

*Given the fluidity of the Pandemic and related prevention protocols we will update this manual with*

*COVID-19 policies in August*

**Family Manual**

**2020-2021**

**Magic Lantern Montessori Preschool**

*4620 South Findlay Street*

*Seattle, Washington 98118*

*(206) 722-2803*

*Interim Director: Judy Summerfield, (206) 348-3975*

**Introduction**

Welcome to Magic Lantern Montessori Preschool! This family manual describes our school from its philosophical foundation to its daily operations. We encourage you to read it carefully and save it for future reference. If any of your questions are not addressed in the manual, please contact the Director.

Magic Lantern Montessori Preschool (MLM) was founded in 2001 by a group of parents in the Hillman City neighborhood, and was a cooperative preschool until joining Sound Child Care Solutions, a nonprofit organization licensed by the State of Washington to provide childcare services. MLM meets and exceeds the standards and regulations that are required by the State of Washington.

**Contact Information**

**Magic Lantern Montessori Preschool**

MLM Address: 4620 South Findlay Street

 Seattle, WA 98118

MLM Phone: (206) 722-2803

Director Phone: (206) 348-3975

Website: [www.magiclanternpreschool.org](http://www.magiclanternpreschool.org)

**Sound Child Care Solutions**

SCCS Address: 1225 South Weller Street, Suite 200

 Seattle, WA 98144

SCCS Phone: (206) 420-7165

Website: [www.soundchild.org](http://www.soundchildcare.org)

**Mission Statement**

Magic Lantern, a chapter of Sound Child Care Solution, has a mission to create high quality, culturally relevant education for all children through the collaboration of early learning centers.

**Program Description**

Magic Lantern Montessori is a non-profit preschool emphasizing community and diversity. Located in South Seattle, Magic Lantern offers a rich curriculum that incorporates many aspects of life. The school has no religious affiliation, but promotes respect and understanding between all people, irrespective of their beliefs. We recognize that we live in an era marked by divisions; our mission is to overcome these divisions and create a community that embraces everyone. We believe that doing this enhances our lives and the lives of our children and the future.

Magic Lantern Montessori serves children from ages 2 ½ through 6 years of age. Classes focus on practical hands-on learning experiences in the areas of science, math, sensorial, practical life, language and geography. The curriculum also highlights cooking, dramatic expression, music, movement, and arts and crafts. Our approach to learning is child-centered. The Montessori method encourages initiative and self-sufficiency through children’s choice to pursue their interests within an intentional structured environment. The faculty and staff gently guide students toward discovery of their inherent talents and abilities, building children's self-esteem and nurturing their awareness of themselves and those around them.

**Organizational Structure**

Magic Lantern is a chapter of Sound Child Care Solutions, a non-profit consortium of child care centers. The SCCS Executive Director reports to the SCCS Board of Directors, which meets monthly to ensure that the organization is living out its mission in a fiscally responsible way.

Magic Lantern Montessori Preschool has a Parent Advisory Committee of 7-8 family and community members who support and advise the Director of MLM. The largest responsibility the Parent Advisory Committee performs is fundraising. New Parent Advisory Committee members are recruited by the Director and members serve a one- to two-year term.

Magic Lantern Montessori Preschool’s Director is responsible for all aspects of the day-to-day operations of the program, and all staff report to him/her.

New Light Christian Church is our landlord and although we seek to work cooperatively with the parish community as our neighbor and ally, there is no formal relationship between the church and the parish other than one of landlord and tenant.

**Our Goals**

We guide each child to develop fully through his/her work, according to the “Montessori Method.” The following are areas of development you can expect to see in your child:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. A joy of learning2. Learning through discovery3. Independence4. Self-confidence5. Self-discipline | 6. Concentration7. Peace and calmness8. Love of order9. Ability to choose10. Enjoyment of quiet |

**The Montessori Method**

Maria Montessori was the first woman to earn a medical degree in Italy. With her background in medicine and her experience working with children in the early twentieth century, she developed a method of education for the very young based on scientific observation of childhood behavior. Many of her ideas such as children primarily learn through sensory experience, and should be treated with kindness and respect, were revolutionary at the time.

The Montessori approach to child care and education is different from many school philosophies. The method is based on the idea that the world can only change for the better if we change the way children are treated, especially in their very early years when their basic relationship to the world is being formed. We are doing much more than babysitting, more than "day care." We are making a fundamental difference in the lives of children who can change our future and the world.

The most obvious difference between Montessori and traditional schools is that a Montessori approach shifts the focus from the teacher to the child. It is the adult's responsibility to aid the child in his or her development, rather than to teach. Children learn by teaching themselves.

We believe children learn mostly from the environment. They absorb everything from their surroundings, including the classroom materials, the daily routine, the natural environment, and the example set by the adults and the other children. For instance, it is very important for the adults to model behavior they want to see in the children. If we do not want children to sit on the table, then we do not sit on the table. When we see a child acting aggressively, we have a gentle response.

A strong respect for the child's personality offers room for profound growth. The child is allowed a large measure of liberty that forms the basis of real self-discipline. This is a higher discipline that originates within children as they gain practice making their own decisions and exercising their own will. It is not a discipline that is externally imposed or based on rewards and punishments.

The basic goal of any Montessori program is to support each child's independence. This is why they choose their work and engage in their work for as long or short as they can. The classroom is also structured to encourage children to care for themselves, care for their environment and care for others. At Magic Lantern, our beautiful learning materials and loving teachers surround the children as they fulfill their profound need to learn.

**Morning Montessori Curriculum**Magic Lantern Montessori is a place where children, ages 2.5 to 6 years, love to learn by doing, experimenting, touching and using all of their senses. We provide a hands-on classroom with learning materials for all of the main areas: practical living, sensory, math, art, music, language as well as geography, history and science. Even the youngest children learn about their world!

Freedom of Movement: Absorbing a broad understanding of the world through hands-on materials, the children move about freely, choosing their “work” with responsibility and freedom. Their independence and self-confidence grow as they learn through projects that allow them to learn as individuals, at their own pace and to reach toward their full potential.

Guidelines to Learning: Our school is based upon the fundamental need of each child for freedom within limits. Children are longing “to do” with their hands: to touch, to smell, to taste, to see, to hear so that they may learn. They choose their “work” and concentrate for surprisingly long periods of time without interruption.

Socializing as they learn, the children use their newly-acquired speech skills, expressing themselves as individuals as well as chatting about their life values, interests, and family members.

Learning Outcomes: When children begin school, they show enthusiasm for learning, love of work, concern for others, concentration, a drive toward excellence, orderliness and a joy of learning.

Adapting to a Traditional Classroom: Because of their self-discipline and independence, children who have been in the Montessori classroom for the full 3-year span adjust readily to traditional elementary classrooms. Since the majority of the children have been reading since they were 4 ½ or 5 years of age, they love to learn, wherever they are.

**Montessori Education**

1. Active Individualized Learning through stimulating, multi-sensory teaching materials.

2. Mixed-age class is a “natural” social environment that includes a wide range of ages and fosters self-motivation. Students enjoy working for their own sense of accomplishment.

3. Freedom of Choice involves decision-making. Students select their work according to individual interests.

4. Working at One’s Own Pace enables students to work for long periods without interruption. Each individual works at his potential independent of the class.

5. Integral Education balances academic work with freedom of movement and harmony is created between physical, social and mental activities. There is an inter-relationship between subjects.

6. Independence is fostered by a classroom that is specifically designed to encourage maximum development.

7. Self-Evaluation occurs as students learn to evaluate their work objectively through the use of self-correcting teaching materials and individual work with the teacher.

8. Reality-Oriented Education maintains concrete, first-hand experience as the basis for abstraction.

9. Close Student-Teacher Interaction enables complete and precise evaluation of student’s progress, both academically and psychologically.

**The Montessori Environment**

Practical Life Activities:

Children are offered real life experiences to care for themselves in pouring their drinks, developing healthy eating habits, dressing and undressing themselves, etc. They take care of their environment by maintaining the beauty of their class, watering plants, dusting, etc. The children also learn the healthy habit of taking turns, waiting for the “work” that they want, taking constructive criticism and approval in a positive way, and listening to another person’s feelings and needs.

Sensorial Activities:

This area of learning is scientifically designed to develop, refine, classify and grade the stimulation that children receive through their senses. These activities have five areas:

Seeing………………………color tablets, geometric shapes, etc.

Hearing…………………….sound cylinders, bells, etc.

Tasting …………………….tasting tray, etc.

Smelling ……………….....smelling bottles, etc.

Touching ………………….mystery bag, fabrics, etc.

Mathematics:

All of the math activities are designed to develop the child’s mathematical mind. Learning begins with the child’s use of concrete materials such as numerical rods, sandpaper numerals, counting objects, fraction puzzles and many hands-on math games for number relationship, sorting, matching, the four mathematical “operations,” and place value.

Language:

These activities are organized in a sequential manner to follow the natural language development of the child. Throughout the day books are read together, stories told, songs are sung, and children learn to listen to others speak and share at circle time. The sounds of the alphabet are presented through the phonetic method in a natural way. Parents soon notice that their child is forming letters and words and beginning to sound out short words. Vocabulary development is emphasized in all areas by using specific words for objects in the classroom. At approximately 4 ½ years, the children begin to put phonetic sounds together to read short words, and by five years of age they amaze their parents with their love for writing and reading.

Science:

Through our hands-on materials the children learn to match and sort objects and pictures of living/non-living and plant/animal. They love to make booklets of the “parts” of animals, i.e. head, tail, back, etc. from the insect to the mammal. Exploration of their world through dissection of a flower, apple, or orange brings excitement into the classroom! Our hands-on science materials are the joy of the children.

Geography:

The children are introduced to the earth’s globe, the world “they live on,” and learn about land and water forms through floating miniature boats on a miniature lake, gulf, etc. They use the world and U.S. maps as puzzles, soon tracing and coloring their own maps. Children love to sing the “continent song” to their parents!

Art:

Our children gain the skills to express themselves with crayons, watercolors, tempera paint, clay modeling, collage gluing and many other kinds of materials. Our teachers are experienced in “feeding back” the feelings of excitement in their work so that the children do not become dependent upon praise. Art is such a defining part of us as humans, and we explore it in various forms, from dance, to music. We include art history by featuring fine artists and learning their work and life story.

Music:

Music is a natural part of the daily classroom routine in the form of rhythm, instruments, dancing, singing, and finger plays. A variety music is also played. Weekly music classes are offered by experienced music teachers.

Physical Education/Recess:

Since young children are meant to “move” and to practice bodily control with their very active minds, they soon learn to control their large and small muscles. Children carry tables and chairs and gain the confidence that they “can do it!”

We go outside twice daily for at least thirty minutes each time weather permitting:

 Raining: We go outside with waterproof hooded jackets and boots!

 Pouring: We do not go outside.

**The Montessori Method at Magic Lantern**

The Montessori environment is carefully planned out and set up by the teachers to cover all the subject areas including Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Math, Geography, Botany/Natural science, Peace, Art, and Gross Motor Movement. The children learn by choosing what interests them and by hands on experiences with the work. The teachers are trained to observe and record the children's progress in the classroom and give individual lessons on all new work. The teacher moves around quietly and assesses the needs of the classroom and helps to create a peaceful environment for concentration. The teacher will often gently guide the child to the next appropriate lesson to make sure that he/she is getting balanced exposure to all the activities in the room.

At circle time the children learn about the chosen unit/ theme of the month. We do a calendar activity, weather report, and often role play to practice problem solving skills. The children practice their public speaking and listening skills and learn how to be an active member of a community.

**Recommended Reading on the Montessori Method:**

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| --- | --- |
| * *Montessori in the Home,* Hainstock, Elizabeth
* *Montessori, A Modern Approach,* Lillard, Paula Polk
* *The Absorbent Mind, The Montessori Method, The Child in the Family, Discovery of the Child, Secret of Childhood, and Montessori’s Own Handbook* Montessori, Maria
 |  |

**Culturally Relevant Anti-Bias Education**

Magic Lantern staff is committed to peace, acceptance, and justice, and strives to model and teach those attitudes in everything we do. Magic Lantern Montessori Preschool is also committed to an anti-bias approach.

**Anti-Bias Goals**

Anti-bias education has four core goals, each of which applies to children of all backgrounds and influences every arena of our programs. Each goal interacts and builds on the other three. Together, they provide a safe, supportive learning community for all children. Effective anti-bias education happens when all four goals are part of your program.

Goal 1: Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.

Goal 2: Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.

Goal 3: Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.

Goal 4: Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

**Vision of Anti-Bias Education**

The heart of anti-bias work is a vision of a world in which all children are able to reach their greatest potential, and each child’s particular abilities and gifts are able to flourish. In this world:

• All children and families have a sense of belonging and experience affirmation of their identities and cultural ways of being.

• All children have access to and participate in the education they need to become successful, contributing members of society.

• The educational process engages all members of the program or school in joyful learning.

• Children and adults know how to respectfully and easily live, learn, and work together in diverse and inclusive environments.

• All families have the resources they need to fully nurture their children.

• All children and families live in safe, peaceful, healthy, comfortable housing and neighborhoods.

We strive to provide toys, pictures, puzzles and books that are non-sexist and free from stereotypes and show people of diverse ethnic backgrounds in a variety of careers and family groupings. However, the MLM classrooms are not purposely stocked and decorated with dolls and posters portraying children from many cultures. Though we do have such materials available, they are not our primary mode for creating a culturally relevant, anti-bias program. We recognize that anti-bias work is about more than skin color, so we talk with children about the range of individuals and families that make up our school community and the wider world. We take care with the words we use, the beliefs we express and the books and stories we share.

We support multilingual children and families by showing that we value their language. We learn words from their home languages and incorporate those words into daily classroom use. We also provide books for children that reflect all of the languages in use in the classroom. For children who are working to learn English as their second language, we offer support in the context of social play and classroom activities and encourage them to maintain their first language while learning English.

Social problem solving and conflict resolution are an ever-present part of our daily lives together. We challenge children to articulate their wishes, feelings, and ideas and support them in working towards mutually agreeable solutions. By emphasizing negotiation and alternate perspective taking, we help children advocate for themselves and recognize the needs of others.

Magic Lantern Montessori Preschool teachers devote part of the professional development time to discussing ongoing culturally relevant and anti-bias efforts and opportunities in the classroom, and current thinking about the best practices for supporting culturally relevant, anti-bias learning. We purposely introduce meeting topics, thinking games, teacher skits, and other activities to provoke conversations about bias and fairness. In addition, we support in-depth study projects that contain elements of activism for social justice. Though perhaps not immediately visible on our walls, all of these anti-bias efforts are recorded in our documentation of classroom work. We nurture within each child a disposition to speak and act for peace, tolerance, and justice.

**Our Daily Routine**

***Given the COVID-19 Pandemic some adjustments in the schedule may take place – you will be notified in advance of changes***

We have two programs offered Monday through Friday- The Manatee classroom, which runs from 8:00am – 5:30pm and a school day session open 8:00am – 3:00pm with an extended option to 5:30. Morning Circle begins each day at 9:00am for both rooms. There is a 1.5 hour rest period after lunch for the Full Day classroom (optional free-play or outdoor time is available during the last 30 minutes of this rest period for the children who no longer nap).

Children need regularity in their daily lives in order to make sense out of what may at first seem like chaos. We provide order in our environment in a number of ways. We have very clear ground rules and expectations that we consistently adhere to. The Montessori materials are also designed with an order of arrangement: from least to most difficult and from concrete to abstract concepts. We carry out the activities and functions of the day in the same way and in the same sequence every day. Our belief is that when children know what to expect, they feel comfortable and capable.

The following is a general schedule for each day, but our goal is to follow the children’s rhythm, rather than to watch the clock. Content and curriculum are varied to optimize interest and learning.

**Full Day classroom-**

**Morning Montessori**

8:00– 9:00 Student drop-off

9:00–9:20 Circle time

9:20–10:45 Montessori work time

9:30–10:30 Snack (self-served)

10:45–11:00 Bathroom/circle

11:00–11:45 Outdoor play

11:45–Noon Lunch circle/wash hands

Noon–12:30 Lunch

**Full Day classroom-**

**Afternoon Art**

12:30–1:00 Story time

1:00–2:30 Nap/quiet time

2:00-2:30 non-nappers activities

2:30–3:00 Free choice

3:00–4:15 Circle and Art Project time

3:30–3:50 Afternoon snack

4:15-4:30 Music/Movement Circle

4:30–5:30 Play/recess and pick up

**Gingko Classroom School Day**

8:00-9:00 Student drop-off

9:00-9:20 Circle time

9:20-10:15 Montessori work time

9:30-10:30 Snack (self-served)

10:15-10:30 Circle time

10:30-11:10 Outdoor play

11:10-11:45 Free Choice

11:45-Noon Circle time

Noon-12:30 Lunch

12:30-1:00 story time

1:00-2:45 Nap/quiet time

2:45-3:30 Snack (self-served)/ pick up

**Gingko Classroom Extended afternoon**

3:30-4:15 Afternoon Circle/Art time

4:15-4:45 Outdoor Play

 4:45-5:30 Free Choice/Music/Movement

3:00-3:15 Circle time

3:15-4:00 Free choice

3:30-3:50 Snack (self-served)

4:00-4:30 Outdoor play (P-patch, walks, etc.)

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**Food**

Magic Lantern is a nut-free school and serves a healthy menu centered on whole (mainly organic) food. We avoid refined sugar. Ample protein is offered in the form of beans, legumes, whole grains, poultry and dairy products. Children will be actively involved in the preparation of snacks (served in the morning and afternoon) and lunch. Lunch is served family style so the children can learn to set the table and pass food to each other. We encourage children to eat and try new foods.

The school provides only soymilk as a milk alternative. We ask that children not bring food from home into the classroom unless they have a medically documented food allergy. In these cases, Magic Lantern will provide a form to be completed by you and your health provider. When a child has a medically documented allergy to wheat and/or dairy, families are asked to bring snack alternatives for wheat and/or dairy substitutes. Magic Lantern will provide a wheat or dairy alternative at lunch.

**Naps or rest time**

Many of our children still nap daily, and we will encourage all children to rest after lunch, even if they do not sleep. All children will be invited to lie down on a sleeping mat with their blankets and a cuddle toy and rest while listening to soft music. Children who do not nap will be engaged in quiet play.

Please bring a blanket and a small pillow (and a cuddle toy, if needed) for your child that you can leave in the classroom. The blankets should be taken home and washed weekly by families.

**Field trips**

MLM organizes 2-3 field trips per year. Each field trip will be announced as early as possible in case parents want to accompany and chaperone. The school will provide a specific field trip form for each event, describing the destination, form of transportation, cost and number of chaperones needed. Field trips involving transportation (besides public transit) will utilize school buses rented by MLM.

**Classroom Expectations**

**The Vision of Interaction at our School**

The Magic Lantern Montessori community is a unique blend of cooperative interaction and teacher-managed school environment. MLM is a Montessori school, led by certified Montessori teachers.

The preschool age is a sensitive time for children who are being introduced to a world of learning, for parents who are introducing other educators into their children's lives, and for teachers, who attempt to ease that transition and guide the child in her/his individual growth, using the Montessori method. Varying parenting styles can lead to questions or, at times, even conflict.

Our goal is to achieve a team-driven and productive atmosphere, and foster a relationship of trust between parents and teachers. It is important for parents and teachers to communicate as productively as possible. Teachers welcome questions about the teaching method or daily routines and can share their experiences, philosophies, and observations.

Please note that teachers and the center Director are entirely responsible for setting the school curriculum and changing routines if they deem it necessary to benefit the children and program. Please arrange for a time outside of the classroom that is convenient for both parties to discuss curriculum. This allows for more in-depth discussion and ensures that teachers do not take time away from teaching.

  **Volunteering in the Classroom**Parent volunteers are appreciated and make valuable contributions to the school. If you are interested in volunteering please schedule this with a teacher.

It is important to remember that the day will be different when there is a volunteer, even though the routine will be adhered to as much as possible. Teachers will relay information and rules and any helpful hints for those not used to the Montessori classroom experience. Parents should feel free to ask other staff members for guidance.

Some helpful reminders:

• The calmer the energy (even when plans are still being worked out), the calmer the children and the smoother the day will be.

• Children may test and question a substitute’s authority. Be aware of the “dual authority” and follow the lead of the teacher. Making your expectations clear to the children and standing by your decisions are important.

• If you are a parent volunteering on a day your child attends, please set behavior goals with your child and encourage typically appropriate classroom behavior. The collision of two worlds, which naturally have different kinds of rules, can sometimes confuse children.

• If a situation arises with which you are uncomfortable, feel free to ask the lead teacher to step in.

**Magic Lantern Policies**

**Emergencies or Unscheduled Closures/Delays**

MLM follows the Seattle Public School Weather/Snow closure schedule, available at [www.seattleschools.org](http://www.seattleschools.org) and on local news stations. If the Seattle Public School System closes schools due to snow or inclement weather, Magic Lantern will close as well.

In addition, the school may close on days when the Director deems it necessary due to weather, natural disasters, or when travel to and from school would otherwise pose a safety issue.

If there is an emergency during the school day, parents will be first notified via email. If the situation calls for immediate family pick-up and families do not respond to the messages, MLM staff will proceed to call all families. Please make sure that the school is notified immediately, in writing, if there is any change to your emergency daytime contact information.

In the event of fire or other disaster at the school, which may force evacuation, children may be taken to an alternate safe location nearby, which is designated by the Director. This is posted by the Fire evacuation paperwork to the right of the front door.

Families will be notified of any school closures or school delays via Email, Remind notification, and possibly on the school Facebook page.

Should routine communication systems fail, MLM announcements will be made on radio station, KIRO FM.

**Parent Involvement**

Our commitment to our children goes hand in hand with our commitment to the Magic Lantern community. In 2001, Magic Lantern was founded by a group of parents and for over the next decade, it was a cooperative preschool. The preschool still operates out of themes tied to its history, so parent involvement is important. Parents support the administration and school community through volunteer opportunities. Magic Lantern continues to evolve and change as an organization. As a result, families will find multiple opportunities to become involved in developing and implementing the vision of its future.

Families have a minimum of five volunteer hours per quarter expectation. Each family is asked to attend two required parent meetings; one in the fall and one in the spring. We also ask for participation in parent-teacher conferences, contributing to work parties, and participating in fundraising events.

In addition, at least one member of each family is required to take on a specific job and/or actively participate on one of our four committees, or on the Parent Advisory Committee. Active participation by families in the life of the school is a founding principle of Magic Lantern.

For additional information about the Parent Advisory Committee Parent Advisory Committee and parent committees, please refer to page 22.

**Interaction with Staff and the MLM Community**

Just as we seek to provide a nurturing environment for our children, our goals are to interact with one another with respect, acceptance, empathy and the recognition that we each have a valuable contribution.

**Non-Discrimination**

1. Magic Lantern Montessori does not discriminate against anyone for employment or childcare service on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, cultural factors or disabilities of the child or family members.

2. Magic Lantern Montessori admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic or other school administrated programs. We will not discriminate against children with disabilities. Magic Lantern will make reasonable accommodations to address the physical or mental limitations of disabled children in care or seeking care.

3. Discrimination in employment is prohibited. Applicants receive notice that this program does not discriminate. Job applicants are not required to answer questions about their race, color, national origin, religion, marital status, age, sex, disability or Vietnam-era or disabled veteran status. Magic Lantern has a policy to make reasonable accommodations for qualified, disabled job applicants or employee.

4. Magic Lantern prohibits sexual harassment and provides means for making and resolving sexual harassment complaints.

**Discipline**

Magic Lantern's discipline policy is an extension of our goal to teach children productive ways to manage their own actions and relationships with others. We strive to present positive ideas about every child and encourage confidence and self-respect for every child's needs. Accordingly, we find non-judgmental ways to talk about feelings and encourage children to talk to one another about their conflicts, often using our "peace table" as a diplomatic setting. We use redirection and positive reinforcement, instilling in all children pride for their behaviors and successes.

No one on the premises may use physical punishment of any kind, nor use frightening or humiliating discipline.

**Communication with Parents**

We stress the important link between home and school for your child. To best support your child at school we may ask you about their home life if we see changes in your child’s behavior. We encourage parents to inform the director or teachers about how we can team with you on any special needs or circumstances. We appreciate working in partnership to provide children with the best environment possible. In the rare event our team has exhausted all internal means of resolving a behavioral issue, we may also discuss with you the addition of outside professional consultants to observe the classroom and coach teachers.

We will also contact you if your child’s actions are disrupting the class beyond what can be reasonably handled and consult with you on an action plan moving forward. If his/her behavior is a potential harm to themselves or others, we may ask you to come early for pick and to determine a time to discuss best steps to create a safe environment for your child.

If your child has been hurt by another child, we will let you know the circumstances of the situation and complete an incident report. Due to licensing confidentiality policies, we may not disclose the identity of the other child involved.

**Grievance Procedures**

Our goal is teachers, administrators and parents/guardians develop positive relationships of mutual respect and resolve issues of concern promptly with each other.

Please contact the Director if any issues or concerns arise. If a conflict cannot be resolved, you may contact the Executive Director of Sound Child Care Solutions to mediate as needed to help the parties reach a mutually agreeable solution.

**Drop Off and Pick Up**

The State of Washington requires that all children be walked into the school by an adult, and be signed in and out of the school daily. The Full Day signature sheets are located on the podium at the front door. The Half Day signature sheets are located in the cubby area. These sheets are for documentation purposes and should be signed with a full signature by adults only.

The 9:00am Circles are important for setting the tone for the day. Please drop off your child a few minutes before 9:00am. During pick up before 5:30pm, we will encourage your child to clean their work/play space and quietly exit the classroom. If you are picking up your child during circle-time, please allow one of the teachers to bring your child to you in the lobby. The school closes promptly at 5:30. Teachers appreciate going home to their own families at the end of the day when families all arrive for pick up on time.

**Authorized Pick Up of Children**

Children will be released only to those persons who have been authorized in writing by parents. Unfamiliar adults will be asked for identification before the child will be allowed to leave the facility with them. It helps for you to notify the person picking up your child that they will be asked for ID. Please be sure all authorized people are listed on the Child Care Register Form, or fill out a new form in the office in the morning to notify the staff.

**Security**

Our door is always open to parents of enrolled children and designated authorities. However, no unauthorized persons may have contact with the children while they are in our care. Parents must sign children in and out of the school each day.

Please be diligent about firmly closing school doors. The main hallway door must be closed and locked for security purposes, even when there are no children in the classroom.

**Illness – Additional COVID-19 protocols will be added in August**

Please notify the school by phone (206-722-2803) if you are keeping your child home due to illness.

Below is a list of symptoms and conditions that require your child to leave school and/or stay at home. It is very important that you respect these rules – they are state requirements and we cannot legally make exceptions to them. They are crucial to the prevention of the spread of disease.

If we notice that your child is not feeling well, we will attempt to notify you as soon as possible. Children that become sick during school hours will rest on a nap mat, away from the group of children, until the parents arrive to pick him or her up.

Children with any of the following symptoms will not be permitted to remain in care at Magic Lantern. **Fever** of at least 100 degrees F ***in combination with*** one or more of the following:

• Diarrhea/vomiting

• Earache

• Headache

• Signs of Irritability or confusion

• Sore throat

• Rash

• Fatigue that limits participation in daily activities

In addition, your child ***must be sent home or remain home*** if he or she experiences any of the following symptoms:

1. **Vomiting** on 2 or more occasions within the past 24 hours.

2. **Diarrhea:** 3 or more watery stools within a 24-hour period or any bloody stool.

3. **Rash,** especially with fever or itching.

4. **Eye discharge or conjunctivitis (pinkeye)** until clear or until 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.

5. **Sick appearance,** not feeling well and/or not be able to keep up with program activities.

6. **Open or oozing sores**, unless properly covered and 24 hours has passed since starting antibiotic treatment, if treatment is necessary.

7. **Lice or scabies**: For head lice, children and staff may return to school after treatment and no nits. For scabies, return after treatment.

When the symptoms have been gone for **24 hours**, then your child may return. For example, if your child’s fever (vomiting, diarrhea, untreated conjunctivitis, etc.…) is gone at 4:00pm, then they may return after 4:00pm the following day. The teachers especially ask that parents respect this 24-hour rule.

Ways We Promote Wellness:

1. Adults and children wash hands frequently and when they enter the classroom, after toileting, after using tissues, before eating and before preparing food.

2. Teach the children to cough and sneeze on the inside of the elbow.

3. Provide for plenty of outdoor exercise.

4. Offer nutritious, healthful meals and snacks.

**Medication**

Washington State law requires that MLM staff have a parent’s written permission to give any over the counter medication to a child. The school also needs the doctor’s signature for all medication (prescription/herbal/over the counter).

• All medications must be in their original containers.

• When it is necessary for a “well” child to continue to take a prescription medicine while attending school, please complete an Instructions for Medication form for each day the medicine is to be taken.

• The form must be signed by a doctor.

• Sunscreen, Chapstick or other lip gloss etc. are technically medication. We require a Medication Authorization form (signed by a doctor) if you would like your child to have lip balm/Chapstick at school. On sunny days, please apply sunscreen to your child before they come to school. If you would like MLM not to use your preferred brand due to skin sensitivity, please notify the Director.

A full description of the Medication policy is located in the school health policy.

**Communication**

The families in our program rely heavily on email to share business-related information about the school – committee updates, classroom needs, school newsletters, meeting minutes and even shopping lists. All families with email accounts will be added to our group email list as the most efficient way to stay current on school news. Families who do not have access to email should discuss alternative arrangements for regular updates with the Director.

To send messages to the group, simply address them to: mlm-all@googlegroups.com

Each family will be assigned a mailbox in the school for memos, committee updates, or notes from teachers. This will be the top section of your child’s cubby. Please check your mailbox daily. In addition, there is a bulletin board along the stairway outside the preschool door. This includes general messages relevant to all families, as an all-school calendar of meetings and events.

Curriculum details will be posted on the whiteboard in the classroom each week.

**Teachers**

The Director is responsible for managing streamlined communications with teachers. Any general classroom issues or concerns should be addressed to the Director. Please feel free to discuss your own child with his or her teacher but direct general classroom matters with the teachers. You may also leave notes in teachers’ mailboxes or schedule a conference if you need to speak with them at length about your child. We expect all parents to have respectful interactions with the staff, children, and other families at Magic Lantern.

**Expectation of Potty Trained**

The expectation is that children are potty trained by the time they attend Magic Lantern. Teachers can work with families to support this transition prior to attendance and any concerns about meeting this expectation should be discussed with the Director. Pull-ups are not typically used at Magic Lantern however we do give guidance on potty training issues but do not have the capacity to actually conduct training at school. Parent support of potty training at home is needed if a student begins to relapse.

**Policy Violations**

The Director will work with families to adhere to policies. The director will suspend families for policy violations or if the Director has reason to believe their presence at the school presents a hardship or danger to themselves, children and staff. In the event that a family is asked to leave the school they may forfeit their tuition deposit.

**Holidays/ School Breaks**

MLM operates on a 12-month calendar (September – August). The school is closed on the following holidays: New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King Day, President’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran’s Day, and Thanksgiving (and Friday following). We are also closed for Winter break for two weeks in December and for Spring break for one week in April. Please refer to the calendar located on the school website for additional information.

**Enrollment/Admissions Policies**

**Admissions Process/Criteria**

Magic Lantern Montessori strives to enroll a student body that is rich and balanced across multiple dimensions. Our enrollment process helps us create an atmosphere of diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Applicants who are not enrolled in the first round of enrollment will be placed on a wait-list. The wait-list openings are processed through the following:

• Applications received by the deadline have priority for enrollment decisions.

• Magic Lantern Montessori will enroll applicants that best fit the days available at the time of the opening.

• If an applicant is not moved off the waitlist by December 31st, they are required to complete a new application.

**Enrollment Procedures *(Additional Guidance will be provided in August given the pandemic)*** In order to guarantee your child’s enrollment, we require a $500 deposit. This deposit is held and will be applied toward your child’s last month of enrollment at MLM. The deposit is non-refundable if cancellation for enrollment occurs before the student begins school and without a written notice. If written notice is given at least 60 days prior to starting school, then 50% of the deposit may be refunded.

If a family chooses to withdraw their child from MLM, a 60-day written notice is required prior to the date of a child’s withdrawal. Without such written notice, parents or guardians are responsible for one month’s tuition charges.

**Late Enrollment or Early Departure**

In instances where a family is admitted outside the normal enrollment period, tuition may be pro-rated for the first month. For instance, if a space becomes open mid-year and a new student is contacting and starts midway through the month, their tuition for that month may be prorated. However, tuition is not pro-rated for families who opt to leave before the end of a given month.

**Extra Days or Drop-In Days**

Occasionally, in cases of need, a family may request extra days at MLM. Requests should be made to the Director with as much advance notice as possible so that the Director may evaluate the teacher/child ratios on requested days. If the Director determines that there is space for that child on the requested day(s), the Director will notify the teaching staff and also notify the family that the request is approved.

In the event you need same-day availability or also known as a “drop-in” day, please contact the Director or lead teacher directly at school. Extra days will be charged at $95 a day.

The school does not exchange/swap days. Any day requested besides regularly scheduled attendance days is considered an “extra day”.

**Pesticide Free Policy**

For children’s safety, we do not use pesticides at Magic Lantern Montessori Preschool. If there is ever an insect problem on a plant, we use soap and water to rid the plant of unwanted insects. Although we hope never to have the need for pesticides in our center, in the event we needed to use them we would follow the Integrated Pest Management Policy recommended by the Public Health Department of Seattle that includes posting a notice and a myriad of other safety precautions.

**Preparations for the School Year**

**Personal Items**

Please bring these items to leave at school for your child. All items should be labeled clearly with the child’s name.

• a plastic cup for water;

• a blanket, small pillow (12 in x12 max), for afternoon nap/quiet time;

• extra clothes (shirts, pants, socks and underwear - packaged in labeled plastic bins to be kept in the bathroom cabinet).

In addition, we would like you to prepare an individual emergency supply bag for your child, to be used in case of earthquake or other extreme emergency that could prevent families from reaching children for an extended period of time.

Please bring the following items in a large, gallon-size Ziploc bag:

• 3-day supply of prescribed medication and a signed medical permission slip (if necessary)

• short note to your child (see sample below)

• family photograph

• 2 - 3 comfort foods that are non-perishable and easily opened. For example, your child’s favorite granola bar, or raisins, juice box (in aseptic packaging).

• if desired, toothbrush and toothpaste

**Sample note**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I love you. I will come to see you as soon as I can. Your teachers will take care of you until mommy or daddy (or….) can get there.

Love, Mommy/Daddy/other

In general, please do not bring other personal items to school. This includes toys, stickers or treats without the teachers’ permission. We have sharing time as part of our curriculum – you will be asked to bring items related to our unit of study. The topic is posted on the curriculum whiteboard at the beginning of each week.

**Clothing Notes**

• Please send your child in clothes that can get dirty. Our children make “messes” as part of learning.

• We recommend *at least* two sets of extra clothes (this includes socks, shirts, pants and underwear), more for potty-trainers. Wet or soiled clothes will be put in a plastic bag for you to take home and wash. Check your child’s cubby every day for bags and to see if they need additional extra clothes.

• Label ALL clothes, especially socks.

• Send your child in clothes they can put on and remove with minimal help. Examples are Velcro shoes instead of laces or buckles, and coats that zip up instead of coats that must be pulled over the head.

Please send your child in clothing appropriate to the weather. We go outside nearly every day. Hats or coats with hoods are needed, along with rain gear such as boots and raincoats. Please also equip your child with mittens in colder temperatures.

**MLM Volunteer Opportunities and Parent Committees**

**Parent Advisory Committee**

Magic Lantern Montessori Preschool has a Parent Advisory Committee of 7-8 members who support and advise the Director of Magic Lantern Montessori Preschool. The largest responsibility of the Parent Advisory Committee is fundraising. New Parent Advisory Committee members are recruited by the Director and serve a one- to two-year term. Board meetings are open to all parents unless confidential personnel issues are being discussed. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend monthly board meetings, which will be announced after the start of the school year. The Advisory Committee does not field grievances. Please refer to page 15 for the school’s grievance policy.

**Other Parent Committees**

Magic Lantern has four other parent volunteer committees. Each committee identifies a committee lead to coordinate the committee’s work. The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) Liaison is the point person for communication between the PAC and the committee and is generally the person who reports on committee activity at the monthly PAC meeting.

Enrollment Committee

The enrollment committee assists with many aspects of recruiting and admitting new students and their families to Magic Lantern. This includes advertising the school, coordinating informational open house events as well as assisting the Director with choosing families to enroll for the following year. This committee also focuses on fostering community within Magic Lantern, and forging connections between the school and the larger community of South Seattle. The committee hosts internal events, coordinates MLM participation in neighborhood activities, generates media attention through PR or online efforts, and maximizes goodwill opportunities in our area. The outreach committee manages the efforts of seeking parent volunteers to join committees or fill specific job roles.

Building, Playground, and Gardening Committee

This committee oversees physical maintenance of the school identified by the Director. Members handle tasks ranging from building the playground structures to fixing broken items at school, and everything in-between. Large-scale projects, such as the playground construction, are often done as a work party with many families participating. Do-it-yourself experience is great but the interest and willingness to help maintain the school is all that is needed.

This committee also tends to the P-Patch vegetable garden, weeding and maintaining beds and tracking work for volunteer hours for the P-patch (there is a clip board in the p-patch shed to track hours-8 hours per year) the garden group also plans with the teachers gardening activities for the children to learn and grow!

Auction/Spring Fundraiser Committee

The fundraising committee raises money for the school through coordinated school-wide fundraising activities and exploring alternative funding sources. The committee should develop a long-term resource strategy including developing the school's capacity to seek out and obtain grants. Magic Lantern families are expected to participate in fundraising activities throughout the year that will help us raise money for items such as playground equipment, program enrichment, scholarships for families, or unforeseen maintenance costs. Fundraising activities include a spring auction as well as other possible fundraising events such as bulb sales, yard sales, cookbook sales, etc.

The Committee also promotes *PCC Scrip and Amazon.com School Rewards.* Scrip cards are special gift certificates used like cash cards at any PCC Natural Market. They work like a rechargeable debit card. Through the PCC Scrip program, Magic Lantern buys scrip cards at a 5% discounted rate and keeps the 5% difference as fundraising profits. This is a great and easy way for not just MLM families but for all your friends to help MLM without any kind of financial commitment! (Please send an email or speak to the Director if you are interested in PCC cards for your family and your friends)

In addition, through Amazon's School Rewards Program, 4 percent of the value of your amazon.com purchase will be donated to Magic Lantern when you make your purchases via the link on the home page of the MLM website (<http://magiclanternpreschool.org> ). Pass this information along to your family and friends who make purchases from Amazon.

Party Committee

The party committee or also previously referred to as the “fun” committee, is responsible for planning family events such as the Winter Celebration in December as well as the end-of-year party potluck picnic held in the summer. This includes securing a location, food and drink options, and entertainment. Incoming families are also invited to the summer event.

Teacher Appreciation Committee

The teacher appreciation committee works on making sure our MLM staff feel valued. They coordinate gift-giving for staff during holidays or other special times as well as “teacher appreciation week” in the spring. This could also mean gathering classroom “wish-lists” from teachers for special project supplies and gathering items from families or community.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

Individual jobs at MLM may include weekly washing of school laundry, assisting with management of school internet and computer resources, general maintenance of the school or playground, helping with garden maintenance, or regularly checking out/returning books from the library for the school. Additional jobs arise over the course of the school year and are announced via the school mailing list.

IT Volunteer – one volunteer

The IT volunteer assists with the school's internet and computer resources, including help managing the school and Board mailing lists, and the website.

Library Volunteer– a volunteer from each classroom - responsible for getting story books and some curriculum books every 2 weeks.

Laundry Duty – a volunteer from each classroom - responsible for taking home and washing classroom rags and towels every week

**Thank you for taking the time to read the MLM Family Manual. If there are any questions that you may have, please feel free to contact the Director at any time.**