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2026-2027
PARENT HANDBOOK
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***"The most important period of life is not the age of university studies,
but the period from birth to the age of six...for that is the time
when intelligence itself, her greatest implement is formed."***

-Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind

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I. Welcome To Your School!

We are honored that you have chosen to make MSYC a part of your family's educational journey. By selecting a Montessori experience, you demonstrate a commitment to an environment where your child's individuality and inherent potential for social and intellectual development are both respected and cultivated. The staff and Board of Directors at MSYC are dedicated to ensuring that you and your child experience our school as a nurturing and stimulating place, enabling each child to achieve their fullest potential.

Community and Expectations

Effective functioning of MSYC relies on a shared understanding of our operations and clear communication channels for addressing questions or concerns. During the initial days of enrollment, your child will become familiar with the foundational rules designed to maintain safety and facilitate their engagement in various activities with minimal interruptions. Similarly, this handbook serves to provide you with the necessary guidelines to ensure smooth and safe operation within the MSYC community.

Support and Points of Contact

We are committed to offering a supportive environment for all members of our community. For any classroom-related queries, please contact your child's Directresses after consulting the relevant sections of this handbook. For broader questions, or issues outside the classroom, please direct your inquiries to our Executive Director. You will find a staff directory at the end of this handbook for your reference.

We extend a warm welcome to you and anticipate a rewarding and enriching collaboration.

--The MSYC Staff and Board of Directors

II. A Historical Overview of MSYC

Founded on August 15, 1978, MSYC began as a non-profit corporation with just 22 students attending morning classes at Vine Congregational Church, under the instruction of Lynette Kohles. As the school grew, Kohles found the dual responsibilities of teaching and administration increasingly challenging. To address this, the newly established Board of Directors hired Maria Schoch from Columbia, South America, as a second teacher, and began to assist with administrative duties. Kohles generously donated her teaching materials, setting the stage for MSYC's promising future.

Growth and Expansion

Since its inception, MSYC has experienced significant growth. From its modest beginnings, the school now boasts a staff comprising five Directresses, twelve assistant teachers, Before Care/After Care supervisors, a Spanish Directress, several substitute teachers, an administrative assistant, and an Executive Director. MSYC currently serves approximately 105 students across five classes.

As Lincoln has expanded, so has the demand for Montessori education, resulting in a more stable enrollment process compared to the uncertainties faced in the early years. Presently, the average wait time for full-day enrollment is approximately 2.5 years. In the fall of 1996, a 1,500-square-foot addition to the building facilitated expanded enrollment. At MSYC's 40th anniversary celebration in the spring of 2018, plans for further expansion were announced, including the purchase and demolition of the house to the west of the existing campus to construct a new building scheduled to open by the 2020-2021 school year. However, the COVID-19 pandemic delayed this timeline, pushing the opening to the 2021-2022 school year. The new campus introduced a second toddler class, a third preschool class, and over 8,000 square feet of additional outdoor classroom space.

Recent Developments

During the 2022-2023 school year, MSYC was awarded a grant exceeding \$60,000 to transform its outdoor classroom into a Nature Explore-designed space. Our outdoor classrooms continue to evolve with contributions including a new wooden bridge, two Nature Explore sand/water tables, a “mud kitchen,” a sorting table, student wheelbarrows, an outdoor tool organizer, two outdoor drums, a climbing turtle, shaded gathering benches, and a Funhoop Basketball game—all gifted by the graduating classes of 2016-2026.

Community Engagement and Support

As a non-profit organization, MSYC relies on non-tuition funds to sustain its vitality and maintain a wish list of items, services, and programs supported by fundraising efforts. Parents and guardians of enrolled children are automatically members of the MSYC non-profit corporation, carrying a responsibility to contribute to the school. We encourage MSYC families to share their time and talents, whether it involves participating in fall cleanup activities, assisting with maintenance tasks, serving on the Board of Directors, or volunteering to share special skills in our classrooms or office. Participation in various committees also helps enrich the school experience for both students and parents. There is always a meaningful way for each family to contribute to our vibrant community.

We deeply appreciate your involvement and look forward to the collective efforts that keep MSYC a thriving educational environment.

III. Mission Statement

To promote and encourage the intellectual, social and physical development of children through education according to the Montessori method.

Responsibilities of the School

- To provide an environment that is clean, safe, and attractive.
- To maintain the standards and licensing regulations required by the state, county, and city agencies.
- To provide a Montessori program that is stimulating, developmentally appropriate, and has the best possible resources.
- To provide teachers who are exceptional in their capacities for guiding and caring, and in the excellence of their professional skills.
- To remain committed to professional growth and openness to new ideas and information.

Responsibilities of the Parents

- To bring your child(ren) on time.
- To fulfill financial obligations to the school promptly.
- To support both school and child by:
 - attending parent/guardian meetings and conferences
 - keeping informed about the goals and policies of the school
 - volunteering your time to help us maximize financial support for programs
- To develop a relationship with your child’s Directress and to familiarize yourself with the Montessori philosophy and principles

Responsibilities of the Child: To construct the adult he or she will become.

Non-discrimination Policy

The Montessori School for Young Children admits students of any race, color, religion, family composition, or national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, family composition, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions, scholarship, and other school-administered programs.

MSYC is licensed as a child care and regulated by the State of Nebraska. A copy of state licensing requirements is available upon request.

MSYC's Executive Director reserves the right to suspend, expel, and/or to refuse school services to a family for the following good causes:

1. Inability of staff and family to work together in a congenial and cohesive manner.
2. Disruptive behavior which impedes the progress of the rest of the class or school and/or infringes on the rights of others.
3. Failure to pay school tuition and charges.

The Executive Director will review all complaints and responses before rendering a final decision.

IV. Our Dedicated Staff and Other Professionals

The day-to-day operations of the school are ably handled by our staff. Most of your questions and needs will be handled through direct contact with them. MSYC takes pride in that our staff exceeds the minimum qualifications set by the State of Nebraska for teachers employed in child cares.

A. Directresses, Assistant Teachers, and Support Staff

All of our Preschool and Toddler Directresses have attended American Montessori Society (AMS) programs for their Montessori training and certification. Our Assistant Teachers and Support Staff are Montessori certified, hold degrees in education, have other degrees, and/or experience in education. All assistant teachers who are not Montessori certified have been mentored in the Montessori methods by MSYC Directresses. Those who do not hold degrees in education meet Nebraska child care regulations for non-certificated teachers.

B. Executive Director

The Executive Director works closely with the Board of Directors. She provides leadership and guidance for the school and oversees day-to-day operations, admissions, staffing, and all administrative issues. The Executive Director can also answer your questions about anything that isn't classroom-specific. Those questions should be directed to a student's Directress.

C. Attorney

The Board of Directors may enlist the services of an attorney to handle the more complex legal matters of the corporation.

D. Interns/Practicum Students

From time to time, an intern/practicum student working towards Montessori certification or pursuing a degree in education may serve under the supervision of a Directress in one of our classrooms.

V. The Board of Directors

Each March, during our annual meeting, members elect directors to the MSYC Board. These individuals are parents/guardians or other community members who help make decisions regarding development, financial, and personnel support. They also help with short- and long-term goals for the future of MSYC. Parent/guardian committees may work with the Board to hold social events, contribute to the school's "Notes from the Office", coordinate promotion of our school, plan fundraisers and support the maintenance of our grounds and building.

The MSYC Board of Directors meets on the third Monday of each month at 7:00pm. at a location specified in the weekly "Notes from the Office" (unless otherwise noted on the school's calendar or in the "Notes from the Office.") A summary of their deliberations will be in the MSYC school's office and will be made available to you on request. You are welcome to attend all open Board meetings. A list of MSYC's Board of Director's is available on the school's website.

VI. Benefits of Membership in MSYC

Of course, the greatest benefit of membership is the growth you will see in your child. But, there are additional membership privileges that can enrich your association with MSYC.

A. Notes from the Office

During the academic school year, we will send you our weekly "Notes from the Office" publication via email. We hope you enjoy reading the latest news about our school and learning more about Montessori education! If you are interested in contributing to the publication, please contact our Executive Director, Emily Dutter.

B. Parent Education Events

Learning extends beyond the classroom at MSYC. Each fall and spring, we conduct parent/guardian-teacher conferences to provide detailed insights into your child's academic progress. Furthermore, throughout the school year, we periodically offer complimentary Parent/Guardian Education Events to enhance your understanding and engagement in your child's educational journey. These events:

- 1) help you learn more about the Montessori Method
- 2) help you employ Montessori methods in your home
- 3) familiarize yourself with your child's work at school

These events are ideal for connecting with other parents/guardians in our community. Typically held in the evenings at MSYC, topics covered include Montessori education, children's nutrition, discipline strategies, and even practical skills like composting. Additionally, we offer resources such as books and tapes on Montessori education for self-study. Feel free to inquire at the office about borrowing these materials.

C. Lending Library and Scholastic Books

We invite volunteers to serve as librarians for our Preschool classes on a monthly, or potentially biweekly basis with sufficient volunteers. Volunteers help maintain organization and assist children with checking out books from our collection of over 400 titles. Each child may borrow one book on library day.

Our library features books that reinforce classroom learning, covering topics such as the natural world, transportation, manners, and interesting careers. The MSYC library also includes materials suitable for Toddlers and books for adults on parenting and Montessori philosophy. Some books are donated, others purchased, and some acquired through our participation in Scholastic Book Clubs.

Periodically, you will receive flyers in your child's communication folder for the Scholastic Book Club and other materials. Purchasing is optional; most books are paperback and affordable. Parent purchases through Scholastic earn MSYC shopping credits, which we use to expand our library with new titles.

D. Summer Enrichment Program

The Montessori School for Young Children operates on an academic calendar with the school year ending in May. Our regularly enrolled students are eligible to enroll in our Summer Enrichment Program. Space is limited in this program. Information about enrollment in the Summer Enrichment Program is typically made available in February of every school year. Traditionally this program has been a morning-only program but full-time schedule options have been available dependent upon staff availability and budget. The number of weeks and the program theme will be determined each year.

VII. What to Expect in the Classroom

The Montessori School for Young Children offers a Toddler program (for children between the ages of 18 months to 3 years) and a Preschool program (for children between the ages of 3 to 6 years.) Placement of your child into the Preschool program before the age of 3 is dependent on the age and abilities of your child that are determined by both the Toddler and Preschool Directresses. If the Directresses feel a toddler student is ready to enter the Preschool program (and space is available), the child will be transitioned into the new classroom. Parents will be informed by the Directresses on the transition stage for their child.

What can you expect from your child's Montessori experience at MSYC? How will discipline be handled? What will he/she be learning and how? The next section gives you an overview. As the year progresses, you may have additional questions. Your child's Directress is eager to answer them either after school or by email or phone in the evening. In addition, you are welcome to observe in your child's class to see what happens firsthand. We ask that you not plan your visit during the first month of school as children are still adjusting at this time. Please speak with your child's Directress to coordinate a time to observe.

A. The Educational Experience

1. A Developmental Approach

Montessori education is developmental education. The Montessori classroom offers a prepared environment that invites your child to define his/her real interests and rhythms in learning. Look around in your child's classroom. If you are like a lot of us parents, you will find yourself drawn to the novel, tactile materials available to your child. Through the guidance of a Directress, your child learns to choose

appropriate work, be eager for instruction, work for as long as desired with satisfaction, complete a task and return work to the shelf for another child to use. Your child will develop at his/her own pace in an ungraded, mixed-age classroom that does not rely on rewards or punishment. It is his/her chance to become an independent learner, and to build concentration and self-discipline within a warm social group. If you haven't looked in on a Montessori class in action, try it. The focus and contentment of the children are conspicuous.

2. Design for Success

Montessori work is designed for the child's success and the development of the child's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs. The work is self-correcting whenever possible so the child intuitively develops the skills the work was designed to provide. You will have a chance to see a demonstration of some of the work from your child's classroom at one or more parent education meetings.

3. Sensory Orientation

In a Montessori classroom, sensorial work is central to children's learning and development. This method involves hands-on activities that engage the five senses—sight, touch, hearing, taste, and smell—allowing children to explore and understand their environment. Sensorial materials are meticulously designed to isolate specific qualities such as color, shape, texture, and size, helping children refine their perceptual skills and cognitive abilities. Through this sensory exploration, children build a foundation for more complex learning, enhance their concentration, and develop an appreciation for the nuances of the world around them.

4. Imagination vs. Fantasy

In the Preschool years, your child's understanding of the world is concrete rather than abstract. Cartoon characters are as real to them as live actors and fantastical happenings are plausible. Montessori believed it was important to cultivate imagination rather than fantasy. She characterized the former as conceptualizing novel combinations of things from the real world. In the real world, animals live for a time, then they die; plants grow from seeds and that takes time, water, and light; the earth rotates each day and revolves around the sun each year; etc. **Please avoid dressing your child in items with fantasy characters, especially those that engage in rough or violent play (superheroes or villains, etc.)**

5. Practical Life Skills

Practical life work involves activities that help children develop essential life skills through real-world tasks. These exercises, such as pouring, sweeping, buttoning, and food preparation, are designed to foster independence, coordination, concentration, and a sense of order. By engaging in these purposeful activities, children gain confidence and learn to care for themselves and their environment, laying a foundation for personal responsibility and social development. Practical life work bridges the gap between the classroom and everyday life, providing children with the tools they need to navigate and contribute to their world effectively.

6. The Great Outdoors

MSYC is home to one of the largest Nature Explore-designed outdoor classrooms in Nebraska, encompassing over 15,500 square feet. The design includes dedicated spaces for gathering, nature art, building, and a large loose parts area. Children can enjoy climbing, crawling, balancing, big body play in an open area, music and movement, gardening, and dirt-digging/sand activities.

Our garden provides a chance for children to observe seasonal changes and watch birds as they feed. Teachers often encourage children to listen and identify various outdoor sounds, enhancing their sensory experiences. Additionally, nature walks around the neighborhood allow Preschool Program students to collect interesting leaves and other natural items for use in indoor projects.

Weather permitting, we ensure that outdoor time is a daily activity. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather, and label outerwear, boots, and accessories to prevent mix-ups with other children's belongings.

7. Language

Language work is a vital component that supports the development of communication skills through a structured yet dynamic approach. Children engage with activities that progressively build their phonetic awareness, vocabulary, reading, and writing abilities. Using tactile materials like sandpaper letters and movable alphabets, they link sounds with symbols and practice forming words and sentences. Storytelling, conversation, and exposure to rich language environments further enhance their linguistic abilities. This immersive, hands-on method fosters a deep understanding of language, empowering children to express themselves clearly and confidently, while laying the groundwork for lifelong literacy.

8. Music, Movement, and Visual Arts

It won't be long before you hear your child talk about the white line. This is an area of the classroom where the children gather for group experiences. The white line gives children a concrete destination and it also provides a guide for different kinds of walking and movement that improve coordination and balance. Singing is probably among their favorite activities on the line. Your child will have lots of chances for self-expression through painting, drawing, cutting and pasting, collage, and other seasonal projects that his/her teacher will provide lessons for. In addition, matching work is available which introduces the children to composers and famous works of art. Your students may also mention their time spent with Miss Jennifer. Jennifer Buehler is a licensed music therapist who visits MSYC weekly for music enrichment sessions with both our Preschool and Toddler Programs.

9. Cultural Area

In the Montessori classroom, cultural area work encompasses geography, history, science, art, and music to provide children with a comprehensive understanding of the world and its diverse cultures. This area encourages exploration and appreciation of global diversity, introducing children to different traditions, environments, and historical perspectives through hands-on materials and activities. Children might explore maps, study animals and plants, learn about past civilizations, and experiment with artistic techniques from various cultures. By engaging with these subjects, children develop a sense of curiosity and respect for the world's cultural richness, fostering global awareness and interconnectedness from an early age.

10. Mathematics

Mathematics work is designed to build a deep, intuitive understanding of mathematical concepts through concrete, hands-on materials. Children explore foundational principles such as counting, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division using specially designed tools like number rods, bead chains, and golden beads. These tactile resources allow children to visualize and manipulate mathematical quantities, promoting a natural progression from concrete experiences to abstract thinking. As they advance, children

engage in increasingly complex activities, fostering problem-solving skills and a love for mathematics. This approach helps demystify numbers and operations, making math both accessible and enjoyable.

11. Foreign Language

We are fortunate to include Spanish as a key part of our curriculum, a tradition that dates back nearly to the founding of our school. Early exposure to a foreign language broadens our students' perspectives and takes advantage of a period in childhood when language acquisition is most natural. Research indicates that children's ability to learn a second language starts to diminish around junior high, just when most schools typically begin language instruction. You'll be amazed at how quickly your child will learn Spanish vocabulary through engaging and imaginative group activities, and they may even start using these words at home. At the beginning of the year, our Spanish Directress provides a folder with the words and phrases the children are learning, complete with pronunciation guides, so you can follow along. Additionally, MSYC offers an Alumni Spanish Club to further develop students' Spanish skills and maintain friendships. Look for enrollment details from the office in April or May for your graduating child.

B. Classroom Matters

1. Snack Time

Snack time at MSYC serves as a refreshing break and an opportunity for children to refuel while learning essential social skills such as manners, serving others, and tidying up. Each child takes a turn bringing snacks for their class during the month, typically on or around their birthday or a specified class day. You will receive a calendar detailing your child's assigned snack day and the number of children involved. We prioritize nutritious snacks and discourage sugary treats. **Please notify your child's teacher of any food allergies so we can ensure a safe environment; families will be informed of any specific ingredients that must be avoided due to student allergies.** Popular snack options include pretzels, fruit slices, bagels with spreads, cheese, bananas or grapes, graham crackers, muffins, tortilla roll-ups with cream cheese, carrot sticks with dip, and raisins or dried fruit. **According to state licensing, snacks must include items from at least two food groups to promote balanced nutrition.**

2. Clothing (3-6 year olds)

We encourage your child to develop independence in dressing themselves, so please dress them in comfortable clothing without loose straps, extra belts, or difficult fasteners like buttons and snaps. Shoes and boots should fit well enough for your child to manage them independently. Your child's Directress will provide details about "indoor shoes" before the school year begins. **To align with the Montessori philosophy, we kindly ask that you avoid sending your child in "character clothing" featuring characters like Dora, Spiderman, or Disney Princesses.** Please label loose items such as coats, mittens, and hats to prevent mix-ups. These steps help create a supportive environment where children can focus on learning and self-discovery.

Children enrolled in our Preschool Program should not be wearing diapers/Pull-ups and should be able to manage most aspects of toileting independently. Accidents may occur occasionally, and our staff handles these situations with sensitivity and understanding. **Please prepare an extra set of clothing, including underpants and socks, to keep at school in a large Ziploc bag labeled with your child's name. As seasons change, we'll remind you to update these clothes as needed.**

We maintain a small supply of emergency clothing on hand. If you need to borrow from this supply, we kindly ask that you launder and return the items as soon as possible. Donations of socks, underwear, pull-up pants, and pull-on tops that your child has outgrown are always appreciated and welcomed. Your cooperation ensures a smooth and comfortable experience for all children in our care.

3. Clothing (Toddlers)

Your child's Directress will provide details about "indoor shoes" before the school year begins. If your child is in diapers, please provide a pack for us to store on the bathroom shelves; diaper wipes are provided at MSYC. To support our operations effectively, please send only diapers (**not Pull-ups unless they have detachable sides**) to MSYC. **Please prepare an extra set of clothing, including underpants and socks, to keep at school in a large Ziploc bag labeled with your child's name. As seasons change, we'll remind you to update these clothes as needed. To align with the Montessori philosophy, we kindly ask that you avoid sending your child in "character clothing" featuring characters like Dora, Spiderman, or Disney Princesses.** Please label loose items such as coats, mittens, and hats to prevent mix-ups. These steps help create a supportive environment where children can focus on learning and self-discovery.

4. Birthdays

We make every effort to reserve your child's birthday as his/her snack day during the month. Children with summer birthdays or those during weekends or vacations will celebrate their birthdays as close as possible to the real day.

Nutritious snacks are still preferred though you may choose to do something extra special like cupcakes, fruit kabobs, etc. Along with the snack, we ask that parents send a picture of their child for each year since birth so we may celebrate his/her life. All the pictures will be returned. Your child may wish to donate a book to the school library on his/her birthday.

5. Show and Tell

We encourage children to bring objects related to nature, geography, foreign cultures, or other topics aligned with their Montessori studies for show and tell. Books, photos, items from trips, and art projects are also excellent choices. Please attach your child's name to anything you wish to have returned. Show and tell coincides with your child's snack day each month. To ensure a positive experience for everyone, we kindly ask that you do not send toys, candy, gum, jewelry, watches, or similar items to school. These items can easily get lost or broken and may lead to misunderstandings among children. The school cannot be held responsible for lost or damaged personal belongings, so please consider this when assisting your child in selecting their monthly show and tell item. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

6. Discipline

Children at MSYC are encouraged to use good manners with one another and with their teachers. They learn to introduce themselves and their classmates when visitors are present, how to serve and be served food during snack time, and how to express gratitude with phrases like "thank you" and "no thank you." From the first days of school, they learn that they are not permitted to encroach on each other's work and are taught to politely but firmly inform students who interrupt their work to find other activities or wait

until they are finished. Usually, they do very well with all this.

Most children respond well to the clear expectations and consistent routines established in the classroom. When a child needs redirection, a gentle reminder from the teacher is often all that is needed to help them make a positive choice.

Occasionally, a child may need additional support to regain self-control. In these situations, the teacher calmly and respectfully communicates the expected behavior and, if appropriate, remains with the child in a quiet area away from the group to provide support and allow time to regain composure before rejoining classroom activities. While Nebraska child care licensing refers to this practice as a "time out," MSYC does not use that terminology. Instead, this time is viewed as an opportunity for the child to reset with the guidance and support of a caring adult.

In rare situations where a child's behavior poses a safety concern or they are unable to successfully rejoin the classroom, a parent or guardian may be contacted to pick up their child early. This decision is made only after other strategies have been attempted and is intended to support the child's well-being while maintaining a safe, respectful, and productive learning environment for all children.

The school operates under the principle that everyone in the community should care for one another. Two key behaviors are emphasized: no child or adult should physically harm another, and no child or adult should disrupt another's work. These ground rules are intended to foster self-respect and respect for others.

If your child experiences recurring challenges with self-control or engages in behavior that impacts other children in class, parents will be contacted to discuss strategies and ideas aimed at supporting the child. Additionally, if the Directress believes the child may benefit from additional developmental services beyond what MSYC offers, parents will be informed and guidance will be provided.

In cases where there are concerns about the child's ability to thrive happily at the school, MSYC may initiate a limited probationary period to address these issues. Throughout this process, MSYC is committed to making recommendations and offering support to each family and child. If, despite concerted efforts, significant progress is not achieved over a reasonable period, MSYC may have to consider termination of enrollment as a necessary solution to ensure the well-being of the child and the overall harmony of the class.

7. Lunch Bunch

The Lunch Bunch offers a "brown bag" lunch option for children enrolled in the full-day Preschool or Toddler Programs at MSYC. Since MSYC does not provide lunch, please ensure your child brings lunch from home. **State licensing mandates that any lunch eaten at school must adhere to federal nutritional guidelines, including items from each of the four food groups (proteins, fruits, vegetables, grains, and dairy).** To assist us in maintaining compliance, please aim to pack these components in your child's lunch. **You may incur charges if MSYC needs to supplement any missing food groups. Please refrain from including desserts in your child's lunch.**

A refrigerator and microwave are available if needed, though to support our Lunch Bunch workers, we kindly request limiting foods requiring microwave heating. If you include items needing reheating, please include a note for our staff.

This program is exclusively for children enrolled in the full-day program. Lunch Bunch takes place from 12:00-12:45 pm and follows a routine of lunch preparation, eating, cleanup, and free play with friends until 12:45 pm, when supervisors prepare children for the afternoon program.

8. Communication Folder

Your child(ren) will be given a Communication Folder with the work they have completed during the past week and various informational notes from the office, Board, and teachers. **Please make sure to review the contents of your child's folder as soon as possible so as to not miss any notes, and to enjoy the projects your child has completed.** The envelopes are usually sent home on Thursdays or Fridays. Please return your child's envelope to the school the next day he/she attends.

C. Volunteering

MSYC values parent/guardian involvement as crucial to fostering a positive learning environment and attitude toward education in children. We encourage each family to volunteer 10 hours per semester, totaling 20 hours for the school year. Families are invited to fulfill these hours through various volunteer opportunities available during school hours, evenings, weekends, and occasionally through take-home tasks. Grandparents and other family members are welcome to participate.

Volunteer opportunities include assisting with fundraising events, helping in the office with tasks like Thursday folder stuffing or preparing Spanish class materials, participating in Fall and Spring Work Days for yard cleanup, and contributing articles to the Notes from the Office.

MSYC relies on and greatly values parent involvement, which is integral to our school community. Stay informed about volunteer opportunities through your weekly "Notes from the Office" and school emails.

For safety reasons, if you are volunteering in the office, please do so during your child's class time and arrange childcare for younger siblings, as the office cannot be completely childproofed. Before bringing children to any volunteer opportunity, please ensure that they are allowed to accompany you, as some tasks may involve equipment hazardous to children. **All adults volunteering during school hours at MSYC must have a cleared background check on file.**

D. Procedures for Arrival and Departure from School

1. Handling Separation from Parents

From years of experience, we've found that the most effective approach to handling arrival separation anxiety is to keep farewells brief, reassure your child that you will return, and leave them in the care of a staff member. While this approach may seem impersonal, reasoning with a young child experiencing separation anxiety is often not productive. Our staff will console and reassure them, helping them adjust to the school routine and engage in activities. You're welcome to call us during the day to check on your child's well-being.

Separation difficulties are a natural part of growing up, indicating your child's readiness to expand their social circle. We understand this adjustment can be more challenging for parents than for children. Here are some tips that may help:

- a) **Confidence:** Let your child know they are ready for this new learning experience. Provide them with the reassurance they need, and they will adjust, enjoy school, and make friends.
- b) **Consistency:** Maintain consistent routines at home and school daily. Your child will feel secure knowing you are consistent and reliable, helping them navigate through any testing behaviors.
- c) **Support:** Don't hesitate to reach out to the classroom teacher or Executive Director if you encounter difficulties. Our staff can provide support and suggestions to ensure smoother transitions.

2. Arrival/Dismissal Times

The arrival time for morning-only or full-day students is between **8:45-9am**. The dismissal time for morning-only students is between **11:45am-12pm**. The arrival time for afternoon-only students is between **12:45-1pm**. The dismissal time for afternoon-only and full-day students is between **3:45-4pm**.

Please arrive on time for both drop-off and pick-up. Teachers are not scheduled or compensated to provide care beyond the school's dismissal times. A late pick-up fee of **\$5 for every five minutes** (or portion thereof) will be charged beginning immediately after your child's scheduled dismissal time.

If a child has not been picked up, MSYC will first attempt to contact the child's parent(s) or guardian(s). If they cannot be reached, staff will contact the individuals listed as the child's emergency contacts. If MSYC is unable to reach a parent, guardian, or emergency contact within a reasonable period of time, law enforcement will be contacted to ensure the child's safety.

Repeated late pick-ups place an undue burden on staff and disrupt school operations. Continued failure to pick up a child on time may result in the termination of the student's enrollment at MSYC.

3. Arriving at School Late/Absences

If you arrive after 9:00am or 1:00pm, please park in a designated parking stall and walk your child to the office entrance at the East Campus. Ring the doorbell, and a staff member will meet you at the door to escort your child to their classroom.

Exterior doors are locked at the school so please ring the doorbell. A staff member will escort your child to the appropriate classroom to make sure the Directress or an Assistant Teacher is present and aware of your child's arrival. In a Montessori classroom, the children have a three-hour open, uninterrupted work period. For your child's Directress to have enough time for crucial lessons for *every* child in the class, your child needs to arrive promptly to begin the school day collectively. Late arrivals can be extremely disruptive to children who have already started their work. It can also be unsettling for your child to arrive late. Families should make all efforts to bring their children to school on time.

If you know you will be more than 10 minutes late, please call the school so we know when to expect your child. If your child will not be attending MSYC for any reason (illness, vacation, etc.) on a day he/she is scheduled to attend please notify the school's office.

4. Parking lot safety - **NO CHILD SHOULD EVER BE LEFT ALONE IN A CAR!**

Safety of our students is a priority at MSYC. Children (including siblings of MSYC students) should **never** be left unattended in a car. When walking through the school's parking lot at arrival or dismissal time, we ask that adults hold the hand of the child(ren) they are accompanying. We ask that you communicate MSYC parking lot procedures to all individuals responsible for dropping off or picking up your child. We appreciate adults displaying patience with MSYC staff and one another with the parking lot procedures.

Parent or Guardian will...

Watch for loose children; especially
Toddlers in transit from parking stalls.

Pull up to the appropriate stopping place
for your child's classroom (see diagram).

Keep your child buckled in the car until a
staff member arrives and then unbuckle your child.

Prepare your child by saying goodbye
giving kisses/hugs, etc. ahead of time.

Stay in your car while you are in the
drop-off queue.

Limit in-car discussions with staff
out of courtesy to others waiting in line.

Pull into a designated parking stall if you
have business to take care of inside the school.

Staff members will...

Make every effort to keep each
child safely beside them.

Show you the correct stopping
place when appropriate.

Greet your vehicle as soon as
possible.

Welcome your child by name
with a smile.

Guide students to their classroom.

Encourage you to phone or
schedule a visit to discuss your child.

Encourage you to pull out of
the queue when appropriate.

5. Arrival/Dismissal Procedures for Toddlers

When you arrive to MSYC, please park in one of the designated parking stalls close to the "Toddler Class" gate entrance. It's important that adults dropping off/picking up park in a designated stall and avoid parking just outside the fence or gate. At arrival time, please unload your child and hold their hand while crossing the parking lot to the gate leading to our largest outdoor classroom on the south side of the school. Toddlers must be accompanied by an adult through the first gate. At the second gate, the Directress or one of her Assistant Teachers will welcome your child into the outdoor classroom.

Adults picking up toddlers at dismissal time should come through the "Toddler Class" gate, pause, and not pass through the second gate. A Directress or Assistant Teachers will greet you and guide your child to retrieve any items they've brought with them, such as jackets or backpacks. The Directress or Assistant Teacher will then escort your child to you.

For security reasons, adults should not pass through the second gate into the outdoor classroom at arrival or dismissal time unless students are starting or ending their day inside. This protocol also helps reduce stress for children who may be uncomfortable with unfamiliar adults in their learning environment.

Adults dropping off or picking up may enter through the second gate only when Toddler classes are starting or ending their day indoors. On those days, please escort your child along the sidewalk in the outdoor classroom to their specific class. The Directress or an Assistant Teacher will greet you at the classroom door and assist your child with stowing any belongings.

Children are not permitted to leave school with anyone who is not on their Children's Record Form. We must have the full name, address, and phone number of adults who are authorized to pick up children. The staff member on duty will request photo identification from anyone who does not regularly pick up your child.

6. Arrival/Dismissal Procedures for Preschoolers

At MSYC, we use car lines for dropping off and picking up students, which significantly enhances the safety of our parking lot environment. **Each Preschool Program classroom has unique drop off/pick up procedures as explained on pages 18-20 in this handbook.** While car lines might seem slower, our system, refined over 45+ years of experience, is highly efficient. By minimizing the number of children walking through the lot while cars are in motion, the risk of accidents is greatly reduced. This system is particularly beneficial for families with multiple children, as parents do not need to unbuckle several children when only dropping off a single child. Additionally, the car line method fosters a sense of independence in children, as they walk into the building with one of their teachers. This process also helps ensure that children are only released to adults approved by their parents/guardians. This procedure creates a calming and welcoming classroom environment, as students are escorted into their classroom one by one, rather than entering in a large group.

A staff member will escort Preschool children from and to vehicles in the car line as soon as possible. The car lines will only be used during the following arrival dismissal times: 8:45-9:00am, 11:45am-12:00pm, and 3:45-4:00pm. If you arrive late, please following the instructions found on page 15 of this handbook.

If you arrive early for dropping off or picking up, please remain in your car. When arriving for drop off, please keep your child buckled in their car seat until a staff member arrives at the car door to collect your child. At that time, please unbuckle your child from their car seat. **Children should not be unbuckled from their car seats until a staff member arrives at the car door.** The staff member will open your child's car door and assist them in getting out of the vehicle. When arrive for pick up, please remain in your car until a staff member is in the process of walking your child out to you. At that time, please exit your car and open your child's car door. You will collect your child from a staff member. MSYC staff will not load children in cars or car seats. It is the responsibility of the adult picking up to do this.

Children are not permitted to leave school with anyone who is not on their Children's Record Form. We must have the full name, address, and phone number of adults who are authorized to pick up children. The staff member on duty will request photo identification from anyone who does not regularly pick up your child.

7. Two children in different classrooms/different campuses

If you have two children in two different classrooms or at two different campuses, our office will contact you with the most efficient plan for the arrival and dismissal times of your children. Some examples of plans include: If you have a Toddler and a Preschooler; you may drop off/pick up your Preschooler using the drop-off/pick-up lane and then park to escort your Toddler to the Toddler arrival/dismissal area OR you may park and escort your Toddler and your Preschooler to the Toddler arrival/dismissal area and a MSYC staff member will escort your Preschooler to his/her classroom.

MSYC Parking Lot Procedures

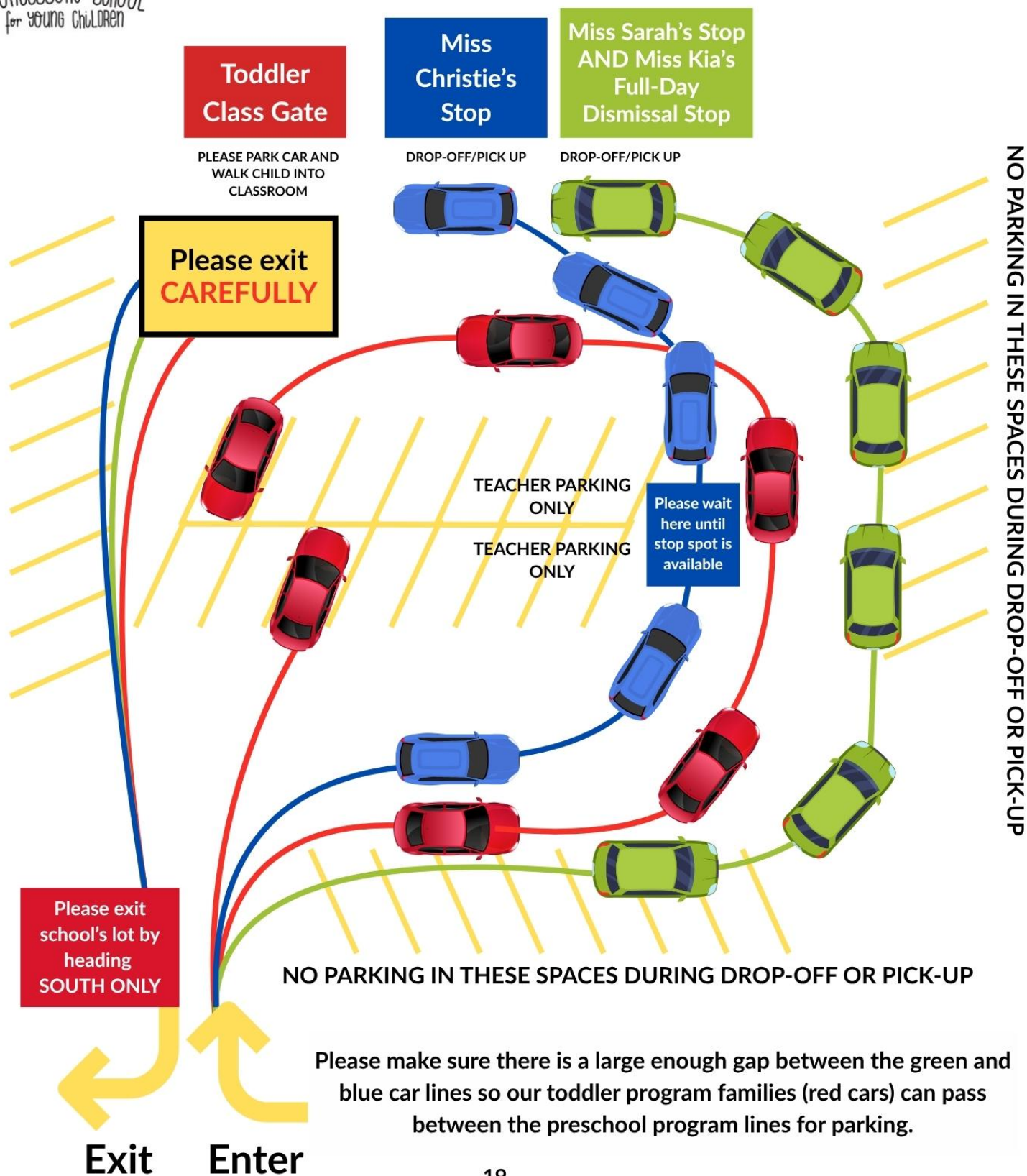
For the safety of our children and to facilitate a smooth flow of traffic, all parents are asked to comply with the following guidelines:

- Children are to remain **buckled** in their car seat during arrival time. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to unbuckle/buckle a child into his/her car seat at arrival and dismissal times.
- All cars should turn into the East Campus parking lot from the southbound lane of 48th Street. **Do not attempt to turn left from northbound 48th Street.**
- Those dropping off **Toddlers for the East Campus OR West Campus** should park in a designated parking spot and escort their child in through the gate marked "Toddler Class" on the diagram. Toddlers will be dismissed from this same area.
- **Preschool drop-off and pick-up for Miss Christie's and Miss Sarah's classes and pick-up for Miss Kia's PM-only or Full-Day class** will follow the traffic flow diagram on page 18. **Preschool drop-off for Miss Kia's class** will follow the traffic flow diagram on page 19.
- Those going to **Miss Sarah's class for arrival or dismissal time OR Miss Kia's PM-only or Full-Day class for dismissal time** should form a line hugging the outside of the lot, stopping at the bottom of the steps. Once you have dropped off/picked up your child you may have to drive around the car stopped at Miss Christie's stopping space.
- Those going to **Miss Christie's class for arrival or dismissal time** should stay to the inside and pause at the top of the curve until the stopping space for Miss Christie's class is open.
- Those going to **Miss Kia's class at the West Campus for arrival time (or dismissal time for AM-only students)** will need to come from the west on A St. and turn RIGHT into the "horseshoe-shaped" driveway in front of the school. When exiting the driveway all cars must turn RIGHT (head east) on A St. **No left turn entry or exiting is allowed.** **Please note, this flow of cars is required by the city of Lincoln!**
- If you need to accompany your child into the building, park in one of the designated Toddler spots. To avoid blocking the traffic flow, please do not park in the north end or far east parking spots during drop-off and pick-up times.
- **All cars leaving the lot should exit by turning right (heading south) on 48th Street.**

THE PARKING LOT IS VERY BUSY! PLEASE WATCH FOR ADULTS, CHILDREN, AND CARS FROM ALL DIRECTIONS!!!



TRAFFIC FLOW FOR DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP AT EAST CAMPUS

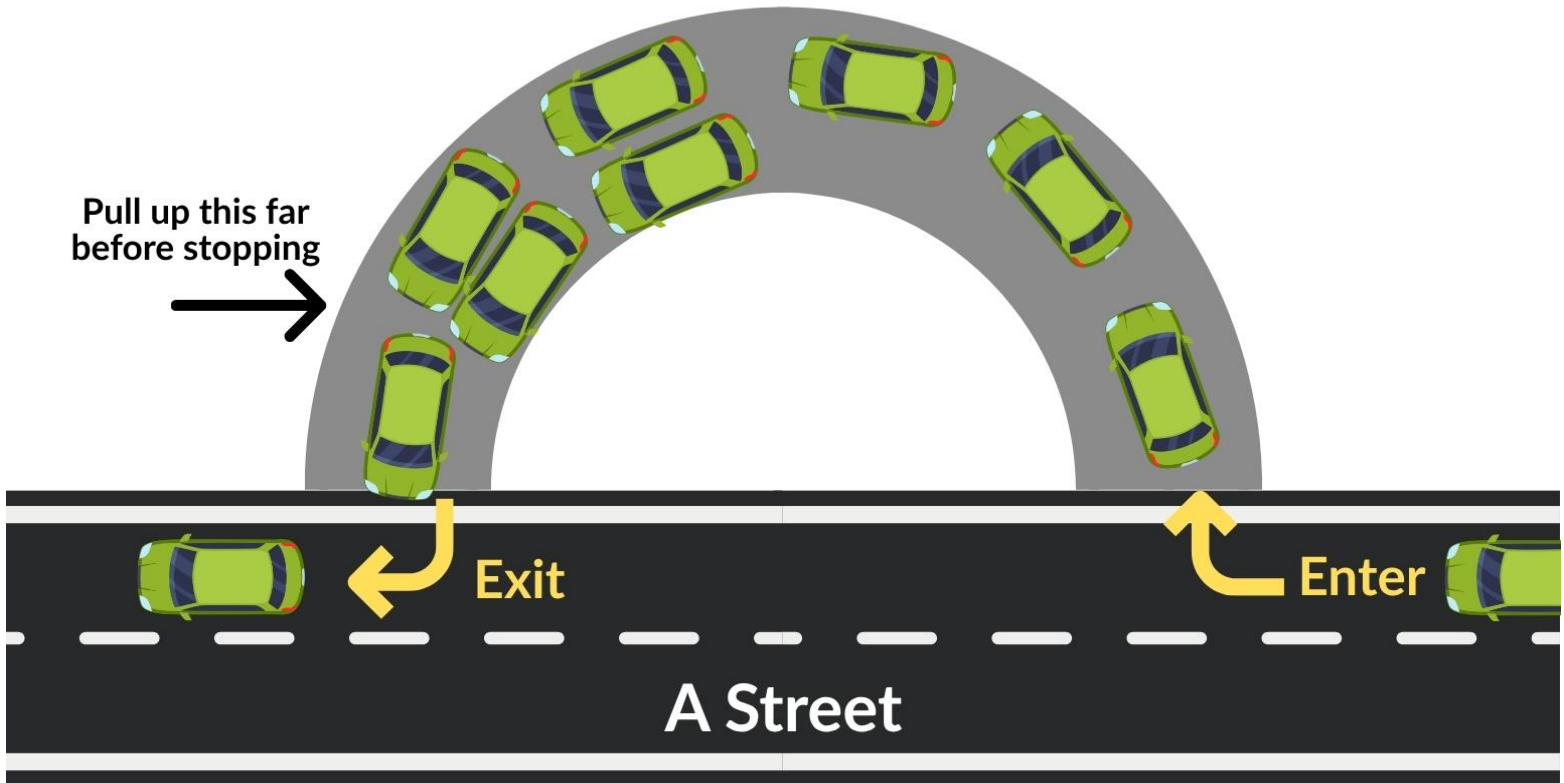




TRAFFIC FLOW FOR DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP AT WEST CAMPUS



Miss Kia's Drop-off/Pick-Up Stop for AM-only Students and Drop-off for Full-day Students



Those going to Miss Kia's horseshoe-shaped driveway at the West Campus will need to come from the west on A Street and turn RIGHT into the "horseshoe-shaped" driveway in front of the school.

When exiting the driveway, all cars must turn RIGHT (head east) on A Street.

When dropping off or picking up, please pull forward as much as possible so you are almost exiting the driveway so a car line can form behind you. To prevent our car line from holding up traffic on A Street, we ask that an internal care line be formed on the right side of the driveway and then a second care line be formed on the left side of the driveway if needed.

NO LFET TURN ENTRY OR EXITING IS ALLOWED.

Please note, this flow of cars is required by the city of Lincoln!

VIII. MSYC Policies

Below is a discussion of those things that keep us safe, legal, and financially solvent. What do you do when your child is ill? What do we do in the unlikely event that your child is injured? Is there a refund on tuition when you're on vacation or when your child has an extended illness? How about tuition payments? Read on for answers to these and other questions.

A. Illness

If your child becomes ill at home with any of the following, he/she should not attend school:

- fever of 100 degrees or more
- diarrhea
- vomiting
- rash
- chicken pox
- ringworm
- impetigo
- head lice
- pink eye
- other communicable viruses/diseases

Please notify the school's office if your child will not be attending due to illness. The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department requires us to keep an illness and symptom log, so please be prepared to share this information with the school's office. Families will be contacted if a child or staff member has been diagnosed with a reportable communicable disease. Confidentiality will be respected regarding your child's health. If your child will need medication upon returning to school, please inform the staff. We do not administer medication at school unless it is emergency medication. Many medications can now be administered in the mornings and evenings, so please ask your child's doctor if this is possible. If your child must take medication during school hours, including inhalers and epi-pens, please contact the office to complete a Medication Administration Plan.

A child may also be excluded or sent home if they are not feeling well enough to participate in daily activities with their peers.

If your child becomes ill at school, you (or a designated guardian) will need to pick up your child immediately. Until you arrive, we will do our best to keep your child comfortable and separate from other children.

B. Emergencies and Emergency Response to Life-Threatening Asthma or Anaphylaxis

In the rare event of an emergency, our staff will obtain treatment for your child by calling the parent and/or the specified emergency contact person. In a time-sensitive medical emergency, our staff will contact the child's physician and/or admit your child to the nearest hospital emergency room or summon an ambulance. A written record of any accident involving an emergency will be kept in your child's file.

Please notify the school's office of changes to emergency contacts.

If there is ever an emergency need for students and staff to be evacuated from MSYC, we will relocate from the East Campus to the West Campus or vice versa. If both campuses must be evacuated then we will go to Christ United Methodist Church at 4530 A Street. The church's office phone # is 402-489-9618. An alternate number at the church is 402-671-5017. We will notify families by email and phone if there is a need for us to relocate.

We have special, practiced procedures for events such as tornadoes and fires. School evacuation plans are posted in each classroom and will be followed in the event of a fire or other event that requires students and

staff to quickly evacuate the building. Monthly fire drills/quarterly tornado drills will be conducted to familiarize children with the evacuation procedures, as well as to fulfill state mandates.

Montessori School for Young Children (MSYC) is committed to providing a safe environment for all children and staff. MSYC maintains procedures for responding to life-threatening asthma attacks and systemic allergic reactions (anaphylaxis).

Emergency Response

If an individual exhibits symptoms of a life-threatening asthma attack or anaphylaxis, staff will:

- Call 911 immediately.
- Administer prescribed or authorized emergency medication (such as an epinephrine auto-injector or asthma medication) in accordance with the individual's health care plan or standing medical orders.
- Monitor the individual's condition until Emergency Medical Services (EMS) arrive.
- Contact the child's parent or guardian as soon as possible.
- Complete all required incident documentation.

Any individual who receives epinephrine will be transported by EMS to a medical facility for further evaluation.

Children with Asthma or Severe Allergies

Parents of children with diagnosed asthma or severe allergies are responsible for providing:

- A current physician-signed Asthma or Allergy Action Plan.
- Any prescribed emergency medications before the child's first day of attendance.
- Updated medical information whenever treatment or medications change.

Staff Training

MSYC provides training for designated staff on recognizing life-threatening asthma and anaphylaxis, administering emergency medications, and implementing emergency response procedures. Staff maintain CPR and First Aid certification as required by licensing regulations.

C. Snow (or severe cold weather) Days

In the event of bad weather, please refer to radio stations, KFOR (AM 1240) or KLIN (AM1100). You can also watch Channel 10-11 or Channel 8. **If Lincoln Public Schools cancel classes, then MSYC will also cancel classes.** If we close after the start of classes, someone from the school will contact you to come pick up your child. The school calendar is designed to accommodate up to five weather-related closure days. If weather or other emergency conditions result in closures beyond that, MSYC will determine an appropriate plan based on the circumstances and will communicate any updates to families as needed.

D. Child Abuse-Neglect

If an MSYC staff member has reason to believe child abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse may be occurring in the child care center, in the child's home, or elsewhere they will immediately file a report with the Child Abuse-Neglect Hotline (1-800-652-1999).

E. Your Financial Obligation to MSYC

Tuition rates are based on a child's enrollment for one school year (August through May). The annual tuition total is divided into ten equal installments based on your child's schedule. Tuition payments are collected monthly from August through May of each school year. **Monthly statements are not issued.** Please refer to the weekly Notes from the Office for reminders of when tuition payments are due.

1. Tuition/Materials Fee Information

Montessori School for Young Children 2026-2027 Tuition Monthly Payments

Morning Toddler Tuition*

Five days	\$595.00
Four days	\$505.50
Three days	\$417.00

Full-Day Toddler Tuition*

Five days	\$1,002.00
Four days	\$836.00
Three days	\$670.00

Rate until the **month following 3rd birthday*

Half-Day Preschool Tuition

Five days	\$549.00
Four days	\$463.00
Three days	\$386.00

Full-Day Preschool Tuition

Five days	\$931.00
Four days	\$768.00
Three days	\$621.00

*If your child will attend a combination of full- and part-time days, please contact the office (402-489-4366) for rates.

2. Before Care Program & After Care Program

MSYC offers a Before Care Program for Preschool and Toddler students from 7:45-8:45am and an After Care Program for PM or Full-Day Preschool students and Full-Day Toddler students from 4-5:30pm. Both programs require a minimum enrollment to operate and a completed monthly or annual agreement to participate.

Before Care is \$6.00 per day for Preschool students and \$7.00 per day for Toddler students. Children may bring a virtually mess-free breakfast, such as dry cereal, cereal bars, sandwiches, bagels, muffins, or yogurt. The morning is spent easing into the day with outdoor activities or quiet play and stories indoors.

After Care is \$9.00 per day for Preschool students and \$10.00 per day for Toddler students. Payment for both programs is due on the tuition due date listed on the school year calendar.

Families interested in enrolling their child should contact the office for registration information.

3. Tuition Prorating Policy

Tuition is based on a student's annual enrollment and cannot be reduced for vacations, illness, or other absences.

Students who enroll or withdraw during the school year will have their annual tuition prorated based on the portion of the school year they are enrolled. A 30-day written notice is required prior to withdrawal, and tuition will continue to accrue during that notice period.

If a student's schedule changes during the school year, their annual tuition will be recalculated based on the amount of time spent in each schedule. Any payments already made will be applied to the revised annual tuition total, and an updated payment schedule will be provided for the remaining balance.

Requests to reduce a student's schedule for the second semester must be submitted by the first day of the second semester. Any approved tuition adjustment will become effective on February 1st or earlier if the vacated spot is filled by another student.

Requests submitted after the first day of the second semester will not result in a tuition adjustment unless the vacated spot is filled by another student. If the spot is filled, the tuition adjustment will become effective on the date the new student begins, and a revised payment plan will be provided if applicable.

Families who have prepaid tuition and are eligible for a tuition adjustment based on the circumstances above will receive a prorated refund.

5. Child Care Subsidy Program

MSYC accepts the Child Care Subsidy Program for families who qualify through the State of Nebraska. A limited number of Title XX students can be enrolled each school year. The family is responsible for contacting DHHS to apply for assistance. If a family receives the child care subsidy and their child(ren) are absent from school for any reason except scheduled school breaks or snow days, they may be responsible for paying MSYC the state's hourly or daily rates. **This includes absences due to illness.** Failure to pay MSYC these fees may result in the family losing the subsidy benefit through the state. **MSYC reserves the right to turn past due accounts over to a collection agency.**

F. Tuition Payment Options

1. Monthly Tuition and Past Due Accounts

At MSYC, tuition is due on the first of each month, except for the August payment, which is due 10 days before the school year begins. Families have until the 8th of the month to make their tuition payments. Payments made on or after the 9th of the month must include a \$35 late payment fee. If a tuition payment is not made by the 14th of the month, the child is no longer considered enrolled at MSYC and may not attend. The child's spot will then be released to a family on the waitlist. If the child's spot is not filled and the family wishes to re-enroll, a \$35 re-enrollment fee will be charged, and any previous balances must be paid before the child can return to MSYC. Families experiencing a financial emergency should contact the school's office for assistance.

Families who incur three late payments within a 12-month period will be discharged from MSYC. They may reapply for enrollment twelve months following the discharge, with a new \$100 enrollment fee. Upon re-enrollment, the family will be allowed only one late payment within a twelve-month period. If a second

late payment occurs during this period, the family will be permanently discharged and will not be allowed any future enrollment at MSYC.

MSYC reserves the right to turn past due accounts over to a collection agency.

2. Returned Checks/Payments

The return of a check issued to the Montessori School for Young Children or an ACH payment that cannot be processed due to insufficient funds will result in a \$25.00 service charge per check placed against the account of the student on whose behalf the check was presented. Each account will be allowed two (2) returned checks after which payment by check will not be accepted. All returned checks will be forwarded to collections if the amount of the check plus the service fee has not been paid within the ten (10) business days of the non-payment.

3. Withdrawal and Enrollment Fee

A \$100 Enrollment Fee accompanied your child's initial enrollment application. This is a non-refundable fee.

If you choose to withdraw your child from school before the end of the school year, his/her space will be filled from our waiting list, so please deliberate carefully before deciding. A written notice is due to MSYC's office 30-days before a child is withdrawn mid-year.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's classroom progress, whether it is about his/her relationship to the environment, the teachers, or other children, please talk to the Directress directly and promptly. If necessary the Executive Director will collaborate with the individuals who are involved to resolve any issues.

4. Barb Francis Scholarship Program

The Barb Francis Scholarship Program at MSYC has been providing income-based financial aid for over 20 years, helping families by reducing their monthly tuition payments. This financial support is made possible through generous donations, grants, and successful fundraisers. Scholarship applications are due in July for the following school year, with limited funds available for families who experience an emergency need after the school year has begun. Families receiving scholarships must reapply annually to continue receiving aid.

G. Children with Special Needs

In the context of our Montessori school, a child with special needs is defined as one who requires additional support and accommodations to thrive in the educational environment. This may include children with physical disabilities, developmental delays, learning differences, sensory impairments, or behavioral and emotional challenges. While we strive to provide an inclusive and supportive atmosphere where every child can reach their full potential, MSYC may not be able to offer all the specialized support services some children might need. Our approach includes collaborative efforts with parents, specialists, and educators. However, it is important to note that our staff must be able to provide sufficient individualized attention to all students and cannot dedicate a staff member to an individual child for a majority of or their entire school day. The safety of our students and staff is a top priority. If MSYC finds

itself in a position where it is unable to fully support a student with special needs while also meeting the needs of all other students in the classroom, we will work with the child's family to explore alternative arrangements or resources that may be more suitable for the child's needs.

H. Extracurricular Activities

For the most up-to-date information about the extracurricular activities and additional services the school offers each school year for currently enrolled or alumni students, please refer to the "Programs" section of MSYC's website at www.montessorilincn.org. These activities are offered immediately after school or in the evenings. They may include programs such as the UpField soccer program, the Alumni Spanish Club, Kidz Educational Dance Express, and more. Please contact our office with any questions about these programs, including fees and the days and times the activities are offered.

2026-2027 MSYC Staff Directory

Executive Director	Emily Dutter dutter.emily@gmail.com	402-617-6051
Administrative Assistant	Emily Hardy emilylynnhardy@gmail.com	
Administrative Assistant	Rachel Moore	
Full-Day Directress-Preschool	Christie Lederer christielederer70@gmail.com	402-202-5485
Full-Day Directress-Preschool	Kia Hulvershorn hulvershornkia5@gmail.com	402-906-6949
Full-Day Directress-Preschool	Sarah Bretta hollissarah10@gmail.com	402-405-7600
Directress-Toddlers East Campus – AMs West Campus - PMs	Beth Reckamp elizreckamp@gmail.com	815-403-3479
Directress-Toddlers West Campus – AMs & PMs	Lisa Michel lisamilan@me.com	402-540-5745
Spanish Directress	Gina Huerta	
Assistant for Miss Christie	Rumi Misaki (AM & PM)	
Assistants for Miss Kia	Skylar White (AM & PM) Ashley Jones (AM)	
Assistants for Miss Sarah	Liliana Martinez (AM) and Mollie Ferguson (AM) Liliana Martinez (PM)	
Toddler Program Assistants and/or Before Care-After Care Supervisors	Natalie Berner Kierah Haase Emily Hardy Sharon Irvin Ashley Jones Liliana Martinez Marta Martinez Rosalva Martinez Athraa Mohammed Ali Rachel Moore Ashley Payne Elyse Vinton	