trained to be able to continue in the Children’s House program.

It is expected that children will have occasional accidents or find themselves in need of a change of clothes. Always keep an extra supply of clothes in your child’s cubby.

## **DIAPERING AND TOILET LEARNING – INFANT HOUSE & TODDLER HOUSE**

THE SPRINGS Infant and Toddler Houses do have the necessary equipment to care for children in diapers or pull ups. THE SPRINGS will help those children in the Infant and Toddler Programs to change themselves, which may include, but is not limited to, cleaning or wiping their genital area, helping children on and off the toilet, etc.

The Montessori philosophy for the Infant and Toddler level provides for toilet learning and the basics of toilet learning will be introduced as young as nine months. The faculty is trained to teach toileting lessons and will work with your children to ensure they learn to use the toilet as they become ready. The Montessori approach to toilet learning encourages children to become involved in the process of cleaning and dressing themselves from an early age. However, it is expected that children will have many toileting accidents at times during their toilet learning experience. Always keep **multiple changes** of clothes at school for your child.

Until children are able to successfully wear underwear, children will be diapered. Parents are to provide a supply of diapers daily for their child in the size, brand, etc., that is appropriate for their child’s needs. All diapers must be disposable unless the use of cloth diapers is deemed medically necessary by a licensed physician. It is recommended that children in the Toddler House wear a pull up style diaper as they facilitate independence and child involvement in the toileting process.

Unscented, hypo-allergenic wipes will be provided by the school. If a parent wishes to provide alternative wipes from home, they are free to do so.

Diaper ointment is treated like a medication and the appropriate authorization to administer must be completed. It must be supplied in its original container, clearly labeled with the child’s name. A record will be maintained of all applications and any adverse reactions, if applicable. The Springs maintains a

supply of Destin on-site, which still requires administration authorization. Children requiring other types of diapering cream/ointment will be required to supply their own.

## **DAILY REPORTS**

Daily reports are kept for children enrolled in the Infant House and Toddler House. Daily reports detail your child's meals, snacks, diaper changes and/or toilet use, as well as sleep times. Daily reports are maintained in our child management system, Montessori Compass. Parents may log on and view the daily report at any time. Some teacher's may also provide a paper copy, but are not required to do so.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Enter the school driveway from Fullerton Road and please park in marked spaces. Do not park in the handicap space unless you are authorized to do so. Never park in fire lanes or other unmarked areas.

All children enter and leave through the door by the school office. All doors in the building are locked at all times, with the exception of the main door by reception. This door is always locked. There is a security system to the right of the door. All enrolled families will be given a code to the door that will operate the door between the hours of 7 am and 6 pm. This code should only be given to the people who will regularly be picking up your children. The code will change on the first of every month. Parents will be notified by an email a few days prior to the change. If you do not know the code to the door, there is a buzzer that can be pressed and a faculty member who is at the reception desk may let you in. In the event that the office is left unattended, and you do not know the code, you may have a short wait to enter the building. A SPRINGS' faculty member will come to let you in as soon as possible. THE SPRINGS asks that if you are unsure of a person trying to enter the building to not let them in and please let one of the faculty members handle the situation. We would like to maintain as safe of an environment as possible.

Half Day children should arrive between 8:15 am and 8:30 am. This includes children enrolled in the Half Day Kindergarten program who stay until 2:45 pm. Please bring your child into the building and sign him or her in on the appropriate sign out sheet. Half Day children should be dropped off in Toole Hall.

Full Day children may arrive as early as 7:00 am, but no later than 9:00 am and must be picked up by 6:00 pm. Children arriving late (after 10 am) must have approval from the office to join their class. Please come into the building and sign your child in and out. Make sure to make eye contact with a faculty member when you drop off and pick up your child in his or her classroom.

**Please call the school office by 9:00 am if your child will be absent or late to school.**

The safety of your children is our first priority and we ask that you help us maintain consistency by upholding and reminding your child of the school rules while they are in your care on school property, especially during arrival and departure. These rules are applied to all children at the school, regardless of age.

**Children are prohibited from entering or leaving the school building without being accompanied by an adult.** Please do not send children into or out of the building alone for any reason, regardless of their age.

**Only adults may open the door of the school's main entrance.** Please do not allow your child to touch or stand in front of the door even if you are right there with them. Please do not allow your child to run and bang into the door as other children are often on the other side of the door. Additionally, the parking lot is right there and we would like to insure the safety of all children.

**Only adults may use the security system next to the door.** Please do not allow your children to type in or touch the box regardless of their age and academic level.

**Children are not allowed to be in the hallway, bathroom, or classroom without an adult.** When picking up or dropping off your child, please keep him or her by your side at all times.

**Children are not allowed to touch the fire alarm or fire extinguisher.** Because the fire alarm must be handicap accessible it is also child-accessible and can be attractive to children. The children are taught that they may not touch this. Parents must be vigilant when signing their child in and out as well. If a child pulls the fire alarm, the school will evacuate according to procedure. The fire alarm is linked to the Fire Department who must come to deactivate the alarm. In the case of false alarms, the Fire Department charges an inconvenience fee. This fee is passed on to the family of the child who pulled the alarm.

**Children may not run or shout in the building.** Please remind your child to walk and use inside voices.

**Avoid carrying your child into school.** Walking into school prepares the child for a school atmosphere of independence and eases the separation from the parent.

**Children may not play in the parking lot or other outdoor areas outside the fenced playground.**

Should any child be left at THE SPRINGS past 7:00 pm, and parents or emergency contacts cannot be reached, Virginia Department of Social Services and Child Protective Services will be called and arrangements will be made for the child to be taken into state custody.

**NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED TO ANYONE OTHER THEN THOSE LISTED ON THE YELLOW PICK-UP AUTHORIZATION FORM IN YOUR CHILD'S FILE. A written note should be sent if a child is to go home with someone other than their parents.** If someone unfamiliar to the faculty picks up your child, the person picking up will be required to present identification to determine that the person picking up is on the parents' list of individuals authorized to pick up your child. Individuals cannot be added to the pick-up list without written consent (i.e., over the phone).

The following tips will help with the drop-off process:

1. Talk about school. Explain to your child what to expect: how long you'll stay, who will be in the classroom, the teachers' names, etc.
2. Be positive. Your child can sense your own separation anxieties; if you're enthusiastic, they will be too.
3. Read books about school when you're home.
4. When/if your child cries, remain calm. Try not to say, "Don't be afraid," or "There's nothing to be afraid of," or "There's no reason to cry." It's best to address your child in a positive way. "It's okay to be afraid. Your teachers will take care of you."
5. Never sneak out, slink out, or "slip away." Tell your child that you're leaving the classroom. Make sure you are consistent and give one quick good-bye, each time you leave.
6. When you leave, tell your child where you're going, when you'll be coming back, and what you'll be doing. Please follow the teacher's instructions on when to come back, when to leave, etc.
7. Don't ask your child for permission to leave the classroom. For example, "Is it okay if I go now?" This can be confusing to your child. Be matter of fact instead.
8. Please trust that we will comfort your child when you leave and that your child is safe.

## **CLOTHING**

Clothing should be neat and comfortable, appropriate for the weather, and easy for the child to manage for him or herself in the bathroom. Clothing should be washable. **ALL REMOVABLE CLOTHING MUST BE MARKED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.**

A change of clothing must be left at school for all children. Infants, toddlers and children who are recently potty trained should have several changes of clothing at school. Clothing **MUST** be marked with your child's name.

During seasons of variable weather conditions (e.g., spring and fall), children should have a change of clothing at school to accommodate temperature changes. During the winter, children should have a hat and mittens as well as a warm coat. Infants should have a stroller blanket. During the summer, children must wear socks and closed-toed shoes. It is particularly important for children who nap to wear socks so that their feet have protection if we are required to evacuate the children during nap time.

All children enrolled in the Toddler House and Children's House are required to wear slipper shoes in the classroom. Children in a Montessori environment spend a lot of time on the floor and the use of classroom shoes helps keep the classroom clean and eliminates a great deal of noise from foot traffic. The slipper shoes need to provide the structure and support of a shoe, but the comfort and softness of a slipper. We highly encourage shoes from Montessori Movers that are specifically designed to look and feel like a slipper, but provide the support of an athletic shoe. In the event parents wish to provide other classroom shoes, they must be a slipper with a rubber sole, a solid color with a closed toe and closed heel and must be free from all logos, characters, decorations such as jewels, feathers, etc. Please note that these shoes will be exclusively used indoors.

Additional outdoor shoes will need to be provided to remain at THE SPRINGS for the children to change into during outdoor activities. All shoes must be closed toe.

Infants are not required to wear classroom shoes, but their feet should be covered with socks, footed onesies or early walking shoes. No outdoor shoes will be worn in the Infant House classrooms.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

All personal belongings must be marked with your child's name and stored in his or her cubby or other area designated for particular personal belongings. Please check with your child's teacher about proper storage when leaving a personal belonging at school

Books and recordings are welcome. Also welcome are additions to the science and nature shelf or items which relate to school activities. Please check with your child's teacher before leaving any items at school for "show and tell." These items should be in accordance with your child's teacher's policy regarding "show and tell." Please do not allow your children to bring money to school. Please do not allow your children to bring toys to school. Please do not allow your child to wear removable jewelry to school as such items present a choking hazard and are easily misplaced. Please check your child's pockets before he or she comes to school.

Please check your children's pockets when they return home. Montessori materials are very expensive. Please return any items found belonging to the school.

A cubby is provided for all children enrolled at THE SPRINGS for storage of a change of clothing and other personal items brought to school. All children have a folder in which their school work is kept.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

THE SPRINGS does not provide transportation. We encourage parents to form carpools.

# **PART V: FOOD POLICIES**

## **BREAKFAST**

THE SPRINGS does not serve a formal, full scale breakfast. Children are expected to finish breakfast before coming to school. However, we understand that mornings are hectic and hurried with children. A breakfast snack of dry cereal is served between 7:00 am and 8:15 am for children who may still be hungry. Additionally, we provide a Grab and Go Breakfast Basket for children who require a more substantial breakfast. Parents may select an item for their child and are asked to pay \$1 per item. Additionally, children arriving before 8:15 am may bring a breakfast snack to supplement the meal they eat before coming to school. A “breakfast snack” includes any item that can be eaten immediately, does not require utensils or tableware and all remnants, including packaging, can be thrown away. Appropriate breakfast snacks include fruits, muffins, cereal bars, etc. All breakfast activities cease at 8:15 am when children go to their Montessori classrooms. Children arriving after 8:15 am are expected to have eaten breakfast.

In the event that food or containers are left behind; please understand that they will be discarded. THE SPRINGS cannot save uneaten food.

## **SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM**

Lunches are obtained from Fairfax Food Services for all children in the Children’s House and Toddler House who stay at school through lunch including Kindergarteners in the Half Day class who stay until 2:45 pm. THE SPRINGS bills the cost of lunches to the parent at the end of each month. Children are expected to eat the lunch provided by Fairfax Food Services unless the child has allergies or special dietary needs. Forty-eight (48) hours notice is required for the school to adjust the lunch count. Therefore, THE SPRINGS will have to charge for lunch in the case of your child’s absence unless the office is given the appropriate notice. Parents must provide lunch if the child has special needs (i.e., dietary or religious restrictions).

## **LUNCHES FROM HOME**

THE SPRINGS strongly encourages families whose children eat lunch at school to participate in the school lunch as the Department of Health requires the school to closely monitor lunches brought from home for preschool age children. However, children with special dietary needs due to illness or allergies may need to bring lunch from home. We recommend that families use the school lunch calendar as a guide when preparing lunches and recommend limiting lunch items to fruits, vegetables, cheeses, lean meats and healthy grains. Lunches from home must be nutritionally balanced.

**Families wishing to discontinue school lunch and bring lunch from home must have approval from the Head of School and complete the necessary paperwork to discontinue school lunch.**

If your child brings lunch from home, please send your child’s lunch in a plastic lunch box or a paper bag labeled with the child’s name. **DO NOT** send breakable thermoses or glass containers.

We do not have facilities for refrigerating food from home and heating foods brought from home is strictly prohibited by the Department of Health. **Lunches sent from home must contain an ice pack especially when fruit, vegetables or dairy products are sent. Similarly, hot food should be packed in an appropriate warming thermos.** THE SPRINGS provides milk and water for all children at lunchtime. The Health Department also recommends that any leftover food be discarded. Therefore, it is THE SPRINGS policy to discard all uneaten food. If a child has a milk allergy, the parent is responsible for providing an alternative beverage (e.g., soy milk, 100% fruit juice). If the parent does not bring a substitution, the child will be served water. Lunch boxes are placed on shelves in the hall.

Candy, gum, sugary desserts, and junk food are prohibited. All juices and fruit snacks must contain 100% fruit juice. Flavored milk is prohibited. Vitamins are also not allowed.

## **SNACKS**

A snack is served between 7:00 am to 8:15 am. This snack is provided by the school and consists of dry cereal and milk.

Snack is also served throughout the morning work period and after nap. These snacks are generally provided by the school. You may occasionally be asked to contribute for a special snack.

Children are expected to eat school snack. Snacks may not be brought from home unless a child has a specific allergy or dietary restriction that cannot be accommodated by the school. Parents are responsible for providing snacks if their child has food allergies or dietary restrictions.

Meals and snacks meet the nutritional needs of children as established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Fairfax County Department of Health and Virginia Department of Social Services.

## **FEEDING – INFANT HOUSE**

Generally, the majority of all meals and snacks for children enrolled in the Infant House are provided from home. Parents are required to send breast milk and/or formula daily as well as any additional solid foods you may wish your child to have. Infants are free to eat on demand and the faculty will work with students and parents to move towards a traditional feeding schedule towards the end of the first year in preparation for moving to the Toddler House.

All nutrition and other food items must be clearly labeled with your child's name, the name of the food (including brand name) and any other additional feeding instructions. All bottle fed babies will be held while fed. Children that have progressed to solid foods will be seated and assisted as necessary. Self-feeding will be promoted as much as possible.

Breast milk and/or formula must be premeasured in individually, labeled bottles. Bottles will be warmed using a bottle warmer and food temperature will be checked. At no time will bottles be microwaved. Parents are highly encouraged to send an extra portion of nutrition to account for infants ever changing feeding needs. If a bottle is started and not finished, the remaining nutrition must be discarded. However, entirely unused bottles will be sent home at the end of the day. All bottles will be returned for cleaning and sterilization at home.

As children progress to solid foods, parents are free to send prepackaged foods or homemade items as long as they are appropriately labeled. As with bottles, unfinished food will be discarded from an open container, but unopened, unused food will be sent home. All new foods and beverages must be introduced at home. THE SPRINGS will not serve a new food or beverage item to a child until it has been introduced over three consecutive days at home.

Parents are welcome at any time to come to school to feed their children. Breast feeding is always facilitated and encouraged.

A limited number of school snacks will be available in the Infant House. These items include, but are not limited to, cheerios, bananas, goldfish, etc. Under no circumstance will a school snack item be served in the Infant House without parent approval.

**Please review THE SPRINGS' allergies policy in the Health and Safety section for additional information regarding food.**

# **PART VI: PROCEDURES FOR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND OCCASIONS**



## **BIRTHDAYS**

On your child's birthday (or the day you choose to celebrate your child's birthday if his or her birthday does not fall on a school day), you are welcome to send a special treat. We recommend small cookies, cupcakes with minimal icing, muffins, fruit, etc. Please do not send cupcakes with sticky or dyed frosting. We prefer un-iced cupcakes. Please do not send cupcakes with plastic decorations on the top. Please provide napkins with any food. Goody bags are not allowed at THE SPRINGS. Please do not send candy. **All food items must be nut free.** Always check with your child's teacher before bringing in any treats or planning a birthday celebration. We keep a list of local bakeries specializing in allergy friendly treats in the office.

## **LIBRARY BIRTHDAY BOOK PROGRAM**

We invite our families to participate in **THE SPRINGS Birthday Book Program**. The birthday child is given an opportunity to select a book and present it to the school; the book is placed in the library with a nameplate in the child's name. This is a fun way to honor children as well as provide books and resources for our library.

## **HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS**

THE SPRINGS is a non-sectarian school. In keeping with the Montessori philosophy, we discuss and celebrate holidays from many cultures. If your family celebrates a holiday that THE SPRINGS has not celebrated in the past and that you would like for the children to learn about, please let the school office know when the holiday falls and we will make every effort to expose the children to such holidays. Occasionally, parents will be asked to contribute for a class event or celebration. Common celebrations at THE SPRINGS include, but are not limited to:

- Fall
- Thanksgiving
- St. Nicholas Day (Germany, Holland – Dec. 6)
- Santa Lucia Day (Sweden - Dec. 13)
- Christmas
- Hanukkah
- Chinese New Year (China)
- Valentine's Day \*\* (Italy – Feb 14)
- St. Patrick's Day (Ireland – March 17)
- Military Appreciation Month (May)
- Cinco de Mayo (Mexico - May 5)

**\*\* Valentine's Day:** All classes have a Valentine's Day party. Send in signed cards for all the children in the class. Please coordinate with the child's teacher to determine how many children are in the class. Please do not address the envelopes. This allows younger children who may not be reading yet to hand out their own Valentines. Please do not send candy.

# **PART VII: INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

## **SNOW DAYS OR EMERGENCY CLOSING**

THE SPRINGS follows Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) for school closings and delays due to emergencies or inclement weather. Our families and staff travel from all over the county, neighboring counties, and in some instances, even neighboring states, to be at THE SPRINGS. We do not have the technology or resources to determine widespread weather conditions; and, therefore rely on county resources. We believe it is best for children to be in school consistently and understand that school closings and delays can be an inconvenience, but please understand that we must also protect the safety of our students and staff. Additionally, we also must verify the conditions of our school facility and allow sufficient time for snow to be removed from our property. Most importantly, we must ensure that we have enough faculty available to maintain state regulated ratios and age groupings and ensure the safe supervision of all children

In limited circumstances, THE SPRINGS does review FCPS' decision and deviates from their decision. Generally, a deviation only occurs in weather related closings that do not involved precipitation and do not have much bearing on our community. For example, in cases where FCPS has closed due to extreme low temperatures, THE SPRINGS has decided to open as our property was safe and our students are brought to school at their parent's discretion. Please keep in mind that the Administration makes this decision with very limited resources and can only do so to the best of their ability with the information available. They base their decision on several factors that include but are not limited to FCPS's decision, the National Weather Service, Capital Weather Gang, the conditions of the property, and the faculty's ability to get to school. Therefore, it is always best to check school resources (website, voicemail, etc.) when there is inclement weather to verify THE SPRINGS' operating status.

In all weather conditions, the decision to bring a child to school is at the discretion of the parents. At any time, if you feel that the conditions are unsafe to bring your child(ren) to school, you are under no obligation to do so.

School closings and delays are always announced on the school website, the school voicemail, and school social media accounts. Additionally, we utilize School Messenger to send out email and text message blasts. Every family is automatically enrolled in this program. You may choose to opt out of either program. Please note that standard text messaging rates apply from your carrier and THE SPRINGS is not responsible for any additional fees that you may incur.

If school opens late or closes early, the start time will be determined from our 7:00 am opening and 6:00 pm closing times. For example, if THE SPRINGS has a two-hour delay, we will open at 9:00 am for all students. If THE SPRINGS has a two-hour early closing, the pickup time for all children program is 4:00 pm.

Preschools are not required to make up snow days and our full day Kindergarten greatly exceeds the number of instructional hours required for Kindergarten by the Virginia Department of Education. Additionally, starting with the 2015-2016 school year, The Springs added an additional week to the school year. As such, THE SPRINGS calendar allows for 15 snow days. This is two more than Fairfax County Public Schools because we do not hold every teacher work day that FCPS does. In the event we have more than 15 snow days, every effort will be made to make up the days as ***a courtesy to our families***. Typically, other holidays are converted to regular school days or the length of Kindergarten time is extended daily to make up instructional hours, if necessary. **However, due to Summer Camp, the end of the school year will not be extended.**

# **PART VIII: BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE**

## **POSTIVE DISCIPLINE**

The policy at THE SPRINGS is to help children acquire self-discipline by keeping them constructively occupied by doing interesting, challenging activities and by teaching behavioral skills. Expected behavior is on the child's level and limits or rules are appropriate and understandable to the children. Rules and expectations for behavior are fairly and consistently applied. Our faculty focuses on positive discipline.

Positive Discipline includes but is not limited to redirection, modeling appropriate behavior, as well as natural and relatable consequences. Our approach does not focus on external rewards or punishments such as stickers or time out chairs. Occasionally, a child may need to regroup and be separated for a brief time. The teacher will do so with compassion and in a manner that helps the child understand why he or she is being separated and with a focus on what he or she needs to do to rejoin the class.

The Montessori philosophy places a large emphasis on Peace Education. As such, THE SPRINGS incorporates these concepts into our discipline policy as well encouraging children to be peaceful and reflective. Often our classrooms have a Peace Table with soothing items such a Peace Rose or a book of peaceful scenes. This is an area where children may go to relax, regroup, or to work out conflicts between one another. Our goal is for children to acquire productive social emotional skills and to do so in a respectful and kind manner.

Faculty members agree on the standards of acceptable and unacceptable behavior to prevent children from being confused. The methods of discipline most often used include teaching appropriate behavior, distraction, brief verbal command, and redirection.

### **The following types of discipline are prohibited:**

- A faculty member shall neither force nor withhold food from a child
- A faculty member shall neither force a child to nap nor withhold naps from a child
- A child shall not be punished for a toileting accident
- Verbal abuse of a child or the child's family shall not be used
- Physical punishment of any type is prohibited

Violation of any of the above results in immediate job termination for the faculty member involved.

## **BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS AND DISMISSAL**

Children enrolled are expected to behave in a manner that does not cause continuing or ongoing disruption of the peace, harmony, and operation of the classroom. Children are not allowed to hit faculty members or other children. Ongoing disruptive or aggressive behavior will be considered cause for dismissal.

THE SPRINGS considers biting and hitting serious behavioral problems. Biting and/or hitting often result from frustrated, inadequate communication and/or lack of impulse control—two developmental tasks that children are intensely engaged in. Children are in the process of mastering language and often lack the words to fully express their needs, feelings, and thoughts. In the absence of words, children employ their bodies; they push, grab, scratch, and sometimes bite. A bite or a hit by an older child is more unusual, but usually still stems from the inability of a child to be successful when using words to resolve a conflict. When a child bites or hits, the parent of the child who did the biting as well as the parent of the child who was bitten will be notified. A child, who continues to bite, hit or shows other signs of aggressive behavior will be dismissed from the school.

Destruction of materials or environment is also considered a serious behavior problem. When a child breaks materials through purposeful misuse, the parents of the child will be notified. Parents of children who break or destroy school items are asked to replace the damaged items. Children should be involved in the process of replacing the item so they can learn and understand the consequences of their actions.

If a child's behavior is creating an ongoing problem in the school, the teacher will call the parent to discuss the behavior and develop a plan with the parent to correct the behavior. If the behavior continues to be a problem, the parents will be asked to come to the school for a conference with the teacher and Head of School to determine a course of action to change the behavior. A child's ongoing aggressive or disruptive behavior affects the well-being of all of the children. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be dismissed. Parent cooperation is essential in successfully navigating and overcoming ongoing behavioral issues.

It is our desire that your child's school experience be a positive one and that parents feel comfortable with the philosophy and policies of the school. If THE SPRINGS determines that this is not the case, THE SPRINGS reserves the right to require a child to withdraw from the school. In most cases, parents will be given two weeks notice when required to withdraw their child from the school. However, **THE SPRINGS reserves the right to dismiss a child, without notice, at our discretion.**

## **SPECIAL NEEDS OR DEVELOPMENTAL CONCERNS**

The Montessori philosophy is conducive to teaching children with all different learning styles and abilities. Our teachers work very hard to meet the needs of each individual child. However, at times, teachers may identify issues concerning a child's development that may require additional services or resources. These types of concerns may range from behavioral issues to academic challenges to physical limitations. Our teachers, as part of Montessori certification, receive general instruction on how to identify such issues and methodologies for observing and communicating concerns. Given their training and professional experience, the teachers are well qualified to recognize when they may need additional resources to best serve a child's needs. However, they are not qualified to diagnose children in anyway.

In the event, a child's teacher is concerned about his or her development, the teacher will contact the parent for an initial discussion of the situation. This may occur in person or over the phone. The teacher will begin conducting formal observations of the child in the classroom. She may ask classroom assistants to conduct observations as well. Formal observations mean that the teacher sets aside specific time to observe the child and completes documentation of her observations. Generally, there will be at least three observations. The purpose of the observations is to attempt to identify any patterns and to see what alterations or accommodations the teacher can make in the environment to help the child as well as to document the outcome of such changes. After the initial observations of the teacher, if she still feels the situation warrants more attention, the teacher will request additional observations from other members of the teaching staff and the administration. Upon completion of formal observations, the child's parents will be invited to school for a formal conference. The parents may be required to observe the child in class as well. We will discuss our observations and determine a plan forward to support the child. While it is our goal to work with all children, to do so may require additional resources. These observations provide a record that should be shared with pediatricians and other specialists that you may decide to consult. In some cases, we may require that a doctor or other professional review your child's observations. Speech therapists, behavioral therapists, psychologists, etc. are welcome to come to school to observe and work with the children. This is a common practice. However, if such professionals wish to work with your child one-on-one away from our faculty, they will be required to submit proof of appropriate background checks and screenings in accordance with VDSS regulations.

Please understand that identifying special needs or developmental issues is difficult in young children. Many behaviors that are often classified as age appropriate in young children can also be an indicator of larger issue. At the same time, for many special needs, early intervention is crucial and can have a significant impact for later development. Therefore, we do not treat such concerns lightly and aim to proceed thoughtfully and with as much support as possible. Additionally, we also strive to understand the

delicacy and emotional impact for parents when such concerns arise. We understand that for many parents, this may be the first time there is an indication of a special need or developmental issue and that this can be a very difficult process. We will support families in any way we can. When parents, teachers, and specialist work together, openly and honestly, we have a very high success rate of working with children with special needs and/or helping children over developmental hurdles.

# **PART IX: COMMUNICATION AND PROGRESS**



## **INFORMATION FROM HOME**

Please inform your child's teacher and the office anytime a significant change (i.e., a parent away from home, death in the family, death of a pet, illness in the family, new family member, etc.) occurs at home.

We will inform you of any changes in the school environment that may affect your child

## **INFORMATION FROM SCHOOL**

We make every effort to communicate school wide information to parents effectively, quickly and diversely. We understand that each person is unique in how they like to and are able to receive information. Generally, to conserve resources, the administration communicates most information electronically. The administration sends out an e-newsletter a few times a month with general information. We also utilize School Messenger to send out texts with quick, general reminders and to communicate emergency closings. Additionally, notices are also posted on the main bulletin board above the sign out shelf. Please check the bulletin board daily. Each child also has a pocket folder attached to their sign out sheet. Communications that cannot be sent electronically will be sent home in the sign out sheet folder. Parents are welcome to use these to send home invitations, thank you notes, and other communications between families. Please check the sign out sheet folder daily as well.

At the classroom level, each teacher will send home information as she chooses. The teachers often post signup sheets on the main bulletin board for classroom events. Again, please check the bulletin board and sign out sheet folders daily. Additionally, each teacher creates a work folder for each student in the class. Children store their work in these folders throughout the week. On Fridays, the teachers will make the folders available to take home. Please take them home and return them empty on Monday. Keep in mind that most Montessori work is manipulative and hands-on. A great deal of work can be completed without a paper trail. Therefore, do not be concerned if you child's folder does not seem that full or is mostly art projects. It is not until closer to Kindergarten that more work included paper work.

## **TELEPHONE CALLS and EMAILS**

Please feel free to call the school at any time between the hours of 7:00 am and 6:00 pm to leave messages concerning your child, to request a call from your child's teacher, or for information concerning billing, etc. THE SPRINGS telephone number is 703-455-1000.

Emails are welcome, but may not receive an immediate response. We do our best to respond to all emails within 24 hours during the school week. THE SPRINGS email address is [clifford@springsmontessori.com](mailto:clifford@springsmontessori.com).

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Parents are welcome at school at any time. Parent participation is an extremely important part of the child's school experience. Parent help is a welcome resource for the school. In the past parents have made tables, made copies, taken photographs, developed computer programs, repaired equipment, and painted shelving. If you have a cultural experience or musical instrument you can share, these are also enjoyed by the children. We always welcome fresh flowers, blank scrap paper and baby food jars.

If you have time to volunteer, please contact your child's teacher and/or the school office. Parents typically volunteer in the classroom in the morning for 30-60 minutes. Parent volunteers must sign in at the school office. Please understand that state regulations do not allow volunteers to work with children without school staff present.

If you can donate a service to the school, please contact the office.

## **PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

A strong line of communication between parents and teachers is crucial to a child's academic success. Teachers will provide monthly newsletters to parents to provide general information about the class. Additionally, each teacher will maintain individual records for each child through our child management system, Montessori Compass. Parents may log in to Montessori Compass to view their child's progress, send messages to the teachers, view pictures, read descriptions of Montessori lessons, and receive announcements about upcoming events.

For students in the Infant and Toddler Houses, daily reports can also be viewed through Montessori Compass. Keep in mind that daily reports do not include academic information. Academic information is generally updated weekly.

Parents are always welcome to request a telephone call from their child's teacher. The teacher will make every effort to call you the same day, if the request is made during school hours. We ask that parents please respect our teacher's privacy, personal lives and personal obligations. Teachers' private phone numbers and emails will not be distributed and we ask that even in the event you access this information that you do not use it without the teacher's direct consent.

The Lead Teachers all have a school email address. Parents may email them directly at their school address or through Montessori Compass. Please allow at least 24 hours for an email response during the school week. Generally, live conversations are most productive for discussing issues of concern.

Teachers will discuss the best way to communicate with them at Back to School Night. Please understand that we allow our teachers the freedom to communicate in the way they feel most comfortable.

Generally, information about your child will be relayed by your child's Lead Teacher or the Administration. Please understand that while Assistant Teacher's may be able to provide you basic information about eating, sleeping, toileting, etc., they are not able to comment on a child's academic or behavioral progress.

Please understand that parent-teacher communication is very important and our faculty is happy to provide you with many avenues for communication: phone calls, emails, conferences, etc. However, we ask that parents keep in mind that during school hours our faculty is responsible for supervising and teaching the children present at school. Therefore, please refrain from conferencing with faculty during visits, observations, drop off and/or pick up. If you have an immediate concern while at school, please let an Administrator in the office know.

If at any time you have a problem or concern about a faculty member or another student, we ask that you bring it to the attention of the Administration professionally, respectfully and privately. Please be sure to avoid discussing other adults or other children in front of any children, including your own. We will do our best to help resolve any issues with kindness in a discreet and professional manner. We require our faculty to treat every individual, child or adult, with respect. We ask that you provide our faculty the same consideration. Any parent who is threatening or aggressive towards members of our faculty, other parents or any children may be prohibited from school grounds. If such problems persist, you may be required to withdraw your child from our program.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Parents of new children will be contacted within the first two weeks of school. Parents may be contacted again after a few weeks to discuss the child's adjustment.

During November, a formal parent conference with you and your child's teacher will be scheduled. A second scheduled conference is held in the late spring. Additional conferences may be requested at other times throughout the school year by either the parents or the teacher. In the event you would like to request a conference, please allow us 72 hours to make arrangements for the conference.

## **CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS**

If you wish to observe your child's class, please let us know. It is helpful to the teacher to know ahead of time to ensure other parents are not already scheduled to visit the classroom. Please do not bring other children with you when you observe as this is very distracting to the children in the class. We encourage your interest and hope you will observe often. For students in the Toddler and Children's Houses, we ask that you wait to observe until after the first six (6) weeks of school to allow classroom routines to be established and separation anxiety to be appeased.

Parents are welcome in the school at any time, but please be sure to sign in as a visitor in the office.

## **NARRATIVES AND LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

THE SPRINGS provides a narrative of a child's progress at the completion of the Kindergarten year. The narrative is completed in May. A copy is placed in the child's file and another is provided to the parent. You may want to ensure that your child's first grade teacher receives a copy. A copy will be sent to your child's elementary school if the school requests records from us. However, not all schools request records and in some cases the records are not forwarded on to the teacher when received by the school so it is always good to double check.

THE SPRINGS will complete recommendation forms for children moving on to first grade as requested by the elementary school. Please allow 2 weeks (14 days) for recommendation requests to be completed. Generally, recommendations are sent directly to the requesting school.

The Montessori Method expects a child to complete the Kindergarten year to realize fully the goals and outcomes that are common to Montessori education. THE SPRINGS does not recommend transition prior to the completion of Kindergarten. Therefore, THE SPRINGS does not complete recommendation forms or write narratives for children transitioning out of the program prior to first grade except in the case of relocation, transfer to another Montessori school, or for students requiring additional services to meet special needs such as, but not limited to, speech therapy, behavior management, etc. THE SPRINGS Head of School has ultimate discretion over the decision to complete recommendation forms and/or write narratives as well as final review of recommendations and narratives.

## **PARENT EVENTS**

Parent events will be held during the year. Your participation is encouraged. Time and dates will be announced. Parent events may include opportunities for student showcases, parent education, or community socials.

Parent events are a wonderful way to gain a better understanding of your child's school experience. We strive to offer many events and vary the timing of events to accommodate the varying schedules of our families, particularly during Summer Camp when there are more opportunities for parent events. While participation is highly encouraged, we also understand that it is unrealistic for parents to attend all events. Therefore, we try to structure parent events that include children in a way that does not upset those children whose parents are unable to make the event. Depending on the type of event, this may involve allowing parents and children to participate together and then repeating the event with just the children or children without parents may be assigned to faculty members and enjoy the event with their favorite teachers. Additionally, we welcome grandparents, aunts, uncles or other family members or friends to come as well. Please let the office know ahead of time if we should expect an individual other than the

parent. In either case, every child will participate in any special event regardless of whether or not a parent is able to attend.

# **PART X: HEALTH POLICIES**

## **FIRST AID, CPR and ACCIDENT PROCEDURES**

The staff at THE SPRINGS undergoes First Aid and CPR training every two (2) years. Multiple staff members who are trained in First Aid and CPR are always present at school.

In the case of a minor accident, such as a skinned knee, parents will be informed of the accident, the circumstances involved, and the treatment at the time of pickup. In the case of an injury that needs immediate, but non-emergency medical treatment, parents will be called immediately to pick up their child. If the parents cannot be reached, the emergency contact person listed on the emergency card will be called. **Please keep emergency numbers up to date.** In the case of a serious injury, parents will be notified and an ambulance will be called.

## **ALLERGIES**

We understand that children often have allergies that influence their diet and/or well-being. Please be sure to notify the Head of School as well as your child's teacher of any food or drug allergies. Parents must complete an Allergy Action Plan for any allergies disclosed to the school. Allergies requiring Emergency Medication must have the appropriate Medication Authorization completed. Please note that your child's allergy will be posted in the classroom so all faculty members are aware of such restrictions. If you wish to keep your child's allergy confidential, please notify the school office.

Please understand that the school will make every effort to accommodate your child's allergy. However, you will be required to provide substitutions if the school's lunch and/or snack program does not meet your child's needs.

In fairness to all the children at the school, we avoid making general restrictions for specific foods (e.g., peanut butter, nuts, dairy, etc.). However, the school does evaluate the level of restriction for certain allergens on a case by case basis. If there is a child in the class that has a life threatening allergy, restrictions may be placed on that particular allergen class-wide. If a specific food is restricted class-wide or school-wide, you will be notified in writing by the school administration. **For the 2015-2016 school year, THE SPRINGS will continue to be entirely nut-free.**

## **HEALTH AND ABSENCES**

When children enroll at THE SPRINGS they join a school community that in addition to your child, consists of other students, teachers, and family members of teachers and students. THE SPRINGS works hard to protect the health of all members of our community and reserves the right to send ill children or those who may be ill home. For the health of all the children, those children who are sick must be kept at home. Any child arriving at school sick will not be allowed to remain. Any child who becomes sick at school will be safely isolated and carefully monitored, and parents will be required to pick up the child. The decision to exclude or send a sick child home from school is left to the sole discretion of the school administration. All school administrators have completed the Virginia Daily Health Observation Training that provides education in identifying potential contagious illness, but in no way allows for diagnosis.

Children will be excluded from school when any of the following signs of illness are present:

1. Fever of 100 degrees or more
2. Diarrhea
3. Rash (until diagnosed and determined to be non-contagious)
4. Vomiting
5. Eye inflammation (until diagnosed and determined to be non-contagious)
6. Sore throat

7. Unable to participate in school activities

Sick children must be picked up within 30 minutes. We suggest all families have a back-up plan to contact someone who can reach the school within that time frame. Be sure they are listed on your authorized pick-up list. **However, please understand that if a sick child is not picked up after one (1) hour from the time the parent is notified, we must notify Child Protective Services and the regular late pick up fees will take effect (i.e., one dollar per minute for every minute late), even if we know you are on your way.** Late fees collected on behalf of sick children will be donated to the School Library.

Children will not be allowed to return to school until the symptoms have disappeared for a full 24 hours or until the child has been on the appropriate, corrective medication for 24 hours, or whichever is longer. In the case of a fever, a child must be fever free for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medication, in order to return to school. In certain cases, a doctor's note/diagnosis may be required to return to school (e.g., skin rashes). Please understand that the children in the age range served by THE SPRINGS are considered a more susceptible and sensitive group than the general population. The requirements for returning to school may be more stringent than for older, school-age children and is up to the discretion of the school administration. It is possible that a doctor's note may not be sufficient enough for returning to school. Additional treatment and or exclusion may be required in order to protect the school community adequately. For common childhood illnesses such as chicken pox, children must be excluded from school according to Department of Health guidelines.

If your child has an ongoing, reoccurring medical issue that is not contagious such as eczema or seasonal allergies, please have your child's doctor provide documentation, including a description of typical symptoms. Having such documentation may prevent us from having to send your child home. However, THE SPRINGS reserves the right to still send your child home, even if documentation is on file, if any uncertainty due to worsening symptoms or additional symptoms arises.

Please understand that THE SPRINGS does not employ medical personnel and, therefore, cannot diagnose a child. When a diagnosis is required for a child to remain at or return to school, it must come from a licensed doctor or nurse practitioner. THE SPRINGS cannot accept diagnosis made by non-medical individuals, including parents.

Whether or not a child is fit to attend school is up to the discretion of the school administration that has undergone Daily Health Observation Training as required by the Commonwealth. Any child who is unable to participate in regular school activities will be sent home.

The Commonwealth also requires enrolled families to notify the school within 24 hours when any member of the immediate household develops any communicable disease, except for life threatening diseases which must be reported immediately. The school is required to post an anonymous notice to alert the school community of any communicable diseases occurring among the school's population.

**Please call the school office by 9:00 am if your child will be absent or late to school.**

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

**THE SPRINGS only administers emergency (i.e., epi-pen, inhalers, etc.) and prescription medication.**

The school must have a completed Medication Authorization Form on file for each medication your child is to receive. Forms are available in the school office. All medication must come in the original package with the original pharmacy label and any additional instructional inserts. We cannot accept a parent authorization that varies from the pharmacy label without a physician's authorization. Parents must provide an accurate measuring device (e.g., oral syringe, medicine cup or medicine spoon) clearly

marked with your child's name. Utensils will not be accepted and medication will not be given without the appropriate measuring device.

VDSS regulations state that children may only receive medication for a maximum of 10 days with written parent authorization. Medication can be administered for periods exceeding 10 days with a written authorization completed by the child's physician that must be updated every six months.

The Medication Authorization Form is a common form that has been developed and authorized by VDSS. All medication authorizations must have the front page filled out by the appropriate authorizing party (i.e., parent or physician) and must include a specific medication name, dosage, route and time for administration. Only one medication per form can be authorized. Additionally, only one medication and form may be used per child. **The Medication Authorization Form must be completed in English. Any physician authorizations must be completed by a licensed medical doctor (M.D.) or pediatric nurse practitioner (PNP).** Physician authorizations cannot be completed by a parent even if that parent is a licensed medical doctor or nurse practitioner.

Medication will only be given on an "as needed" basis with written authorization from the child's physician outlining the specific symptoms that warrant administration of the medication.

**Medication will not be administered if the authorization form is not filled out correctly and sufficiently.**

Medications are stored in a locked cabinet or in the refrigerator in containers reserved for medication storage. Faculty must have completed the state mandated Medication Administration Training (MAT) in order to administer medication. This training certifies child care professionals to administer medication through the following routes: oral, inhaled, topical, medicated patches, eye, ear and Epinephrine via auto injector device. Medications that require injections or vaginal or rectal application can be administered with further training from the parent and/or child's physician. Faculty members who dispense medication are required to record the name of the child, the date, the time, the medication, the dosage, the route, and any adverse reactions or administration errors. The faculty member administering the medication will sign off on this information. The medication log may be reviewed by parents upon request.

Chapstick and other lip balms and ointments are considered medications according to the VDSS regulations. THE SPRINGS will only administer these items if they are medicated and prescribed by a doctor.

Parents should understand that while THE SPRINGS uses every care in dispensing medication, medication is dispensed by non-medical personnel.

If your child has a communicable illness, please contact the school so other parents can be notified.

## **SUNSCREEN & INSECT REPELLENT**

Virginia Department of Social Services classifies both sunscreen and insect repellent as medications and must be authorized as detailed in the previous section. VDSS does make one exception regarding these items and allows them to be authorized for longer than 10 days without a physician's authorization, but we still must have a completed authorization filled out by the parent.

THE SPRINGS will administer sunscreen and insect repellent from April 1 until October 31. However, the school will only administer sunscreen and insect repellent **before going outside in the afternoon** as it must be applied 30 minutes before outdoor activity. If you would like your child to have sunscreen or insect repellent for outdoor play in the morning, these items must be applied at home before coming to school.

**Unless medically necessary, enrolled children use our school provided sunscreen. We use Rocky Mountain SPF 50 Broad Spectrum Sunscreen (RMS). RMS meets all 2012 FDA mandates for**



**sunscreen. It is water resistant, hypo allergenic, fragrance free, gluten free, nut-oil free, and formulated for sensitive skin. Proper authorizations are still required.**

Authorization Forms for sunscreen and insect repellent are available in the office. THE SPRINGS provides sunscreen. Sunscreen and insect repellent cannot be authorized on the same form. A separate authorization must be filled out for each item.

**PART XI:  
CHILD SAFETY,  
CRISIS  
MANAGEMENT,  
AND SCHOOL  
SECURITY**

## **CHILD SAFETY**

Your child's safety is of the utmost importance at THE SPRINGS. All doors in the building are locked. There is a security system located next to the door near the school office. **Children are not allowed to open doors leading to and from the school building or touch the security system.**

Parents are reminded that Virginia law states that when a child is a passenger in a car, child restraint devices are required for children who are under eight (8) unless parents obtain a signed doctor's note indicating that the child is physically mature enough to no longer require a booster seat. In the event that a car or truck does not have a back seat, the passenger's side airbag should be deactivated and the child restraint device should be placed in the front seat. This law applies to all children enrolled at THE SPRINGS. THE SPRINGS will advise parents failing to observe this law.

Please teach your children the basic rules of safety: Never talk to or accompany a stranger. Never approach the car of a stranger when called from the sidewalk. Never accept gifts or treats from a stranger. Instruct them to never open the door to a stranger. Always accompany your child into a public restroom. Children should be taught their full name, address, and phone number as soon as they are able to learn these. Teach them how to use a landline telephone and a cell phone. Show them how to dial "0" and "911" to ask for help. Teach them what to do should they become lost in a mall, store, amusement park, etc. Emphasize caution, not fear.

## **CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

THE SPRINGS has a Crisis Management Plan on file in the office. Should an emergency arise, the plan states the procedures to be followed in the event of a disaster. The Crisis Management Plan focuses primarily on the responsibilities of the faculty. Parents may review a copy of the Crisis Management Plan at any time.

In the case of any emergency, please know that your child's safety is the primary concern of all faculty members. Unfortunately, in today's world, emergencies unimaginable to us that have no outlined plan may occur. Be assured we will make every effort to protect all children in all situations. At THE SPRINGS, emergencies are classified into three general categories: evacuation emergencies, shelter-in-place emergencies and lock down emergencies.

In the case of emergencies that require evacuation (e.g., fire, flood, etc.), children will evacuate the building and proceed to the playground area or if necessary to the grass area of the adjacent building. The administrative staff will begin notifying parents by phone of the situation and will make an announcement on the school website and social media accounts. A message will also be sent via School Messenger.

In the case of emergencies that prevent us from evacuating the building (e.g., hurricane, tornado, biological warfare, etc.), the faculty and children will shelter-in-place in Toole Hall. Everyone will remain in Toole Hall until the threat has passed. If an emergency requires shelter-in-place, please do not try to come to the school. Remain where you are until the threat has passed. If phone service is available, THE SPRINGS will make every effort to contact and update parents.

In the case of emergencies or threats in the surrounding community, the school will go into lock down. Lock downs are issued by local law enforcement agencies and can vary in the level of intensity depending on the duration and severity of the threat. Please understand that no one may enter or leave the building during a lock down. You will be notified of a lock down, but please do not attempt to come to the school during a lock down. You will not be admitted to the building and may interfere with the efforts of emergency personnel.

Each classroom contains an emergency GO BAG. The Faculty is trained to take the bag with them in the event of any emergency. The bag contains names tags, contact information for each child's parents, a flashlight, duct tape, a copy of the Crisis Management Plan, extra snack food, and a first aid kit.

THE SPRINGS also has one cell phone which will be used in the case of any emergency to contact parents. If you are trying to reach the school and the main line is not functioning, you can try the cell phone. The number for the cell phone is 703-396-7744. However, this phone is only on during an emergency and is not used during the regular school day. If the phone systems are down or circuits are busy, it may be possible to contact the school through email. Please email Daniel ([Clifford@springsmontessori.com](mailto:Clifford@springsmontessori.com)) or Rebeccah ([Garretson@springsmontessori.com](mailto:Garretson@springsmontessori.com)) and someone will try to respond as quickly as possible.

Lastly, please be assured that in the event of an emergency a faculty member will remain with your child(ren) until every child has been picked up.

## **FIRE PREVENTION AND FALSE ALARMS**

THE SPRINGS is issued a Fire Permit from Fairfax County every year and undergoes an inspection from the Fire Marshall to ensure that all alarms and emergency lighting are functioning, emergency exits are cleared, and that the building is generally prepared to limit the spread of a fire. This permit is on display in the hallway.

All fire alarms must be handicap accessible and as such are within the reach of a child. Our fire alarm is located in the main hallway. The children are taught at school that they may not touch the fire alarm. Please help us reinforce this by supervising your child very closely when in proximity to the alarm. The Fairfax County Fire Department takes false alarms very seriously, viewing them as a nuisance to the community and a waste of resources. As such, the fire department reserves the right to charge a fine for false alarms. Please understand the school cannot support the payment of such fines and the family of any child who pulls the fire alarm will be responsible for any fines imposed by the county, alarm system company or the fire department.

## **SCHOOL VISITORS**

All visitors to the school must check in at the school office. This includes parents, other family members, prospective parents, volunteers and any individual conducting business with the school.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY OF STUDENTS**

From time to time, the faculty at THE SPRINGS takes pictures of students to document work, record special activities, and show parents their child's achievement. At the time of enrollment, parents will be given a release giving THE SPRINGS permission to photograph their child. All parents have the option to prohibit photography of their child(ren).

Children who are allowed to be photographed are only photographed or recorded with school cameras. Faculty is strictly prohibited from photographing children with personal devices. Pictures may be posted to the school website, school maintained social media, placed on display in the school or used for student records. Occasionally, student photographs are required for coursework for teacher training and education. In such an instance, the coursework will be submitted to a third party, typically an educational institution, for grading. Parents will be specifically notified of such instances and will have the opportunity to opt out for their child.

You will have the option to limit photography of your child to be used only within the school community or to allow full use for dissemination outside the school community (advertising, social media, etc.). At no time, will a student's identity accompany any photo or video that is made public.

# **PART XII: MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

## **RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION**

We have no religious affiliation and provide a non-sectarian program.

## **SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

63.1-248.3 of Code of Virginia requires any person providing full or part-time child care for pay, on a regularly planned basis, to report suspected child abuse or neglect. If any faculty person at THE SPRINGS suspects abuse or neglect, Virginia Department of Social Services and Child Protective Services will be notified.

## **INFORMATION REGARDING VIRGINIA SENATE BILL #594**

In accordance with Virginia Senate Bill #594, inspectors completed an asbestos inspection at THE SPRINGS by an inspector licensed in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Our facility was determined to be free of asbestos.

Copies of the Asbestos Survey Report detailing the results of the asbestos survey can be found in the office.

## **LICENSING INFORMATION FOR PARENTS ABOUT CHILD DAY CARE PROGRAMS**

THE SPRINGS is a school serving children under the age of 5 and as such is classified as a Child Day Center (CDC) by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Commonwealth of Virginia helps assure parents that child daycare programs that assume responsibility for the supervision, protection, and well-being of a child for any part of a 24-hour day are safe. Title 63.1, Chapter 10 of the Code of Virginia gives the Department of Social Services authority to license these programs. While there are some legislative exceptions to licensure, licensed programs include child daycare centers, family day homes, child day center systems, and family day systems. The Commonwealth may also voluntarily register family day homes not required to be licensed.

Standards for licensed child daycare centers address certain health precautions, adequate play space, ratios of children per faculty member, equipment, program, and record keeping. Criminal records checks and specific qualifications for faculty and most volunteers working directly with children are also required. Standards require the facility to meet applicable fire, health, and building codes.

Compliance with standards is determined by announced and unannounced visits to the program by licensing staff from the Department of Social Services. In addition, parents or other individuals may register a complaint about a program. Registered complaints will be investigated if it violates a standard.

Three types of licenses may be issued to programs. Conditional licenses may be issued to a new program to allow up to six months for the program to demonstrate compliance with the standards. A regular license is issued when the program substantially meets the standards for licensure. A provisional license, which cannot exceed six months, is issued when the program is temporarily unable to comply with the standards. Operation without a license when required constitutes a misdemeanor, which upon conviction can be punishable by a fine of up to \$100.00 or imprisonment of up to 12 months or both for each day's violation.

If you would like additional information about the licensing of child daycare programs or would like to register a complaint, please contact the Regional Office of Social Services closest to you.

THE SPRINGS is licensed by the Fairfax Licensing Office at 12011 Government Center Parkway, Suite 232, Fairfax, Virginia 22035. 703-324-7500. THE SPRINGS holds a regular license.

### **THE SPRINGS, INC.**

THE SPRINGS was incorporated in 1966 and remains a Corporation in Good Standing in the State of Virginia as registered with the State Corporation Commission.

The president of THE SPRINGS, INC. is Daniel P. Clifford. The vice president is Maureen T. Clifford.

THE SPRINGS is a tenant of G.H. Leasing located at 7215 Lockport Place, Lorton, Virginia 22079.

Parents with questions, concerns, and complaints can speak with the Administration. Parents are welcome at any time to visit their child at THE SPRINGS.

**THE SPRINGS faculty welcomes you and your family to our school. We look forward to working with you to help your child develop to his or her fullest potential. If at any time you have any questions do not hesitate to call.**

### **NOTES:**