



Heartwood  
montessori

## **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

### **Contact Information**

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## Heartwood Montessori School Program Plan

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Heartwood Montessori School's Program Plan follows the Educational Theory and Methodology of Dr. Maria Montessori.

Well-educated teachers ensure a strong educational foundation for your child, facilitated in a safe, respectful and nurturing environment. A well-balanced community of children provides optimal opportunities for your child to establish meaningful peer relationships and establish membership in a community that cultivates helpfulness, joy and respect for each child.

Heartwood Montessori School is committed to excellence in education. This commitment is realized with a strong partnership between school and family, for the benefit of each child. There are several components to our education efforts: education of staff, education of adults, education of the children and education of the greater parent community.

Heartwood Montessori School offers children access to a quality Montessori environment. All children are free to explore their interests within their capabilities, while under careful supervision by trained staff at all times. "Supervision" means a Heartwood staff person is accountable for each child's care, can intervene to protect the health and safety of each child, and is within sight and hearing of each child at all times and all children in attendance are within sight and hearing of qualified staff at all times.

Families are encouraged to attend Community Education meetings.

### **Mission**

Heartwood Montessori School grows community by empowering children through respect, independence, and discovery.

### **Philosophy**

Heartwood Montessori School offers a variety of learning experiences that include physical, intellectual, social and emotional development. Our philosophy rests on the premise that each child is a unique and special individual with varying interests, needs and abilities. Children are respected as different from adults and as individuals who are different from one another.

Daily communication, formal conferences and community education classes contribute to an atmosphere in which each child can realize their full potential. An open, supportive relationship between teachers and families, and congruence between the home and school environments are essential to providing optimal conditions for the child.

## Program Goals

The primary goal of a Montessori program is to help each child reach full potential in all areas of life. Activities promote the development of social skills, emotional growth, and physical coordination as well as cognitive preparation. The developmental curriculum, under the direction of a Montessori trained teacher, allows the child to experience the joy of learning, time to enjoy the process, ensures the development of self-esteem, and provides the experiences from which children create their own knowledge.

Heartwood is committed to the four goals of Early Childhood Anti Bias Anti Racist Education:

1. Each child demonstrates self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identity;
2. Each child expresses comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections;
3. Each child increasingly recognizes unfairness, acquires language to describe unfairness, and understands that unfairness hurts;
4. Each child becomes empowered with skills to act, with others or alone, against biased and racist acts.

There are three elements vital to a successful Montessori environment:

*The Montessori Teacher:* The teacher in a Montessori environment has several important roles within the classroom. It is their job to be a facilitator of learning, preparing the classroom on a daily basis for each child. The teacher acts as a guide to the child, directing the child's learning in a progressive manner. This gentle guiding enables the child to develop fully, through a wide range of experiences, and at their own pace. It also allows the child opportunities for self mastery, learning and success. The teacher also acts as liaison to the child's family, and is charged with ensuring open and honest communication, using conferences and community education events, in order to guarantee common goals for each child's complete development.

*The Montessori Materials:* A comprehensive range of materials designed by Maria Montessori are the signature pieces of a Montessori classroom. Each piece is self-correcting in nature, and allows the child mastery through successful repetition. The materials are considered the second teacher behind the Montessori teacher.

*The Prepared Environment:* The third component of the authentic Montessori classroom is the prepared environment. Each day, the classroom is made ready for the children, ensuring their success by careful attention to detail. Pitchers are filled, paper restocked, cloths unfolded – awaiting the children to enter and discover what awaits them on the shelves. The order of the classroom gives opportunity for order within the child, allowing the child to be a more peaceful participant within the community of the classroom.

## Montessori Curricula

Heartwood Montessori School has beautiful, well-appointed classrooms with the full complement of Montessori materials. The complete sets of Montessori materials comprise the Montessori curricula in the following areas: Practical Life, Sensorial, Music, Social Studies, Words, Numbers, Science, and Art.

*Practical Life* materials are simplified, child-sized replicas of those tools which diverse groups of people use to complete their daily life tasks. The Practical Life activities range from the isolation of skills such as pouring and scooping, folding napkins, care of the indoor and outdoor environments, dressing frames which isolate the opening and closing mechanisms found on children's clothing, and food preparation activities reflecting the child's cultural background.

*Sensorial* materials isolate singular properties with the intention of refining one sense at a time. These activities also require the children to exercise their full range of movement from fine to gross motor skill development.

*Music* is present in the Montessori classroom through the use of bells, chimes, and group singing and dancing, often occurring spontaneously and joyously within the daily life of the community.

*Social Studies* materials, presented in a manner incorporating the children's sensorial impressions, allow the children to construct concrete impressions of abstract geographic and social concepts. The Montessori Social Studies curriculum incorporates the use of world maps, flag studies, and animal studies. We provide children with real artifacts from around the world to explore.

*Words* work in the Montessori classroom begins by working on Oral Language development in the youngest children through beginning Grammar work for the oldest. As children progress through the curriculum, they learn the phonetic sounds of cursive and print letters, cursive penmanship, technical reading and reading for comprehension. Furthermore, the Montessori teacher is trained to observe the children for readiness and to present these materials in a fun and accessible manner to instill a lifelong love of reading.

*Numbers* comprehension in young children begins long before formal presentations; children are offered a plethora of opportunities within the Montessori environment to practice 1:1 correspondence and spatial relationships. The Montessori Guide will also present numerals in relation to quantity; linear counting 1-10, 1-20, and 1-100; skip counting; beginning work with the decimal system; addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Older children may advance to beginning fraction work.

*Science and Art* are both offered in myriad exploratory materials. Following their interests, children may explore materials relating to Botany, Zoology, or Astronomy. Science experiments in the Montessori environment are designed to allow the children freedom to explore, observe, and draw their own conclusions about the world. Art materials are also offered for free exploration within an ordered fashion. Presentations of new material may be given to children as their interests and skills develop throughout their time in the environment.

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## About Heartwood Montessori School

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### Children Served

Children's House: Children 33 months – 6 years of age. Heartwood Montessori School ("HMS") currently enrolls up to 60 children.

Heartwood Montessori School admits children around 3 years of age and endorses a three-year program, including the Kindergarten year, to provide maximum advantage of the Montessori Method. Four year-olds will be placed with a two year commitment, to carry them through that Kindergarten year. It is the policy of HMS to not enroll any child who is already 5 years of age. This will guarantee a child at least a two year relationship with the community. All children must be toileting independently before enrollment. No child will be accepted for enrollment while still using diapers for their toileting needs.

### Special Needs

Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for all individuals.

All children are welcome to participate in the programs offered at Heartwood Montessori School. If any child requires special services, the families, teacher and health consultant or outreach consultant will meet to discuss such needs and possible services required. A child may be excluded from the preschool program if they require more care than the program staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children enrolled.

### Calendar

Heartwood Montessori School operates year round. School calendars will be emailed each spring to each family enrolled. Additional calendars are available at any time.

### Hours of Operation\*

Monday-Friday

8:00 am-12:00 pm	Morning program
8:30 am-3:30 pm	School day program
8:00 am-5:30 pm	All Day program

\*Hours subject to change.

## Late Arrivals

Please be aware that our late arrival policy is designed to support children's health and safety as well as their natural sense of order and craving for routine and predictability. **Children must arrive during their designated arrival window**, before their uninterrupted work cycle has begun. **No child will be admitted outside their designated arrival window without prior arrangement.**

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## Enrollment and Payment Policies

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Heartwood Montessori School admits new children on a first-come first-served basis. Returning children are given priority registration for the next year.

We strive to ensure an authentic Montessori Children's House experience for every child. To that end, we require that each family seeking enrollment be willing to commit to sending their child to HMS through their Kindergarten year. This safeguards not only that child's experience, but also the experience of the other children in the community. In families where an older child was withdrawn to attend Kindergarten at another school, any younger siblings will not be guaranteed placement in our school.

We believe the relationship between home and school is vital to a successful experience for each child. It is our desire to draw families who realize the importance of family support and involvement, to create community education programs, and to develop strong partnerships with families for the benefit of each child.

All paperwork, including immunization records, must be completed before the child's first day. A complete Healthcare Summary must be on file within 30 days of enrollment.

## Materials Fee

A Materials Fee in the amount of \$250.00 is due each year, for each child, to hold their place at Heartwood for the upcoming school year. This fee is additional to all tuition costs, and is non-refundable.

## Tuition

Tuition is due the first of each month. Children who will complete their third or fourth year at Heartwood and are five years old on or before September 1 will receive a tuition discount of 50%.

## Late Fees

Tuition is due on the first day of each month. Understanding that sometimes events unfold despite our best efforts, we implement a 5 day grace period. Any payments submitted on or before the last day of that grace period will be accepted as timely. However, any payments submitted after the grace period will be assessed a **\$10.00 PER DAY** late charge.

## Non Sufficient Funds Checks

We are happy to accept personal checks for payment of tuition. If a check is returned to the school as Non Sufficient Funds, we will assess a standard \$20.00 per check handling fee.

## Non-Payment of Tuition

All tuition is due on the first day of each month. Any arrears, including late charges and other fees, must be paid by the first day of the following month, in order for that child to be able to attend school. We fully understand that circumstances can change often and quickly for a family. Please communicate with the Director if you anticipate any difficulties, and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

## Licensing Authority Contact Information

Heartwood Montessori School operates under license from the Department of Human Services, Licensing division. DHS can be contacted at (651) 431 6500.

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## Health and Safety Policies and Procedures

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### Immunization Policy

Heartwood Montessori School complies with DHS and MN Department of Health requirements with regards to immunizations. In accordance with state and licensing regulations, a copy of a child's complete Immunization Record is required to be on file at school within 30 days at the time of enrollment. A DHS Immunization Record will be provided along with the other papers for the child's file.

### Illness Policy

The State of Minnesota requires that all teachers observe students carefully for signs of illness that would require their exclusion from the classroom. **Please screen your child for symptoms prior to leaving for school. If the staff determines that a child is too ill to remain at school, the staff will either refuse admittance, or call the family and request that the child be removed from the facility.** Please be aware that this is a state requirement to minimize the unnecessary spread of infection at school.

### COVID-19 Exclusion Guidelines:

If your child has one or more of the more common symptoms (new cough/cough that gets worse, shortness of breath, fever, and loss of taste or smell), two or more of the less common symptoms (congestion, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, fatigue, diarrhea, vomiting, or nausea), or ANY symptoms during a close-contact quarantine period, your child and all siblings must stay home until a negative COVID test or other diagnosis and clearance to return to school is received. At that time, siblings may return to school and the sick child may return when well enough to participate in daily activities. If your child has only one LESS common symptom, please evaluate at home to determine if your child is well enough to participate in normal daily activities.

In the event of a positive COVID-19 test, families are required to notify Heartwood immediately so that close-contact tracing can begin and quarantine periods can be started.

Based on the above guidelines, if at any time the staff feels a child is too sick or contagious to participate in all classroom activities, the family will be notified immediately so that arrangements may be made for the child to be picked up. **An authorized person must pick up the sick child within one hour of notification** that the child is being excluded. **If a family feels that their child is not well enough to participate in ALL activities, including outdoor play, HMS requires that they stay at home until they are fully recovered.**

If a physician verifies that the child has a contagious condition, their family is required to inform the school within 24 hours. All enrolled families will be given a notice regarding contagious conditions. Other families will then have the opportunity to be alert for similar symptoms in their own children. **Ultimately, it is up to the staff at HMS to allow a child to return to the center.** If, in its sole discretion, HMS staff feels that a child is too sick or contagious to participate in activities, or poses a health hazard to other children in the environment, the doctor's recommendation will be overridden. The child will be excluded until the staff feels the child is well enough to participate in all activities and is no longer a health risk to others.

**Please see the Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 decision tree that details the guidance Heartwood will follow: [Recommended COVID-19 Decision Tree for People in Schools, Youth Programs, and Child Care Programs](#)**

### **COVID-19 Quarantine Policies:**

A close contact is defined as anyone who lives in the same household as someone who tests positive for COVID-19 OR who has been within six feet for fifteen or more minutes throughout the course of a 24-hour period of someone who tests positive for COVID.

All close contacts will be required to remain home for the full 14-day quarantine period. Due to the fact that children this age are unable to maintain 6 feet of social-distancing and must remove masks throughout the day for eating and napping, a shortened quarantine period will not be accepted to return to school. Anyone who is vaccinated or has had a positive COVID-19 test in the past 90 days does not need to quarantine, but should monitor for symptoms. In the event that the close contact develops symptoms during the quarantine period, all siblings must remain home until a negative COVID test is received.

### **Head Lice Policy**

Heartwood Montessori School asks that families notify the director if they discover an infestation of lice at home. If a child shows symptoms of a possible infestation at school, staff will check for signs of lice. If lice are

discovered, families will be notified and asked to pick up their child immediately. Children may return to school once treatment is completed and no live lice are detected.

## **Accidents and Injuries**

All Heartwood Montessori School employees are required to be trained in First Aid and CPR. In an emergency staff will assess the situation, administer appropriate aid and/or call the Emergency Services. Once Emergency Services have been called, families will be notified by phone.

The closest hospital to Heartwood Montessori School is **Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC)**.

Heartwood's designated Emergency Dentist is: **Children's Dental Services** (636 Broadway St NE).

## **Medication Policy**

HMS will administer medications to children in accordance with state and licensing regulations.

Should a child require medication during the school day, the family will be asked to fill out the Authorization to Administer Medication form. Medicine must be brought to school in the original container, with the particular child's name clearly marked thereon. At the end of the medication period, the Authorization to Administer Medication form will be placed in the child's file.

HMS will administer the fewest number of daily doses of medication possible. Please give morning and afternoon doses of medication at home whenever possible.

## **Sunscreen**

Sunscreen should be applied to the child before arriving at school. Families must supply their own sunscreen **lotion (NO aerosol)** if they would like it reapplied before afternoon outdoor time.

## **Insect Repellent**

If a family deems it necessary, they must provide their own insect repellent, clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. Each family must have a signed Authorization to Administer Medication release form on file with the school before any insect repellent can be applied.

## **Topical Lotions and Lip Moisturizers**

Any other moisturizing lotions or lip balms sent to school must be clearly marked with the child's first and last name. These items must be given directly to the teacher at arrival, to be stored by the teacher in the classroom. This is to prevent cross-contamination, and ensure the hygiene of each child's belongings.

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## Family / Staff Partnership

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### Family Orientation

An orientation will be held for all families in August. This includes a staff introduction, an overview of this Handbook, review of arrival and departure procedures, and a time for questions and answers with the teachers and Director. **This evening is for adults only.** Child care may be provided.

### Parent and Family Relationship

Heartwood Montessori School is a peaceful community of families, students, and staff. As such, we hold ourselves to high standards of civility and expect all community members to treat one another with respect and compassion. As adults, we aspire at all times to model grace, courtesy and a deep respect for our community.

Any intimidating or physical action towards staff members, including use of profanity toward staff or used on school grounds will result in program dismissal. Any staff concerns will be reported to the family immediately by Heartwood's Executive Director or Board Members to ensure transparency and clear communication.

### Community Education

Community education is requested of all families enrolled at Heartwood Montessori School. The aim is to foster community and maximize communication at conferences regarding your child's development and activities during the school day. Families will be informed of the dates and times in advance. **These evenings are for adults only.** Child care may be provided.

### Community Involvement Opportunities

The community at HMS is very active. There are many ways in which families can be involved in our program, including opportunities with the Board of Directors or any of its committees. For more information ask the director for a volunteer opportunities form.

### Ongoing and Scheduled Communication

Daily communication is facilitated during drop off and pick up, as well as through the Procure app. At drop off, please keep your child's teacher aware of changes at home –emotional or developmental changes you've noticed; a change in eating or sleeping patterns for example. This information helps the teacher understand where your child is coming from, and helps them remain attuned to their needs. Feel free to mention minor things –a poor night's sleep, an uneaten breakfast; a caregiver is out of town- when you drop off your child. At pickup, general observations and activities will be communicated by your child's teachers. If you have a particular issue you wish to discuss, you may call or email the school to set up an appointment with a teacher at your convenience.

The Procure app will be used for family communication, pictures and updates throughout the day, classroom observations, and parent/teacher conferences. The app will be used by families to check their child in and out

each day, and you can expect to receive pictures and updates. Parents and teachers can use the messaging feature for quick notes during the school day.

## **Family Events**

Family events are scheduled throughout the school year. The dates are set in advance, to enable as many families as possible to attend. This is an excellent opportunity to get to know the other families in the community. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, in-person family events will be limited.

## **Conferences**

Twice a year we will schedule parent–teacher conferences. This is a time set aside for you to review your child’s progress with their teacher regarding your child’s intellectual, physical, social and emotional progress. You will receive a written assessment to go along with the discussion. **These meetings are for adults only.** Child care may be provided. Special conferences may be scheduled on an individual basis at any time when caregivers feel there is a need.

## **Confidentiality and Data Privacy**

Records concerning your child: enrollment forms, health records, observation records, written conference reports and records and all information about your child is confidential, and will only be accessible to you, the director, your child’s teacher, and a person designated by the state licensing department to review our records for licensing purposes. All required records must be complete and in the child’s file before admittance to the program. The Immunization Record and Health Care Summary, which must be completed by a Health Care Provider, is required within 30 days of enrollment.

Information will not be given without a legal guardian’s written consent. We will not verify your child’s enrollment to anyone without your consent.

## **Family Discord**

The school is a safe haven for your child. If families are going through a custody battle or any legal proceedings they will not involve the school or any staff. If we believe that a child is in danger we will call Hennepin County Social Services, as is required by law.

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## **Children’s Belongings at School**

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We have established the following guidelines, which are in keeping with our educational philosophy as well as safety and positive role modeling. **Please clearly label everything your child brings to school.**

## **Clothing**

Children's clothes should allow for a child's freedom of movement. Children who are developing independence and toilet-training should be dressed in clothing they can put on and off easily and independently. Allowing children to dress themselves helps promote independence and self-confidence.

Our days at school include trips outside, to the garden or playground, as well as arts and crafts that have the potential to be messy. Clothing should therefore be **weather appropriate and easily washable**. We recommend that your child dress in comfortable two-piece sets, in lieu of jeans, party dresses or other items, which may hinder movement or be difficult to clean.

In keeping with the Montessori philosophy of peace, we ask that all children **refrain from dressing in clothing that depicts superheroes or other aggressive characters**. We have observed that such clothing can lead to excessively rough playground games, teasing and exclusion of certain children from activities.

Examples of unacceptable characters include Spiderman, Batman, The Incredible Hulk, Power Rangers and Power Puff Girls. Clothing depicting gentler cartoon characters, such as Bob the Builder and Winnie the Pooh are acceptable, as is clothing depicting animals including dinosaurs.

Clothing representing sporting heroes is also allowed. Teachers or older children often use this clothing as a springboard for conversation, which may lead to a language, writing or research activity.

**Each child should keep a complete change of clothing, clearly labeled, at school. Staff will help children check their cubbies regularly, and send home a list of items that should be replaced.**

## **Indoor Shoes**

We require that all children wear 'indoor' shoes while in the classroom. Indoor shoes should be comfortable so that they help create a cozy and home-like atmosphere for our children and staff. The use of indoor shoes will also eliminate the amount of dirt brought into the room, which will aid in our fight against germs and spread of illness. Open-toed sandals or flip-flops are not allowed because they can lead to tripping and injury. Examples of acceptable footwear are rubber-soled slippers or light sneakers. **These will be left at school, so please be sure to label them clearly with your child's name.**

## **Jewelry**

Children may not wear or bring jewelry to school because it is easily lost or broken and is potentially dangerous if it gets caught on something such as classroom or outdoor equipment. Small studs for children with pierced ears are acceptable.

We ask that all families take the time necessary to ensure compliance with this policy.

## **Toy Weapons**

In keeping with the Montessori philosophy of peace, we do not permit toy weapons of any kind or in any form. Bags or clothing, including backpacks and lunch boxes, worn or brought to school should not depict superhero, games or other aggressive characters. Children are discouraged from playing aggressive superhero games at school.

## **Bringing Items to School**

To mitigate the spread of illness, children may only bring a water bottle, extra clothes, their lunch, and nap items to school.

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# **Special Visits and Celebrations at School**

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## **Birthday Celebrations**

Heartwood Montessori School believes that a child's birthday is special and should be celebrated. It is our tradition to perform the following ritual in observance of a birthday:

### **Celebration of Life**

We have a special way of honoring a child in our Montessori classroom. The birthday candle is placed in the middle of the group circle. We say "The candle in the center represents our Sun. It is very hot. It is the star closest to our planet Earth. It gives everything on Earth the energy we need to grow. It takes one year for our planet Earth to travel around the Sun." The candle is lit to represent the moment of birth. The birthday child holds a globe which represents our Earth and orbits, or walks around the sun, once for each year of age. As the child walks around the sun, something special is shared about each year of the child's life. We collectively discuss the achievements of that year of life (this is when you learned to walk; this is when you started playing T-ball). After completing the walk, the child blows out the candle and makes a wish.

In preparation for your child's birthday we will provide a Celebration of Life form. On your child's birthday, please send in one birth photo, one at 1 year old, one at 2 years old, etc. Also send us the story of your child's life, which will be read during the celebration. Let your child participate in selecting pictures and writing his or her life story. The Celebration of Life is a very special occasion to honor your child. Thank you for your help in making your child's celebration a meaningful and memorable event.

### **Items to share with classmates**

While many schools allow families to send in cup-cakes or other 'treats', we would prefer something the child can share more deeply with his/her friends. We have some suggestions to follow, but by no means see this as a complete list. Please talk to your child's teacher in advance.

- ❖ Send a favorite fruit or vegetable the children can share for snack.
- ❖ Send in a copy of your child's favorite book, which we will mark with a commemorative bookplate, noting that the child donated this book in honor of their birthday.
- ❖ A simple seed planting, with a fruit, vegetable, or flower chosen by the birthday honoré can be a great learning experience, and a long-lasting memory for the children involved.
- ❖ Provide a bouquet of cut flowers for the children to use in the flower-arranging activity to beautify our classroom environment in celebration of your child's birthday.

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## Food and Nutrition at School

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**Please notify the school about any food allergies or dietary restrictions relevant to your child's participation in food preparation activities.**

### Snack

A snack consisting of two food groups (protein, vegetable, fruit, and grain) and water will be served for morning and afternoon snacks. Morning and afternoon snacks are provided by Heartwood Montessori School. If a family would prefer to provide their own snack due to allergies or food preferences, please inform your guide and the director. All snacks will be screened for allergens/food preferences and substitutes will be available for all children requiring them. Water is available at all times.

### Lunch

As of August 2021, **Heartwood Montessori School bans shellfish and whole eggs (hard-boiled, scrambled, etc.)**. If a child's lunch includes any of the following allergens, we ask the families to label the child's lunch accordingly: Peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, and baked-in eggs. We reserve the right to ban particular allergens pertaining to our community's needs.

Children enrolled in the School- and All-Day programs bring lunch from home. All lunches must be labeled with the child's name and include an ice pack. Linens including napkins are provided, as are dishes and flatware. The children set tables cooperatively, choosing linens and flower arrangements.

We ask that all children bring a healthy, well-balanced lunch, in clearly labeled, compact lunch containers that the child can open and close independently. In the interest of good eating habits, please be mindful of the nutrition offered by the food in your child's lunch. Often children discuss what they are eating, and get ideas about what's good from each other. Below are the bag lunch requirements as outlined by the USDA:

<b>Meat, poultry, fish, tofu, soy products or cheese</b> Or cooked dry beans, or peas Or peanut, soy or other nut or seed butters Or nuts and / or seeds Or yogurt	1.5 oz $\frac{3}{8}$ cup 3T 1.5 oz 6 oz. or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup
<b>Vegetable</b>	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
<b>Fruit</b>	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
<b>Grains/Bread or bread alternate</b> Whole grain-rich or enriched bread product, such as biscuit roll, muffin Whole grain-rich, enriched or fortified cooked breakfast cereal (< 6 grams sugar/dry oz.), cereal grain, and/or pasta	$\frac{1}{2}$ slice 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup

Heartwood must supplement a child's lunch from home if it is deficient in meeting the above nutrient requirements. All lunches must include one food from each of the four components. Families will be notified upon such an occurrence.

Heartwood Montessori School will offer milk daily at lunch time. If your child is in need of a milk substitute, please inform the Director. Additionally, water consumption is encouraged throughout the day for proper hydration.

Heartwood employs a Certified Food Safety Manager to implement food-handling policies and procedures. Specific food safety policies are available to families at any time.

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## Arrival and Departure Procedures

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Parents and staff need to greet one another when dropping off and picking up their child.

	Arrival Window	Departure Window
Half Day	8:00am-8:30am	11:30am-12:00pm
School Day	8:30am - 9:00am	3:00pm - 3:30pm
All Day	8:00am - 8:30am	5:00pm - 5:30pm

If you need to drop off or pick up your child outside of your drop off or pick up window, please coordinate with your child's teacher or the director. No child can be dropped off outside of your drop off window without prior arrangement.

We understand that sometimes traffic and weather will prevent you from picking up a child on time. If you find that this is the case please inform the school as soon as possible, so that we may make arrangements. To encourage timeliness on the part of parents and families, **we will apply a \$1.00 fee for every minute after the end of your child's designated departure window.**

### Drop Off/Pick Up Policies:

**Half Day:** The half day pod will drop off at the gate leading to the school yard from the parking lot. Please use parking along the fence-line whenever possible during drop off or pick up.

**School Day:** The school day pod will drop off at the gate leading to the school yard from the parking lot. Please use parking along the fence-line whenever possible during drop off or pick up.

**All Day:** The all day pod will drop off at the front door of the school building. Please park on the street and walk your child to the front door. Heartwood's designated drop-off space extends from the stair to the corner of 13th and 3rd. Please be advised that some high school students may be dropped off between 8:00-8:30 outside of the designated Heartwood drop off area. There will be adults from both the high school and Heartwood to manage drop off times.

**All departures must be conducted through the gate leading from the school yard to the parking lot. Heartwood has five designated spaces just west of the playground gate. All other spots are first-come, first-served.**

The parent is legally responsible for the child before and after the school's operating hours, even when the child is on school grounds.

If the parent fails to pick up their child and/or contact the school, and the parent or an authorized pick up person cannot be reached, school staff may release the child to the custody of Child Protective Services or other local authorities.

## Attendance

We expect children will miss school when an illness requires them to stay home. If your child is unable to attend school for any reason, please inform the school no later than the end of your arrival window. This allows us to begin our classes on time. **No child will be admitted after 9:00 am without prior arrangement.**

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## Family Permissions

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### Field Trips

The Montessori Children's House is a protected environment. Our philosophy maintains that "going out" does not serve Children's House children well. However, on those rare occasions when a field trip is appropriate, the following guidelines apply. Families will be given information about each scheduled trip and a permission slip provided well in advance. A signed permission slip is required at Heartwood Montessori School in order for any child to participate. When field trips require transportation, arrangements will be made in accordance with the Department of Human Services regulations and Minnesota law. If school bus rental is not the designated mode of transportation, Minnesota training requirements will be met. There is no transportation provided for children to attend our program.

### Research and Public Relations

Periodically, outside research agencies, photographers, advertising agencies, etc. may come to the school wanting to use the faces, names or time of the children enrolled. When these research or public relations events come up, families will be notified in advance and will have the opportunity to sign permission forms which allow their child to take part, before EACH OCCURRENCE. Permission by parents or guardians shall be documented in accordance with and to the extent required by the State of Minnesota. Permission forms will be kept in the child's file.

In any case of research or experimentation a parent or guardians written permission will be required on file at the school before a child is included in the study.

### Photography, Website, Social Media

Each classroom is equipped with a tablet, used by staff and students to document and capture work in progress. Occasionally these photographs may be used by HMS to illustrate advertising materials, the school website,

Facebook and Instagram page (@heartwoodmontessori), or other social media outlets. While the focus of the photographs will be the activities, and not the children, a child's image may occasionally be displayed. All families will be asked to sign a photography release for such use, with the option to refrain from signing.

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## Security

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The Heartwood classrooms are accessible only through a secure entrance. Only current students and staff are allowed in the school facility during Heartwood's operating hours. Parents will have access to their children at all times.

### Shared Space

Heartwood Montessori School shares the basement space consisting of the gym and kitchen with Exploration High School and St. Cyril's Church. High school students will not be in the basement shared space at the same time as Heartwood students. The parking lot is a shared space between HMS, Exploration High School, and St. Cyril's church. All parties have five designated spaces, and the rest are first-come, first-served. Please see [Appendix](#) for a diagram.

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## School Closing

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Heartwood Montessori School will make every effort to follow our calendar. In case of severe weather or other state of emergency, however, we may decide to close for a period of time. For weather-related closures, listen to WCCO 830 AM or watch WCCO Channel 4 for the "Heartwood Montessori School" listing. We will make every effort to notify families via email, our website, Procure app, and social media.

If it becomes necessary to close the school after children have arrived for the day, a staff member will notify families as soon as the decision has been made. An authorized person will be required to pick up the child as soon as possible, but no later than the closing time decided upon by the school. A late fee of **\$1.00 per minute** may be assessed if children are not picked up by the stated closing time.

### Severe Weather Procedure

In the case of severe weather, such as tornado or heavy storm, and any time the city sirens are activated, the children will be removed to the windowless hall, where they will remain, with the teachers, until danger has passed.

In case of fire the children will be evacuated, accounted for and all policies followed. For a map of the evacuation plan please ask to see Heartwood Montessori School's Policy and Procedure Book.

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## Outdoors Policy

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The outdoors is an important part of the prepared environment and children will go outside every day the wind-chill is above 10 degrees Fahrenheit and the heat index is less than 90 degrees Fahrenheit except in the event of unsafe weather conditions. Children do go outside in the rain. A child too ill to go outside must remain home.

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## Behavior Management

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Heartwood Montessori School uses the word *discipline* to refer to the spontaneous *self-discipline* of the child.

Heartwood Montessori School nurtures self-discipline, which develops over a period of many years. The basis of discipline is care: care for oneself, for others, and for the environment. The adults and children in the Montessori environment set limits for behavior based on the group's need for a safe and mutually caring community.

### Behavior Guidance

Young children learn by experimenting, testing limits, and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. The goal of guiding behavior is to help children develop safe and appropriate ways of interacting with others and the environment and help them problem solve. Heartwood Montessori School ensures that each staff member at all times demonstrates and provides each child with a positive model of acceptable behavior.

Heartwood Montessori School will use the following guidance and discipline that you can seek to apply at home as well:

- ❖ Structuring the environment to maximize positive behavior;
- ❖ Ensure that each child is provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior;
- ❖ Setting clear and enforceable limits by using natural consequences and redirection;
- ❖ Recognizing each child's individual needs;
- ❖ Protecting the safety of all children and staff;
- ❖ Teach children how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behavior in order to reduce conflicts
- ❖ "Hold the child to standard": they will rise to expectations;
- ❖ Use intrinsic, not extrinsic rewards;
- ❖ To maintain strong, effective discipline, seek consistency and clarity;
- ❖ Engage, interest the child;

- ❖ Involve, stimulate the child;
- ❖ Redirect the child from destructive, negative behavior;
- ❖ Be respectful. Maintain unconditional love. Love is not a “bargaining chip”!
- ❖ Use humor to support and defuse, not to deflate.

In the process of setting and enforcing limits, our teachers assist the children in developing self-control and respect the rights and property of others. Rules and limits in a classroom setting may differ from those in a child’s home because of the need to protect the rights and safety of other children.

In rare cases, exceptional behaviors (including, but not limited to, biting, hitting, scratching, kicking and pinching) will require immediate help and intervention from the parent. In the case of a serious safety issue, the child may need to be picked up immediately. Children may not come back into the classroom until a parent-teacher conference has been held, and appropriate plans made. These cases include:

- ❖ A child who harms, threatens or frightens other children or teachers;
- ❖ A child who harms him or herself;
- ❖ A child who is emotionally distraught and inconsolable;
- ❖ Other situations where the health and happiness of any child or staff member may be at risk.

## **Prohibited Actions**

Heartwood Montessori School is governed by the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division, which regulates daycare and preschool programs. According to licensing regulations, it is unlawful for any teacher to use the following measures to discipline a child:

- ❖ Subjection of a child to corporal punishment, which includes but is not limited to: rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, hitting, spanking, kicking, biting, pinching or otherwise physically hurting a child;
- ❖ Subjection of a child to emotional stress, which includes but is not limited to: name calling, racism, shaming, using language that threatens, humiliates or frightens the child, making derogatory remarks about the child or the child’s family;
- ❖ Punishment for lapses in toileting;
- ❖ Harmful restraint, including use of mechanical restraints such as tying is prohibited;
- ❖ Use of physical restraint, other than to physically hold a child where containment is necessary to protect that child or others from harm;
- ❖ Refusal or denial of food, water, light, warmth, clothing or medical care as a means of gaining compliant behavior;

## **Separation from the group**

No child may be separated from the group unless Heartwood Montessori School staff have tried less intrusive

methods of guiding the child's behavior which have been ineffective and the child's behavior threatens the well being of the child, other children, or staff.

A child who requires separation from the group will remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by a program staff person. When separation from the group is used as a behavior guidance technique, the child's return to the group is contingent on the child's stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation, and the child may return to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separation abates or stops.

## **Reporting Incidents of Separation**

Separating a child from the group is a last resort to curb unacceptably unsafe behavior. Before separating, less intrusive methods of guiding a child's behavior must have been tried, and have been ineffective because the child's behavior threatened the well being of oneself, other children or staff in the program.

Any and all separations from the group must be noted on a daily log, that must include the following information:

- ❖ The child's name
- ❖ The staff member's name
- ❖ Date and time of incident
- ❖ Information indicating what less intrusive methods were used to guide the child's behavior
- ❖ How the child's behavior continued to threaten the well being of the child or other children in the classroom

A child whose behavior requires separation from the rest of the students must:

- ❖ Remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be seen and heard continuously by the teacher or assistant;
- ❖ Be made aware that return to normal activity is contingent on stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation; and
- ❖ Be permitted to return to usual activity once the child has stopped or brought under control the behavior that precipitated the separation.

Additionally:

If a child is separated from the group three or more times in one day, the child's family shall be notified and the family notification shall be indicated on the daily log. Should a child's behavior cause incidents of separation five or more times in one week, the procedure for Persistent Unacceptable Behavior (below) will be followed.

## **Persistent Unacceptable Behavior**

In the case of persistent unacceptable behavior, we may also ask for any needed outside assessments to further assist our work with the child. A meeting with parents, teachers and appropriate assessors will be called to better

understand the problem, and develop a written plan. In many cases these partnerships and plans resolve problems within a few weeks. To preserve the integrity of the educational experience of the community, the family of any child who presents a safety concern to themselves or others over an observable period of time may be asked to find another program that better suits that child.

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## **Dismissal, Referral**

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Heartwood Montessori School reserves the right to disenroll a child without prior notice if in the sole opinion of Heartwood Montessori School it is in the best interest of the child, family, and/or school. Referral of a child is appropriate when it is clear that a multi-age, open-ended classroom is not the most suitable environment for that child.

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## **Grievances and Reporting**

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### **Client Grievance Procedures**

In order to effectively serve the community at Heartwood Montessori School, families and staff should work as partners. Feedback from the families is welcomed and encouraged. The school should be contacted immediately regarding any grievance which concerns the operation of the program. It is only through open and honest communication that we can hope to best serve the children in our care. If a problem should arise please contact the lead teacher and /or Director.

### **Release of Liability**

Families agree to release Heartwood Montessori School, owners, officers, and employees from liability for injury, loss, or damage to the fullest extent of the law, except in the case of gross negligence or intentional misconduct.

### **Reporting Suspected Child Maltreatment**

Any person may report abuse or neglect. All persons working with children in a licensed facility are legally required or mandated to report, and cannot shift responsibility for reporting to a supervisor or anyone else at the licensed facility. If there is any reason to believe that a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years it must be reported immediately (within 24 hours) to an outside agency.

#### **What to report**

Maltreatment includes egregious harm, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, substantial child endangerment, threatened injury, and mental injury. For definitions refer to Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03. Maltreatment must be reported if you have witnessed or have reason to believe that a child is being or has been maltreated within the last three years.

### **Who must report**

- If you work in a licensed facility, you are a “mandated reporter” and are legally required (mandated) to report maltreatment. You cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility.
- In addition, people who are not mandated reporters may voluntarily report maltreatment.

### **Where to report**

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.
- Reports concerning suspected maltreatment of children, or other violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules, in facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, should be made to the Licensing Division’s Central Intake line at 651-431-6600.
- Incidents of suspected maltreatment of children occurring within a family, in the community, at a family child care program, or in a child foster care home, should be reported to Hennepin County Child Protections at (612) 348-3552.

### **When to report**

Mandated reporters must make a report to one of the agencies listed above immediately (as soon as possible but no longer than 24 hours).

### **Information to report**

A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the maltreatment (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected maltreatment occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

### **Failure to report**

- A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been maltreated and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor.
- In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from a position allowing direct contact with, or access to, persons receiving services from programs, organizations, and/or agencies that are required to have individuals complete a background study by the Department of Human Services as listed in Minnesota Statutes, section 245C.03.

### **Retaliation prohibited**

An employer of any mandated reporter is prohibited from retaliating against:

- an employee for making a report in good faith; or
- a child who is the subject of the report.
- If an employer retaliates against an employee, the employer may be liable for damages and/or penalties.

### **Staff training**

Heartwood Montessori School trains all mandated reporters on their reporting responsibilities, according to the training requirements in the statutes and rules governing the licensed program. The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

### **Provide policy to parents**

For licensed child care centers, the mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment and must be available upon request.

### **Internal review**

When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care.

The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

- related policies and procedures were followed;
- the policies and procedures were adequate;
- there is a need for additional staff training;
- the reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and
- there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

### **Primary and secondary person or position to ensure reviews completed**

The internal review will be completed by the Director. If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, the Board President will be responsible for completing the internal review.

### **Documentation of internal review**

The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request.

### **Corrective action plan**

Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan to correct any current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder.

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## **Student Records**

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Student records may consist of, but are not limited to, attendance records, health and emergency information, parent-teacher conference reports, accident reports, and parental authorizations.

Student records are kept in a locked cabinet and are confidential to the child's legal guardians and school staff. Access to student records is protected under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The statute of limitations for keeping student records, including attendance records, is 7 years. Information will not be forwarded to other schools without parental consent.

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## Other Policies and Procedures

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Below you will find a summary of certain policies and procedures. Heartwood Montessori School maintains a policy book containing all Behavior Guidance, Emergency and Accident, Allergy Prevention and Response, Handling and Disposing of Bodily Fluids, Emergency Preparedness, Health, Maltreatment of Minors Mandated Reporting, Risk Reduction, Nap and Rest, and Drug and Alcohol Policies and Procedures. These written policies, in full, can be made available upon request at any time.

### **Pet policy**

There may be occasions, during the course of the year, for HMS to add pets to the classroom environments. The teachers and children would provide care and maintenance of the animal. It has been found that children benefit greatly from the routine and responsibilities involved in caring and providing for a pet. Families will be consulted before a particular animal is chosen, and any allergies or other medical conditions will certainly be taken into account. Currently HMS houses a bearded dragon.

### **Nap and Rest Policy**

Healthy sleep is vital to a child's optimal development and growth. At HMS, we strive to serve all of a child's needs –including a daily opportunity to rest. All children in the School Day and All Day programs will be offered a 30-minute rest period every day.

After lunch, all children will use the toilet, wash hands, and prepare for rest. The teacher or assistant will dim the room lights and aid the children in preparing for sleep, either by reading stories, or playing gentle music.

Any child who has rested quietly but is not asleep after 30 minutes will be invited to leave the rest area and return to the non-napping group. Other children may return to work once they awaken. All remaining children will be gently awakened by 2:30pm.

The school will provide appropriate nap cots, consistent with licensing requirements. Each cot will be clearly labeled with each child's name. Naps and rest will be provided in a quiet area that is physically separated from children who are engaged in an activity that will disrupt a napping or resting child. Cots must be placed so there are clear aisles and unimpeded access for both adults and children on at least one side of each piece of napping and resting equipment. Cots must be placed directly on the floor and must not be stacked when in use.

Families are welcome to provide one blanket and one small pillow or other cuddly item.. All items will be sent home for laundering each Friday, or if they become soiled during nap time.

All cots will be sanitized daily and when they become soiled.

# Appendix



**APPENDIX 2**  
of shared space agreement between Exploration High  
School and Heartwood Montessori School Northeast

