

Missouri Valley Montessori School

“Where Learning Takes Place Through The
Senses”

Discover... Explore... Question... Observe...



Parent Handbook

200 W. Turnpike Ave.

Bismarck, ND 58501

701-255-6779

Website: www.missourivalleymontessori.com

Email: director@missourivalleymontessori.com

Dear Families,

Welcome to Missouri Valley Montessori School! We are very pleased you have decided to allow us to work with your children. The staff at Missouri Valley Montessori School is committed to make every week, day, moment fulfilling and educational.

This Parent Handbook has been designed for you to become familiar with our policies and procedures. Please take the time to read the handbook in its entirety. If you have any questions or concerns that are not answered, please do not hesitate to ask. We look forward to getting to know you and your family while watching your child grow and learn throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Carrie Hanson, Director



Emphasis

The emphasis of Missouri Valley Montessori is to provide a Montessori environment to ensure our students have an optimum learning environment while they are in our care.

**The real preparation for education
is the study of one's self.**

- M. Montessori

Mission

Our mission is to provide a quality environment, based on the Montessori method, prepare students for academic excellence, fulfill their creative potential and assist in their physical, emotional and social development.

History

Missouri Valley Montessori School of Bismarck, North Dakota was started in 1977 by a group of parents who wanted a more educational, loving environment for their children. Parents provided the help necessary to get the school running by providing equipment and furniture, implementing fundraising projects, and contacting service organizations for donations. After over 30 years of operation, parents continue to play a vital role in the functions of Missouri Valley Montessori School.

Missouri Valley Montessori

Parental Pledge of Commitment

As a Missouri Valley Montessori Parent, I pledge and commit to:

1. Provide my child with the necessary assistance to foster a love of learning and make learning a life-long pursuit.
2. Assist the school in teaching my child the necessary skills to be responsible for his/her own actions.
3. Send my child to school clean, well-rested, fully nourished and prepared to learn.
4. Embrace the Montessori program.
5. Respect, support and follow school policies, rules and expectations.
6. Participate in classroom and school activities.
7. Attend parent/teacher conferences twice per year.

Education at Missouri Valley Montessori

The primary focus at Missouri Valley Montessori is to engage children in the love of learning and self-discovery. Children do this through a process of seeing, listening, doing, teaching and active participation in the prepared environment.

Montessori educators believe experiences and their presentations are important to help shape learning, work habits, and attitudes toward oneself and the world in general.

Children learn at different paces, and have different interests. One important part of the Montessori approach is the one-on-one relationship between your child and their teacher. By observing and engaging, the teacher knows how they are advancing, and when it is time to move them to more challenging exercises. In following Maria Montessori's philosophy, we have mixed aged classrooms with ages 3-6 learning together.



There are no tests or grades in Montessori. Children are assessed in an on-going basis by the trained teacher who provides individual, progressively more challenging lessons to the child. The elimination of tests and grades reduces much of the frustration and disappointment that arises from competition to get the better grade.

Children are encouraged to be independent and develop a strong sense of self and abilities with specific materials that are self-correcting and age-appropriate, yet stimulating, organized and purposeful.

The teacher plays a directive role in the classroom. His or her job is to provide children with lessons geared towards their learning level and encourage areas of strong interest. The areas to which they are introduced include:

Practical Life - Children learn to care for themselves and for the environment. Activities in this area include pouring solids and liquids, spooning grains, buttoning, zipping, and caring for plants.

Sensorial - The sensorial area provides a wide variety of materials that isolate and develop the senses. The children also develop their mathematical mind by sorting, classifying, and learning problem-solving with geometric materials such as cubes, prisms, and cylinders.

Math - Always working from concrete to abstract, children develop a solid foundation with numbers zero through nine. Through hands-on experiences, children are able to manipulate numbers ranging from zero to 9999.

Language - In the Montessori environment, children focus on the sound a letter makes rather than the letter name. Sandpaper letters are used to teach these sounds. When all of the alphabet sounds are mastered, the child uses the movable alphabet to build words. Children are given intellectual materials to enhance their language and reading development.

Cultural Subjects - The lessons in cultural subjects expose the child to the world we live in. History, Geography, Botany, Zoology, and Spanish are part of our integrated curriculum.

Music - Each classroom participates in a ½ hour music class weekly.

Spanish - Basic Spanish vocabulary is taught, including topics such as numbers, colors, shapes, animals, foods, etc.



Another key factor in Montessori education is the meticulously designed, extensive series of exercises. Each exercise is part of a carefully planned progression where students master one skill that is an essential ingredient of a more complicated skill. For example, in the pre-school program, children trace with their fingers on the sandpaper outlines of letters and numbers. Not only do they get a physical feel for them, they are making the basic movements for writing so that skill comes more naturally to them at a later stage.



Lessons are provided in both group and individual formats. This allows children to work together, teach each other and learn from one another. They may share a lesson if they desire or complete a lesson on their own. They are given an adequate amount of time each day to focus their energy on their lessons, thereby reducing the need to rush through something interesting or feel pressured to end an activity. This type of environment and method encourages self-discipline and helps each child establish their own learning pace.

Montessori Method



The Montessori Method of education was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator. Through her research and work, Dr. Montessori concluded that no human being is truly educated by another person. This is particularly true for children. A child's understanding is gained through their experiences, and that, in turn, creates a natural curiosity and thirst for knowledge which will continue throughout the child's lifetime.

One goal of the Montessori Method is that children should not be filled with facts from a pre-selected course of studies, but rather have children cultivate their own natural desire to learn. This desire to learn is experienced in the specially prepared environment within the classrooms. In order to learn, there must be concentration, and the best way for a child to concentrate is by fixing their attention on some task the child is performing with their hands. Upon visiting a Montessori classroom, it is apparent that the materials are developed in order to create a hands-on experience for each child.

The well-prepared classroom environment helps the child to be self-disciplined, independent, and respect all things, living and non-living. The child also develops the necessary skills required for a lifetime of creative learning. Children carry within themselves the potential for what they can become. In her research, Dr. Montessori, discovered that children didn't have to be forced to learn, they actually wanted to! They learned best when given the opportunity to explore according to their interests. The philosophy which guides everything done in Montessori is to follow the child and is applied at every aspect of the child's education.

School Admission

Children are accepted for enrollment regardless of race, color, creed or national origin. The Montessori approach to learning is such that it shows no distinction of class or intelligence. Children must be 3 years of age by the first day of August of the upcoming school year and toilet trained. If your child has a special need, the need will be taken into account in accordance to staff training, resources available and the extra attention your child needs. Please see the Medical or Special Conditions sections for more details.

We will determine if the child is developmentally ready (emotionally, socially, intellectually, and physically) to participate in our school program. Missouri Valley Montessori does reserve the option of postponing a child's enrollment if they are not deemed prepared to participate through the school day. The teaching staff and Director will work in conjunction with the family to proceed with the best interest of each individual child.

If necessary, we will schedule a meeting in the Director's office with the parents & the teacher; this will ensure that all parties are together when and if the discussion is necessary. Students are admitted in the following order:

- Returning students
- Siblings of students
- Missouri Valley Montessori Alumni
- New students

Enrollment and Starting School

Forms needed to start school:

Licensing regulations require that we have the following forms on file the first day your child attends school. Your child must be 3 years of age by August 1 of the school year to be enrolled. *Must be updated annually:*

State Forms

- ~ Registration form
- ~ Parent Statement of Health
- ~ Child Information Sheet
- ~ Immunization Records

School Forms

- ~ Statement of Financial Responsibility
- ~ Emergency Transportation Form
- ~ Medication Administration Forms
- ~ Parent handbook Statement of Understanding
- ~ *Statement of Confidentiality
- ~ Door Code & Check in Form
- ~ School Directory Form
- ~ Opt Out Form for Pictures

Please return completed forms to the office no later than **August 1**. If you have any questions, please call the office at 255-6779.

***Confidentiality**

All staff and volunteers are bound by confidentiality. Everyone's privacy is important to us and all volunteers must adhere to the requirements listed on the Statement of Confidentiality form.

School Supplies

Basic school supplies (i.e. pencils, glue, etc.) needed for your child's educational experiences are provided to your child by the school. They are included in your supply and registration fee. From time to time throughout the year, families can donate additional classroom supplies by visiting with your classroom teacher, or the Director.

Items Appropriate for School

****PLEASE REMEMBER TO LABEL ALL OF YOUR CHILD'S ITEMS****

Clothing: Must be comfortable, easy to fasten and unfasten, durable and capable of becoming extremely messy. Children must be able to dress independently, which includes buttoning, snapping & putting on shoes.

Clothing or items containing inappropriate slogans or logos (alcohol, tobacco, etc.) are not permitted in school.

Winter Clothing: Each child must have boots, snow pants, a warm coat, mittens or gloves, and a hat. Please label snow pants, boots, mittens and hats as many are similar in appearance.

Summer Clothing: Please dress your child for hot days but also send along a sweater or light jacket for occasional cold days that arise.

Change Of Clothes: Provide a change of clothes in a labeled, Ziploc bag. Please make sure the clothes are appropriate for the season and are the correct size.

Slippers: Please provide your child with a pair of rubber-soled slippers that can be worn in the classroom once the weather gets cold and the snow starts to fly. Since the children work and nap on the floors, this will help reduce the inevitable rock and mud mess that occurs.

Lunchbox: Make sure your child has a durable lunchbox to withstand the school year. Please make sure your child can open and close the box without assistance. Label your lunchbox clearly, as we do have duplicates.

Backpacks: Backpacks will be allowed, but must be kept in the cubby room. Children are asked to keep their items such as gloves, hats, etc in their backpacks to cut down on clutter. If space becomes an issue, backpacks will no longer be allowed.

Napmat: For students, who take afternoon naps; please place your nap mat in a container **no larger** than 15-16 quart. A nap mat, blanket and pillow is okay, as long as it fits in the container. Nap mats **MUST** be taken home each Friday to be washed.

Parental Involvement and Responsibilities

School Governance

Missouri Valley Montessori School is a parent directed and supported, non-denominational, non-discriminatory school.

It is directed by a board of seven parents who serve terms of one to two years. The Board of Directors voluntarily donates their time at monthly meetings to provide direction and set policies for our school. Any parent, who has had a child in school for one year or less, and up to three years after leaving, is eligible to serve on the board.

Responsibilities

Parental involvement at Missouri Valley Montessori is welcomed, encouraged and is an important component of education for all of the children. Tuition alone is insufficient to fund the expenses that are involved in providing superior education and care to our students. There is always room for parents who have the time to assist in supporting the educational achievement of the school's children. The need for volunteer assistance may vary throughout the school year. Classroom volunteer activities must be coordinated with the teacher in advance to volunteering, so materials, directions and plans can be readily available. As with all volunteer efforts, dependability, consistency and reliability are keys to success. Unscheduled, last minute drop in assistance can be distracting to the classroom learning environment, making advanced notice a courtesy that is expected of all Missouri Valley Montessori families.

Reporting a complaint or suspected licensing violation

Please bring any complaints first directly to the teacher, secondly the school Director and finally any school board member. The school asks all parents to follow this chain of command. Please bring your concerns to the lowest appropriate level first. If at any time there is a suspected licensing violation, contact Burleigh County Social Services.

Volunteers

Missouri Valley Montessori asks each family to contribute at least 5 hours of volunteer service each semester. Tasks may range from class projects to committee work, to consultation services as well as participation in fund-raising efforts, maintenance of the facilities, social event planning, field trips, or board membership. By sharing your time, materials, and skills, you make Missouri Valley Montessori the best it can be! Please record your Volunteer hours in the Volunteer Log book located on the front check in desk.

If you cannot spend time at our school volunteering, working on home projects or committee work, a \$50.00 fee will be charged to your account each semester. *It is important to note:* Volunteer hours may **not** be prorated or carried over to another semester. **Families who contribute less than 5 hours (ex. one, two, three or four hours) per semester will still be charged \$10 per hour they are short.** Billing will be done at the end of each semester.



Fundraising & Donations

As a non-profit school, we hold a variety of fundraising events throughout the year. Each family is asked to participate. A fundraising chairperson serves on the Board and appreciates volunteers assisting the events committee. Most donations are tax deductible. Please consult your accountant.

General Operations

Contacting the School

Calls are taken between 7:30 am and 5:30 pm by staff. Please leave a message and your call will be returned. Messages are checked several times throughout the day.

If you have any suggestions, feel free to speak with a staff person or e-mail the Director at director@missourivalleymontessori.com.

School Day: Our school day runs from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm Monday through Friday. If you need to pick up your child prior to the end of the school day, please contact your child's teacher or call the school. **The teachers plan for a full school day; your child should be here no later than 8:30 and will be dismissed at 3:30.**

Newsletters

An all school newsletter is sent home monthly. Upcoming events, volunteer opportunities and other important news are documented in our newsletter. Teachers also send home classroom letters of communication regularly.

Staff Hiring Policy

All persons applying for a position at Missouri Valley Montessori School will:

- Complete an application for employment.
- Review the job description and place his/her initials on the application that they did read said document.
- Inform the Director or hiring authority of any reasonable accommodations required to fulfill the job duties.
- Complete background checks applications.
- Complete an interview with the Director or hiring authority.
- Accept a position, if offered, with written notification by Director or hiring authority of start date, salary/wage, and position, by initialing on the letter that the stated conditions are acceptable to the newly hired person.
- Complete a new hire orientation checklist.
- All newly hired personnel will have a month to complete orientation from start date, two days of which will be in the first week of hire.

Should any employee, once hired, become convicted of a felony, child abuse or neglect, they have 24 hours to inform the Director of said conviction. Once the Director is notified, the school can and will no longer employ this person, resulting in immediate

dismissal of the employee. If the Director is not notified within the 24-hour period, the Board will meet to determine the most appropriate course of action.

Staff is evaluated on their performance on an annual basis by their direct supervisor. New staff is evaluated at their 30 day and 90 day anniversaries. Staff is on probation for the first 90 days of employment. If they receive satisfactory evaluations at their 90 day evaluations, probationary status is lifted. An employee can be terminated at any time during the probationary period.

Billing Information

A complete summary of the financial obligations to the school is on the financial responsibility form. Please read all information carefully.

Billing is put in mailboxes the first days of the month. Tuition is due by the 15th. Payment can be made in the form of check, money order, automatic ACH payment or cashier's check and can be placed in the secured "Payment" box. Money or checks left on the desk cannot be secured and we cannot be liable for lost monies of which we are unaware.

Reduced Rate

For families with multiple children, the child with the tuition of the least amount will receive a 10% discount.

Late Fees

- Payments received after the 15th of the month will be assessed a \$15 late payment fee □ Late pick up (12:45 ½ day AM, 3:45 ½ day PM & full day school, and per minute after 5:30) will be assessed at \$1.00 per minute.
- Families have a **10-minute** leeway for drop off & pick up (except for 7:30 am & 5:30 pm no leeway is offered at these times). (MVM opens at 7:30am & closes at 5:30pm)
- If late pick up occurs more than 3 times, you will be notified and be moved up to the next tuition level.

Child Care Assistance

Persons receiving child care assistance are required to pay the registration and the first month of tuition in full before the 15th of the month your child(ren) begins school. After assistance is received, the balance will remain on the books as a credit to your account and you will be billed each month for any remaining balance. If you are receiving any other assistance and need forms completed by the office, let us know ahead of the deadline, so you will be able to keep up with payments. It is the parent's responsibility to turn in completed forms to Burleigh County Social Services if receiving child care assistance. We are an approved program for Child Care Aware Military Assistance

NSF Fees

Upon receipt of the first NSF check, you will be charged \$25.00. Upon receipt of the second NSF check, you will incur another \$25.00 fee and will be required to pay by

cashier's check or money order only. If your check should cause Missouri Valley Montessori to write an NSF check, you will be responsible for all bank charges relating to this event.

Registration and Tuition Fees

All registration and tuition fees are non-refundable. Full tuition is charged all months with the exception of August, where tuition is pro-rated accordingly.

Early Withdrawal

A one-month written notice is required for early withdrawal. If no notice is given, you will be charged the tuition due for that time period following the child's last day.

Vacations/Illnesses Tuition paid is non-refundable and vacations or illnesses will not be deducted from your monthly statement.

Change of Information

Please notify the school immediately if there is a change of address, phone number or place of employment. Current information is critical in the case of an emergency.

Children and Classrooms

Staff

The school's day to day operations are overseen by the Director. Parents can address any issues and needs with the Director or teachers as they encourage questions about your child's education. If you have a question or concern about your child or classroom, please visit with the classroom teacher. Any other concerns you can visit with the director.

Currently, Missouri Valley Montessori employs staff which includes the Director, Lead Teachers, Teacher Assistants, an After-School Coordinator and a lunch assistant.

A background check and fingerprinting is obtained on each staff member hired. Our school will not hire an individual convicted of a felony or convicted of child abuse or neglect.

All Lead Teachers go through formal Montessori Teacher Training with the North American Montessori Teachers' Association and have or within their first year will have successfully completed courses to obtain a Preschool / Kindergarten Montessori Teaching Diploma. All Lead Teachers hold teaching licenses or certificates through the state of North Dakota. All teachers are required to complete at least 13 hours of training per license year.

Repetition of Teachers

As part of Missouri Valley Montessori's educational approach and as preparation for the format of formal classroom transitioning in higher grades, students are placed with a different teacher each year he/she is enrolled with the school. The school recognizes

the opportunity change can provide to each child's level of academic growth. MVM only allows siblings to be in the same class when they attend the ½ day program.

Classroom Access

For safety reasons, students are not allowed in the classrooms before 8:30am or after 3:30pm.

Logging In/Out and Door System

- ❖ All children must be logged in and out daily. You will select a passcode for both the secure door (4 digits) and the check in computer (one 5 digit & one 4 digit code.)
- ❖ We must be notified if someone other than you or the regular pick up person is taking your child from the school. Please notify your child's teacher & the Director. **Proof of ID will be needed upon entrance to the school before we will release your child.** Personal passwords are not to be shared.
- ❖ Make sure you make contact with a staff member when dropping off or picking up your child. This will ensure the staff knows your child has arrived and that you are taking your child.
- ❖ Please make sure your child stays with you when picking up. We are unable to watch for your child if he or she goes out the door.
- ❖ If you know that your child has a tendency to run after you, or has trouble with separation from you, please notify the staff so the necessary precautions can be made. It is important that you leave quickly & do not come back after your departure, as this is very upsetting to the child. This makes the transition much easier for the child.
- ❖ **Please note: Children are not permitted to use the computer system.** An adult **must** be the one who signs a child in/out.

Nonattendance

- ❖ Attendance is taken daily in each classroom.
- ❖ **Please notify the school if your child is going to be absent.**
- ❖ The Director or teacher will contact parents/guardians to inquire about the child.
- ❖ Please call the school or email the teacher/Director by 9 a.m.

Release of Children

- ❖ Children will be released only to those individuals on the pickup authorization form.
- ❖ Birth parents are always entitled to custody of their child unless a court order limits their rights. MVM **must** have court documentation of any custodial issues within a family.
- ❖ Please send a photograph of any person who is **not** allowed to pick up your child, this is beneficial to staff members. We will call parents in the event a nonscheduled person comes to pick up your child.

Preschool

Each spring, kindergarten readiness testing is completed free of charge. The testing involves a basic check of skills your child should be able to do by age in development. Testing is for children who will be attending or eligible for Kindergarten the following school year.

If the child is struggling in an academic area and might need assistance from a trained special education or related services person, we will refer the child for further testing with your permission. Should your child qualify for services, we ask that we be involved with the education plan to make sure we are doing our part in your child's education.

Because of the strong academic focus in the classroom, we often notice if a child is struggling with academic issues. Research has shown that early intervention and remediation will ultimately benefit the child and serve as a stronger base for educational excellence.

Having difficulty in an area is not a failure on any one's part or of a person's capabilities. It simply means that the child has a different way of learning and we must discover the best way to teach to the child. And, because the Montessori Method is designed for individual instruction at developmental level, your child is in the best early learning environment possible to gain the foundation needed for academic success.

Conferences

Conferences will be scheduled two times per school year. Should you need more time to visit with the teacher or wish to discuss other academic needs, please contact the teacher to set up a meeting. We offer two dates to choose from each conference session; it is difficult for the teachers to reschedule, so please make sure to keep your appointed conference. We cannot guarantee a makeup conference, so please do your best to keep your set time.

Daycare Days

- ❖ Daycare days are designated throughout the school year (check your calendar)
 - ❖ Lead teachers do not work these days, Teacher Assistants plan the day
 - ❖ No Montessori lessons are given. Students work together in the gym
 - ❖ **You must sign up for Daycare Days in order to attend. We are limited to 40 children, so please do not sign up if you will not need care on these days.**
- More than 2 no -show daycare days will prohibit you from signing up the remainder of the school year.**

Lunch

Full day students will be here for lunch. Half day students may also be here for lunch if signed up for the extended day program (limited to 10 children).

- ❖ Sack lunches that a child can eat independently should be sent.
- ❖ We recommend that lunches meet USDA guidelines (2 fruit/vegetable, 1 grain, 1 meat/meat alternative & milk or milk substitute)
- ❖ Microwaves are available

- ❖ Pizza Day is the last Friday of each month. Children can choose to bring their own lunch from home.

This requires a sack lunch of a simple, healthy meal that your child can eat independently. Microwaves for warming food are available in each classroom or food can be kept warm in a thermos. If a lunch is forgotten, MVM will provide the student with a lunch and a charge of **\$15** will be placed on your bill.

Snacks/Drinks

We ask that parents provide snack for their child's classroom on a rotation basis which is once or twice a month.

- ❖ Full day students bring **TWO different** snacks on your snack day. Each class has 19 children, they eat snack both morning and afternoon.
- ❖ Snack needs to be at the school by 8:30 a.m. & at 12:30 for the afternoon ½ day program.
- ❖ Half day students bring one snack for the classroom.
- ❖ In addition, one jug of water, milk or juice is enough for two snack times for a class
- ❖ If you would like to bring cups, bowls and or spoons for your snack, please do so.

A monthly snack calendar will be provided to you in your child's mail folder with the date(s) of your child's snack day and with the number of children in the class. If you are not sure of your date, please talk to your child's teacher.

Following is a list of healthy snacks that we prefer parents bring for the children eat at school.

Sweet snacks should be limited to special occasions such as birthdays. Please contact the teacher for more specifics regarding special occasions.

Whole Grain Crackers	Cereal Snack Mix
Apples/Oranges/Bananas/Grapes	String Cheese
Watermelon	Cereal and Milk
Cantaloupe/Honeydew	Chex Mix
Carrots and Dip	Granola Bars
Pineapple	Yogurt Raisins
Fruit Kabobs	Fruit Bars/Cereal Bars
Veggie Kabobs	Rice Krispy Bars
Fruit cups/applesauce	Whole Grain Muffins
Celery/Peanut Butter	Mini Bagels
Raisins/Dried Fruit	Pretzels
Whole Grain Tortilla Roll-ups	Low fat or Low Sugar Pudding Cups
Mini Rice Cakes	Graham Crackers
Baked Chips or crackers	Jell-O
Crackers, meat, and cheese	
Trail Mix	

Water, milk or 100 % juice

Please remember that the teachers are teaching during snack time; keep snacks simple and easy for the children to serve themselves.

- ❖ A fee of \$25 will be charged for forgotten or insufficient snack for full day, \$15 for 1/2 day.
- ❖ If a child has food allergies, please let us know, so necessary precautions can be taken.
- ❖ Please have children eat their breakfast before coming to MVM. There will be NO eating breakfast in the gym in the morning.

Rest Periods

After lunch, all full day children will take a rest for at least 30 minutes. Children do not have to sleep, only rest quietly and take a break from the classroom activities.

- Nap items must be stored in a **15-16 quart** container (to keep the spread of germs to a minimum). Over-sized containers will not work for our storage shelves.
- All items must be washed on a weekly basis, including pillows. If your child becomes sick during the week we will send the items home at that time to be washed.
- Nap items not taken home will be placed in your child's cubby and sent home on Monday to be washed. We want to keep the spread of illnesses down, and this is an important part of doing that.

Discipline

Positive behavior management techniques are used to redirect a child's behavior. On occasion, time outs will be used to remove the child from a situation. Removal to the office is the last resort. In an event where a child is hurting others, themselves or doing extensive property damage, he/she will be physically removed from the situation. This will be documented and parents will be notified.

If inappropriate behavior continues on three occasions of damage to self, others, teachers or equipment, a meeting will be scheduled with the family to discuss solutions.

When a child's conduct is extreme enough to interfere with the learning of others, the child may need a different learning environment. Parents will be involved to discuss alternatives that may include a behavior plan written by a qualified specialist (paid for by the child's parent or guardian). Suspension or expulsion may be imposed if necessary. The Board of Directors reserve the right to dismiss a student in extreme circumstances without prior notice.

Please know that we are committed to helping your child succeed, but not at the expense of others' safety or education. We ask that you work with us to create an appropriate environment for all children in our care.

Bullying

All students have a right to learn in an environment which is safe, supportive, nurturing and highly conducive to learning. MVM strives for an environment which is free from harassment and intimidation. Bullying in any form is prohibited at MVM and will not be

tolerated. Bullying and harassment occur when a series of intentionally cruel incidents that are deliberately hostile and aggressive are directed towards a person. MVM teachers will work with the school Director and the parent(s) in order to determine the appropriate consequences and find the most suitable resolution to the problem. Please talk to your child's teacher if you feel your child is being bullied.

Abuse or Neglect

All observations or suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to the child protective service agency no matter where the abuse might have occurred. Staff members will follow the direction of the child protective agency regarding completion of written reports and notification of the parents or legal guardian. Missouri Valley Montessori is licensed by the state of North Dakota and is required to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect. (NDCC, 50-25.1-01-04.) Please call the North Dakota Department of Human services at: 222-6622 if you suspect abuse.

Toilet Training

All children attending Missouri Valley Montessori must be fully toilet trained.

- ❖ All children should have a full change of clothing in a Ziploc bag at all times.
- ❖ Flushable wipes are not allowed.
- ❖ Soiled clothing will be placed in or above your child's cubby to be taken home.
- ❖ Continuous difficulty with accidents may postpone a child's enrollment.
- ❖ If it is a medical condition, we will make reasonable accommodations for your child.

If your child continues to have accidents, we may postpone their enrollment until they are fully toilet trained. If your child leaves due to training issues or a medical condition, your child is welcome to return to the school at a later date, providing there is room and we are able to meet his or her needs.

Medical or Special Conditions

We will do what is reasonable in accommodating medical or special conditions for a child. The condition must be discussed with the Director before the child enters school. If the Director feels that reasonable accommodations cannot be made with the present staff or facilities, the child will require a different learning environment. It is the parent's responsibility to notify and give the school a reasonable amount of time to assess the situation.

Lost and Found

- ❖ Lost and Found is in the rolling rack by the entry tables. Items are placed there if we do not know who they belong to.
- ❖ Items are kept for 30 days, then donated or used at the school as needed.
- ❖ Clearly labeling your child's clothing is helpful; it keeps items from mistakenly being taken.

Toys

- ❖ Toys are allowed only on Show & Share days. This way, their toys are safe and sound and nothing gets broken, lost, or stolen. This includes stuffed animals- please keep them home.

Pets in School

We love having pets visit our school, but unfortunately due to allergies and liability, pets are not allowed on school grounds. Pets are also not allowed in the school.

Transportation and Fieldtrips

- ❖ Fieldtrip permission slips must be filled out in order for your child to attend a field trip.
- ❖ We contract with Harlow's bus service for field trips during the school year. Afternoon ½ day children ride with parents who volunteer to the field trips.
- ❖ Summer school fieldtrips are done in conjunction with Martin Luther School. Our liability insurance covers all field trips.

Please be courteous to the MVM staff by calling at least 24 hours in advance if you are signed up to chaperone and you have a conflict.

Illnesses

- ❖ Please call the school if your child is unable to attend school that day.
- ❖ If the illness is contagious, let the school know so that a notice may be posted.
- ❖ If your child becomes ill at school, the parent will be notified & expected to pick up their child as soon as possible. A child who has a fever, is vomiting or has diarrhea is required to be out of school for 24 hours.
- ❖ We are only as healthy as the children who attend school, so please keep your child home if they are not feeling well enough to engage in school activities.

The child may not attend school for 24 hours until the following conditions have abated and medical attention has been given:

1. A fever of 100 degrees or more
2. Vomiting or diarrhea
3. Strep throat
4. Pink eye
5. Tonsillitis
6. Whooping Cough
7. Skin sores or infections or rashes
8. Lice the child must also be free of nits & lice to return to school
9. Scabies
10. Chicken pox **stay home until the sores heal, usually 5-7 days
11. Not feeling well enough to participate in the day

Other viral or bacterial conditions listed that are contagious also exclude your child from attendance. Please consult your physician.

- ❖ If your child is not immunized they will be required to be out of school for 21 days if a vaccine-preventable disease is present within the school. (Measles, mumps, pertussis, polio, rubella, or varicella).

Medications

Any medication your child receives should be given at home. Should the dosage schedule require administration during school hours, the school will make reasonable accommodations as needed.

Medication will only be dispensed if:

- ***The medication is in the original container***
- ***The medication administration sheet is completely filled out by the appropriate guardian or parent***
- ***The medication is given directly to staff for safe keeping***
- ***Epi Pens: will be administered according to directions & previous stipulations.***
- ***911 will be called as the Epi Pen is effective for roughly 20 minutes & any allergic reaction severe enough to require its use, must be turned over to the medical community immediately.***

Any medication that is left at school will be disposed of properly. Please do not leave any medication in your child's cubby.

Injuries While in School / Emergency Medical Care

If a child has a minor injury (scrape, scratch) the child will be cared for by the staff. Parents will be notified with an incident report if a minor injury has occurred. If a child hits his head, the parents will be notified

In the case of a serious injury, 911 will be contacted and efforts made to find the parents or emergency contacts. The emergency transportation sheet you provide will help guide emergency care for your child.

The cost of the ambulance and any medical care is the parent or guardian's responsibility. Missouri Valley Montessori is not responsible for any medical expenses.

Inclement Weather

- ❖ We will go outside daily, unless it is raining, thunderstorms are in the area, the wind chill or air temp is below 15 degrees or above 92 degrees.
- ❖ Children need fresh air daily, if you feel they are not well enough to go outside, then they are not well enough to be at school. Parents can visit with the Director if they have concerns about their child.
- ❖ Students should come to school dressed appropriately to go outside. A child will still be required to go outside daily, so please be sure to send hat, mittens, snow pants & boots daily during the winter months.

Students should come to school dressed appropriately to be outside for the weather expected that day. Children who are too sick to go outside, are too sick to be at school. All children do go outside if weather permits.

In the event of inclement weather, the school will close or be closed if Bismarck Public Schools closes. Please tune in to local radio, television or visit the school website for closures.

Email Alert: MVM will send a mass email to families if there is a reason for school to close early (weather, water main break, etc.)

Emergencies and Disasters

The school has an Emergency Response Plan in the event of an emergency. In the event of a disaster and the school must be evacuated, the children will be escorted to Northbrook Mall. Parents will at that time be contacted for pickup. Parents will need to go through the Director or designee to sign out their child. If the school is closed due to an emergency, the Director and school board will secure an alternate location so school will be interrupted as little as possible. If parents are unable to pick up their child as a result of an emergency, the Director will contact the alternate contacts until someone is able to pick up the child.

Lockdown Drills

The school will hold a lock down drill yearly. In the event of an intruder, the staff and students will go to the nearest classroom, office or secure area. Lockdowns will be practiced, all staff are trained on the procedures for this process, and emergency responders will be contacted and take over when they arrive.

Fire and Tornado Drills

Fire drills will be conducted monthly. In the event of a real fire, the children may be taken to the Northbrook Mall or other facility until parents can be contacted.

Tornado drills will not be conducted with the children. In the event of an actual tornado, all children and staff will be moved to the nearest bathroom and remain there until it is safe to leave.

Severe Weather

The Director may choose to close the school in the event of severe weather. Listen to the television and radio stations for closing announcements. If in doubt, call the school or check the website.

**** If Bismarck Public schools are closed, Missouri Valley Montessori will close.**

Mail Folders

Staff will use mail folders to provide families with calendars, newsletters, tuition statements, send home student projects and any other needed correspondence throughout the year.

Cubbies

Each child will have a cubby designated with his/her name on it. In the winter, each child will have a boot cubby to store their winter boots.

Unauthorized Items

Alcohol, tobacco, firearms or other weapons of any kind are not allowed in school by anyone.

Social Media, Internet and Cell Phone Use

The school respects the right to privacy of its employees and families.

The following rules will govern technology use at the school:

- All online activities, including social media sites, are subject to monitoring, and no employees should expect privacy regarding such use.
- Employees and families are prohibited from creating or sending inappropriate messages or unprofessional communication discussing the school, its director, its employees/volunteers, the Board of Directors and those it serves.
- The school does not have the right to reproduce, use or otherwise copy software, without the permission of the software provider.
- Unauthorized copying or use of software on any medium is strictly prohibited.
- MVM does have a Facebook fan page. It is encouraged that MVM employees and parents communicate with the MVM Board Public Relations Chair if you choose to have administrative access to update the Facebook fan page. As a reminder, MVM has no authority over the personal use by employees on Facebook or on social media outlets. However, employees are subject to disciplinary action if it is reported that personal posts were made regarding the work day, children or families in the school, or any confidential information related to MVM. Some families request that no photos be taken of their child. Please be prudent and respectful of this.
- **Please refrain from being on your cellphone when dropping off or picking up your child.**

Children and Learning

The teachers of Missouri Valley Montessori are dedicated to offering your child an exceptional early education opportunity. They would like to share some points to help you better understand the education process we use with the Montessori Method as a forefront.

- Montessori philosophy is allowing the children to choose their activities to work on. We try our best to allow children to do so.
- First and foremost- our class time begins at 8:30 am (full day school) & 12:30 pm (for afternoon ½ day class). Please be respectful of the teacher and classroom by being on time for school.
- Lessons in the classroom are hands on. Sometimes your child may not have anything in their folders that day. This does not mean they are not learning or staying active throughout the day.
- We focus on the sound of the letter more than the name of the letter.
- We write on the board daily about your child's activities. If you have any other questions related to your child's progress, etc, please talk to your **child's teacher**.

- Talk to your child's teacher about appointments, being picked up early, behavior, snack, if you need to switch snack days, etc.
- Check folders daily projects or notes about your child's lessons will be in there.
- Children are encouraged to dress on their own and put own shoes on. Clothes/shoes should be easy enough for them to take care of independently.
- Children are responsible for their own gear. If you can't find something, ask your child and check lost and found.
- Please bring only 1 item for your child's show and share. They will only be allowed to show one.
- Please keep any toys, candy, etc. at home. They are not to be left in backpacks or cubbies.
- Teacher emails are listed in the Parent Handbook.

This document is intended to be used as a guideline and is not all inclusive.

Updated: May 2016

Staff Emails:

Director~ Carrie Hanson: director@missourivalleymontessori.com

Teachers:

Lacey T. - lacey@missourivalleymontessori.com

Lisa D. - lisa_d@missourivalleymontessori.com

Kara P. - kara@missourivalleymontessori.com

Randee H. - randee@missourivalleymontessori.com