



Parent / Student Handbook

“The education of a very small child does not aim at preparing him for school but for life.”

Maria Montessori

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Sweet and Smart Montessori School reserves the right to amend this handbook as needed and will provide notice of such to parents. By acknowledging your receipt and review of the handbook you are also agreeing to abide by any terms and conditions stated in these amendments.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Sweet and Smart Montessori School is licensed for full and part-day care, one, two, three, four and five year olds-

Hours of operation are: 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The School does not transport children to and from school.

The School is a drug free, smoke free and weapon free facility.

The School strives to be environment friendly

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is of a world that seeks to live in peace, a global community based on interdependence, respect for all life and all people, a vision that can be reached through our children when they fully develop their talents and attributes.

MISSION STATEMENT

Sweet and Smart Montessori School's mission:

To inspire in children a passion for a lifelong love of learning in an environment which nurtures independence, creativity, confidence and tolerance while developing a sense of responsibility for self and community based on the principles and philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori.

MONTESSORI PROGRAM

The objective of the program is to help the child achieve his fullest potential and mental ability by carefully preparing a learning environment to meet the child's needs. The child uses materials designed to assist growth in practical life, sensorial, mathematics, language arts, music, art, science, geography, etc.

The program is based on the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, a noted Italian educator and physician (1870-1952), who revolutionized early childhood education by advocating that children be allowed the freedom to explore and develop their own creative potential through a wealth of self-teaching educational materials. Maria Montessori developed much of the educational equipment found today in the Montessori classroom nearly 100 years ago. They include hands-on mathematical materials and activities to develop the child's sensory perceptions and refine his sense of awareness. Many exercises are designed to allow young children to practice skills they will need for daily living and self-help. Materials illustrating principles of geography, zoology, botany, and archeology nurture the child's avid interest. All of these areas are explored with concrete objects, tactile experiments, collection, classification, and identification. The children readily take up this reality-based purposeful "work" designed to develop mental and manual dexterity. Children also develop the tools for a lifetime of creative learning.

ENROLLMENT

Sweet and Smart Montessori School does not discriminate between applicants on the basis of race, creed, national origin, or disabilities.

All Toddler and Children House students will be accepted on a conditional basis. Parents or guardians may be asked to withdraw the student if Sweet and Smart Montessori School determines, in its sole discretion, that the program is not meeting the student's needs or that the student's presence is having an adverse effect on the program.

Our enrollment first and recurrent is performed through our website and our Tuition Management Portal. The procedure requires a Full Name to be entered by the person agreeing to our Legal Policies and is governed by **The Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act An email will confirm the action.** The email notification with time and date stamp falls under the criteria of this Electronic Signatures Act and allows you to consider Online Registrations binding. You also have the ability to view and the time and date stamp with full signature for each registration.

Classroom Placement

It is the policy of Sweet and Smart Montessori School **not** to accept parent requests for specific classroom placements. Classroom placement is determined in the best interest of the child by an academic team.

TERM AND PAYMENT PROCEDURE POLICIES

Term Policy Sweet and Smart Montessori School has been instituted as a School and aims to develop children's natural abilities as per Montessori Philosophy. The school year is divided into 10 months; these months are the specific terms which we follow to create a monthly fiscal calendar and a school opening calendar as published by the Broward County. The School budget is divided into these 10 months and reflects our monthly costing which translates to our monthly fees. Month partitioning is only available at Registration which will prorate fees according to entry date. Once enrolled tuition payments will be due on monthly basis

Payment Policy All tuition payments must be made online by credit card or bank draft. No cash will be accepted on the premises. Sweet and Smart Montessori School aims to be a factor in protecting our environment and thus will make every effort to reduce use of paper. Parents or Guardians are required to enroll in the tuition management system present in our website www.snsmontessori.com as a condition of enrollment in the Toddler, Children's House or Extracurricular Activity programs.

Late Payments:
Each payment, whether for tuition or other fees, will be considered a late payment if not made by the 5th day, After the due date and first working day thereafter will incur a penalty of \$20.00 and \$ 5 incremental for each day of the remaining month period. SSMS School reserves the right to refuse entrance to the school if payment is more than 30 days late..

Tuition Payments: Parents or Guardians agree and understand all tuition payments will be processed through the website and the Tuition Management Portal. Early withdrawal of the student(s) from Sweet and Smart Montessori School Programs will be effective 30 days following SSMS administration's receipt of written notice of Student(s)'s intent to withdrawal or the date of withdrawal, whichever occurs later. Payment of the last

month's Monthly Tuition Payment will be prorated to the next half month as of the effective date of withdrawal.

Return of Fees and Deposits: Parents or Guardians of Toddler and Children's House students agree and understand that the Registration Fee and the Tuition Deposit are non-refundable and will not be returned for any reason. Parents or Guardians further understand and agree the Tuition Deposit will be applied to the May tuition payment (School Year Program students) or June (All Year Program students) during the student(s)'s last year of enrollment in the Toddler or Children's House Program at Sweet and Smart Montessori School, but if the student withdraws or is disenrolled by Sweet and Smart Montessori School prior to the end of any school year, the Tuition Deposit will not be returned or applied to monthly tuition.

Termination: Sweet and Smart Montessori School reserves the right to terminate the Enrollment Contract and disenroll Student(s) from Sweet and Smart Montessori School, with or without notice for any reason. Parents or Guardians agree and understand that termination of the Enrollment Contract and disenrollment of the student from Sweet and Smart Montessori School programs does not change the refund provisions.

Illnesses and Vacations: Sweet and Smart Montessori School does not give refunds for days student(s) is/are absent due to illnesses, vacations or other personal reasons.

GENERAL TERMS AND PROCEDURES

CONFIDENTIALIT

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Confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees who have a "need to know" in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as Sweet and Smart Montessori School strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and health related information.

Outside of Sweet and Smart Montessori School, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of the program, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

ATTENDANC

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Parents are requested to ensure that their children arrive on time in order to reap the full benefits of the Montessori environment. If children arrive late, they are missing out on valuable class time. If the child arrives after class time has begun please check with the front desk for assistance.

Regular attendance and punctual arrival at school are two habits that dramatically impact student achievement. Absences and tardiness are disturbing to students, disrupt their schedules, require readjustment to the class routine, and diminish learning. Parents are urged to make every effort to schedule doctor, dentist, and other appointments for students at times outside the school day.

Absence

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In case of an absence these procedures should be followed:

1. Please call to the school office to inform the school of the child's absence as soon as possible at 954-340-7377. Leave a message if necessary.
2. Vacation should be planned for regularly scheduled breaks. The school does not condone taking students out of school during the regular school schedule.

3. Ten consecutive days of unexcused absences will be cause for automatic withdrawal.
4. Some program levels require students to be accountable for missed work.
5. **Frequent patterns of absences may result in a meeting with the teacher and/or Head of School. Penalties for excessive absenteeism (10 or more days per school year) may include non-promotion to the next grade.**
6. When a child needs to leave school early, please send a Note to the teacher.

Tardines

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1. The school day starts at 9:00 a.m. A student is considered late if he is not in class at the start of the school day

2. **Frequent tardiness may result in a meeting with the teacher and/or Head of School. Due to the nature of the Montessori method, tardies are very disruptive to a student's school performance and are handled very seriously by administration.**

Drop-off and Pick-Up

For the safety of all our children and parents, please drive slowly and with caution at all times while parking especially during drop-off and pick-up times when the parking lot is the busiest.

Late Pick-Up Fee: A fifteen-minute grace period is given to accommodate any unforeseen circumstances. Beginning ten minutes after the scheduled pick up time in any of the private programs, a \$1.00 per minute per child fee will be billed by the Tuition.

Sign in/out

Children must be signed in and out each day by parents or designated individual (18 years and older) as required by the State of Florida Department of Health Services. If someone other than the parent will be signing a child in and/or out, the school must have written permission on file. When signing in or out, the individual must use the first initial of their first name and full last name. Please make sure the signature is legible.

Dismissal

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Sweet and Smart Montessori School will only release a student the parent, guardian or an authorized person **as stated on the student dismissal authorization form.** If someone else is going to pick up a child, the parent must use a note and/or call the office. In cases of doubt, we will phone the custodial parent to confirm that someone else has been authorized to pick up the child. Photo identification is required from any adult who is not known to school personnel and who comes to pick up a child, and we will make a copy of it, to file it.

STUDENT HEALTH

In case of injury or illness during school hours, the student will be brought to the school office. Parents will be notified by phone when a child is sick or injured. It is the parents' responsibility to collect the child within 45 minutes of contact from the school. If a parent cannot be reached, the office will call the alternate pick-up names on the emergency card. **Parents are responsible for keeping all emergency information current by making any changes in addresses, telephone numbers, or emergency contact information at the front**

office.

- **If a child becomes ill at school, he will be isolated and the parent or authorized person listed on the Emergency Information Card will be notified for the child to be picked up immediately.**
- It is particularly important that the school be informed if your child has contacted any communicable diseases.
- **As required by State regulations - if a child has had any symptoms of illness, such as nasal discharge, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or fever (100 degrees or higher) the child may not return to school until symptom free for 24 hours.**

Medical Emergencies

In the event that a student needs emergency medical attention, 911 will be called. The parent or person responsible will be notified. If it is necessary to transport a child to the hospital, a staff member will accompany the child and remain with that student until one of the parents (or someone designated by the parent) arrives at the hospital. Staff members with current CPR/First Aid training are always present on campus and will administer aid whenever necessary.

Medication

1. A designated staff member is responsible for the administration of all medications including storing, supervising ingestion, and recording the dosage.
2. The administration of medication is not permitted unless the child's parent completes a medical consent form.
3. Prescription medication will only be administered from a container dispensed by a pharmacy and non-prescription medication will only be administered from a prepackaged container labeled for use by the manufacturer and labeled with the enrolled child's name. No medication will be administered that has been transferred from one container to another.
4. Medication is to be brought directly to the office by an adult. **It is NOT acceptable to send medication, Chap Stick or vitamins in a child's backpack, lunchbox, or pant's pocket. This is a serious health hazard to the other children on campus.** No medication will be administered without a signed medical consent form. This form can be obtained in the front office and on the Keystone website.

Immunizations

The state immunization law requires all students to have an immunization record on file for school attendance. If your child is exempt from immunizations, he must have a signed exemption on file. In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease for which you cannot provide proof of immunity of your child, your child will not be allowed to attend school until the risk period ends. All needed immunization records must be on file prior to the child attending school. **If your child does not have current immunizations or a signed exemption on file, he will not be allowed to attend classes until the situation has been remedied.** It is the parent's responsibility to bring any updated immunization records to the school office.

Emergency Card

A child will not be admitted for enrollment to Sweet and Smart Montessori School unless an Emergency Information Card is on file. Parents are asked to call or go to the main office to make any changes to the blue card. Please keep in mind that if your child was to have an accident and the information on the emergency card was incorrect; we would have no way of contacting you.

Allergies

Make sure that you note any and all allergies on your child's emergency information card. Also make sure that your child's teacher is aware of all allergies.

RISK AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Hazardous Materials

Any substance or item that is potentially hazardous, harmful, or disruptive is prohibited. If a student has such materials on campus, the school will confiscate the materials, notify the parents, and arrange for disciplinary action.

Tobacco Policy

Sweet and Smart Montessori School is a NO SMOKING facility.

By state law, no person is allowed to possess any form of tobacco on school grounds, nor in any vehicle transporting children for school functions.

Sweet and Smart Montessori School does not allow any clothing or other materials that promote the use of tobacco

Emergency Closing and Inclement Weather

If *Broward County School District* is closed or declares a delayed opening due to inclement weather, *The Sweet and Smart Montessori School* will also be closed.

If *The Sweet and Smart Montessori School* must close during the day, staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made. Staff will notify the parents or emergency contact person at the time of the call, of the pick-up location should the children need to be evacuated from the child care center. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated.

Should the center need to close for an emergency, tuition will not be refunded.

Fire Emergency Drills

Fire drills are conducted monthly. Parents, staff and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into the program. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe-zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real fire/emergency situation, the Director will inform staff that the school will be closing. At this time any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone of the situation. As with the sick child pick up policy, children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the telephone call.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

Per state law, school employees must report suspected cases of abuse, neglect, non-accidental injury, or sexual offenses against children to Child Protective Services (CPS) and/or local law enforcement agencies as well as to the Head of School or Assistant Head of School. Where parents are the alleged abusers, school personnel are not to notify parents; Child Protective Services and law enforcement agencies are responsible for notification. Should the alleged perpetrator be other than a member of the child's family, school personnel shall follow reasonable notification procedures.

Any child who is a suspected abuse victim shall be made available to either CPS or the Police Department for questioning. The investigating agency will determine whether school personnel should be with the child during questioning. The CPS worker and/or the police may interview the child and all other children residing in the

home on school grounds outside of the presence of school personnel. They may conduct interviews of the child without permission or notice to the parents where the suspected perpetrator is a family member. CPS has the authority to obtain school records upon written request. State law protects individuals required to report suspected abuse from civil and criminal liability.

COMMUNICATION

Please inform the child's teacher of any changes at home or in the child's life that may have an effect at school so that we can better provide for the needs of the student.

In order to facilitate positive communications the parent should discuss any concerns directly with the classroom teacher. If this first step does not resolve the problem, the parent should contact the Head of School.

PARENT VOLUNTEERING

Parent volunteers are required to retain a valid Florida Fingerprint Clearance Card at all times. Prior to contributing time to the class, volunteers must attend a Sweet and Smart Montessori School Volunteer Training session and submit the Volunteer Guidelines acknowledgement form.

FIELD TRIPS AND GOING OUT TRIPS

1. Please watch for field trip permission slips. Students who do not return a signed field trip permission slip will not be permitted to attend the field trip.

2. Siblings are not permitted to accompany volunteers inside the classroom or on field trips and "going out" activities.

LUNCH AND SNACKS

1. Parents are to provide lunches. Please pack a balanced, nutritious lunch for your child.
2. Water is always available in the classroom.
3. Please have your child bring a lunch box.
4. The microwave will be available to reheat previously cooked items. Please do not send frozen entrees.
5. Candy, gum, and soda are not allowed. If a child comes to school with any of these items in his lunchbox, it will be sent home unopened. For suggestions on healthy lunches, please ask your child's teacher.
6. Please encourage children to participate in the preparation of their own lunches.

BIRTHDAYS

1. Please check with your child's teacher regarding the observance of birthday celebrations.
2. Clowns or any other "Character" are not welcome in the birthdays Party.
3. Sweet and Smart Montessori School will encourage the Birthday Celebrations, like an important event on the Child's life, we will also encourage to keep it simple, so they can enjoy the celebration.
4. Please send pictures from various stages of their lives that we may borrow to discuss their growth. The children may host their own parties by bringing nutritious snacks to prepare and serve.

NAPS

According to the Department of Health Services, all children who are three years old or younger are required to bring nap materials to school. These should include a fitted crib sheet and blanket labeled with your child's name in a clear plastic bag. Sheets and blankets will be sent home every Friday to be laundered and should be returned on Monday. Remember to leave all toys and stuffed animals at home.

OBSERVATIONS AND PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES

Observations in conjunction with Parent / Teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year in order to facilitate the best understanding of the Montessori environment. Both parents are strongly encouraged to attend. In addition, a written progress reports are completed. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher if you have a concern or question at any other time.

VISITOR REGULATIONS

All visitors must check in at the office and obtain a visitor's permission. All parents visiting campus during school hours must check in at the office. All parents have access to the areas on facility premises where the parent's enrolled child is receiving childcare services.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Please have students leave all personal property such as toys, sunglasses, games, etc. at home. The school is not responsible for damage to, loss, or theft of any personal items brought to school. If items are brought to school they will be held in the teacher's possession until the end of the day.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND CELL PHONES

Electronic devices, including cell phones, are not to be used by students during school hours. If necessary, they will be held by school personnel until the end of the school day. In the case of repeated unauthorized use, parents will be contacted.

Parents, please refrain from using cell phones while on campus and in the parking lot at Sweet and Smart Montessori School

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Toddler & Children's House

1. We encourage our children to wear our uniform, Monday through Thursday and on Fridays they can wear a casual outfit.
2. Young children should come to school in clothing that permits full movement and outdoor play and is easy to slip on and off. For more peaceful play, we ask that you do not send your child to school in clothing that encourages aggressive behavior.
3. Children are required to have a change of clothes in their cubbies at all times. Please label clothing and follow the procedure outlined by your child's teacher. It is your responsibility to make sure that clothes are replaced as needed. If a child has a bathroom accident or gets wet outside and has no extra clothing, the parent may be called to come pick up the child or to bring some clothes.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

DISCIPLINE

Staff will encourage children to respect other people (both adults and children), to be fair, respect property, and learn responsibility for their actions. We will use the following techniques in doing so:

- Planning ahead to prevent problems
- Consistent clear rules
- Encouragement of appropriate behavior
- Positive guidance
- Involving children in problem-solving where appropriate

The school's discipline policy is at all times intended to cultivate a positive atmosphere in which quality education and productive learning can take place.

Good behavior makes our school a safe and pleasant place for everyone, as well as an environment conducive to learning. Whether in class, on a playground, at lunch, or on the way to and from school, all children are expected to:

- Be courteous and respectful to others
- Conduct themselves in a reasonable and cooperative manner
- Recognize the authority of the teacher, administrators, and other school staff
- Use proper language
- Be punctual
- Follow all school rules
- Not act in an aggressive manner
- Use playground equipment appropriately
- Leave electronic toys and equipment at home
- Respect other people's personal space and property

Any behavior that endangers the health or safety of others will not be allowed. However, no child will remain enrolled if he or she:

- Causes continual, deliberate physical or emotional harm to other children.
- Requires more care than the staff can adequately provide without compromise to the other children.
- Continually disrupts the class to the extent that activities cannot be completed.

Biting Policy

In order to provide a safe and healthy environment for your child, the school has a biting policy in force. An occasional biting incident, especially in the Toddler Program, is a part of normal toddler development. However, if the child becomes a chronic biter, and if it is determined that the child would be better served in another environment, a parent may be asked to remove their child from school.

School Property

Students are responsible for taking good care of schoolbooks, equipment, and facilities. If a student loses or damages these items beyond normal wear, the parent/guardian may be held liable for repair or replacement. If a student's misbehavior results in damage to school property, disciplinary action may be taken.

INCIDENT REPORTS

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the course of the school day, a staff member will

complete an Incident Report. The Incident Report will be placed in a sealed envelope and put in the child's mailbox. Parents are required to sign the report at pick-up time and return it to staff. Should a person other than the parent pick-up the child, a parent or must sign the report and return it to the Director within 24 hours.

The Parent/Student Agreement is part of the online registration process which cannot be considered final until it is agreed upon. This form will become part of your child's permanent school records.

It is very important to carefully read and understand the Parent/Student Handbook.