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# RIVERBEND MONTESSORI

## Parent Handbook

2019-2020



4225 Elkins Road  
Sugar Land, TX 77479

 281.980.4123

 [info@riverbendmontessori.com](mailto:info@riverbendmontessori.com)  
[www.riverbendmontessori.com](http://www.riverbendmontessori.com)

 <https://www.facebook.com/RiverbendMontessoriSchool>

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When communication, cooperation, and continuity exist between home and school, we provide the optimum conditions for development and learning. We hope that you will read about our school and about Montessori philosophy, goals, and techniques in order to better understand your child's school experiences. We are eager to answer questions and demonstrate materials, and we have books that you are welcome to borrow. We hope that you will become as excited as we are about this unique approach to education.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Riverbend Montessori School is dedicated to providing a nurturing environment in which children will develop self-confidence, intellectual and social competence, successful work habits, respect, good manners, and self-discipline.

Our staff is committed to these operating principles:

- \* We are dedicated to high standards of service.
- \* We seek to understand and promote diversity.
- \* We seek open communication.
- \* We work through collaboration.
- \* We treat each other respectfully.
- \* We each take responsibility for excellence.

## **HISTORY**

Riverbend Montessori School was founded in 1976 and moved to the present site in 1984. We are family owned and family centered. Riverbend offers transition classes for children 18 months to three years, primary classes for children three years to six years old (Kindergarten), a lower elementary program for first through third grades, and an upper elementary program for fourth through sixth grades. Each class is specifically designed to meet the developmental needs of the students. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician, studied child development, observed children, and designed an environment in which children learn and grow in self-esteem. Recent research into the development of the brain confirms her observations that in the first decade of life children are creating their brains through experiences in the environment and through interaction with nurturing, knowledgeable adults. Children in the Montessori classroom are active learners, experiencing the joy of learning and achievement.

Riverbend is a American Montessori Society Full Member school and abides by the A.M.S. Code of Ethics.

## **MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY**

The Montessori class focuses on the emotional, intellectual, and physical development of each child.

A child-centered classroom where each student can progress at his/her own rate is the basis of the Montessori approach. During the work period, the children teach themselves through the use of specially designed materials. They are allowed to move freely through learning centers, where the teachers guide the students in choosing an activity, completing it, and returning it to the shelf ready for others to use. By careful observation, the Montessori teacher introduces developmentally appropriate materials, and one success builds sequentially to another, increasing the child's self-confidence.

The classes are communities with the ground rules designed to promote independence, consideration for others, and self-discipline. The classes are multi-age grouped in order to develop a sense of community, where children work together. The younger children teach patience and empathy, and the older children are role models, providing the younger ones with assistance with work and help in adjusting to the classroom.

Through individual and group activities, the child experiences decision making, independent thinking, and concern for his own and other's property rights.

## **CURRICULA**

In the Montessori class, all disciplines are integrated. Math and language skills, knowledge of scientific principles, and history complement each other and are applied together to make each lesson meaningful and interrelated. Each lesson employs all three modes of learning - visual, auditory, and kinesthetic - to open up the world for all students. The children follow through with their studies individually and in small groups, proceeding at their own pace of learning.

### **Upper Elementary:**

The Upper Elementary students refine and apply the skills and knowledge acquired in their previous years of study. They expand and improve their reading, writing, computer, math, science, and geography skills and use them as tools to explore in depth the natural world, their community, and global institutions. They investigate all in the universe recording their research and experiments and writing extensively.

They experiment with mathematical concepts such as decimals, square roots, and algebra first with concrete materials, and then move on naturally to working abstractly.

The Upper Elementary class writes extensively creating stories and expressive literature.

The class utilizes a hands-on, see it for yourself approach to learning in varied activities such

as field trips, learning about gears by riding a bicycle, or holding a complete campaign and mock election.

### **Lower Elementary:**

The Lower Elementary curriculum strikes the imagination of the students and allows them to follow their curiosity. The children acquire the skills they need to explore the world through research and experimentation. They develop the reading, writing, computer, and math skills necessary for research, and, through their own investigations, they extend their knowledge in all areas of the curriculum. In Writing Workshop, the students express themselves through creative and formal writing.

The Elementary program focuses on the following reading and math skills:

#### READING SKILLS

Comprehension  
Speed reading  
Precision  
Vocabulary  
Word Study  
Grammar

#### MATH SKILLS

Concepts of mathematic operations  
Math facts drill  
Fractions  
Decimals  
Ratios  
Percentages  
Geometry  
Pre-algebra

The Montessori classroom emphasizes self-discipline, responsibility, decision-making, and following through in a nurturing environment. The students learn to manage their time and resources, to organize their materials, and to work with precision.

### **Primary Class:**

The principle learning centers in the Primary Class are:

#### **PRACTICAL LIFE**

Practical Life activities are the foundation for all other areas in a Montessori classroom, and they form the bridge between the home and school environments. The exercises in this area are concerned primarily with care of self (i.e. dressing frames and hand washing) and care of the environment (i.e. polishing and dish washing). The child develops his large and small muscle coordination through the practical life exercises while concentrating on self-help skills.

Achieving motor control of his/her body permits the child to develop inner control, develop a longer attention span, and increase self-confidence, independence, and self-discipline. These activities also prepare the child indirectly for the other areas of the classroom, i.e. finger and muscle control for writing and artistic endeavors. Practical Life exercises promote the logical, sequential thinking, so necessary for the language and mathematics studies.

## SENSORIAL

The Sensorial area provides perceptual training to expand the child's sensory perceptions and knowledge of the world. The child learns to sort, differentiate, and name colors, dimensions, weights, forms, textures, sounds, odors, and tastes. Maria Montessori called the sensorial materials the "keys to the universe," because they enable the child to perceive, identify, and classify what he sees, hears, touches, tastes, and smells. Once the child has mastered the skills of making finer discriminations and sequencing he/she is ready to move on to the language, math, geography, and science areas.

## LANGUAGE

Emphasis on vocabulary building begins when the child enters the classroom for the first time. While working in the Practical Life and Sensorial areas, children acquire the vocabulary of their work, and all areas involve vocabulary development.

The phonetic reading and writing program uses sandpaper letters to teach the basic phonetic sounds and recognition of the lower case letters. The alphabet we teach is:

a - cat	h - hot	o - ox	v - van
b - ball	i - it	p - pan	w - wet
c - can	j - jet	q - queen	x - wax
d - dog	k - king	r - roof	y - yes
e - pet	l - lost	s - sat	z - zoo
f - fog	m - man	t - top	
g - get	n - not	u - cup	

We use these phonetic sounds rather than the letter names so that the children will be able to read and write phonetic words. Later we work on phonograms, a combination of letters that make a different sound, such as: th, sh, ee.

The primary goal of this area is not to teach each child to read, but to help each individual to enrich and refine the ability to express himself/herself and understand the expression of others. Having acquired a sound phonetic foundation, the Montessori student is prepared for spelling and reading.

## MATH

Math principles are acquired through indirect preparation in the Sensorial area and through manipulation and observation of the Montessori math materials. By practicing and handling these multi-sensory exercises, the child forms a solid foundation for understanding basic concepts of our number system: quantity, sequence, hierarchical position, and the functions of the operations. These materials are concrete rather than abstract. They will be touched, manipulated, and counted. Concrete experiences are the vital first step in developing a full understanding of abstract mathematics.

## GEOGRAPHY

As in all areas of the Montessori classroom, the young child's introduction to geography

begins with the multi-sensory approach. A simple globe, which distinguishes between the continents and oceans, eventually leads the child to wooden continent puzzle maps. From these maps the older children proceed to drawing their own maps.

Through a variety of picture cards, photographs, toys, and books that center on the various cultures, the child satisfies his curiosity about similarities and differences in people of the world.

#### **ART**

Once the child has mastered the motor skills necessary to handle scissors, pencils, crayons, paint brushes, etc., she/he is free to construct her/his own creations. Care is taken to allow the child many avenues of expression using various media. Art is a process-oriented activity rather than a product, or end result activity. Art in the Montessori classroom is an extension of the Practical Life area. The child is encouraged to plan, set up, actively create, and clean up each project. As the child experiences each of the developmental levels of growth, the style and content of the art work produced changes and evolves.

#### **SCIENCE**

Science in the primary level stimulates curiosity, encourages active observation, and builds scientific vocabulary at a time when the child is absorbing new language effortlessly. Materials evolve sequentially from the inorganic (including states of solids, liquids, and gases, earth science, and weather) to the organic (including classification of plants and animals). The younger child experiments, then the older child is able to verbalize what happened and why.

#### **MUSIC**

The approach to music in the Montessori school combines singing, playing, listening, moving to rhythm, and creating in a steady progression toward musicality. It is during the early years that the sensitive period for music occurs, and the child develops the skills of listening and communication that are essential in the mastery of both music and language.

#### **Transition Class:**

The toddler environment is carefully designed to promote independence. The furniture and materials are toddler size so that the children can learn to control their movements and to be responsible for taking care of themselves. The teachers in this room assist the young child in making the transition from home to the outside school environment. The program emphasizes independence, concentration, coordination and includes toilet learning. In the classroom, they spend their time in practical life, sensorimotor and language skills, pre-math, science and arts areas of the Montessori curriculum.

## **ADMISSIONS**

Acceptance into one of the Montessori classrooms involves a 5 step process. To understand the procedure and the special considerations that determine how admission decisions are made, please review the following:

## **1. Applications**

Application forms may be obtained from either the school office or at our website ([www.riverbendmontessori.com](http://www.riverbendmontessori.com)) and submitted at any time. When the application, along with the registration fee is received, the child is eligible for consideration as vacancies arise.

## **2. Formal Tour**

We offer a formal tour of the school on scheduled mornings in order to provide an applicant's parents with the opportunity to observe each of the class levels offered at Riverbend. A general overview of Montessori Education will be discussed during the tour. You must take a formal tour before your application will be considered for enrollment.

## **3. Informal Interview with Child and Parent Interview**

This is a one-on-one time for the school to be introduced to the child and the child to view the school for the first time. During the interview, the child and the administrator will have an opportunity to interact. At this time, each applicant will be placed on a waiting list and will be considered for placement as openings occur. As the parent tours the school, many specific questions or concerns may arise. During the interview, parents and the administrator have an opportunity to address those specific areas regarding each child.

## **4. Administrative Considerations**

The school reserves the right of student classroom placement. When all other qualifications are equal, preference will be given to siblings and children of former Riverbend students who have completed the school's curriculum. The factors of boy/girl ratios and necessary age grouping are also considered in the selection of new students.

## **5. Testing for Elementary**

New students wishing to enroll in the Elementary classes will need to take an assessment test. A \$50.00 non-refundable fee is required in order to take the test.

## **Re-Enrollment**

Late January or early February a re-enrollment agreement is sent to those students invited to return to Riverbend. The completed application along with the non-refundable, registration fee must be returned by the priority enrollment date to ensure priority re-enrollment. When the re-enrollment deadline has expired, new applicants will be considered for any remaining spaces. A security deposit is required in May to hold a space. Failure to timely pay your security deposit will result in your child's space being forfeited. The Security Deposit is non-refundable.

**Riverbend Montessori and Elementary admits qualified students of any race, color, national or 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, national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational or admission policies, nor in any other school-administered activities.**

## **BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR**

### **Conferences**

Each child new to the school or a level will have a conference with the teachers of his class before school starts. After the conference, tell your child that he may (implying that he will be permitted to) begin school on a specific date. Excessive anticipation and misconceptions can result from too much discussion about school. Talk about it only a day or so before beginning and without elaboration regarding activities.

In the Elementary classes, prior to the start of school, parents and students will have a conference with the teacher to set goals for the year.

### **Orientation Week**

Throughout the school, when a child enters a new level or new classroom, a special week is set aside at the beginning of the year for orientation in order to facilitate the child's adjustment to school routines. The new students are invited into the classroom for approximately one week, with shorter hours, before the returning students join them. This phase-in period allows the teachers more time to work with children new to the class.

### **Supplies**

You will receive a list of supplies needed for your child. It is important that you carefully read the list so that the proper items are purchased. The supply list has been compiled by the teachers who have given thought to what the students need for the school year. When the list states a brand name, please make sure that you purchase these items as we have seen that the brand name items either last longer or are better suited for the task. The children enjoy being involved in the purchasing of their items.

### **Health Records**

The State of Texas requires that the school have on file a record of immunizations and a statement of health ***before the opening day of school***. Emergency medical information is a part of the health records. Please notify the school immediately of any changes in your child's medical matters or special care needs.

## **OBSERVATIONS AND PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Our school has found that observing a child in the classroom is an excellent preparation for the parent-teacher conference as it provides insight into the Montessori method. We have books available, and we encourage parents to read about Montessori philosophy and then set up an appointment for an observation.

Riverbend has an open-door policy regarding observations after the sixth full week of school. Before this time your child's teacher will be very busy setting the tone and routine for the school year, and the children are easily distracted.

Younger siblings are not permitted to visit when the class is in session.

It is important that the calm atmosphere of the classroom be maintained and that the teacher not be distracted by impromptu conferences. A phone call to our office will advise the teacher your desire for a conference. This helps to avoid interruptions and allows the routine and flow of the day to continue.

Parent conferences are scheduled in the fall and end of the school year for all students. In addition, upcoming and current Kindergarten and elementary students have a conference in January. Additional conferences may be scheduled by contacting the office.

During the year, we will schedule several parent meetings in which we will explain and discuss with you the Montessori method and cooperation between home and school. These meetings should help parents gain deeper insights into the Montessori program and early childhood education.

Changes that may affect your child's behavior and general well-being should be shared with the child's teachers as soon as possible. Common causes of distress include: either or both parents being away from home, a new baby, a new person living in or visiting the home, illness or hospitalization within the family, accident or death in the family, moving, a change in a carpool etc. Often the child will need additional reassurance, to be read a special book, or to be encouraged to verbalize feelings. Teachers can help. Please share.

Please report to us any unobserved incident that may have disturbed your child. Call to make an appointment for a consultation at school, if you feel that there is something that we need to discuss.

**Please note:** Teachers spend time immediately before and after class handling record keeping, setting up new exercises, etc. It is **essential** that teachers have that time free for their duties; therefore, they cannot engage in impromptu conferences, but would gladly give parents a call later in the day.

## **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND SCHOOL**

### **Cancellation of Classes**

If it is necessary to cancel classes for any reason, such as inclement weather, an announcement will be broadcasted to all parents via a telephone call or text message. Therefore, it is extremely important that we have your correct numbers. If you have a change during the year, please let us know. Please note that the call will not start until 15 seconds because it allows time for answering machines. If you receive a call from Riverbend in your caller ID allow a few seconds to hear the message. In addition to the telephone call, we will send an e-mail to the address you have provided to school.

### **Change of Address and Phone**

Please notify the school **immediately** if there is any change of address or telephone number. This is critically important in case there is an emergency.

## **Communication with the School**

Your communications with the school are extremely important to us. Please direct questions regarding Montessori information, admissions, finances, gifts to the school, or grievances to the Administrator.

## **Custody Statement**

When parents are divorced, the school requires that a custody statement be on file in the office specifying whether or not the school may release the child to the non-custodial parent.

## **Emergency Information**

If parents leave the city, the school should have, in writing, the name and telephone of a guardian or relative responsible for the child during the parent's absence.

## **Parent Communication**

In an effort to make sure that parents receive the school notes, we have declared "Tuesday Newsday." Tuesday is the day for school notes. The Tuesday Newsday will be e-mailed to you at the addresses on your application. If you would like to change this address please let us know. In addition, we have a secret Face Book group which we highly recommend you join. At the beginning of the school year we will notify you of the process for joining. This group is open only to current parents and grandparents. In addition to viewing school notifications parents will see photos of students and articles of interest. Our general calendar is also posted on the school's website: [www.riverbendmontessori.com](http://www.riverbendmontessori.com). The chalkboard located under the porte-cochere will also have information about upcoming events.

If you have any questions during the year, feel free to contact the Administrator. We have an open door policy. By speaking directly with the Administrator, we can address your concerns immediately and eliminate any confusion.

## **Parent Involvement**

Parent interest and involvement at Riverbend enriches our school immeasurably. Parents are encouraged to assist in various ways, such as being room parent, attending parties and events, and sharing talents and knowledge.

## **Telephone Calls**

Teachers are not available to take phone calls during class time, and they need to prepare materials and lessons before class begins. However, our office manager will gladly put a note in the teacher's message box so that after class she may return your call and help in any way possible.

## **INFORMATION REGARDING SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

### **Tuition**

Tuition is due on the first of each month. You will receive an invoice/envelope with the tuition amount. Payments made after the 16<sup>th</sup> will be charged a late fee of \$10.

Returned checks will incur a fee of \$25.

## **Absences and Tardiness in Elementary**

In the Elementary class, work missed from class must be made up at home. When a child has missed 2 or more consecutive days of class, the required assignments must be completed at home in a timely manner.

Tardiness also makes it difficult for children to complete their work. Our door will be locked at 8:50 am for security reasons. Since the doors are locked and class has begun, if you arrive after 8:50 am, an adult must check the student in the front office by signing in the child. We are using satellite or cell phone time as the indication of the time. In case of recurrent tardiness, the child must complete missed work at home. Some mornings we have spelling and math facts test which your child will miss if he is late.

Tardiness and absences are recorded on your child's permanent record, which is given to your child's next school.

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

Riverbend Montessori hours of operation Monday through Friday are:

Before Care from 7am

Transition Half Day 9.10 am – 12.00 pm

Transition Full Day 9.10 am – 3.00 pm

Primary Half Day 9.00 am – 12.00 pm

Primary Full Day 9.00 am – 3.15 pm

Elementary Full Day 8.45 am – 3.45 pm

After Care until 5.30 pm

If your child is not in the Elementary class and you arrive before 9:00 am, do not leave your car unattended under the porte-cochere. This lane needs to remain open for the Elementary students to arrive.

Each morning the children are greeted at their cars by the teachers. Parents who arrive before class time are asked to **wait in the car** until the teachers are ready to see that children get to their classrooms safely. This procedure encourages independence and facilitates separation for the child. Experience has shown that children separate at the car easier than at the classroom door.

The classroom day begins immediately upon arrival. Greetings, Montessori lessons, and introduction to special activities all help to set the positive atmosphere for the day. Many of these lessons are sequential, building on previous activities. It is extremely important that each child is punctual and has the opportunity to be part of these welcoming activities every day. The child who arrives after the end of carpool time (when there is no teacher to assist) should be brought to the office and signed in, and the office staff will see that the child gets to the classroom safely.

For the safety of all our children, any child to be picked up during school hours is to be called

for in the office. Our Office Manager will assist you in the early departure with a minimum of disruption to the classroom, and you will need to sign the early dismissal sheet to note that your child has left school. It is essential that all of our parents respect safety measures.

Children must be picked up PROMPTLY at dismissal time. Please check your child's daily schedule for this time. Riverbend has five different classrooms, and each uses the porte-cochere. The staggered carpool arrival and dismissal times ensure safety and convenience for all families during these times. For half day students a \$10.00 late pick up fee will be assessed after the last car in the line-up has left. For full day students the after care fee will be assessed after the last car in the line-up has left. A \$1 per minute per child fee is assessed for children picked up after 5.30 pm. We rely on the satellite time on our cell phone.

If your child is attending before care, you need to park in the parking lot and walk your child to the classroom. Before care starts at 7:00 am, and you may sign up for the month or on a daily basis. After care starts at the end of class and ends at 5:30 pm. You need to drive to porte-cochere and come to the class to check out your child. An early arrival fee of \$7 is charged if your child arrives before their designated class start time.

Our first concern at Riverbend is for the safety of your children. We have set up ground rules for adults and children to ensure the safety of all children, and we must insist on strict observance of these rules. The driveway, porte-cochere, and parking lots are very dangerous areas for children who are too short to be seen by drivers. For this reason, we must require that no child walks in these areas unless accompanied by an adult holding his/her hand. To protect the children, we will admit and dismiss children only under the porte-cochere, and we earnestly ask your cooperation in this.

### **Gate Latch**

Everyone must make sure that the gate is latched whenever they enter or exit through any one of our gates.

### **Cell Phones**

We request that you not use your cell phones in the driveway area while picking up and dropping off your child. The use of cell phones may distract you as you are driving in this area where children are present. This is a matter of safety for the children. The roads around the school are subject to the no cell phone law and fines during school zone hours.

### **Driveway Safety**

Please note that there is a bike and hike trail, which crosses the driveway. This trail is below the driveway grade so it is difficult to see bikers and walkers before they are on the driveway. This trail is often used by school children especially during our pick up and drop off times. Please drive slowly and watch this area carefully. We ask that you treat our driveway as you would any other school zone and drive no faster than 20 miles per hour. Please be aware that parents who need to buckle up their children are stopped along the side.

### **Pick Up Authorization**

We must have the names and telephone numbers of any person other than a parent who will pick up your child. If you need to make a change, please come in to or call the office.

Only parents can make this change. If someone is picking up your child one day, you may send a written note with the name of the person, telephone number, date, and your signature. In the interest of your child's safety, Riverbend will not allow children to ride with individuals who are not listed on the form in the office. If the staff is not familiar with the person, we will request a valid, photo identification card.

### **Sign In and Out**

If your child arrives late or is picked up early, you must sign him/her in or out in the front office. Children who arrive and leave at regular times are recorded in their classrooms.

### **Birthdays**

Every child's birthday is important!

**Transition Class:** In the Transition class children are beginning to understand growth and birthdays. As such we still want to celebrate the child's birthday but it will be a simplified version of the Montessori celebration described below. Parents are encouraged to bring in a small treat. Please contact your class teacher to book a time for your child's celebration.

**Primary Classes:** It is very hard for young children to understand the passage of time. However they do understand growth and birthdays, and this can help them to begin to understand time. Each month we will display pictures of the lives of the birthday children for the month. **At the beginning of your child's birthday month** please bring the teacher a small snapshot of your child as an infant and one picture of each year thereafter. (For example, if your child is 3, you will send a picture as an infant, at 1 yr., 2 yr. and a current picture for a total of 4 pictures.) These will be displayed on the bulletin board so that during the month all the students can see how the birthday child has grown over the years, how the older children have lived more years, etc.

We greatly appreciate the parents' help so that every child has this special occasion at school. During our regular ceremony on the child's birthday, we will show the snapshots as the child travels around the sun, representing the passage of time, and talks about the special events in her/his life. Parents are invited to join us for this ceremony. If you would like to, you may bring a special snack for the class. Cookies, small cupcakes, or ice cream sandwiches make a good birthday snack. Please feel free to send a special set of napkins for the occasion. Birthday goody bags, hats and party favors are not appropriate for the school celebration. Please save these items for home parties.

**Lower Elementary:** The lower elementary student may present research about the country of your family origin or tell a story about a relative during the birthday celebration. The children may bring a cultural snack or a traditional birthday snack.

**Summer Birthdays:** If your child has a summer birthday, you may send pictures at the half year. We will celebrate June birthdays in December, and July in January. This half-birthday celebration prevents May from being overwhelmed with May, June, and July birthdays as May is already hectic. We don't want the summer children to miss out.

**Confirm the Date with the Teacher:** Please contact your child's teacher ahead of time to confirm all arrangements. Often, we have several children who share the same date. When this occurs, the teacher needs to make arrangements taking all of those involved into consideration.

**Passing Out Invitations:** *Out of respect for the feelings of all of our students, we cannot hand out invitations to parties outside of school. Birthdays are very special to young children, and those who are not invited can be deeply hurt. Even when all students in the class are invited, we cannot handout invitations because we cannot ensure that the invitation will make it home to the parents. Please respect this rule.*

### **Discipline Policy**

It is Riverbend's policy to use positive methods of discipline, focusing on the desired behavior. Teachers will redirect when appropriate for the behavior and age of the child. It is our goal to have the children learn to be self-disciplined.

As the child is a member of a group, his freedom is limited by the collective interest of that group. If a child is disrespectful to teachers or other children, misuses material, or is interfering with other children's work or welfare, the child will be asked to 'sit aside' until he/she is ready to return to the group and be cooperative.

Continued disruptions will be referred to the administrator, who will notify the parent. If a child's attitude and behavior does not reflect growth within a reasonable period of time, the school reserves the right to ask that the child be removed from school.

School must be a safe environment for all. We will not tolerate behavior that hurts children or staff.

\*The first six weeks of school will be a probationary period during which we will work with the children to help them adjust to the school routines. Teachers will send home reports of behavior that hurts other children as they occur.

\*If a child has ongoing problems with regards to conduct that hurts other children, parents and teachers will discuss the problems during a conference and formulate a plan to change the behavior. The teacher and parents will agree on a check back date to assess progress. We will give the parents information on how they can support the child in changing behavior.

\*If the behavior continues, the school will call the parents to pick up the child immediately, whenever an incident occurs. The child must be picked up within 20 minutes. We must have your cooperation in picking up your child immediately. The child needs to understand the severity of being sent home, and if the child is not picked up within the 20 minute period, the connection between the misconduct and the

consequence is lost.

\*A child who has had to leave school three times will be dismissed from the school.

All children are accepted on a six-week provisional enrollment period.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Animals**

The learning experience is enhanced with introduction of animals in the classroom. In our school, we might have birds, hamsters, guinea pigs, hermit crabs, snakes, lizards, and fish in the different classrooms. The children are responsible for feeding and caring for the animals. We teach the children that they need to wash their hands after handling or coming in contact with the animals, their water bowls, food bowls, and cages. Certain animals are not permitted to be handled by children per Texas Child Care Licensing requirements. If these animals are kept in the school, they will be for observation only and it will be the teacher's responsibility to feed and care for them.

### **Field Trips**

An important element of Montessori education is taking field trips to actually experience what the students are learning in the classrooms. We must have a signed permission slip from the parents authorizing the child's participation. The children should wear their Riverbend Montessori t-shirt to identify their affiliation with the school. You will be given notice of the field trip telling you where the children are going and the times of the trip. In addition, there will be a notice in the office for at least 48 hours before the trip.

Transportation for the field trips can be either a chartered bus or personal cars of the teachers. Teachers who drive personal vehicles on field trips will be certified to transport children. In the event that we are driving personal cars, a teacher will be in each car.

Often times, the school must pay the field trip fee in advance. In addition, the cost of the bus is determined by the number of students who attend. As a result, we will advise you of the field trip and ask you to commit by a given date. Then if your child is unable to attend, you will remain responsible for the bus portion of the cost, and the field trip fees will be refunded if the school did not have to pay the fee.

### **Financial Policy**

Riverbend is not a day care facility. We are a school with a planned curriculum for the year. For this reason we cannot operate on a drop-in basis. Our program, our staff, and our finances are arranged on a school-year budget. Our staff-student ratio is fixed for each time period, and we do not overcrowd our classrooms or overtax our teachers. Before 9:00 am and after 3:15pm teachers are very busy preparing the classroom and the activities for the

week. If you leave your child early or late, we do have to charge you in order to pay the teacher working during that time period. Please remember that what is only 1/4 or 1/2 an hour for you, multiplied by 20-30 children is a staffing problem for us. Our teachers are well educated individuals who are here because they are dedicated to working with children and they enjoy the job; we must respect them. Providing a stimulating educational program for the children is our first priority.

In order to hold a place for a child who is not attending, it will be necessary to pay the tuition in full. Our program and our costs go on even when your child is absent.

## **Health Matters**

**Illness:** A child should remain at home if he is in the early stages of a cold, has a temperature above 100 degrees Fahrenheit, is vomiting, has diarrhea, has a rash, sore throat, or a discharge from the eyes or nose. If these symptoms develop while a child is in class, the parents will be called to come for the child promptly. Children who are running a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit) are **required to be fever free for 24 hours, without receiving fever-reducing medication within the 24-hour period**, before returning to school. As parents ourselves we understand how limiting this can be, but it is extremely important for the continued health of everyone that the school protects the welfare of all the students.

Out of consideration for the entire school community, if your child is sick, please call school to let us know. Quite often other students will be home with the same 'bug'. Calling will help the teachers to detect the illness in the early stages.

**Medications:** Any student needing to take medicine during the school day, must comply with the following procedures which are required by our licensing agency:

1. All medicine must be provided by the parent.

All medicine must be handed by a parent to a staff member with a written request signed and dated by the parent or guardian. You may obtain a copy from the office.

All medicine, prescription and non-prescription, must be in the original container and must be labeled with your child's full name, date brought to school, and the dosage. School must follow the orders of the health-care professional or the stated directions on the label if there is no health-care professional's order. No medication can be administered after its expiration date.

2. Please contact you child's teacher if you are noticing any side affects of the medication (drowsy, irritable, loose bowels, etc.) given to your child.

**Medical Emergencies:** If a critical illness or injury requires immediate attention of a physician, the school will contact emergency medical services or take the child to the nearest emergency room. Our teachers, trained in First Aid and CPR, will give the child aid as needed. We will contact the doctor identified in your child's record and the parent.

**Hearing and Vision Screening:** The State of Texas requires that we have on file hearing and vision screening results for children four years of age as of September 1st and first, third and fifth graders. Each year we arrange for a person to conduct the hearing and vision screenings for a fee paid to the provider. If your child has had the screening completed by his/her doctor's office, you may provide us with those records.

**Immunization Requirements:** Riverbend Montessori is required to obtain a copy of the child's immunization record as specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services in 25 TAC 97, Subchapter B (relating to Immunization Requirements in Texas Elementary and Secondary Schools and Institutions of Higher Education). Riverbend Montessori will only enroll children who have been immunized per the Texas Minimum State Vaccine requirements for child care. Riverbend Montessori will not enroll children with vaccine exemptions.

1. Provided immunization records must include the following:
  - The child's name and birth date;
  - The number of doses and vaccine type;
  - The month, day, and year the child received each vaccination; and
  - The signature or stamp of the physician or other health care professional who administered the vaccine.
2. More information on immunization requirements can be found at [www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize)

**Health Checks:** School staff may need to conduct a visual or physical assessment of a child to identify potential concerns about a child's health, including signs or symptoms of illness and injury, in response to changes in the child's behavior since the last date of attendance.

**Tuberculin Testing Requirement:** Tuberculin tests are not required by Riverbend Montessori, but we recommend that parents discuss this test with their doctors.

**Vaccine-preventable Diseases:** The school will specify vaccines for the staff if it is determined that an employee requires a vaccine for a vaccine-preventable disease.

**Outdoor Play:** If a child is well enough to come to school, that child will be expected to participate in all activities - including motor skills and outdoor play unless a chronic medical condition exists. A letter from your doctor noting any limitations should be on file in the office.

## **Library**

The library at Riverbend Montessori and Elementary school is designed to be a resource for our classroom curriculum. The books have been selected with careful consideration and pre-screening of subject matter. The children are invited to explore the books while they are in the individual classrooms.

Riverbend has a tradition of adding new books to our library. Your child is invited to celebrate his or her birthday or holiday by giving a new book to the library for the school to enjoy. Each book has a gift plate showing the name of the donor.

In our library, we have a collection of books written to help children deal with family crisis situations such as a death in the family. It's often hard for us as adults to understand the way in which children perceive these events, and these books can help parents talk about it in a way that will aid the child's understanding. You are welcome to borrow these books.

### **Personal Possessions**

Children should not bring toys, trinkets, purses, jewelry to class (religious or cultural jewelry excluded). These objects are often lost and can become a source of conflict or hard feelings in the classroom. Some parents have a box in the car in which the child may leave these items until his return.

Please label all lunch boxes, coats, sweaters, etc. with your child's name. The children often cannot identify items they have brought to school. Often times, there are several items which are the same or look alike which can cause confusion for the children.

### **Snacks and Lunches**

**Transition and Primary Classes Snacks:** A variety of foods are offered for daily snack. At the beginning of the year, you will receive a schedule of when you will be responsible for bringing snack for the class. This system allows every family to participate in supplying these special treats. You will receive a letter stating the types of snacks suggested. The health department requires that the snacks be purchased from a store or commercial kitchen. We cannot have you bring in homemade goods. Any items, which need to be cut must be cut at school. Since the school is not providing the snack, we cannot be responsible for its nutritional value or for meeting the child's daily food needs. Children must not bring additional snack food or chewing gum into the classroom. A record of food allergies, reactions, and required actions to be taken **MUST BE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE**. If your child does have food allergies, it is very helpful to give the teacher a supply of "back up" snacks appropriately labeled.

**Elementary Classes Snacks:** In the elementary classes, the children may bring their own snack to be eaten during the day.

**Lunches:** Students may elect to purchase lunch from the Upper Elementary Hot Lunch program or bring their lunch from home. Lunches will not be heated up for the students until they are in the Elementary classes.

### **Nursing Mothers**

If while at school, a mother needs to breastfeed her child, please contact the office. We will make arrangements for a quiet, comfortable place.

### **Diaper Changing and Potty Training**

Staff will change all diapers whether disposable or cloth. Parents will be asked to provide diapers/changing supplies for their child. If cloth diapers are being used, we ask parents to bring a bag that closes to store soiled diapers. Employees will change diapers according to *Division 2, Diaper Changing of the Minimum Standard for Child-Care Centers*. All diaper

changes for children in the Transition Class are recorded and this information is available for parents.

Our staff will assist with potty training by taking the child to the restroom once every hour or more often if necessary. The information will be documented for your knowledge if you want a report. Potty Training is always an activity done in conjunction with our parents and with their support. We ask parents of children who are potty training to bring extra clothes and materials.

### **Recalled Children's Products**

The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission provides a recall list on the website: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov). You may check this website to determine if you have purchased any items that have been recalled.

### **Gang Free Zone**

The Texas Penal Code provides that an area within 1,000 feet of a child-care center is a gang free zone where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

### **Weapon Free Zone**

The school is a weapon free zone. Pursuant to Section 46.03, Texas Penal Code (Offences Against Public Health, Safety, and Morals), a person commits an offense if the person intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly possesses or goes with a firearm, knife, club or prohibited weapon...on the physical premises of a school or educational institution...whether the school or educational institution is public or private.

### **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

We have developed a plan for emergencies. You may view the plan if you like by asking in the office. The plan covers sheltering in place and evacuation. Evacuation routes and relocation plans are posted in every room. The designated relocation area if we need to relocate inside the operation is the Art Room, as this space has no windows, is an interior room and is easily accessible. We have shelter in place locations in every classroom. If we need to relocate outside the operation, we will follow our emergency evacuation plans and relocate to the First Colony Disciples of Christ Church which is located behind the school. Routine drills will be conducted according to licensing requirements.

### **Disabilities**

Child day care operations are public accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title III. If you believe that this operation may be practicing discrimination in violation of Title III, you may call the ADA Information Line at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

### **Minimum standards and Licensing Inspection Report**

A copy of the Minimum Standards for Child-care Centers is available for review at **Riverbend Montessori** upon request. In addition, parents can find it online by going to:

## Local Licensing Office, PRS Child Abuse Hotline and the PRS Website Information

### Licensing Office

<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/safety/child-care/contact-child-care-licensing>

9702 Bissonnet St. 2200 W,  
Houston, TX 77036

Ph: 713-940-3009

### Abuse and Neglect of Children

Riverbend has a Child Abuse Prevention Plan. You are welcome to a copy of our plan which sets forth methods to increase awareness and prevention of child abuse. We have a list of resources available for any questions you may have. Our teachers receive at least annually in continuing education to understand the child abuse/neglect. Under the law, everyone, including caregivers, is required to report suspicious behavior to the appropriate authorities. If you have any questions or concerns regarding child abuse or neglect, please contact the Administrator immediately.

### Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

For information from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services on reporting abuse, neglect or exploitation, visit:

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact\\_Us/report\\_abuse.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_Us/report_abuse.asp)

Abuse Hotline and Website

- Call the Texas Abuse Hotline toll-free at 1-800-252-5400 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide
- Make your report through their secure web site and you will receive a response within  
24 hours: [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)

### Registration and Security Deposit

There is a yearly registration fee of \$175.00 per student and \$200.00 per family with 2 or more siblings. This fee is due at the time of the application and is **non-refundable**.

A security deposit equal to one-half of one month's tuition is due in May, and it is **non-refundable**. During the school year, if you provide one month's written notice of withdrawal, the deposit will be applied to any outstanding tuition with the balance returned, otherwise it will be applied to May's tuition.

### Teacher Recommendation Requests

If you require a teacher recommendation request to be completed, please provide a copy of the request form to our office manager and we will arrange for the form to be completed. Please note that we require up to 72 hours turn-around time for those requests.

## **Water Activities**

Riverbend Montessori may provide as part of its curriculum various water based activities including water tables, sprinkler play and small splash tubs. Children will also wash their dishes in tubs of water and number of lessons require the use of water.

On the last day of school, we have a splash day. The children play in the water sprinklers and on an inflatable, water slide.

## **Dress Code**

The purpose of this dress code is to enhance school safety, improve the learning environment, and promote good behavior. Children's attitudes toward schoolwork and behavior are related to the clothing that they wear. Therefore, we recommend clothing and footwear suitable for a working atmosphere (in a Montessori environment children are moving all day and do tasks such as gardening) and appropriate to the weather/environment here in Sugar Land. In order to achieve this goal, the following guidelines are in place at Riverbend Montessori School.

### **Shoes**

- Tennis shoes or sturdy, form-fitting shoes are recommended for the school day. No backless or high-heeled shoes are permitted. (Flip flops are not permitted; sandals with back straps can be worn.)
- No shoes with wheels (can be worn if wheels are removed.)

### **Pants, shorts, skirts**

- Pants and shorts need to fit snugly at the waist.
- Sagging clothing is not acceptable.
- Extremely brief shorts and short skirts are not appropriate for school. Mid-thigh length or longer is appropriate.

### **Shirts**

- Shirts with sleeves are recommended.
- Halter, tank, and thin-strapped tops are not permitted.

### **In General**

- Tops and bottoms must overlap at all times, including when arms are raised.
- The following items are inappropriate for school and therefore not permitted:
  - Clothing that is in disrepair, ripped, or contains holes
  - Any article of clothing or accessory that promotes drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex, violence or is offensive or degrading
  - Anything that may cause a distraction to the educational process or is deemed inappropriate or unsafe

This dress code does not regulate the exercise of an individual's sincerely held religious beliefs.

## **Photos and Videos**

Pictures of teachers, students, parents and guests are taken for the purpose of promoting Riverbend Montessori via print and internet media such as newspaper articles, yearbooks and Riverbend Montessori's website.

Most pictures are of group activities for the purpose of promoting the activities of Riverbend Montessori. Website postings will list captions identifying the activity, not the individuals. Full names of minors will not be posted on websites.

All such photographs are used without monetary compensation to the persons pictured in Riverbend Montessori activities. All photographs remain the property of the photographer.

The enrollment form contains a photo release which is not event or time specific, rather it shall serve as a general release for all photos. Photos of Riverbend Montessori activities will be stored and kept for future use under these guidelines. Photos may be used without specific notification to those pictured in the photo.

It is the responsibility of the individual whose permission is granted on the photo release to inform Riverbend Montessori if they wish to rescind permission to use pictures of their participation in Riverbend Montessori.