



PARENT HANDBOOK
2026 – 2027



MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF LAKE FOREST

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This Handbook, and any student directory, is not to be used commercially or lent to anyone outside the families listed therein without the permission of the Montessori School of Lake Forest. The MSLF administrative team requests your continued cooperation in adhering to the school's policies. MSLF's guidelines, detailed in this Handbook, exist to serve our parents, children, and faculty. School policies and procedures stress the preservation of Montessori environments and the safety of our children.

This Handbook is intended to inform parents of general school policies, procedures, and events. This Handbook is not part of the enrollment and tuition contract, and the school reserves the right to revise, amend, and abolish its policies, and to make exceptions to them, without notice and at any time.

Updated 10/10/2026

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MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF LAKE FOREST HISTORY

In 1965, a parent study group dedicated to the educational theories of Dr. Maria Montessori came together and hired Montessori trained teachers to begin teaching their children. In 1966, the Montessori School of Lake Forest (MSLF) was founded as a not-for-profit organization. It was the fifth Montessori school to be established in the State of Illinois. MSLF continues to pursue Dr. Montessori's philosophy of educating children.

For its first six years, MSLF rented space at the North Shore Unitarian Church in Lake Bluff. In the fall of 1971, the school moved to its own building at 1180 South Western Avenue in Lake Forest. Demand for a 0-3 program prompted the school to open classes at the Friends Meeting House in Lake Forest in 1977.

Growth brought further change to MSLF. Temporary space was leased at Lake Bluff's former East School. To provide for expanding enrollment, the board of directors and administration searched for a site suitable for consolidating all MSLF's programs. In the autumn of 1988, a 5 ½ acre parcel of wooded property located at 13700 West Laurel Drive in unincorporated Lake County was purchased, and the architectural firm of Serena & Sturm was retained to design a facility to accommodate full day, as well as parent infant, toddler, primary, and elementary programs. Occupancy of the new 23,000 square foot facility, which united previously dispersed programs, took place as scheduled in the fall of 1990 - a fitting celebration of MSLF's twenty-fifth year.

In October 1997, a 4,000 square foot elementary addition was completed. These two spacious new classrooms provided a new environment for lower elementary children and enabled upper elementary children to re-locate to a larger classroom. The addition of these new classrooms also allowed the faculty and staff to re-occupy the conference room and faculty lounge.

In February 2000, MSLF's multipurpose room and parent infant addition were dedicated. This 5,000 square feet expansion included a nurse's office, a music room, and tutoring rooms. In October 2001, Phase 1 of the Outdoor Learning and Discovery Project (ODLDP) was completed to provide classroom yards, playgrounds, prairie, and woodland. In August 2002, Phase 2 was completed to provide classrooms with planters and gardens, landscaping, and the reconfigured north parking lot. In August 2003, the school completed renovations of its west parking lot, drive, and carpool circle. Thanks to the generosity of our MSLF Board members, parents, faculty, and staff, additional gardens and trees were planted through our commemorative Garden Tribute Program. In 2012, many of the final pieces of the original ODLDP were put into place, including a sled hill and a stream bank.

In August 2002, MSLF opened its pilot Adolescent Program, which became a permanent program in January 2003. This program served students 12 to 15 years old. In 2003, the Adolescent Program leased space at Prairie Crossing Organic Farm in Grayslake, Illinois. This established it as a land-based Adolescent Program. In April 2018, MSLF's Board of Directors voted to temporarily close the program until it could be reopened at the Lake Forest Campus in 2021.

We are proud of MSLF's accomplishments and the accomplishments of its many students. MSLF holds a Certificate of Recognition as a Nonpublic School from the Illinois State Board of Education for its elementary and secondary programs and is licensed by the Department of Child and Family Services for its programs serving children less than 3 years of age. In addition, MSLF maintains compliance with Montessori standards.

MSLF MISSION AND VALUES

MISSION

To develop the whole child, cultivate curiosity and a lifelong love of learning, and give each MSLF child a strong foundation for life.

VALUES

Excellence in Education

We achieve excellence in education by inspiring children to reach their full intellectual and social potential. We provide an exceptional, authentic Montessori education with a strong core curriculum supported by unique enrichment opportunities and guided by highly trained and experienced teachers.

Excellence in Instruction

We recruit, continually develop, and retain the most qualified Montessori classroom directors from both AMI (Association Montessori Internationale) and AMS (American Montessori Society). We strive to offer an enriching, rewarding environment where staff feel valued, supported, and able to thrive.

Respect for the Child

We respect each child as an individual and are committed to guiding all students on their individual paths to independence and intellectual development. A peaceful and caring environment is created to provide an optimal learning experience for our students.

Development of the Whole Child

We develop the whole child by empowering our students to become self-aware, resourceful, empathetic, adaptable, and well prepared for life.

Appreciation of the Natural World

Our curriculum immerses students in structured and unstructured hands-on learning in the outdoor environment to promote curiosity, creativity, healthy living, and environmental stewardship.

Collaboration and Compassion

We create mixed-aged classrooms that model cooperation, empathy, mutual respect, and conflict resolution, cultivating an education for peace.

Community Engagement

By creating a supportive, nurturing environment at MSLF, we foster an engaged network of students, families, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends. We strive to collaborate with the broader Montessori community and its schools and training centers as well as with the surrounding local communities through engagement, service, and outreach.

SCHOOL DIRECTORY

DIRECTORY'S PURPOSE

Members of the faculty and staff will be happy to schedule an appointment to discuss your concerns at a mutually convenient time. Please respect their privacy and family responsibilities and do not telephone them at their homes or mobile phones unless they have specifically requested you do so.

OFFICE GUIDELINES AND VOICE MAIL EXTENSIONS

MSLF office hours are from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. The reception area is staffed from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM. Telephone messages for faculty can be left in each teacher's voice mailbox at 847-918-1000. **Teachers are not available to speak on the phone during class time.** They will return all calls as soon as possible. Emergency calls should be directed to the receptionist and will be returned immediately.

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MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF LAKE FOREST

FACULTY AND STAFF 2026-2027

TODDLER (0-3)	Toddler 1	Michaela Glusic Teresa "Monse" Guerrero Zavala TBD Zahra Azmoodeh	Teacher Assistant Assistant Assistant/After School Club
	Toddler 2	Shannon Rowe Victoria Del Rosario Kristina Bearor Yaretzi Mendoza	Teacher Assistant Assistant Assistant/After School Club
	Toddler After School Club	Zahra Azmoodeh Yaretzi Mendoza Jess Keller	Teacher Assistant Assistant
PRIMARY (3-6)	Primary 1	Carolyn Lanni May Chan	Teacher Assistant
	Primary 2	Mia Fotopoulos Katie Crews	Teacher Assistant
	Primary 3	Monica Pearson Mina Herrera	Teacher Assistant
	Primary 4	Jenny Fairbanks Karen Dietz	Teacher Assistant
	PRY After School Club 1	Eva Leung Margaret Stypik Margo Czechowski	Teacher Assistant Assistant
	PRY After School Club 2	Katie Svedman Desha Ramsey	Teacher Assistant
ELEMENTARY	Lower El	Laura Earls Caroline Clark Felicia Rivas	Teacher Assistant Assistant
	Upper El	Ekaterina Jorgensen Marion Janin	Teacher Assistant
	After School Club	Sam Ritter Nayeli Tiscareno	Teacher Assistant
ADOLESCENT PROGRAM		Danna Ayres Brandon Chartier	Program Director Teacher

MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF LAKE FOREST

FACULTY AND STAFF 2026-2027

ENRICHMENT

Eva Leung	Mandarin
Monserrat Mares	Spanish
Jess Keller	Outdoor Education
Lara Simon	Cooking
Kim Ward	Music
Sara Yost	Gardening
Becky Casey	Movement/Physical Education (P.E.)

ADMINISTRATION/SUPPORT

Hope Allegretti	Head of School, Executive Director
Ellwyn Bohnert	Health Office Assistant
Marguerite Allegretti	Engagement Coordinator
Suzanne Brown	Evening Receptionist
Lynn Dolister	Receptionist
Kevin Gallagher	Facilities Director
Tiffany Natale	Director of Finance and Operations
Teresa Pavelich	Administrative Director
Lara Simon	Food Service Coordinator
Ami Soni	Education Director
Kiara Toledo	Building Substitute

2026-2027 FACULTY AND STAFF BIOGRAPHIES

HOPE ALLEGRETTI

Executive Director, Head of School

Hope first joined MSLF in the summer of 2004, as a primary assistant. She earned her BA in Elementary Education from Southern Illinois University in 2007, completed her AMI Primary training in San Diego in the spring of 2008, and her MA in Montessori Education from Loyola College in the fall of 2008. Hope has served as a Primary Assistant and as a Toddler Assistant, Permanent Substitute, as well as a Toddler Directress and a Substitute Primary Directress during maternity leaves. In 2016, after some brief time off, she returned to MSLF as the Admissions and Marketing Director. Hope became Interim Executive Director at MSLF in the summer of 2019 and named Executive Director in July 2020. Hope has three children at MSLF: Bella is a student in the Adolescent Program; Rosie and Leo are in Upper Elementary. Her oldest son, Nico, an MSLF graduate, currently attends Libertyville High School.

MARGUERITE ALLEGRETTI

Engagement Coordinator

Marguerite joined MSLF in 2026 as an association and nonprofit professional with a background spanning member relations, alumni engagement, fundraising, sponsorships, and project management. Throughout her career, she has built meaningful relationships and created programs that connect people to organizations and causes they care about. Marguerite's experience includes roles at Smithbucklin, Kendall College, Evanston Township High School, and Chicago Cares. Marguerite spent nearly a decade as a fitness instructor with Pure Barre, developing a passion for wellness and helping women feel strong and confident. Marguerite holds a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations from Purdue University. Marguerite's two children, Innes and Leora, are both enrolled in the Primary program at MSLF.

DANNA AYRES

Adolescent Program Director

Before stepping into her role as Adolescent Program Director, Danna taught math in the MSLF Adolescent Program and at Chicago Montessori. Danna holds a BA in History, with a concentration in History of Science and a minor in Philosophy from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a Master's in Mathematics Education from DePaul University. While at MSLF, Danna completed the Montessori Orientation to Adolescent Studies and has continued her learning by regularly attending courses and workshops. Through observing her students, Danna designed her own Adolescent Montessori math curriculum, and in 2024, she was invited to speak at the AMI Refresher Course about teaching math to the Adolescent. Danna's love of learning shapes her life at school and at home, and she is always excited to continue to learn and practice new things alongside her students, from crochet to the science of sourdough to Latin. In March of 2026, the Ayres family welcomed their newest addition, baby Clara, to the family. Jack and Callen, both in Primary at MSLF, have loved stepping into the role of adoring older brothers. Outside of school, Danna loves to go on walks and enjoy nature with her children, listen to audiobooks, make and enjoy music of all kinds, knit, crochet, and do math just for fun!

ZAHRA AZMOODEH

Toddler After School Lead

Ms. Zahra comes to MSLF with over 20 years of teaching experience across diverse education settings, including traditional public schools and Modern Montessori. She is deeply committed to fostering secure, supportive, environments where children can thrive. Her approach emphasizes guiding children through their formative years, helping them become confident, independent, and joyful learners. Zahra holds an AMS certification from the Midwest Montessori Teacher Training Center in Evanston, a bachelor's degree in Clinical Psychology, and Master's in Education from the University of Tehran. Outside of teaching, Zahra enjoys learning, traveling, gardening, cooking, and spending time with family and friends.

KRISTINA BEAROR*Toddler Assistant*

Kristina joined the MSLF team in 2022 as a Toddler Assistant. She truly enjoys watching toddlers grow at MSLF and is so grateful every day that she gets to be a part of their success! She says, "MSLF is my favorite place, a home away from home."

ELLWYN BOHNERT*Health Office Assistant*

Ellwyn brings a long personal and professional history of patient care to her position at MSLF. From caring for family members declining in health, professional experience in the field of Orthotics & Prosthetics to caring for clients in nursing home settings, she has cared for many people with various nutritional, emotional, mobility, pain management, and rehabilitation needs. Ellwyn graduated from the University of Saint Francis with a bachelor's degree in biology. Thereafter, she was a substitute teacher and an adjunct teacher at Joliet Junior College and later became a Certified O&P Assistant and Orthotic Fitter. Ellwyn's daughter Zelda has attended MSLF since she was in Toddler and is currently continuing to enjoy the love of learning in the Adolescent Program.

BECKY CASEY*Movement & P.E. Teacher*

Becky lives in Libertyville with her husband and 2 kids. Becky graduated from Dominican University with a degree in Early Childhood Education, where she played volleyball and softball. Becky started her career teaching Kindergarten before starting a family. Becky returned to teaching at the Chicago Botanic Gardens at the nature preschool. After moving to Libertyville, Becky began working at Slammers Baseball, where she runs softball clinics for girls of all ages. She served as the JV softball coach at Libertyville High School for 2022 and 2023 spring seasons and continues to support the high school and feeder programs when she can.

MAY CHAN*Primary Assistant*

May has been happily married for over 20 years, and with her husband is raising 2 outstanding young men, Wesley and Garrett. May came to MSLF in 2016 and during her time here she has been a substitute teacher and assisted in Primary After School Club. May's previous experience includes working as an assistant at the Glenview Park Center preschool and as a dental assistant at the Children's Oral Care Only office, in Lincolnshire. May studied Advertising Design at Columbia College Chicago.

BRANDON CHARTIER*Adolescent Program Teacher*

Brandon joined MSLF in the 2014-2015 school year. He graduated from Western Illinois University as Department Scholar with a BA in Sociology. Following his time at WIU Brandon was employed as a Rock Climbing/High Ropes Director for various summer camps. It was during this time that Brandon found his passion for teaching. He then joined the Environmental Education staff at Nature's Classroom Institute (NCI) in the spring of 2012. Brandon learned of the Montessori method and MSLF while at NCI. After joining the MSLF team in 2014, Brandon designed and implemented the outdoor education program. He joined the Adolescent Program in 2022 and completed his AMI adolescent diploma course during the summer of 2024.

CAROLINE CLARK*Lower Elementary Assistant*

Bio coming soon

KATIE CREWS*Primary Assistant*

Katie joined the MSLF team at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year. She discovered her passion for teaching and working with children when she was a figure skating coach from 2016-2018. “Ms. Katie” loves coming to school every day and being able to nurture and learn from the children with whom she works.

MARGO CZECHOWSKI*Primary Club Assistant*

Margo joined the Primary After School Program in October 2007. She worked as a Glenview Park District Preschool teacher and a Lyon School Educational Associate for 18 years. Known affectionately as “Mrs. C.”, Margo is an enthusiastic individual ready to be a positive support to any teacher and child.

DESHA RAMSEY*Primary Club Assistant*

Bio coming soon

VICTORIA DEL ROSARIO*Toddler Assistant*

After Victoria completed her studies at Assumption College in the Philippines, she moved to Los Angeles to join her fiancé, who was studying at the University of Southern California. While in California, Victoria worked in the entertainment industry at MGM Studios for 13 years, and her family relocated to Chicago in 2007. She has three adult sons and is a proud grandmother to 2 grandchildren. When her grandchildren moved back to the Philippines, Victoria decided to go back to work. Her love of children led her to Montessori School of Long Grove, where she worked for two years before coming to MSLF during the 2023-24 school year.

KAREN DIETZ*Primary Assistant*

Karen joined MSLF in August 2025. Serving as a Montessori assistant for 11 years, she previously worked at Forest Bluff Montessori School in Lake Bluff and Country Meadows Montessori School in Gurnee. She is passionate about assisting children, preparing and maintaining the environment, modeling order, environmental care, observing curiosity, joyful work in concentration, and supporting growth towards independence. Karen lives in Gurnee with her husband of 34 years and enjoys spending time with her 2 adult children. She also enjoys biking around Lake County on the nature bike trails, reading, and grooming Koda, her standard poodle.

LYNN DOLISTER*Receptionist*

“Ms. Lynn” is an experienced receptionist who has served MSLF since 1997. Previously, she worked in many business offices and brings her great organization and attention to detail to the MSLF team. Each day, she handles the many varied duties of the receptionist with grace. Lynn takes her duties very seriously and takes responsibility for the safety and well-being of all the students at MSLF.

LAURA EARLS*Lower Elementary Teacher*

After receiving her BA in Art History from the University of Dallas and doing graduate work at Notre Dame, Laura shifted to the educational realm and received her AMI Elementary Montessori diploma at the Montessori Institute of Milwaukee. She then taught Lower Elementary at Forest Bluff School in Lake Bluff, Illinois, during which time she was a speaker at the AMI National Conference. Laura then received her AMI Primary Montessori diploma at the Midwest Montessori Institute and taught in a Primary classroom in Wisconsin, where she also served as Director of Admissions. She returned to Forest Bluff to be Head of School for a couple of years; then she worked as a Regional Program Lead for Higher Ground Education/Guidepost

Montessori, before coming to MSLF's Upper Elementary program last year. This year, Laura is excited to shift to the Lower Elementary classroom! Laura has three grown children who all attended Montessori school when they were young and are now thriving around the world! She has lived in both Paris and Rome and loves to travel, play the piano, and read.

JENNY FAIRBANKS

Primary Teacher

Jenny graduated from Barat College with a Bachelor of Arts and pursued her Montessori training at Midwest Montessori Teacher Training Center in Evanston, receiving her certification in June 2002. Prior to coming to MSLF, she was a directress for a full day Montessori class in Highland Park for 22 years. This is her first year at MSLF and she is delighted to join our amazing team! Jenny is a mom to two amazing children: Gabriella (18) and Jackson (15). Jenny enjoys spending time with her family, watching Jackson's hockey and baseball games, walking our beloved dog Gunner, and just spending time with her extended family!

MIA FOTOPOULOS

Primary Teacher

Mia began her Montessori journey as a Primary student when she was 3 years old. She has fond memories of scrubbing, spooning, and, of course, building the pink tower. During her junior year in college, Mia became reacquainted with Montessori when she conducted an Early Childhood Education survey as part of a marketing class. Mia received her BA in Business from Lake Forest College. She went on to obtain an A.M.I. International Primary Montessori Certificate from the Midwest Montessori Institute of Milwaukee and has taught at the Primary level since 1988. From 2000-2003, Mia took a three-year sabbatical from teaching to serve as MSLF's Admission Director. Her daughter, Gianna, graduated from our MSLF Adolescent Program in 2016 and from the University of Iowa's nursing program in 2024. She is currently working as a Registered Nurse at the Evanston Hospital NICU. Both Mia and Gianna attribute their positive outlook on life to their Montessori foundation.

KEVIN GALLAGHER

Facilities Director

Prior to joining MSLF, Kevin served for many years as a driver, maintenance generalist, and maintenance supervisor at K&S Photographics. Following that job, he held the position of Maintenance Worker II at Northbrook Park District. Kevin's broad work experience prepared him for the constant on-call pace of his job at MSLF, as he maintains the school's physical plants and grounds; the needs of our classrooms, office and support staff areas; and the set-up for MSLF's many special events—large and small.

MICHAELA GLUSIC

Toddler Teacher

Michaela first joined the MSLF community as a parent in 2002. Michaela has served the MSLF community in various ways, as a substitute, classroom assistant, as well as Toddler lead teacher. She holds a BA in Early Childhood Education and Psychology from National-Louis University and completed her AMS 0-3 Assistants-to-Infancy Montessori certification with Seton Montessori Institute. Her children, Demi and Max, are both MSLF alumni.

TERESA "MONSE" GUERRERO ZAVALA

Toddler Assistant

Bio coming soon

MINA HERRERA*Primary Assistant*

Mina joins the MSLF team with 20 years of experience as a Montessori assistant teacher with toddlers, primary, lower elementary, and upper elementary. She has been married for 29 years with two amazing children who are now in college. They both started their education in Montessori. Mina loves Montessori philosophy and is excited to continue doing what she loves at MSLF. During her free time, she enjoys reading, listening to music, and doing arts and crafts. Mina is bilingual (Spanish and English) and is passionate to see children grow and thrive in the classroom.

MARION JANIN*Upper Elementary Assistant*

Bio coming soon

EKATERINA JORGENSEN*Upper Elementary Teacher*

Ekaterina studied Fine Arts at the University of Denver, then moved to Como, Italy to design textiles. After that, she landed in Los Angeles, where she worked as a Creative Director for Universal Music Group. It was fast-paced and celebrity-studded, but after several years, she craved more meaningful work. This led her into teaching, where she found her true calling in Montessori education and the depth of learning it provides. Ekaterina holds Montessori credentials for ages 6-12 from the Montessori Institute of San Diego and a Master's in Montessori Education from the University of Hartford. Over the past two decades, she has taught in a number of Montessori environments - from Children's House (Primary) to Elementary, as well as taught Montessori adolescents, high school students, and college-level courses. She's also worked as a Montessori coach, curriculum specialist, consultant, and administrative leader in many Montessori programs, both public and private. She looks forward to returning to the classroom and working directly with students again. She is a proud mom of three: two are thriving in the art and music scenes of New York City and one is a college freshman studying film. As a lifelong learner and lover of the arts, Ekaterina enjoys sewing, painting, crocheting, gardening, and playing the ukulele.

JESS KELLER*Outdoor Education Teacher*

Jess Keller joined the MSLF team in the 2025-2026 school year. Jess graduated from Valparaiso University in 2023 with a B.A. in Geography and Political Science. She spent over five years with the National Park Service, beginning as a volunteer and eventually working as an Interpretive Park Ranger. During that time, she developed a deep passion for environmental education and helping people of all ages connect with the outdoors. Jess is an avid hiker, biker, and paddler and loves spending time outside with her dog, exploring trails, and enjoying nature in all seasons. In addition to her love for the outdoors, Jess enjoys expressing her creativity through reading, writing, drawing, and trying her hand at new crafts.

CAROLYN LANNI*Primary Teacher*

Carolyn joined the MSLF teaching staff as an assistant during the 2009-2010 school year. Previously, she taught English in Taichung, Taiwan to students age 4 through adult. She graduated from Beloit College with a BA in Anthropology and also holds a Master's in teaching from Dominican University. She completed her AMI Primary training at the Montessori Center of Minnesota in 2013 and has been the director of Primary 1 ever since. All three of her children attend and love MSLF.

EVA LEUNG

Primary Club Teacher; Mandarin Teacher

Eva has worked at MSLF since 1996, first as a substitute in the Toddler program, and then as a Primary Assistant. Her three sons have attended and worked as counselors in MSLF Summer Sessions. Eva completed her Primary training at the Ohio Montessori Training Institute in Cleveland, Ohio, in 2004 and she is now a Primary Teacher, heading up the Primary After School Club. Eva has created a Club Room that is a beautiful, welcoming, and homelike environment for the children. The Primary Club Room includes Montessori materials and lessons, and embodies Montessori philosophy, so that children are able to enjoy pursuing their Montessori lessons with children from other classrooms. This helps to enrich children's individual social development and the life of the entire Primary community. In addition, Eva has been teaching Mandarin Chinese lessons throughout the school since 2008. Primary Club Children naturally enjoy more Mandarin Chinese lessons in Eva's Club Room. Before she came to the United States, Eva worked as a preschool teacher for many years in Hong Kong. She holds a Kindergarten teaching degree from Grantham College of Education in Hong Kong, and also a Certificate of Music in Pianoforte Playing and Theory from The Royal School of Music in Hong Kong.

MONSERRAT MARES

Spanish Teacher

Montserrat joined the MSLF teaching staff during the 2009-10 school year as a Toddler assistant. She holds an Associate's in Early Childhood Education from the College of Lake County and her American Montessori Society Toddler diploma from Seton Montessori Institute. She brings her fluency in both English and Spanish into her work with children, and this is her 9th year teaching Spanish throughout the Toddler, Primary, and Elementary divisions. Both her sons, John and Johann, have enjoyed attending MSLF.

YARETZI MENDOZA SALMERON

Toddler Assistant

Yaretzi joined the MSLF team during the summer of 2025. She moved to Illinois from California in 2022 and is currently studying at the College of Lake County in the Dental Hygiene program. She loves spending time and going out with her friends and family.

NAYELI TISCARENO

Elementary After School Assistant

Bio coming soon

TIFFANY NATALE

Director of Finance & Operations

Tiffany joined MSLF in the summer of 2019. Before joining MSLF, Tiffany worked as a Management Consultant focusing on Strategy and Operations, Restructuring and Turnaround, and Mergers and Acquisitions. After leaving consulting, she worked in Corporate Finance before taking time off with her children. During that time, Tiffany served as the President of the Board of Directors of a local preschool, as well as serving in various positions at her children's elementary school, and with the Board of Mothers of Young Children. Tiffany graduated with a BS in Finance with Honors from University of Illinois. She brings her broad business experience and expertise, diverse experience within numerous business and school environments, and commitment to education to the team. Tiffany lives in Libertyville with her husband, Rob, who is a public-school administrator, and their three children.

TERESA PAVELICH

Administrative Director

Teresa joined the MSLF administration team in 2015 after working for 13 years in University Advancement at Marquette University. At Marquette, she gained experience in data management, business process development, project management, development, fundraising, and alumni relations. She graduated from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota with a BA in Sociology. She also attended Marquette University,

earning credits toward her teaching certification. It was during field work at Highland Community School in Milwaukee that she was introduced to Montessori education. A strong advocate for Montessori education, she loves being able to lend her skills, knowledge, and talent to the MSLF team, and to work closely with staff and families to offer the best Montessori experience to the students at MSLF. Teresa lives in Kenosha, Wisconsin with her husband, Mike, and daughter, Moxie, an MSLF alumna who attended MSLF from 2013 until her graduation in June 2026. This year, Moxie begins as a freshman at St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Kenosha.

MONICA PEARSON

Primary Teacher

Monica joined the MSLF faculty in 2002. She received her Montessori Primary training from the Montessori Education Center Association (MECA) in Clarendon Hills, IL. She holds a BS in Child Development with a minor in Psychology from Illinois State University. Monica is passionate about creating a nurturing and peaceful environment for her students. She is committed to building community with the families in her class. MSLF is truly a “home away from home” for Monica.

KIARA TOLEDO

Building Substitute

Bio coming soon

SAM RITTER

Elementary After School Lead

Sam returns once again to MSLF, after previously working as a substitute and summer camp assistant in the 2010s. Known as “Mr. Sam” to the children, he is an MSLF alumnus, who attended our school in Lower EI, Upper EI, and was the first Adolescent Program student when the program began! His family has deep roots in our community: his dad served as board president, and his mom was also on the board and very actively involved, especially in the establishment and development of our beloved outdoor environment. Sam attended Indiana University and holds a bachelor’s degree in general studies. He loves learning new and different things and is currently enrolled at Lake Forest College, taking a variety of classes of interest. Prior to his return to MSLF, Sam lived and worked in Los Angeles for 8 years, managing businesses and personal lives of public figures. His hobbies include music production, hockey, fitness, arts & crafts, beekeeping, mental and emotional health. Sam is an advocate for developing strong habits and skills that support the mental, emotional, and physical health of children and young adults. This year, Sam adds “Coach” to his list of titles, as he is also coaching hockey for the Falcons U12 team.

FELICIA RIVAS

Lower Elementary Assistant

Felicia is excited to join the MSLF community. She holds an Associate’s degree from College of Lake County and a Bachelor’s degree from Lake Forest College. She brings a great depth of experience to her work in Lower Elementary this year, having previously taught Spanish at a K-8 public school for five years, as well as reading and math lessons at an after-school program for three years. She lives in Arlington Heights with my partner and our cat. Felicia enjoys playing board games, walking in the forest preserve, and spending time with her family.

SHANNON ROWE

Toddler Teacher

Shannon leads our Toddler 2 classroom again this year. Shannon returned to MSLF in 2023 after having worked as an assistant in our Toddler community from 2017-2019. Shannon has a degree in Psychology from Eastern Michigan University and completed Montessori training through the Center for Guided Montessori Studies in Nashville this past summer. Prior to her time at MSLF, she worked as an art enrichment teacher at Montessori Connection in Highland Park. Shannon also worked as a toddler teacher until she became the Director of the

Park District of Highland Park, which included a school year and summer camp program. Shannon is also yoga certified for ages 2-10 and owned her own business, Yogart, teaching art and yoga in schools in Libertyville and Highland Park. For the three years prior to rejoining MSLF, she taught toddlers at the Steinberg Preschool at Beth El in Highland Park. Shannon and her husband live in Grayslake. Their daughter, Violet, is a freshman at Indiana University studying psychology and their son, Henry, an alumnus of MSLF Adolescent Program, is now studying pre-law at DePaul University.

LARA SIMON

Food Service Coordinator & Cooking Teacher

Lara joined the MSLF team during the 2023-24 school year after falling in love with the school as an MSLF parent. She received her nursing degree from Ivy Tech Community College and her BA in Liberal Arts from DePaul University. She brings to her role at MSLF 13 years of cooking/food service experience. A busy mom of three athletic boys, Lara volunteers at her children's schools, currently serving as an executive Board Member for Woodlawn Middle School PTO and Stevenson Jr. Patriots football program. She has also been the PTO Lead Chair member for Country Meadows Elementary school's three largest fundraisers for the past 3 years. She lives in Long Grove with her husband and three boys, all who attended MSLF through the Primary program. Her husband is currently an assistant coach for Chicago Sky WNBA team, and while most of her family's time is spent playing or watching sports, Lara also loves to read, write, and craft.

AMI SONI

Education Director

Ami earned her Master's in Elementary Education from Roosevelt University, Learning Behavior Specialist Endorsement from University of Illinois - Springfield, and Reading Specialist License from Cardinal Stritch. She also has her Montessori primary certificate from Midwest Montessori Training Center, where she was also a consultant for three years. As MSLF's Education Director, Ami's role is to support faculty by assisting with the support of students' special needs in the classroom, collaborating with lead teachers to plan accommodations and lessons, including any accommodations outlined in ISP's or evaluations. In addition, Ami's role is to sustain and nourish a skilled experienced faculty in their work with children, parents, curriculum, and colleagues, and to assure the integrity and quality of the scope and sequence of the educational program from Parent Infant through the Adolescent Program. Her experience as a classroom teacher in both public and private Montessori environments, in addition to her experience in school administration, will help to inform her work as she serves as a liaison between classroom and family. Ami and her husband, Kaushal, live in Mundelein and their daughter Mila is in our Primary program.

MARGARET STYPIK

Primary Club Assistant

Margaret joined MSLF in 1999 as a toddler assistant. After finishing her secondary education in Warsaw, Poland, Margaret attended a Technical High School in Warsaw from 1965 to 1970, where she received certification in Civil Engineering, specializing in roads and bridges. Previously, Margaret held several positions caring for children and adults. Margaret tried to retire from MSLF but returned shortly thereafter to continue caring for our children at MSLF!

KATIE SVEDMAN

Primary Club Lead

This is Katie's first year at MSLF, and she joins us to lead the second Primary Club Room. She has previous experience working with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Chicago as an Art Instructor and working at a nature-based preschool in Florida. A Florida native currently living in Chicago, she has a degree in theatre and environmental studies from Florida State University. When not at work, Katie is an artist and a published poet, enjoys doing theatre and performance, as well as woodworking, reading, and painting.

TBD

Toddler Assistant

KIM WARD

Music Enrichment

Kim has long been a member of the MSLF community, joining as a parent in 2013. Most recently, Kim served as our Nido Assistant, caring for infants in our Staff Nido from 2022-2024. When the Music Enrichment program was created for the beginning of the 2024-25, Kim was a natural fit for the new program. Kim has a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Music Education K-12 from the University of Minnesota-Duluth and a Master's Degree in Teaching and Learning from St. Mary's University. She was a general music teacher for K-5 for 9 years in Minnesota and spent a year as a middle school choir director in Highland Park. She has also been a choir accompanist at Lake Forest Academy for 10 years. When not at MSLF, she loves spending time with her husband, Joe, and her 3 kids, who are current MSLF students or alumni.

SARA YOST

Garden Teacher

When she previously worked in a Montessori toddler classroom, Sara always tried to incorporate nature. Dr. Maria Montessori considered the outdoor environment an extension of the indoor classroom, and Montessori philosophy believes that the natural world provides endless possibilities for experimental learning. Sara has always been delighted to share her knowledge and passion with children. In 2021, she decided to pursue a degree in Horticulture and landscape architecture, and later, started her own design company focusing on sustainable landscaping. In her free time, she loves spending time with her son, Robby (12), a Montessori Upper Elementary student, and her husband. If she's not digging in her garden, she enjoys working on puzzles, traveling, geocaching, and of course gardening!

PROGRAMS

OVERVIEW

Maria Montessori's ideas, developed some 100 years ago, are supported by the theories of Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner, Eric Erickson, and other developmental psychologists. Psychologist Benjamin Bloom, of the University of Chicago, wrote in Stability and Change in Human Characteristics, "the environment will have maximum impact on a specific trait during that trait's period of most rapid growth." Since 80% of the child's mental development takes place before he or she is eight years old, the importance of favorable conditions during these years can hardly be overemphasized. Maria Montessori said, "The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six. For that is the time when man's intelligence itself, his greatest implement, is being formed."

Montessori philosophy sees each child as unique and precious with magnificent individual potential. Children work in a socially cooperative atmosphere to reach their academic potential. They learn from their own physical and sensorial experience and are allowed to discover, explore, and create in the prepared classroom. Teachers guide each child to explore new areas of learning at sensitive periods of individual development. Each room is filled with constructive materials that meet the child's developmental needs and as the child explores these materials they move from concrete knowledge to intellectual abstraction. The Montessori trained teacher provides supportive guidance based on observing the individual child's interest and readiness.

MSLF's curriculum is designed to maximize each child's potential through prepared environments. Montessori trained teachers present carefully planned lessons which children then practice independently and repeatedly. Children are guided to build sensory skills, motor skills, socialization skills, and critical thinking skills. The Montessori plan helps children develop will, concentration, and a sense of inner well-being. Great care goes into preparing and maintaining classroom materials that are beautiful and inviting and serve as essential components of the curriculum.

Starting at age 3 years, Montessori classrooms group children across three-year age spans. Older children help younger children to learn which reinforces their own knowledge. Younger children admire their older classmates and eagerly anticipate the day when they, too, will have the same lessons and similar knowledge. A caring atmosphere promotes the development of responsibility, collaboration, and cooperation.

As a result of being respected and valued in their classroom community, children learn to value and respect themselves and one another. At the Montessori School of Lake Forest, children develop social responsibility through self-discipline and generosity. They are self-motivated and, in a sense, self-taught. As a result, they acquire deep self-respect, true self esteem, and a deep love of learning that will remain with them all of their lives.

SCHOOL AND PARENT EXPECTATIONS

High level Montessori education that supports children and their love of learning is best realized through teamwork between families and school. The Montessori School of Lake Forest is committed to providing excellent Montessori education. In order to do so, we dedicate our energies to fulfilling the goals of our mission statement.

Mission

To develop the whole child, cultivate curiosity and a lifelong love of learning, and give each MSLF child a strong foundation for life.

Values

Excellence in Education

We achieve excellence in education by inspiring children to reach their full intellectual and social potential. We provide an exceptional, authentic Montessori education with a strong core curriculum supported by unique enrichment opportunities and guided by highly trained and experienced teachers.

Excellence in Instruction

We recruit, continually develop, and retain the most qualified Montessori classroom directors from both AMI (Association Montessori Internationale) and AMS (American Montessori Society). We strive to offer an enriching, rewarding environment where staff feel valued, supported, and able to thrive.

Respect for the Child

We respect each child as an individual and are committed to guiding all students on their individual paths to independence and intellectual development. A peaceful and caring environment is created to provide an optimal learning experience for our students.

Development of the Whole Child

We develop the whole child by empowering our students to become self-aware, resourceful, empathetic, adaptable, and well prepared for life.

Appreciation of the Natural World

Our curriculum immerses students in structured and unstructured hands-on learning in the outdoor environment to promote curiosity, creativity, healthy living, and environmental stewardship.

Collaboration and Compassion

We create mixed-aged classrooms that model cooperation, empathy, mutual respect, and conflict resolution, cultivating an education for peace.

Community Engagement

By creating a supportive, nurturing environment at MSLF, we foster an engaged network of students, families, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends. We strive to collaborate with the broader Montessori community and its schools and training centers as well as with the surrounding local communities through engagement, service, and outreach.

GENERAL CURRICULUM INFORMATION

At the Montessori School of Lake Forest (MSLF), we dedicate ourselves to Montessori principles in order to care for and provide an education in excellence to children and families from birth through age fourteen. We offer a rigorous academic curriculum that includes development of skills in the areas of practical life, sensorial, language, mathematics, humanities, geography and science while also focusing on the child's social, emotional, and physical developmental needs. To review the [MSLF Curriculum Scope & Sequence](https://www.mslf.org/mslf-scope-sequence) for details regarding MSLF curriculum and progression by level, please visit our website: <https://www.mslf.org/mslf-scope-sequence>.

The Montessori School of Lake Forest curriculum is conducted in English. As required by the Illinois State Board of Education, students in the Primary, Elementary, and Adolescent levels are provided with developmentally appropriate instruction in the following areas: American history and patriotism; political systems; the Pledge of Allegiance; economics; geography; social systems; and nutrition and health education. Additionally, all of MSLF's students receive ongoing daily opportunities to develop and maintain physical fitness through their participation in regular recess and movement activities, held outside whenever possible.

TODDLER COMMUNITY

In the Toddler classroom, 15-month-old to 3 year-old children are active community members and are guided toward independence. Determination and independence, assets of a strong personality, develop through work carried out with full concentration. In pursuing their natural urge to explore the world, children choose purposeful work activities and become completely engrossed in them.

The Toddler environment is divided into several areas including gross motor movement, practical life, fine motor development, and language skills. In each area materials are provided to foster coordination and control of movement; to develop articulate language; and to promote social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development. The exercises of practical life include care of the environment (both indoor and outdoor), care of self, grace and courtesy, and movement. Children prepare food for one another, scrub tables, mop the floor, etc. These activities allow them to develop their coordination, independence, and sense of community.

PRIMARY PROGRAM

The Primary class is composed of a balanced, mixed-age group of 2 ½ to 6 –year old children. This mixed age community allows children to follow their unique growth patterns. At this crucial phase of the "absorbent mind" the child's environment is enriched by Dr. Montessori's specially designed concrete and sequential materials which help children "interact with and learn about the limits and realities of [their] world."

Each Primary class provides a selection of manipulative materials that engage the child in the study of numbers, counting, mathematical operations, phonetics, spelling, writing, pre-reading, and reading skills. Geography materials include puzzle maps, as well as artifacts and pictures of each country. Science, art, and music are also integrated into program academics.

Five year old children remain for an Extended Day to have lunch and to pursue areas of advanced study. Children are invited to enter the Extended Day Program around their fifth birthday. The Extended Day provides a very rich afternoon experience for the older child in a small group setting. Sharing lunch with peers provides a good setting for the reinforcement of socialization skills. This six-hour program qualifies as a Kindergarten Program as defined by the State of Illinois.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

Elementary age children move from vivid material experience to abstraction. They begin to be able to visualize mental concepts which they could previously understand only by handling concrete materials. The earlier period of the "absorbent mind" has provided the basis for the Elementary level, or the "age of reason." The Elementary school child begins to discover reason and seek active, conscious learning.

The Elementary curriculum inspires the fertile imaginations of 6- to 12-year-old children to explore the world and the universe. Elementary children study the passage of time as events and conditions that have shaped our world and will shape our future. Children learn how language and mathematics became the tools for human survival. The Elementary curriculum helps children understand that the task of life is to learn how to use these ancient tools in order to contribute to the future. Inspired by the Elementary lessons and follow-up work, the children learn to work cooperatively and collectively.

The Montessori Elementary Curriculum includes: mathematics, geometry, algebra, language, reading, writing, grammar, literature, history, physical geography, cultural geography, economic geography, political geography, biology, zoology, botany, anatomy, ecology, chemistry, geology, astronomy, elementary physics, drama, music, arts, physical education, care of the environment, care of animals, gardening, life-skills, computer work, "going out," and cooking.

The Elementary teacher collaborates with students individually to help them reach their full potential. The teacher guides the children and assists them in becoming self-directed in their learning and in their awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. The Montessori Elementary classroom encourages and develops the use of conflict resolution techniques in the management of interpersonal relationships. The Montessori Elementary approach assists the child in becoming an independent, productive, and compassionate person.

The Elementary Division participates in an annual camping/environmental education week. It is required that all Elementary students participate in this week-long experience. It is developmentally inappropriate for an Elementary child to return to Primary class instead of participating in the Elementary class trip. If a family chooses not to have their child participate in this all-class experience, they will be responsible for making other, outside-of-school care arrangements for their child during that week.

ADOLESCENT PROGRAM

Dr. Maria Montessori believed adolescents should be given the opportunity to experience self-worth through real and important work—a process she called valorization – providing the opportunity for adolescents to realize they are strong, worthy, and capable of effort. A Montessori Adolescent Program strives to meet the adolescent's need to exhibit creativity, to problem solve, to take responsibility, and to claim independence. The ultimate goal of the program is to support each student as they find a place in the community and become a respectful, responsible, and ethical contributor to society.

Adolescents need to construct themselves as responsible individuals who participate as contributing members of society. The Adolescent asks: Who am I? Where do I fit in? What contribution can I make? How can I participate? Adolescence is a time of dramatic change, including profound changes in the structure of the brain. The Adolescent Program of the Montessori School of Lake Forest addresses the challenges of adolescence as opportunities. The Adolescent Program:

- Provides a supportive learning environment;
- Offers a stimulating syllabus to meet or exceed state and local school standards;
- Allows each young person to develop their unique strengths while learning about the roles and responsibilities of adult society.

The Adolescent Program employs as its syllabus Maria Montessori's Plan of Work and Study. The Plan of Work and Study is based on adolescent developmental characteristics and offers "...the privilege of initiation to the knowledge that is the pride of our civilization..." (Maria Montessori). The Plan of Work and Study meets or exceeds all State of Illinois educational standards for middle school. The Adolescent Program further serves the needs of 12- to 14-year-olds by providing support for the profound developmental changes which adolescents experience. The Adolescent Program emphasizes both individual fulfillment and responsibility to others and prepares students for life, starting with their immediate futures. By offering hands-on learning, real-life experience, and academic challenges, the Adolescent Program supports students as they acquire "the self-confidence that is born of true knowledge of one's own capacities, combined with the powers of adaptation." (Maria Montessori)

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Because the Montessori Method of education can serve children with a variety of needs, MSLF is capable of providing a unique environment for mainstreaming children with a wide range of mild to moderate impediments, including learning disabilities, social and emotional difficulties, language delays, hearing impairments, large motor impairments, and other special needs.

Children with special needs are considered for enrollment at MSLF. Consideration is based on a review of the child's records and on consultations with the child, the child's teacher, the child's parents, and the school administration. Consideration is based on the current class enrollment and the teacher's ability to effectively meet the child's needs as well as the needs of the class as a whole. The review and consultation determine whether participation in the Montessori classroom environment can potentially offer a successful experience for the child. Parent support and cooperation are required and essential.

If the MSLF staff believes a child has special needs and requests a professional evaluation for the purpose of determining these needs, MSLF requires full parental cooperation and support. MSLF requires parents to secure services to meet the child's needs, in order for the child to continue in school programs.

The Montessori School of Lake Forest has arranged for one speech language pathologist and one learning specialist to offer their services on site. These services are privately contracted by parents and are not included in tuition. These specialists gather the necessary information to plan and provide the required educational support services for the child. They use the information they gather to consult with and advise parents, teachers, therapists, and any outside evaluation centers which serve the child.

Parents will be advised of the specialist's recommendation for needed support services. The recommendation will also be communicated to the child's teacher and the Executive Director. Recommended services vary for each child but can range from monitoring a child's progress and consulting with the classroom teacher at regular intervals, to delivering specific types of outside remedial services on an ongoing basis. The recommended services will depend upon the individual needs of each child and, in accordance with state regulations, will be re-evaluated twice a year.

Per state regulations, continued enrollment in MSLF is conditional upon the implementation of the required support services specifically recommended for the child.

BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAYS

Birthdays and holidays are special times at MSLF because they provide wonderful opportunities to further the Montessori sense of community. Children love rituals and traditions. At MSLF we offer each child the

opportunity to enjoy a special day (birthdays) and to mark the years with special annual customs at holidays. While individual classroom teachers have individual ways of celebrating, each holiday is presented with stories and experiences that convey the cultural significance of the celebration. Please check with your child's classroom teacher about distributing holiday cards (Halloween, Valentine's Day, etc.) and for details around any other classroom celebrations.

Classroom birthday celebrations are limited to traditional Montessori ceremonies and gift giving from the birthday child to the class. Please speak to your child's teacher about his/her preferences for presenting the classroom with a small gift, as well as for the classroom's birthday treat plan. **Please do not bring a birthday treat to school that does not comply with MSLF's nutrition policy of adhering to USDA nutrition guidelines.**

Please avoid all food allergens. [SEE ALLERGY POLICY.](#)

Do not send party favors. They distract other children from the birthday child's celebration.

Do not send party invitations or gifts to school to be distributed to other children, at any time.

In the **Toddler Community**, children celebrating birthdays may bring a photo album with pictures beginning with their mother's pregnancy through to the present birthday. The class talks about the milestones from the child's birth to his or her special birthday celebration. Children may bring nutritious snacks, in keeping with the school's nutrition policy, to share with friends. Please consult with your child's classroom teacher for suggestions that will conform to the nutrition policy and to classroom needs.

At the **Primary** and **Elementary** levels, your child's birthday is celebrated with a special candle lighting ceremony in the classroom. During the ceremony, the child carries a globe while walking around a candle signifying the sun. The child walks around the candle the same number of times as his/her age. You may make arrangements with your child's classroom teacher to bring a birthday treat (in keeping with the school's nutrition policy). You are also welcome to donate a gift to your child's classroom in honor of his or her birthday. If you want to donate a gift, classroom teachers are happy to provide a classroom "wish list." Appropriate books are always appreciated. This tradition enables children to learn the value and pleasure of giving and the gift also serves as a reminder to them of their place in our school community. Please inscribe a book given as a classroom gift with your child's name and with the birthday being celebrated.

BUS DRILLS

MSLF conducts bus drills for faculty and students every year.

CLUB DAYS - HOLIDAY CARE - BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL

In order to serve the year round needs of working parents, MSLF is open on Club Days for Toddler, Primary, and Elementary students, when the school would otherwise be closed according to a traditional school calendar. **Club Day hours for the 2026-2027 school year are 8:30am - 3:00pm for School Day enrollment or 8:30am - 4:30pm for those enrolled for After School Club. Club Day requests must be made at least 24 hours in advance if a student is not enrolled in Club Days for the year and may only be approved if space is available.** The Adolescent Program is closed on Club Days.

On regular school days, before and/or after school care is available, from 7:30 AM to 8:30 AM, and from 3:15 PM to 6:00 PM. Breakfast Club and After School Club provide an atmosphere of "extended family" in a nurturing, homelike environment with additional educational activities. After their school day, many children

are ready for a change of pace. After school care follows basic Montessori principles and supports children's need for order and stability. Children are encouraged to help one another, to follow projects to completion, to create their own activities and to care for their environment. The outdoors is an integral part of the after-school experience.

COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS AND STAFF

MSLF faculty and staff communicate with parents in many different ways including monthly class newsletters, the weekly school email, biannual Parent Teacher Conferences, and telephone conversations. To communicate about a specific child, please email the teacher/staff member or leave a telephone message in the appropriate voice mailbox. **Teachers are focused on their students during the day and will return messages at the end of the teaching day.** Faculty and staff are happy to schedule meetings to discuss concerns a parent may have about a child.

DISCIPLINE

The development of inner discipline is one of the goals of MSLF. Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly, logical manner. Children choose work they are capable of doing and are free to do that work for as long as they wish without interference from others. This approach alleviates many discipline problems which might be present in another kind of environment. Mixed age groups allow younger children to emulate the more mature behavior they see in their older, more experienced classmates.

Each child will be treated according to his/her individual needs. Respect for the child is the primary focus of Montessori philosophy. No child shall be subjected, under any circumstances, to corporal punishment in any manner or to verbal abuse.

Parental support is integral to the success of any disciplinary action. The faculty and administration of MSLF have developed a disciplinary policy that is approved by the Board of Directors.

CLASSROOM GROUND RULES

1. Treat oneself with respect.
2. Treat each other with respect.
3. Treat the environment and materials with respect.
4. Use a quiet voice and always walk in the room.
5. Follow all safety rules.

TODDLER LEVEL

One goal of the Toddler program is to create a community of children who learn to interact with one another. Until they can communicate clearly, children may display aggressive behavior. Toddlers will learn appropriate language to express feelings so that they do not need to behave aggressively.

The Toddler program also avoids situations that stimulate aggressive behavior such as crowding, making fast transitions between activities, ongoing boredom, or having several newcomers at one time. Aggressive behavior can also result when a toddler witnesses such behavior on television or among family or friends.

The basic rule in a Montessori classroom is that no one may harm him/herself, others, or the environment. Behavior that hurts others is not tolerated. Toddlers are not necessarily aware of their effect on others. If they

hurt someone, adults point it out. The child may be removed from the situation. More appropriate behavior may be explained or modeled.

GUIDELINES AND SEQUENCES OF TODDLER DISCIPLINARY STEPS

1. Let the child know the boundaries, then redirect him/her.
2. Offer two acceptable choices.
3. If the child does not choose, or continues to behave inappropriately, offer two choices. One represents the child's choice and the other the adult's choice. For example, "You can get down from the table yourself or I will get you down."
4. If the child seems unable to control him or herself, the parent may be called. It may be determined that the child is overtired, and the parent will be asked to take them home to rest.
5. If inappropriate behavior persists, a specialist may be called in, at the parent's expense and at the discretion of the Executive Director, to determine the best course of action for the child and the school. It is possible that a child may be removed from the program for behavioral reasons.

PRIMARY LEVEL

At the Primary level discipline is most effective when it directly relates to the offending behavior and provides logical consequences. This allows children to see the results of their actions and to learn acceptable alternatives. In this way children can learn and grow from their mistakes. Discipline should be immediate and should be carried out by the adults in charge. Ground rules and consequences should be firm. Each child needs to be aware of the ground rules.

GUIDELINES AND SEQUENCES OF PRIMARY DISCIPLINARY STEPS

1. Redirect the child.
2. Give the child the choice of two options.
3. If the child does not make a choice, the adult chooses for the child.
4. If the child refuses to choose, he/she may then remain with the adult or may opt for a "time out" to sit quietly and regain his or her composure in order to again participate in classroom activities.
5. If the child exhibits disrespectful behavior, the problem will be addressed immediately. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, hitting, biting, spitting, and using offensive language. They also include blatantly misusing or abusing classroom materials.
 - a. They might be asked to speak with the offended person about the disrespectful behavior.
 - b. The parent may be notified.
 - c. If the behavior continues, a specialist will be consulted at the parent's expense, and at the discretion of the Executive Director, to determine the best course of action for the child and the school. It is possible that a child may be removed from the program for behavioral reasons.

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Classroom discipline needs to be firm but loving. It is essential that adults provide consistent expectations for children's behavior. Basic ground rules are consistently reinforced so children feel secure. Whenever possible, logical consequences that reinforce basic ground rules are used.

"Peacemaking" techniques are used to settle disagreements among children. The children involved are brought to a private area. Each child is given the opportunity to speak. A "peace object" such as a peace rock or shell might be used to help the children involved take turns listening and speaking. Only the child holding the peace object speaks. All others actively listen. The adult gently guides each child to effectively express his/her concerns: "I felt angry when you took my pencil."

GUIDELINES AND SEQUENCES OF ELEMENTARY DISCIPLINARY STEPS

1. Attempt to speak with the child or children privately. Appeal to their sense of reason.
2. Provide private workspace or "time outs" to help the child regain control.
3. The classroom teacher may, at their discretion, choose to do, or ask their assistant to do, one of the following: calm the child with an alternative activity, take a walk with the child, or engage the child in an activity such as running an errand.
4. When inappropriate language or very disruptive behavior persists, warn the child that any additional incidents will need to be discussed with the Executive Director.
5. The Executive Director discusses the behavior at issue with the child.
6. If the behavior persists, a meeting between the parents, the Executive Director, and the classroom teacher is held to consider what changes can be made and what support can be offered to the child to stop the behavior, including options for redirection, limit setting, taking breaks, and seeking professional help.
7. If deemed necessary by the school, a professional will be brought in, at the parent's expense, and at the discretion of the Executive Director, to determine the best course of action for the child and the school. It is possible that a child may be removed from the program for behavioral reasons.
8. Behavior that constitutes bullying or harassment is subject to discipline per the [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) in this handbook.

ADOLESCENT LEVEL

Setting the standards for behavior in the Adolescent Program begins with adults making the core values of the Program clear. These are expressed simply as: Respect and Responsibility: for self, for others, for the environment.

Along with these values students are given a "code" for civil behavior. Civil behavior is essential in the Adolescent Program. It is our goal that in addition to behaving civilly, students in the Adolescent Program will demonstrate sensitivity to others and a willingness to empathize.

Adolescent Program students are involved in a long-term process of envisioning and communicating their ideals, consistent with the Program's core values. This self-examination process engages students in pursuing their own ethical and moral development.

Class meetings are used for discussing general school issues, working collaboratively with peers and adults and finding solutions to the challenges of community life. Personal and community values are part of these discussions and just as they are part of seminar discussions, academic lessons, and daily life.

Adults involved in the Adolescent Program are expected to live by the program's values. They are also expected to offer sensitive, appropriate guidance and counseling to students. Students are encouraged to discuss any problems with adults.

Behavioral infractions are dealt with individually and, on the whole, privately, between students and teachers at first, including administration and parents as necessary. Each situation is evaluated and dealt with in a manner that is respectful of both the group needs and the needs of all individuals involved. Supports for behavior change that can be offered include options for redirection, limit setting, taking breaks, problem solving within the adolescent student community, or seeking professional help.

If the behavior persists and the student must meet with the Executive Director, such a visit will include a "behavioral consultation form" being placed in the student's folder and the student's parents being notified.

If deemed necessary by the school, a professional will be brought in, at the parent's expense, and at the discretion of the Executive Director, to determine the best course of action for the child and the school. It is possible that a child may be removed from the program for behavioral reasons.

Behavior that constitutes bullying or harassment is subject to discipline per the [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) in this handbook.

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

FOR STUDENTS

All students should come to school every day dressed to work and succeed at the challenges their classroom presents. “Dressed to work” means that clothing must be respectful of one’s self and of others and be safe. Students’ clothing should be pleasant, modest, non-distracting, protective, and allow for freedom of movement and work. The school does not prohibit hairstyles that are historically associated with race, ethnicity or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks and twists.

Since the interpretation of this standard varies somewhat by division, more specific guidelines are provided by each division.

Following are some general examples of “dress for success” that apply to ALL students:

- Students should wear clothing they can take on and off independently. Elastic, Velcro, large buttons, no belts are helpful for younger children.
- Clothing should be weather appropriate and comfortable, clean, without distracting or frightening pictures or advertisement.
- Sleeves and pants legs should not extend past wrist or ankle.
- Layers are ideal because children move around a lot in Montessori classrooms.
- Shoes should provide safe support, be easy for the child to take on and off independently and **provide no lighting!**
- Accessories and jewelry should not move excessively or dangle: this is to avoid distraction *and to maintain safety*.
- Hair should be kept off of the face.

FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

At the Montessori School of Lake Forest, teachers, staff and parents serve as role models for the children in every area of conduct. For this reason, it is necessary that all members of the MSLF community adopt the same dress and appearance code. In order for adults and children to focus on learning, it is necessary that their clothing and personal adornment be clean, comfortable, functional, modest, and not distracting to the wearer or to others.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

The child's toys should remain at home. If a child’s accessories (such as those that clip on to backpacks) become distracting, the child will be asked to remove the accessories and take them home. They should thereafter be left at home. Candy and gum are not permitted at school. Children may bring in special items that relate to schoolwork. Students who stay for nap are asked to bring only a small blanket and pillow. Some teachers ask students to keep a change of clothes at school. Please put your child's name on these items. They should remain at school.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular offerings vary from year to year and have included such options as chess, drama, piano, circus arts, soccer, and sewing club. In addition, MSLF offers intramural sports including cross country, volleyball, basketball, and track and field for elementary and adolescent students.

EXTRA HOURS CARE

MSLF offers before and after school care for Toddler, Primary, and Elementary students. Availability in these programs is limited. Priority will be given to families enrolling in these programs five days a week.

MSLF accommodates drop-in care for Primary and Elementary students based on program availability, billed at an hourly rate.

FAMILY PETS

Family pets are not allowed in school buildings or on school grounds. There are classroom pets on campus and many wild animals frequent the grounds. Bringing family pets into any of these environments disrupts the lives of the animals that live on our campus, and raises issues of health, cleanliness, and safety. Service pets and their owners will be accommodated as the need arises.

GRADUATION AND STEPPING UP CEREMONIES

The MSLF community celebrates Stepping Up and Graduation at the end of the school year. This celebration is open to all members of the community, including friends, family, and alumni. Classrooms or divisions also host individual celebrations for students who are stepping up or graduating.

MEALS - NUTRITION STANDARDS - SNACKS

Sharing mealtimes provides more than just the chance to nourish children; it also provides essential social and learning experiences. To ensure that snack time and lunch time are positive community experiences, teachers and children share meals in community dining situations.

In addition to healthy snacks, nutritionally well-balanced lunches are provided for children who stay for lunch in all classrooms. Faculty discuss lunch routines for each individual classroom at the Annual Parent Meeting. Monthly lunch menus are posted in classrooms, sent to all parents/caregivers via email, and are available in the School Info section on Transparent Classroom. Additional paper copies are available through the office. Parents should review the menus, and supplement lunch if there are items their child should not have. No refunds are made for lunch costs. Please be sure to notify the office and your child's teacher of any special dietary restrictions your child has.

MSLF snacks and lunches avoid "empty calories" and adhere to USDA nutrition guidelines.

Children will have a healthy snack available to them each day. Your child's teacher will contact you regarding the snack schedule. Food preparation will be offered as a classroom work. If you prefer to pack snack for your child, please do so according to the MSLF school guidelines and communicate your preference with your child's teacher.

During the school year your child will have opportunities to provide their class with a bouquet of flowers and snack groceries. This is a lovely opportunity for children to contribute to their class community. Your child and their teacher will prepare a grocery list the week prior, giving you the weekend to shop. Please involve your

child in the shopping and selection of the items from the list. If your child will not be in school on the date on which they are assigned to bring snack/flowers, please let the teacher know so they can make alternate arrangements.

Please be sure to notify the office and your child's teacher of any special dietary restrictions for your child.

NAPS

Toddler and Primary programs provide nap time every day from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Children under age five nap, as required by Illinois law. Five-year-olds participate in the Extended Day afternoon, which is recognized as a Kindergarten Program by the State of Illinois. While not all children will sleep at the same time or for the entire nap period, all children do rest on their cots. Children are asked to bring only a labeled blanket and a small pillow to keep at school. Toys are not permitted. Cots and sheets are cleaned weekly. Blankets and pillows are sent home to be washed weekly.

OBSERVATION PROCEDURE

Classroom observation is an essential part of MSLF's educational program. We recommend that parents observe periodically in order to develop a good understanding of Montessori methods. Classroom observations also help parents assess their child's development and progress. All observers are required to refrain from using any digital or electronic devices during observation. **Videotaping or photographing of classroom activity from the observation room is prohibited.** See Technology.

If you would like to get a realistic look at your child in his or her school environment, do not mention that you will be observing beforehand. You will then get a true picture of your child at work rather than a performance. Please call ahead to reserve a time. If you are interested in a narrated session, you may schedule your observation with either the Admission Director or the Executive Director.

Please realize that you will not be able to see all the dimensions of the classroom in one observation. Also, remember there are many different factors that affect the children and the overall composition of the classroom each day.

After the second week in October, observations can be scheduled online via the link sent in the annual observation communication. Formal observations are encouraged, but parents are asked to wait until after the phase-in and transition periods are completed. In order for **parents of new students** to receive the most accurate demonstration of their child in their classroom environment, we ask that they **wait for a period of at least 6 weeks after their child's first day**, so that their child can reach a level of [normalization](#).

If your child is new to MSLF this year, please check in with your child's teacher on the appropriate date for you to schedule your observation. Special concerns from the parents, classroom teacher, or Executive Director might make observations necessary before the middle of October. Scheduled observations should be at least one-half hour long.

When observing, please avoid interacting with students, so as not to interrupt the children's work cycle or otherwise disrupt their learning environment.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is an essential part of school life at MSLF. Children go outside most days, as weather permits. For this reason, parents are asked to keep outdoor clothing at school. Occasionally parents ask that their children

be kept inside during outdoor periods. Unfortunately, because of staffing requirements, it is impossible for us to honor these requests. The children will go outside unless there is severe cold, extreme heat, or drenching rain.

PLAYGROUND RULES

Each child's physical welfare and safety are MSLF's first priority. Supervising children on the playground is as important as supervising children in the classroom. In order to give the children adequate care, MSLF upholds a carefully developed code of conduct that children are expected to follow. The code of conduct teaches children to remain safe and civil. This code of conduct pertains at all times.

OUTINGS - GOING OUTS - OVERNIGHT CLASS TRIPS

Elementary and Adolescent Program students plan "going out" trips in order to do research within the community. This is in keeping with the Montessori philosophy of self-directed education. Elementary and Adolescent Program students do all of the planning for "going out" trips themselves. These outings may include nature walks, trips to museums, visits to the library, visits to local shops, appointments with area specialists, etc.

Elementary and Adolescent Program students also take overnight class trips. These trips help the children take further steps toward independence. Without parents to rely on, children develop real life skills as they work together and build closer relationships with one another. In order to implement the idea of an "extended classroom," Montessori philosophy places great emphasis on educational experiences outside of the school. The use of resources outside the school is an integral part of the Montessori curriculum and all Elementary and Adolescent Program children are required to participate. If you are an Elementary or Adolescent Program parent, you can help by talking positively about the overnight trips.

PARENT COMMUNICATIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Should you have any questions or concerns about your child, please feel free to call the school during office hours from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. You may leave a message for your child's teacher, who will return your call as soon as possible. Issues involving your child and his/her relationship to the classroom, teachers or other students should first be discussed with your child's teacher. Should you feel your concerns require further attention, do not hesitate to contact the school's Executive Director who will be happy to assist you in finding solutions. However, it has been our experience that most situations are handled best by direct communication between the parents and the teachers involved. Telephone conversations and personal meetings are MSLF's preferred means of communication. Any email communications with teachers should be limited in time and scope. (For more information on MSLF's procedures for communicating with the necessary staff and Board of Directors, see the following section on Channels and Grievances Procedures.)

Observations are an important way for parents to learn and understand what their child is doing at school. Consequently, observations are encouraged at MSLF. Observations can also assist parents in understanding their child's progress. Please refer to the section on Classroom Observation Procedures to learn how to make those arrangements. Parents are responsible for maintaining an awareness of the classroom environment by observing periodically, attending Parent Information Sessions and conferences, and contacting their child's teacher should any concerns arise.

PARENT CONDUCT

Montessori philosophy regards the education of children as a cooperative adult effort. All adults serve as role models for all children. Parents are required to treat all children, faculty, staff, and other parents with respect, according to the standards the children are taught to live by. MSLF parents are expected and required to speak quietly and respectfully in the school building and on the school grounds. Parents must check into the school's visitor system with a valid ID when they enter the building and sign out again when they leave. They may not go anywhere in the school building uninvited. They must use discretion in discussing any matter when children are present. When parents and their children are in attendance together at a school event, parents are responsible for monitoring their children so that the children follow the school's rules for behavior and for use of equipment, building, and grounds. *See also Parent Comportment Policy.*

MEETINGS

At the beginning of the year, all parents are asked to attend the annual Back to School Parent Meeting. The Board of Directors and the Executive Director begin the evening in the multi-purpose room. Then parents proceed to their children's classrooms for class information from their child's teacher.

Parents are welcome to attend the monthly meetings of the Board of Directors. See **Governance**.

CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year; once in the fall and once in the spring, but by no means should parents feel that these are the only times they may visit the school. MSLF makes every effort to create a community based on mutual respect, and open communication is a prerequisite for reaching that goal. Please respect the time allotted for your appointment. If you need additional time, a further conference may be scheduled. If you wish to talk to a teacher at any time, please call to arrange an appointment. If a classroom teacher feels she needs information from you or wishes to give you information, she will call you for a conference. All conferences are confidential conversations between you and your child's teacher.

HOME VISITS

A home visit is offered for each newly enrolled Toddler. The visit usually lasts 20 to 40 minutes. During the visit, the child might give the teacher a tour of their home environment or just listen to the adults talk. This allows the child to become acquainted with their new teacher in the security of his/her home.

NEWS PUBLICATIONS

Your child's teacher will send regular communications informing you of specific areas of study and general class news.

To keep you informed of upcoming events and school news, you will receive a weekly email from the school, as well as other periodic email messages from the school. Other announcements, notices, and flyers are distributed as necessary.

MSLF APP FROM ONESPOT

MSLF is currently using the services of Onespot for an MSLF app for all parents and staff. The app serves as a central communication tool, including our service to send emergency messages, school-wide communications, division specific communications, and other announcements to our school community. Upon entrance to MSLF, you will receive an invitation to join the MSLF app, which can be downloaded onto iOS or Android devices or accessed via a web browser.

REFERRAL FILE

MSLF maintains a central file of professional support services and agencies in the community. The referral file is located in the school office. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher or the school's Education Director for any referral recommendations or decisions.

CHANGES AT HOME

In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please inform your child's teacher or the Executive Director as soon as possible. All information will be regarded as confidential. We will accept your judgment as to the kinds of changes that may affect your child's behavior, security, and general well-being. Common causes of distress include: either one or both parents being away from home for an extended time; a new person living in the home; an illness of either parent; the illness of a sibling; any hospitalization, accident or death in the family; a new caregiver; the family's moving; or a new baby. The classroom teacher and Executive Director will keep you informed of any significant changes in the school environment that may affect your child as well.

PARENT INFORMATION

"Montessori is a way of life encompassing the development of the whole child.

The parent, therefore, has a vital role to play in the education process."

- David Kahn

The MSLF school year opens with a Back to School Meeting at which the President of the Board of Directors introduces the board members and the Executive Director introduces the faculty and staff. Parents of each class meet with their child's teacher to learn classroom plans and procedures.

Continuity is vital to the Montessori teaching method. At both the all-school and the divisional levels, MSLF provides Parent Education Sessions to help parents connect home and school for their children. In these sessions, teachers discuss topics such as planes of development, transitions between levels, how children progress through the curriculum, or how parents can "do Montessori" at home.

Classroom teachers offer a wealth of resource materials and excellent guidance to their parents.

PROGRESS REPORTING

Children progress through four distinct stages of development, each approximately six years in length: Birth to Six; Six to Twelve; Twelve to Eighteen; and Eighteen to Twenty-four.

Dr. Montessori demonstrated that during each stage children experience different psychological characteristics and learning styles and need to be taught in different ways. In support of the Montessori insight that each child's learning is best pursued at his or her own pace, abilities, and development, MSLF does not take a traditional approach to grading and testing. Rather, MSLF classroom teachers observe children and record details of developmental progress in order to introduce educational materials that will best suit each phase of development. This record keeping informs the biannual Parent Teacher Conferences.

TODDLER

At the Toddler level (15 months to 3 years), classroom teachers use a checklist to correlate lessons, work activities, and classroom materials to skills and skill development. If there are concerns about a particular child,

the teacher observes that child and takes notes. The teacher's notes and observations are discussed with parents as necessary and will be used for parent-teacher conferences.

PRIMARY

In Primary classes (3 to 6 years), student evaluations typically consist of record keeping, which includes: initial presentation of materials to a child; degree of practice; mastery of classroom-related skills and activities.

ELEMENTARY

At the Elementary level (6 to 12 years), student work is tracked daily. The student participates in the evaluation process through their daily work journal, regular conferences with their teacher, access to expectations, and goal setting.

ADOLESCENT

At the Adolescent level (12 to 14 years) faculty communicate with students and their parents to develop a system of evaluation through an advisory process and a series of conferences.

CONFERENCES

Parent Teacher Conferences are conducted twice a year and are essential elements of the student evaluation process at all levels. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. (The Adolescent Program also has an additional goal setting conference in the beginning of the year, for a total of three conferences, and all conferences include parents, teachers, and students.) But by no means should parents feel that these are the only times they may visit the school. MSLF makes every effort to create a community based on mutual respect and open communication is a prerequisite for reaching that goal. Please respect the time allotted for your appointment. If you need additional time, a further conference may be scheduled. If you wish to talk to a teacher at any time, please call to arrange an appointment. If a classroom teacher feels he/she needs information from you or wishes to give you information, he/she will call you for a conference. All conferences are confidential conversations between you and your child's teacher.

OBSERVATIONS

Observation of children within their classroom environment is an important aspect of Montessori education. Parents are invited to use classroom observation rooms and to learn about their child's progress through personal observation. Please see the observation procedures under the policy section of this handbook.

SCREENINGS AND EVALUATIONS

Visual and hearing diagnostic services are provided for children 3-11 years of age. MSLF makes assessment services available for children with special needs and assists in coordinating special support services. These support services are provided at the parent's expense. After the start of the academic year, especially at the "entry" level, classroom teachers informally assess children's basic skill levels in writing, reading, and math. Difficulties with task completion or general attitude, or other behavioral problems may suggest a need for a more structured individualized approach.

Families are required to provide, during enrollment, any IEPs (Individualized Educational Plans) and/or evaluations of any kind conducted by any previous schools and/or school districts in which a child has been enrolled.

A student with severe learning disabilities or behavioral problems may be referred to another school if MSLF determines it is unable to meet the child's needs within the Montessori environment.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

MSLF uses standardized testing protocols drawn from MAP Assessments. Testing is administered three times a year to all students from the 1st grade year through the 8th grade year. The tests are administered by the Education Director. Standardized group test measures are considered, at best, a cursory screening of your child's abilities. However, test results, combined with daily classroom performance assessments and teacher observations, can help develop an understanding of a child's academic strengths and weaknesses. The purpose of testing is to expose students to online standardized testing and provide an additional piece of information for the teacher and parents. Results are shared with parents and filed in the student's record. One makeup testing date is scheduled in each testing period.

ROOM PARENTS

Room Parents are a vital element of the MSLF community. They provide another link between parents and the school and lend necessary support both to the classroom and the teacher. Room parents are critical to the success of most of the school's annual fundraising and social efforts. The Room Parent's role is:

- To assist in welcoming new families to the classroom community
- To work with the classroom teacher to create a volunteer resource list, make phone calls, schedule classroom activities
- To work with the teacher on special class projects
- To communicate information with families as needed
- To manage fundraising related classroom projects and participation
- To advocate for and create enthusiastic support for all other fundraising activities

SUMMER SESSION

MSLF's Summer Session provides an opportunity to implement the Montessori philosophy in a relaxed setting, while extending the developmental work of the children in the classroom. Work with the Montessori materials is supplemented by gardening, nature walks, water games, sports, art, and field trips. Summer Sessions offer a balance between enrichment, classroom work, and outdoor learning.

TECHNOLOGY

This statement applies to all school technology and to all personal devices when at the school. It applies to all students, parents, faculty, and staff while at the school or participating in school-related activities.

Students have access to various types of technology during their school day and Adolescent Program students have access to the internet. Our goal is to guide our students to navigate their technological options in a constructive way, and to minimize access to materials that may be illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive.

Technology at MSLF may include but is not limited to: computers, storage and playback devices, cameras, smart boards, overhead projectors, and any other electronic tools provided by MSLF to staff, faculty, students, or volunteers. Individually owned devices are covered by this guideline when in use at MSLF. Any individual with access to technological resources at MSLF is expected to use them legally, ethically, in accordance with

these guidelines, in accordance with copyright and fair use guidelines, and in support of MSLF's Mission and Values.

The privilege to access technology of any sort is given only to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Students are accountable for their actions. Any misuse of any technology may result in loss of privileges or disciplinary action. All students must comply with the following guidelines:

At MSLF technology is used for educational purposes. Recreational use of any devices is not allowed at school at any time. The use of social networking sites, personal email, online games of any kind, or listening to music stations is prohibited on all devices at school unless cleared in advance for an educational purpose by faculty or administrative staff. Other exclusions as identified by MSLF may apply.

Students are not allowed to bring personal computers, iPads, cell phones, or other devices for use in school. Any accommodations for personal needs are made on a case-by-case basis.

Students, volunteers, faculty, and staff are expected to respect the school's hardware and network. They may not download, copy, or install software or reconfigure desktops without permission of IT services.

Students are expected to respect other people's privacy and work. They may only open their own account, folders, work, or files. Students are taught and expected to cite their sources and to avoid plagiarism.

Faculty and staff may view student folders, flash drives, CDs, DVDs, and any other media in use at school.

Faculty, staff, students, and volunteers are expected to observe internet safety protocols. If inappropriate material is encountered, the monitor should be turned off. Students should immediately inform an adult; faculty, staff or volunteers should immediately inform their supervisor.

Students should not provide personal information online or agree to meet anyone they have met online.

Use of technology to harass or demean any individual at or away from school is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action. Individuals should report such activity to a faculty member or an administrator.

Students may not bring personal digital devices to school. If they bring a personal digital device to school, it must be turned off before the student enters the school building and put away as instructed by the teacher until the student leaves the school at the end of their day. MSLF is not responsible for any lost or stolen equipment.

Cell phone use in public spaces of the school or in carpool is prohibited at MSLF for all members of the community.

Students who need to make emergency telephone calls must have faculty or staff permission to do so and must use the school telephone. Parents who need to contact their child must use the school's telephone. The only exception to this policy occurs when parents are waiting for children while seated in the rotunda.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The school may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to a student's private account or profile on a social networking website, such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, etc. However, the school may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's Bullying and Harassment Policy. The school may require the student to share content with a school administrator in the course of such an investigation, but not the username or password.

TORNADO DRILLS

MSLF conducts annual tornado drills for faculty, students, and staff.

WELLNESS

School wellness, including good nutrition and physical activity, is promoted at MSLF through the school's activities and meal programs. This policy is interpreted consistently with Section 204 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004.

POLICIES

ABSENCE POLICY

According to the Illinois State Board of Education, parents are required to inform the Montessori School of Lake Forest beforehand of any absence on the part of their child. If your child will be absent for any reason, please complete the Absence Form located in the MSLF app. The form will send notification to the appropriate MSLF staff and teachers. If your child will be absent due to illness or injury, please include that information when completing the online form.

Children are considered tardy after 8:50am. Late arrivals and early departures can be disruptive to the work cycle of the class.

Our Health Office is required by the State of Illinois to track school illness trends. **If your child is absent due to a communicable disease, please include that information when submitting the Absence Form.** While we will maintain your child's confidentiality, we are responsible for communicating the presence of that disease to all families in your child's classroom as soon as possible.

Please be advised: unreported absences in the case of an elementary age or older student will result in the student being designated "truant" (by Illinois State law) for the period of unreported absence.

MSLF is legally required to document all student absences and trancies.

Please note: Students must attend at least 1/2 day (3.25 hours) in order to participate in any activities held after school or during the evening. **Students who are absent from school the entire day are not allowed to participate in any practices, competitions, performances, or school sponsored activities held after school or during the evening of the day(s) absence.** These activities include all athletic practices and events, plays, musicals, concerts, club meetings, and any other school sponsored activity. If the situation arises in which an exception to the above rule is necessary, the Executive Director will make the final decision.

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

The purpose of the Montessori School of Lake Forest is to care for and educate children from eight weeks to 14 years old, according to Maria Montessori's developmental and educational principles. MSLF promotes and disseminates the educational philosophy and principles of Maria Montessori.

MSLF does not discriminate against students, applicants for admission, faculty, other employees, or parents on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion, creed, age, disability, or any other characteristic. Suspected discrimination should be reported to the Executive Director, or if the Executive Director is suspected, to the President of the Board of Directors. The identity of the reporting party will remain confidential to every extent possible.

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The Montessori philosophy creates a community of children wherein each member is valued and respected. At MSLF, each child is placed in the same class for a 3-4 year cycle. Classes, to the extent possible, are balanced with respect to age, sex, and previous Montessori experience.

ENROLLMENT AND WAITING POOL POLICY

Enrollment preference will be given in the following order of priority:

1. Students returning to the same class, and children of MSLF staff
2. Students graduating to the next level
3. Siblings of current students (ages 15 months – 3 ½ years)
4. Siblings of former students (ages 15 months – 3 ½ years)
5. Students transferring from another Montessori school
6. All other applicants

Within categories 2-6, waiting pools shall be maintained.

The Executive Director, in his/her sole discretion, may fill a space in a classroom out of order of priority, if it is in the best interests of a classroom or of the school. The best interests of the classroom or school include, but are not limited to, balancing a class for age, sex, and Montessori experience.

FIRST POOL – JANUARY

Enrollment contracts will be offered to all students returning to the same classroom and graduating to the next level who have been recommended by the classroom teachers.

SECOND POOL – APRIL/MAY

Enrollment contracts will be offered to students in categories 3-6 in order of priority. The Executive Director, in his/her sole discretion, may choose not to offer contracts for all vacancies if he/she believes that some positions should be left open.

THIRD POOL - JUNE/JULY

Enrollment contracts will be offered for any remaining vacancies to students who have moved to the area or who attended Summer Camp.

ENROLLMENT OF SIBLINGS

Enrollment of a younger sibling is not guaranteed if an older sibling is withdrawn in mid-cycle. When enrolling a child, we prefer parents to commit to keeping their child at MSLF for a complete “program cycle.”

CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

Classroom placements are made with the goal to create a balanced environment in regard to age, gender, background, and skill level. Placements for transitioning children (Toddler to Primary) are made in collaboration with the Toddler teacher, to ensure the best fit for the child as well as the family.

Parents may wish to request a specific teacher or classroom; however, we cannot accommodate all requests or guarantee requested placement for school year or for summer program placement.

COMMUNICATION WITH APPLICANTS

Each family will receive an email to confirm acceptance of their child's application. If an applicant clearly cannot be admitted, the parents will be informed by the Executive Director once that determination has been made.

ALLERGY POLICY

MSLF's Allergy Policy responds to the needs of the rising number of people with serious allergies in the MSLF population. The parent of a child with a documented allergy may send in allergen-free food for that child. Limited refrigerator space is available for that food only. MSLF's lunch caterers provide a monthly list of possible allergens and seek to avoid allergens, but it is not always possible for them to avoid all allergens. If MSLF is unable to serve a child's food restrictions, parents should provide that child's food on a daily basis. Children with food allergies may choose to bring snack from home daily or supply the class with one shelf stable supplemental food such as crackers or pretzels. Please discuss this issue with the Health Office and your child's classroom teacher.

Allergens common in cooking, baking or classroom projects (such as but not limited to eggs, dairy, gluten, soy) are handled without ingestion during classroom and cooking projects. *Parents need to inform the health office in writing if there are handling or exposure concerns related to their child's allergies.*

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Notify MSLF of your child's allergies.
- Work with the Health Office and the rest of the school team to develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school, including the classroom, Before and After School Clubs, school sponsored activities such as "going outs," and overnight school trips.
- Work with the school team described above to develop a child-specific Allergy Action Plan.
- Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by a physician, based on the child's Allergy Action Plan.
- Provide properly labeled medications and replace medications after use or upon expiration.
- Review policies and procedures with the school staff, the child's physician, and the child (if age appropriate) after a reaction has occurred.
- Provide emergency contact information.
- Educate your child in self-management of his/her allergy, including:
 - Safe and unsafe foods
 - Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods/allergens
 - Identifying symptoms of an allergic reaction
 - Knowing how and when to tell an adult he/she may be having an allergy related problem
 - Knowing how to read food labels (age appropriate)

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- May not trade food with others.
- May not eat anything with unknown ingredients or ingredients known to contain any allergens.
- Should be proactive in the care and management of their allergies and reactions based on their developmental level.
- Should notify an adult immediately if they eat something they believe may contain the food to which they are allergic, or if they are exposed to an allergen that they know may cause a reaction.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Review health records submitted by the child's parents and physician.
- Include students with allergies in school activities. Students will not be excluded from school activities based solely on their allergies.
- Organize a team that includes the classroom teacher, a member of the administration, and the Health Office to work with the family to establish a prevention plan. This plan will be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director. The core team will make changes to the plan as needed.
- Train staff members who work regularly with the student to recognize symptoms and know what to do in an emergency.
- Store medications in an easily accessible location. Students are allowed to carry their own epinephrine pens, if age appropriate, with proper documentation, and after the approval of their family physician.
- Provide classroom teachers and support staff with written information concerning the student's allergy and an Allergy Action Plan, if necessary. Train staff in how to recognize allergic reactions and in the use of an epinephrine pen.
- Provide parents and staff with a catered lunch menu. This does not imply that the school is responsible for the allergic student's complete safety. If a student has a life-threatening allergy, parents may provide acceptable food for that student. The school will work with the parent to help the child feel included and safe.
- Nut allergies are the most common allergy; therefore the Montessori School of Lake Forest insists that nuts and foods/candy/snacks containing nut derivatives (e.g., nut oils) are not to be sent to school for classroom use, brought to any school sponsored events, or taken on any class trips. It also insists that these items not be used or stored in offices that commonly admit students.
- Students are not permitted to share lunch brought from home with one another, either in the classroom or on school sponsored trips. If students with food allergies forget their lunch or snack, arrangements to substitute food for them will be made by a faculty member and the Health Office.
- Food supplies purchased and supplied by MSLF will be screened for nuts or nut by-products. Food supplies will also be evaluated in light of any other serious food allergies. However, MSLF cannot guarantee that a specific product is not exposed to allergens during the manufacturing or handling process. In addition, it is expected that foods brought to the school by students will be screened for nuts and nut by-products.
- Foods with possible allergens are permitted in non-student areas, but faculty and staff must carefully dispose of food container materials and wash their hands with soap and water before returning to common school areas. Any item brought to a faculty/staff gathering must be labeled if it contains nuts.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

No child will be released to an unauthorized person.

The safety of students, faculty, and staff is a top priority of MSLF. Please follow our safety procedures **at all times**:

1. You must sign in when you enter the building and sign out when you leave the building.
2. If someone new or different will be picking up your child, you must send a signed, written note or email to the receptionist in the morning. The receptionist will notify the classroom teacher and the after-school teacher of the change. Children will only be released to people listed on the child's Release Form, or who have written consent from the custodial parent(s). The person should enter through the main door, sign in via our visitor system, and provide a copy of a photo ID.

If you have any questions, please contact the school. We appreciate your cooperation.

BREAKFAST CLUB AND AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

1. For children enrolled in the Breakfast Club, please park your car in the parking lot, walk your child into the building, drop them off in the Rotunda, and they can walk down to their classroom. If assistance is needed, the receptionist can help or call other staff to help assist your child down to the classroom.
2. Children enrolled in any after school programs must be picked up at the front entrance. When you arrive at the front desk, the receptionist will call the classroom to get your child ready for departure.
3. You may enter the building through the main entrance between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. and again between 3:15 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. **If you are going past the front desk for ANY reason, you MUST check-in via the visitor system at the tablet in the carpool room**
4. **If someone new or different will be picking up your child, you must send a signed, written note or email to the office.** If a person other than the regular driver continues to pick up your child, please list him or her on your child's Release Form. Children will only be released to persons listed on the child's Release Form, or who have written consent from the custodial parent(s). Please note that whenever a new person picks up your child, we will check that person's photo ID and make a copy of it for your child's file.

SCHOOL DAY

1. To use the carpool line, enter the circular drive and stop at the end of the loading area. An adult will meet your car and assist your child into the building. **DO NOT LEAVE THE LINE OR PASS. THIS IS A VITAL SAFETY RULE.**
2. If your child is not ready for departure and you are first in line, you will be asked to drive around the circle again.
3. **If someone new or different will be picking up your child, you must send a signed, written note or email to the office.** If a person other than the regular driver continues to pick up your child, please list him or her on the child's Release Form. Children will only be released to persons listed on the child's Release Form or who have written consent from the custodial parent(s). Please note that whenever any new person picks up your child, we will check that person's photo ID and make a copy of it for your child's file.

If your child is uncomfortable being dropped off in carpool the first week of school, you may park in the west parking lot and walk your child to the front door. But please keep in mind that morning routines are established quickly. Keep your goodbyes short to avoid ongoing dramatic departures.

The school day begins at 8:45 AM and ends at 3:15 PM.

LATE ARRIVALS/PICKUPS

Because children depend on routine and order to make sense of their experiences, they find it disorienting and unsettling to arrive at school late or be picked up from school late. Some children cling or cry, some get angry, and some pretend it does not affect them (but then withdraw or behave recklessly). For these reasons it is incumbent on parents to abide by scheduled class arrival and pickup times.

If for some reason you arrive late for drop-off, please park your car in the parking lot, escort your child into the building, sign yourself in at the office, and ensure that your child's classroom teacher knows your child has arrived. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CAR UNATTENDED IN THE CIRCLE IN FRONT OF THE MAIN ENTRANCE.** It is a designated fire lane/loading zone. Also, please remember to sign out at the front desk when you leave the building.

Late fees will be applied for late pickups.

CAR SEATS

Please remember Illinois law stipulates that all children up to their eighth birthday must be secured in a car seat or booster seat that meets National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) safety standards. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for providing a child safety seat to anyone who transports their child.

CARPOOL TIMES

Program	Drop-Off Times	Pick-up Times
Half Day	8:30 AM to 8:45 AM	11:50 AM to 12:00 PM
Half Day + Lunch	8:30 AM to 8:45 AM	1:00 PM to 1:05 PM
School Day	8:30 AM to 8:45 AM	3:15 PM to 3:30 PM

The school day begins at 8:45 AM and ends at 3:15 PM.

To expedite carpool pickup, please hold your carpool number on your driver's side window while you wait in the carpool circle. Tinted windshields and dashboard obstructions make it difficult for us to identify your number until you are in the pickup position. Please pull all the way up to the first carpool assistant so three to five cars can fit in the loading area at one time. If your child needs assistance with the car seat after pick-up, please pull out of the carpool line and onto Laurel Drive to help your child with his/her car seat. If you do not feel comfortable waiting and driving onto Laurel Drive to fasten your child's car seat, you may park in the side parking lot and walk up to the carpool circle to pick up your child.

Please review your family carpool number with your child and share this information with any other drivers you have authorized to pick up your child. You may request an additional carpool number for additional drivers or instruct the driver to clearly write your number on a piece of paper.

Cars not displaying their carpool numbers may be directed around the circle one or more times in order to provide children time to walk to the dismissal door.

To keep children and carpool workers safe, do not use your cell phone while you are in the carpool circle.

If a carpool worker is not able to lift a child in or out of a large car or truck, they will ask the driver to park in the lot and walk in to retrieve or drop off the child.

DO NOT PASS ANOTHER CAR IN THE CIRCLE!

ATTENDANCE AND PHASE-IN SCHEDULES

SEE: [ABSENCE POLICY](#)
ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is one of the cornerstones of a child's consistent progress. Children must arrive at the beginning of the school day to avoid classroom disruption. Children should arrive no more than 10 minutes before class begins and they should be picked up on time. Daily attendance is required for K-8 students.

PHASE-IN

Prior to the beginning of school, parents of new and transitioning children (Toddler and Primary levels only) will receive a phase-in schedule designating a specific start date for their child.

The system of "phasing-in" proves to be the most effective way to introduce children, especially very young children, to a new environment. A young child may take seven to ten days to become secure in a new environment. Some children may need more time before they are able to settle down in their new surroundings. The needs of every child are different, so it is crucial that parents and classroom teachers adjust to meet them. This initial investment in time, effort, patience, and cooperation on everyone's part helps to establish the inner sense of security a child needs to blossom to his or her full potential.

Although tuition may be prorated based on a student's start date, it is not prorated by day during the phase-in process. Please note tuition is not prorated for children whose start date is within the first three weeks of school.

TODDLER PHASE-IN

Only returning Toddler students will begin school on the first day and serve as models for new children who gradually arrive later. Newly enrolled children are "phased-in" on an individual basis. A typical phase-in schedule for a child could be as follows: a one-hour visit while a parent or caregiver waits in the rotunda; a second one and one-half hour long visit the next day; two-to-three-hour long visits on the third and fourth days; and finally a visit through nap time on the fifth day. Such a schedule, of course, may be modified to meet the individual needs of the child.

PRIMARY PHASE-IN

Only returning Primary students will begin school on the first day. Newly enrolled students will be "phased-in" during the second and third week of school. Their schedules will lengthen as they become familiar with the environment. Typically, on their first two days, new children will remain for the morning. New children will stay for lunch on their third and fourth days. By their fifth day, most newly enrolled children settle into their regular schedule.

BATTERY AGAINST SCHOOL PERSONNEL

The Executive Director shall immediately notify local law enforcement officials of **written** complaints from school personnel concerning instances of battery committed against school personnel. The Executive Director shall notify the Illinois State Police within 3 days of each incident of battery through the School Incident Reporting System (SIRS) in IWAS.

BIRTH CERTIFICATES

All parents have thirty days to provide either a certified copy of their child's birth certificate or other reliable proof of the child's identity, including a passport, visa, or other government documentation of the child's identity. If MSLF receives original documentation, a copy will be made and the original returned. If a parent fails to produce required documentation, MSLF will notify the Lake County Sheriff and send the parents(s) a letter stating that they have 10 additional days to produce documentation.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

No person, including an MSLF employee or agent, or student, shall harass or intimidate another student based upon a student's actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, gender-related identity or expression, physical or mental disability, military status, unfavorable discharge from military service, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, academic status, pregnancy, parenting status, homelessness, marital status, sexual orientation creed, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic or protected group status. Bullying can lead to physical and psychological intimidation and emotional harm to students, causing a detrimental effect on a student's physical or mental health, and interferes with the creation of a safe educational environment, including a student's ability to learn and/or participate and benefit from school services and activities.

MSLF will not tolerate bullying, harassing, or intimidating conduct, whether verbal, physical, visual, or electronic that affects tangible benefits of education, that unreasonably interferes with a student's educational performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. Examples of prohibited conduct may include, but are not limited to, the following: teasing, name-calling, using derogatory slurs, wearing or possessing items depicting or implying hatred or prejudice of one of the characteristics stated above, mocking, hitting, insulting, making racist remarks, lying, spreading rumors, threatening, intimidating, making jokes at the expense of another, mimicking, social exclusion, damaging someone's reputation, harassing, stalking, or encouraging someone else to do any of the above. The terms "intimidating," "hostile," and "offensive" include conduct that has the effect of humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort. No student shall be subjected to bullying:

- 1) During any school-sponsored education program or activity;
- 2) While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities;
- 3) Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment; or
- 4) Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item (4) applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and does not require a school to staff or monitor any non-school-related activity, function or program.

Bullying is defined to include *cyber-bullying* (as defined below) and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- A) Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
- B) Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
- C) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
- D) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, posting or distributing sexually explicit images, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. *This list is intended to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.*

Cyber-bullying is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic system, or photooptical system, including without limitation electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this policy. Cyberbullying also includes the posting or distribution of an unauthorized digital replica by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying per this policy.

Bullying is strictly prohibited by Illinois law and is contrary to MSLF's policies.

Students who are victims of or witnesses to harassment or bullying are strongly encouraged to report the harassment or bullying to the Executive Director, or if the Executive Director is involved, to the President of the Board of Directors. A report may be made orally or in writing to the above referenced individual(s). Below please find the contact information for these individuals. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened harassment or bullying should report it to the Executive Director, or if the Executive Director is involved, to the President of the Board of Directors. The identity of the reporting party will remain confidential to every extent possible.

Executive Director:

Hope Allegetti
MSLF, 13700 W. Laurel Dr.
Lake Forest, IL 60045
847-918-1000 x304
hope@mslf.org

President of the Board of Directors:

Emily Van Bel
Cell: 847-902-2456
emilysm375@gmail.com
boardpresident@mslf.org

Consistent with applicable federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights, and MSLF policies, the Executive Director, or his/her designee, will inform all parents/guardians of those students involved in the alleged incident of harassment or bullying and discuss, as appropriate, the need for interventions, such as individual counseling, social work services, group counseling, and restorative measures. The following are interventions that can be taken to address harassment or bullying including school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, and/or community-based services.

Reports of harassment or bullying will be promptly investigated by the Executive Director or his/her designee. Reasonable efforts will be made to complete the investigation within ten (10) school days after the date the report of the incident of harassment or bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of harassment or bullying. Any reports of harassment or bullying will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible given the need to investigate the reported claim. School support personnel and other staff members with relevant knowledge and experience, may be involved in the investigation process, as deemed appropriate.

The Executive Director, or his/her designee, shall be notified of all reports of harassment or bullying as soon as possible after the report is made. Consistent with applicable federal and state law, and MSLF's policies regarding student privacy and confidentiality, parents/guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying will be informed within 24 hours after the school's administration is made aware of the students' involvement in the incident, and will be provided relevant information regarding the investigation, as deemed appropriate by the Executive Director, or his/her designee, and an opportunity to meet with the Executive

Director, or his/her designee, to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying, as deemed appropriate. The school shall make diligent efforts to notify a parent or legal guardian, utilizing all contact information the school has available or that can be reasonably obtained by the school within the 24-hour period.

All individual instances of bullying, as well as all threats, suggestions, or instances of self-harm determined to be the result of bullying will be reported to the parents or legal guardians of those involved. Any student who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in harassment or bullying will be subject to disciplinary consequences as deemed appropriate and consistent with MSLF's disciplinary policies. Students who make good faith complaints will not be disciplined. Any retaliation or reprisal against any person who reports an act of harassment or bullying per this policy is a violation of this policy and strictly prohibited. Further, consequences and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken as deemed necessary by MSLF for the person engaging in retaliation or reprisal. Appropriate consequences and remedial action may also be taken against a person found to have falsely accused another of harassment or bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of harassment or bullying.

Possible interventions taken by MSLF to address bullying may include, but are not limited to, social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.

The MSLF Bullying Prevention Policy shall be included in the parent handbook available on the MSLF website (<https://www.mslf.org/handbook>) and is updated and communicated annually to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired, and is included in the employee handbook. The policy shall be reviewed annually and re-evaluated to assess outcomes and effectiveness. Factors may include, but are not limited to, the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation.

(Last updated & reviewed by MSLF Board of Directors - September 26, 2024)

CRISIS PLAN

MSLF has developed a Crisis Response Plan to respond to emergencies. All MSLF employees receive crisis response training and a copy of the Crisis Response Plan. Members of the MSLF community may request a copy of the Crisis Response Plan.

DISMISSAL POLICY

MSLF is a private institution. It reserves the right to dismiss any child for any reason if it is in the best interest of the child, the school, or the school community. Parents who fail to treat the faculty and the staff of MSLF with respect, or whose behavior or child's behavior interferes with the educational work of the school cannot expect their children to continue at the school. MSLF also reserves the right to dismiss any child from MSLF for non-payment of tuition or fees.

EARLY WITHDRAWAL

MSLF's educational programs are planned to continue for a definite term/program cycle. It is disruptive to the school community if children are withdrawn before the end of a term. *Written notice is required for all early withdrawals.* All students will be charged tuition and fees as outlined in their enrollment contract.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

EMERGENCY CLOSING

In case of severe weather that requires MSLF to close, employees and parents will receive a phone call, mobile text message, or MSLF app notification message announcing the closing.

The decision to close is based on many factors and how they impact our school community, including extremes of temperature, wind, precipitation; travel conditions; the condition of the school's buildings and parking areas; the safety of employees, parents, and students. Since MSLF does not operate school buses, it may remain open when public schools close.

Every effort will be made to notify parents as early as possible of an emergency closing. In the event that the school has no water/heat/electricity, classes will not be held.

If the school closes during a school day due to a power failure or other emergency, children must be picked up by a parent or an emergency contact person within one hour of notification.

Employees and families must decide whether it will be safe for them to travel to school when the weather is severe but the school is open. If an employee or a family chooses to stay home from school due to weather, they should notify the school of their absence as usual in the case of an absence.

EMERGENCY ILLNESS OR ACCIDENT

In the event of an accident or sudden onset of illness, the school will seek proper care for a child. The child's individual emergency instructions on file in the school office will be consulted immediately and the parents will be called. If necessary, the child will be transported to the hospital via ambulance. In such circumstances the payment of medical fees is the responsibility of the parents. The consent statement the parent has signed will accompany the child so that treatment can be given immediately in the absence of the parents. The classroom teacher will complete the necessary accident reports. **It is imperative that you keep the emergency contact information in the office up to date.**

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

In accordance with state law, fire drills are held on a regular basis. During tornado drills, children are moved into the hallway and asked to assume a "crouch position" with hands over their head for protection. Children are kept away from glass windows and all doors to the classrooms are shut. The children remain in the hallway in the protective position until the "all clear" signal has been sounded.

POWER FAILURE

In case of a power failure, the school hallways will be lit by battery operated lights. The security door system has a manual override system in case of a power failure. The Libertyville Fire Station and Commonwealth Edison will be informed of any power failures. School may be canceled if the heat or the power is out longer than two hours.

FIREARMS AND DRUGS

Firearms are prohibited at the Montessori School of Lake Forest, except for those carried and/or used by law enforcement personnel in the course of their assigned duties. Illegal drugs of any form are prohibited at the Montessori School of Lake Forest.

The Executive Director will immediately notify the parents or guardians of a student in possession of firearms or of illegal drugs on school grounds. Such a student will be removed from school immediately and will face internal disciplinary action including the possibility of immediate suspension or dismissal from the school.

The Executive Director will immediately notify the local law enforcement agency of firearm incidents or of verified drug related incidents at the school.

"The school" includes all of its campuses and grounds, which include the real properties comprising the school, or the public ways within 1,000 feet of the school, or in any conveyance owned, leased, or contracted by the school to transport students to or from the school or a school-related activity.

The Executive Director will immediately notify the Illinois State Police of firearm or drug related incidents though the School Incident Reporting System (SIRS).

FAMILY LAW POLICIES

STUDENT RECORDS

All student records are confidential. Parents have the right to review, comment on, and release their child's records upon request. If there are family disputes involving custody, visitation rights, etc., the school abides by the restrictions established by court orders and/or custody papers. These documents are kept on file with the student's records. A non-custodial parent may request MSLF to provide directly to him or her, by mail, copies of all correspondence and reports in the absence of any court order to the contrary. These include copies of the following: reports of the student's emotional and physical health, notices of school-initiated Parent Teacher Conferences, notices of major school-sponsored events, and copies of the MSLF Parent Handbook.

MSLF requires health examinations and immunizations in compliance with ISBE. Any student who has not met these requirements by October 15th will be excluded from school until requirements have been met. This does not apply to vision and dental exams.

The Montessori School of Lake Forest will flag the records for any current or former student reported as missing by the Illinois State Police. The Montessori School of Lake Forest maintains alumni student records for a period of 10 years after the student leaves the school.

CUSTODY INFORMATION

In cases of separation or divorce when one parent or guardian has custody of the children, the school sometimes receives special requests or instructions regarding the children. In order to clarify legal regulations and to prevent any misunderstanding, the following information is offered. While most parents are aware of the appropriate rules and regulations in this matter, it has been our experience that some parents are unaware of the rights of non-custodial parents. According to Public Law 93-380, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Illinois Public Act 85-1389:

"In the case of divorce or separation, a school district must provide equal access to both natural parents, custodial and non-custodial, unless there is a legally binding document that specifically removes that parent's FERPA rights."

In this context, a legally binding document is a certified court order or other legal paper that prohibits access to educational records or removes the parent's right to have knowledge about his or her child's records. A

certified court order would also be required if restrictions were placed on when and where a parent may contact or visit the child at school.

This information is provided because parents sometimes give special directions regarding their child's custody that the Montessori School of Lake Forest cannot legally follow. A handwritten note, a telephone call, or comments on the registration card are not sufficient. **MSLF must have a copy of a certified court order noting any restrictions.** These are kept in the student's folder. Should you have any questions, please contact the school. Any legal action or information regarding court orders may require the assistance of your attorney or the courts.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The State of Illinois requires that all members of day care institutions be on the alert for, and report to the State, any and all cases of abuse to a child. MSLF personnel keep themselves up to date on ANCRA, the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. **All MSLF personnel are mandatory reporters and are therefore obligated to report to the state any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.**

FUNDRAISING POLICY

Any fundraising activity may be undertaken and supported by the school using school resources. Such fundraising activity must be consistent with the Mission and Values of the school and support the Strategic Plan goals. Any fundraising activity undertaken on behalf of and supported by the school prior to the passage of this policy is subject to this policy.

Any fundraising activity may not interfere in any way with the children's work time during the school day or interfere with their prepared environment including but not limited to their classrooms, the rotunda and the carpool lane.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND SOLUTIONS

All chemicals, solvents, and cleaning solutions on the grounds of MSLF are kept in locked storage areas. These materials can only be obtained by using a key to unlock the storage closets. In order to prevent accidental use, access to this key is limited to authorized personnel.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Please utilize the **School Info** section in [Transparent Classroom](#) for latest downloadable versions of required Health Office forms.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY AND SCREENINGS

Prior to entering school for the first time, new students must submit an Illinois Department of Health Physical Examination Form completed by their physician. Students are expected to be in compliance with the Illinois State Board of Education Immunization and Physical Examination schedule.

The school is required to exclude children from school who are out of compliance with the state immunization schedule.

Exam Type	Due Date
Health Exam	- Required within 60 days for all students entering MSFL - Update required and due by October 15 of the school year for all students entering kindergarten, 6th, and 9th grades
Eye Exam	- Required within 60 days of entering MSFL for all students ages 5 and older - Also required and due by October 15 of the school year for all students entering kindergarten (Primary Key Year)
Dental Exam	- Required within 60 days of entering MSFL for students ages 5 and older - Update required and due by May 15 of the school year for all students entering 2nd, 6th, and 9th grades

MSLF conducts an annual Hearing and Vision Screening, provided by professionals from the Lake County Health Department Hearing and Vision Program, in accordance with the regulations established by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

- Hearing screenings will be given to students 3 years old, 4 years old, kindergarteners, 1st graders, 2nd graders, and 3rd graders.
- Vision screenings will be given to students 3 years old, 4 years old, 2nd graders, and 8th graders.
- Parents may decline these services by submitting the request in writing and providing MSFL with a complete Eye/Hearing Exam signed by a licensed ophthalmologist/optometrist or audiologist and that is dated within 12 months of the screening date.

For more specific information regarding immunization and physical examination requirements:

- <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/immunization.html>
- <https://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/077/07700665sections.html>

Parents who wish to exercise a religious exemption to these requirements should refer to the Illinois State Board of Education's policies here:

- <https://dph.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/idph/files/forms/religious-exemption-form-081815-040816.pdf>

More information, including copies of required forms, can be found on the Health Office Forms & Information page in the School Info section of Transparent Classroom.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

The risk of transmitting blood borne pathogens, including Hepatitis B and C, HIV, or AIDS is extremely low in school settings when standard precautions to prevent disease transmission are followed. Standard precautions dictate that all blood and body fluids be handled as though they are infectious.

The parent(s) or guardian(s) of a student with a communicable disease should notify the school as soon as they have knowledge of their child's diagnosis. School guidelines for exclusion due to a communicable disease will follow recommendations from local, state, and federal agencies that address communicable disease standards. The determination regarding the conditions under which a child may or may not attend school will be made on

a case-by-case basis by the Health Office in consultation with the treating physician and public health officials if necessary. In the case of any chronic communicable illness, the number of school personnel informed of the student's condition will be limited to those essential to the proper care of the child and to those protecting against the transmission of the disease.

THE ROLE OF THE HEALTH OFFICE

The Health Office has the responsibility to provide emergency care, first aid, and health guidance. The Health Office also works to coordinate the resources of school, home, and community as they pertain to the total health of students and staff. Emergency care and first aid are defined as the immediate and temporary care given to stabilize, comfort, or prevent further injury (to an individual) until medical care or parent transportation is secured. Transportation, except for emergencies, is the responsibility of the parent or guardian. **Emergency contact information for your child must be current and reliable and parents must be available by phone during the school day. In addition, it is imperative that children be picked up within one hour of notification of an illness or accident.** Neither the Health Office Assistant nor any school personnel is allowed to diagnose illnesses or injuries.

MEDICATION

MSLF and Illinois state policy mandate that only those medications *absolutely* necessary for the maintenance of a student's health and comfort should be administered during the school day. If at all possible, daily medications should be given at home. In the event that a child does require the administration of a prescription or over the counter medication (including homeopathic preparations) during the course of the school day, the following conditions must be met:

- The item must be delivered to the Health Office in its original packaging;
- The medication must be accompanied by a medication consent form (available in the Health Office and for download on the MSLF website);
- Both the parent and the *prescribing physician* must sign the medication consent form which indicates instructions for dosage and administration; and
- Medication consent forms must be renewed annually

The intent of these procedures is to assure the safety of your child. We are not permitted to dispense any type of medication* without following these guidelines.

MSLF permits self-administration of medication by a student with asthma or the use of an epinephrine auto-injector by a student as long as the parents/guardian of the student provide the school with written authorization from the parents/guardian and from the student's physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse. (Per Illinois School Code 8/10/10/ See, 105 ILCS5/22-30.)

While MSLF is not required to, it does support the Care of Students with Diabetes Act (see 105 ILCS 145/1 *et seq.*) This Act allows children with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes to independently manage their diabetes while at school—in the classroom, around the school building, and on school grounds. Students with diabetes, their parent or guardian, and school personnel are guided by a diabetes care plan which specifies that the student requires diabetes-related services at school, identified appropriate staff to support these services, and includes authorization and instructions for the student's diabetes self-care at school from a health care provider for diabetes-related services. For more information, please contact the MSLF Health Office.

MSLF permits the administration of a medical cannabis infused product to a student who is a registered qualifying patient by a parent/guardian or other designated caregiver, subject to the restrictions outlined in 105 ILCS 5/22-33. MSLF permits a school administrator or school nurse to administer and may also permit a

student who is a registered qualifying patient to self-administer the product under supervision of a school administrator or school nurse, subject to the restrictions outlined in 105 ILCS 5/22-33.

ILLNESS

The school prohibits a child's attendance during illness. School staff reserves the right to make the final decision about whether a child is well enough to attend school for the day. The decision will be based on the child's ability to participate in class activity or work and/or the ability of staff to care for the child while not compromising the health and safety of other children or staff.

The following list of symptoms increase the likelihood that disease will spread. **Do not send your child to school on days when any of the following symptoms are present:**

- Cough - nagging, deep, or productive cough;
- Discharge of discolored or profuse amounts of mucous from the nose;
- Diarrhea - your child may return to school **24 hours after the last episode of diarrhea** without taking medication for diarrhea;
- Ear pain;
- Conjunctivitis (pinkeye) - thick mucus or pus draining from the eye *or* very red/irritated and uncomfortable eyes. "Pink eye" may result in a white or yellow discharge, matted eyelids after sleep, eye pain and/or redness;
- **Fever - a child with a temperature of 100.4 degrees may not attend school.** Children are required to be fever free for 24 hours ***without the use of fever reducing medication*** prior to returning to school;
- Lice - head lice must be treated with a pediculicide and ALL nits removed before the child can return to school;
- Scabies - students may return to school 24 hours after treatment has begun;
- Spots/Rash - do not send a child with spots or rash to school. MSLF may require documentation from a physician stating it is safe for the child to return to class;
- Children with communicable diseases such as scabies, pinkeye, impetigo, ringworm, or strep throat can return to school once on an antibiotic or appropriate medication for 24-48 hours (depending on specific illness), or with a note from the doctor stating the child is no longer contagious;
- Sore throat/Pharyngitis (inflammation of the throat) may be viral or caused by a bacterial infection—In the case of strep throat (as above) your child may return to school after 24 hours on antibiotics; and
- Vomiting - your child may return to school 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting without medication.

IN CASE OF ILLNESS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Children who become ill during the school day must be picked up within an hour of notification to either a parent or an emergency contact. **Each family must provide the school with an emergency contact that can pick up their child for times when the parents cannot be reached or may not be able to provide timely pick-up.**

Please note: Students must attend at least 1/2 day (3.25 hours) in order to participate in any activities held after school or during the evening. **Students who are absent from school the entire day are not allowed to participate in any practices, competitions, performances, or school sponsored activities held after school or during the evening of the day(s) absence.** These activities include all athletic practices and events, plays, musicals, concerts, club meetings, and any other school sponsored activity. If the situation arises in which an exception to the above rule is necessary, the Executive Director will make the final decision.

ABSENCE NOTIFICATION—SEE [ABSENCE POLICY](#)

MSLF has an Absence Policy in place for the health and safety of our students. **Please inform the school if your child will be absent or tardy as soon as possible on the morning of the absence or delay by completing the online Absence Form located in the MSLF app.** Notification will automatically be sent to your child's teacher, the Health Office, and the Receptionist.

Please notify the Health Office (health@mslf.org) directly if your child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease. In certain cases, at the Health Office Assistant's discretion, a doctor's note may be required upon the child's return to school.

When a student has been absent for three consecutive days due to illness, a note from the child's treating physician may be needed to return to class.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE NOTIFICATION

If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, please notify the Health Office immediately so we may take appropriate action. This may include notifying other class members that a communicable disease has been reported. When a communicable illness is reported in the classroom or there is a trend of illness symptoms in a classroom, an alert is sent from the Health Office. A student exhibiting one or more symptoms noted in the alert may be sent home even if the symptom(s) are mild. This helps to minimize the exposure the rest of the classroom and aids in managing illnesses.

Examples of communicable diseases include but are not limited to:

Chickenpox (Varicella)

The incubation period can be 10-21 days but is commonly 13-17 days. Early signs and symptoms include a sudden onset of a mild fever, of malaise, and of an itchy rash. The disease is transmitted one to two days before the onset of the rash and occurs through direct person-to-person contact with respiratory tract secretions or fluid from lesions of an infected individual. Children may return to school when lesions are crusted over and there are no new lesions.

Streptococcal Sore Throat and Scarlet Fever

The incubation period is usually one to three days. Early signs and symptoms are usually fever, sore throat and tender lymph nodes in the neck, but symptoms can vary. Abdominal pain and vomiting are not uncommon. Scarlet fever occurs most commonly in association with pharyngitis. Scarlet fever-producing strains of bacteria cause a fine, red rash that appears one to three days after the onset of a sore throat. The disease is transmitted by person-to-person direct contact with nasal secretions. Students may return to school following 24 hours of treatment on antibiotics and once they are fever-free.

Conjunctivitis-Pink Eye

The incubation period is one to three days. It may be viral or bacterial and is communicable until the infection resolves. It is transmitted through direct contact with discharge from conjunctivae or upper respiratory tracts of infected persons, from contaminated fingers, and from other articles. Children must be excluded from school for 24 hours after treatment begins and until symptoms have subsided or until the child is examined by a physician and approved for readmission.

Impetigo

The incubation period is 4 to 10 days. Early signs and symptoms include blisters on the skin that open and become covered with yellowish crust. A period of communicability exists as long as lesions continue to drain. Impetigo can be spread through contact with sores, mucus or nasal discharge as well as shared items.

Child must be excluded from school for 48 hours following the initiation of antibiotic treatment and until sores have improved.

Hand Foot and Mouth (HFM)

A highly contagious and common childhood viral illness. The incubation period is usually 3-6 days. The virus can remain in the body for weeks after symptoms have subsided. Early symptoms are fever, poor appetite, feeling unwell, and sore throat. About 1-2 days later, sores and/or blisters form in the mouth and/or on the skin. It is possible for only one symptom, usually mouth sores, to be present during HFM infections. Even when a physician provides a return to class note, students need to be fever free for at least 24-hours without the use of fever reducing medications, free from new blister/spot formations, the current sites are not producing discharge/blistered/crusting, any healing sites are not causing distraction in regard to pain or focus, and, if applicable, no excessive drooling or nose running is present.

Head Lice

While not a disease, head lice is a common problem in schools. It is caused by a very small insect (louse) that lives on human heads where it lays eggs (nits). Symptoms include severe itching and excoriation of the scalp and neck which can lead to a secondary bacterial infection. The life cycle of the louse is about 30 days—after another 10 days the hatched nits become adult lice. As long as the adult insect or nits live on an infested individual, lice are transmissible. Please refer to MSLF's Head Lice policy below for more information.

Head Lice Policy

According to the National Pediculosis (infestation of lice) Association children between the ages of 3 and 12 years are most vulnerable to this parasitic infection and to the dangers associated with abuse of pediculicidal remedies. It is for this reason that childcare providers must establish a head lice management protocol, including a non-nit (eggs) policy. Conflicts arise when there is no clear policy in place. Lice management cannot depend upon the claims of any one product and both parents and staff must be held to a high standard of accountability. Accurate information can help prevent as well as treat outbreaks and minimize the need for crisis intervention. MSLF, in following the recommendations of the NPA, will:

- Provide parents and faculty with the school's policy and educational literature on the prevention, detection and treatment of head lice in addition to what is stated in the Parent Handbook;
- Promptly inform parents if head lice exposure has occurred;
- Communicate school policy to staff and teach them how to examine and identify lice and nits (eggs);
- Perform screening as recommended by the National Pediculosis Association;
- Hang coats and hats separately and so they do not touch. Put them either in separate cubbies or separate bags. Hats should be tucked into coat sleeves and children should not share clothing or headgear;
- Wipe all sleeping cots and wash the cot sheets. Send home blankets, pillows and stuffed animals. Treat laundry in a hot dryer;
- Vacuum carpeted areas and floors;
- Encourage parents to routinely check children, at least weekly;
- Exclude infested children from school until all lice, eggs (nits) and egg cases have been removed through the use of a lice-killing product and until removal is verified;
- Educate parents regarding their responsibilities to ensure no nits; and
- When children return, examine them for any remaining nits before they re-enter their classroom. If the child has any nits he or she must be returned to his/her parents for additional treatment.

SEVERE INCIDENTS POLICY

All severe incidents among children (if there is an injury of broken skin, bruising, or swelling) including biting will be handled by the classroom teacher in charge as follows:

1. The parent/guardian of the injured child will be called immediately.
2. The parent/guardian of the child who inflicted the injury will be called immediately.
3. The classroom teacher or assistant in charge of the child will fill out an accident report. One copy will be sent home to the parent/guardian of the injured child, one copy will be filed in the student's file, and one copy will go to the Executive Director.
4. A meeting between the teacher and the parents of the child who inflicted the injury and the family whose child was injured will be arranged.
5. If the child who caused the injury does not improve his/her behavior, then a meeting between the parents of the involved children, the classroom teacher, the Executive Director and consultants/counselors may be held to assess the situation. If deemed necessary, a professional will be involved, at the parent's expense, to determine the best course of action for the child and the school.
6. Other disciplinary action may be taken as deemed necessary by the Executive Director and the [Bullying and Harassment policy](#) may be determined to be applicable to such incidents.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times!

RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER INJURY OR MEDICAL PROCEDURE

A child returning to school after an injury or procedure (i.e., surgery, hospitalization, casted, etc.) must have a doctor's note stating they are able to be at school, especially if the injury prohibits a student from functioning normally in the school setting. The physician needs to detail any restrictions or precautions and for how long it is expected to last. This note must be given to the Health Office before the child can resume regular classroom instruction.

IMMIGRATION PROTECTION STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Standard Operating Procedure: Law Enforcement & Immigration Access Review

Entity: Montessori School of Lake Forest

Location: 13700 W Laurel Dr, Lake Forest, IL 60045

Compliance Authority: Illinois Safe Schools for All Act (105 ILCS 5/22-101)

Effective Date: July 20, 2026

1. Verification, Escalation, and Legal Review

- **Initial Detention:** Front desk receptionist must detain any law enforcement agent at the main entrance. Agents are strictly barred from entering student areas, classrooms, or non-public spaces during the review. Staff must copy the agent's credentials and badges.
- **Authorized Person Contact:** Staff must immediately contact the **Head of School** (or the Director of Operations if the Head is unavailable).
- **Legal Counsel Routing:** The designated authorized person must immediately forward the agent's requests, warrants, or subpoenas to the school's **legal counsel** for formal review.
- **Judicial Review Process:** The authorized person and legal counsel will audit the document to ensure it is a **binding judicial warrant or subpoena** signed by a judge. Administrative warrants, ICE civil detainers, or standard agency forms do not grant campus access.

2. On-Premises Monitoring, Accompaniment, and Documentation

- **Constant Accompaniment:** If an agent is legally cleared to enter the facility via a valid judicial warrant, the authorized school official must physically **accompany and monitor** the agent at all times while on the school's premises.
- **Interaction Log:** The school official must log all interactions with the agent. This documentation must capture exact times, names of individuals involved, statements made, and actions taken.
- **Evidence Photocopying:** The school must duplicate and keep a record of any documents, items, or records requested, reviewed, or seized by law enforcement before they leave the building.

3. Parent/Guardian Notification & Consent for Immigration Access

- **General Consent Rule:** If an agent requests access to a student for immigration enforcement purposes, the school must notify and obtain explicit consent from the **student's parents or guardian**.
- **Judicial Exception:** Notification and consent may only be bypassed if the agent presents a valid judicial warrant or subpoena that **explicitly restricts disclosure** of the information to the parent or guardian.
- **Safe-Space Separation:** Minor students must remain in a safe, private room with an administrator while parents are being reached. They may not be left alone with enforcement agents.

4. Non-Discrimination, Inclusion, and Privacy Protections

- **Equal Participation:** The school strictly prohibits any practices that have the effect of excluding a child from school participation, or excluding a parent from parental engagement activities, based on their perceived or actual immigration status.
- **No Information Collection:** School staff are legally barred from requesting, collecting, or recording information or documentation regarding the citizenship or immigration status of any student or family member.
- **Directory Data Lockout:** The school shall never designate immigration status, citizenship, or nationality as "directory information" available for public or external release.
- **Disclosure Ban:** School personnel are strictly forbidden from threatening to disclose, or actually disclosing, any details regarding the actual or perceived citizenship or immigration status of a child (or anyone associated with the child) to any immigration or law enforcement agency.

OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIPS

LODGING

Administration will review and approve overnight accommodations prior to any overnight field trips being scheduled. Beds must be available to all attending students. Two students may be assigned to a Full/Queen/King-sized bed. Room assignments are to be communicated prior to the scheduled overnight. If available, a rollaway bed will be provided for any student who is not comfortable with a shared bed.

TRANSPORTATION

Administration will review and approve transportation to/from the location(s) prior to trips being scheduled.

CHAPERONES

Overnight trips are intended to help students take further steps toward independence, therefore MSLE does not allow parent and/or third party chaperones. Staff chaperones will be provided for all overnights. However,

parent drivers/chaperones may be invited to attend day trips. Overnights will include staff chaperones to accommodate a minimum of 1 chaperone for every 10 students.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Students requiring special accommodations while attending overnights due to a medical condition should contact the teacher(s) prior to the scheduled trip. In some cases, a doctor's note may be required.

MEALS

Students will be provided with three meals a day plus snacks while attending overnights. We will do our best to communicate menus in advance, but this may not always be possible. Any food allergies or dietary restrictions should be communicated to the health office for student records at health@mslf.org. Additional policies regarding bringing food or purchasing food during overnights will be communicated ahead of the trip and will vary based on location, accommodations, and availability.

ILLNESSES

If a student becomes ill while attending an overnight, the parents will be contacted as soon as possible. Chaperones will carry basic, over-the-counter emergency medications (e.g., acetaminophen, ibuprofen, Benadryl) during overnights and, with parent consent, administer them as needed. In the case of a medical emergency, the staff chaperones will contact administration first and then the parents. Depending on the severity of the situation, 911 may need to be contacted first.

CELL PHONE USAGE

Whether cell phones are permitted on overnights will be communicated ahead of the scheduled trip. When cell phones are permitted, designated usage times will be communicated. During those times, students may access and use phones freely. Phones will be collected outside of designated usage times to ensure they do not interfere with planned activities, lessons, or sleep.

PARENT COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND GRIEVANCES PROCEDURES

MSLF seeks to achieve a balance among different, and sometimes competing, goals and objectives. For example, MSLF values healthy classroom sizes, but reasonable tuition and fees; attractive faculty salaries and benefits, but again, reasonable tuition and fees; consistency in program offerings, but opportunities for parent participation in subjects of interest; and openness to new ideas, but a stable Montessori learning environment for children. Achieving this balance in a dynamic, child-focused environment is challenging and occasionally stressful. Differences of opinion will arise on how to do so. The school welcomes questions, comments, and constructive criticism. MSLF asks that parents address their concerns appropriately and respectfully in accordance with the following procedures. The following guidelines will help parents identify the proper channels of communication to express their concerns and ideas.

For Concerns or Questions Involving your Child's Achievement and Classroom Behavior or the Disciplining of Your Child

Contact your child's teacher. If concerns persist, contact the Executive Director.

Transportation, Carpool, Drop-Off, and Pick-Up Procedures

Notify the receptionist and the office, in writing and in advance, of the adults authorized to pick up your child. If concerns persist, contact your child's teacher and then the Executive Director.

Day-To-Day School Operations Including Facility Usage and Maintenance, Tuition and Fees, Etc.

Contact the Director of Finance and Operations. If concerns persist, contact the Executive Director in writing. If concerns persist, contact the President of the Board of Directors, who will refer the issue to the proper committee.

General Policies, Public Relations, and Strategic Planning

Contact the Executive Director in writing. If concerns persist, contact the Board of Directors who will refer the issue to the proper committee.

Social and Hospitality Activities, Fundraising Activities, and Room Parent Activities

Contact the Executive Director in writing. If concerns persist, contact the Board of Directors, who will refer the issue to the proper committee.

When Disagreements Arise Parent-to-Parent, Parent-to-Teacher or Parent-to-Administrator

A meeting must first be held between the parties in disagreement. If the disagreement is not resolved, contact the Executive Director in writing. If the disagreement is not resolved, the President of the Board of Directors may arrange a group conference that may include members of the Board.

PARENT COMPORTMENT POLICY

Montessori School of Lake Forest (MSLF) believes that a positive and constructive working relationship between the school and a student's parent/guardian(s) is essential to fulfilling MSLF's mission and creating a culture in which students, parents, and school staff work together with respect, civility, and trust. As such, MSLF reserves the right to discontinue a student's enrollment at the school or not re-enroll a student if MSLF, in its sole discretion, reasonably concludes that the actions and behaviors of a parent/guardian make it impossible to foster a positive and constructive relationship or cause serious interference with MSLF's accomplishment of its educational purposes, mission, and/or the education of the student or other students.

Should a parent's/guardian's actions, inaction, or behavior while at the school and toward school staff be in conflict with MSLF's mission or goals, or in violation of the school policies stated herein, MSLF reserves the right to discontinue a student's enrollment immediately without an option for reenrollment in future years as related to any of the parent's/guardian's children.

PARENTS HIRING TEACHERS

It is a conflict of interest for MSLF staff to be privately employed by parents. Such a situation lends itself to confusion on the part of the children and compromises the teacher-student and teacher-parent relationships. *See also Tutoring.*

PHOTOGRAPHS AND PUBLICITY

Photographs of the children participating in our programs may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures, or other publicity materials. Your permission to use photographs including your child without compensation is provided during initial enrollment and again before each new school year. Please contact the Enrollment Director if you wish to decline permission.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MONTESSORI ACCREDITATION AND AFFILIATION

The primary forms of recognition for Montessori schools come through AMI/USA (Association Montessori Internationale – USA), and AMS (American Montessori Society). Our Toddler classrooms are also overseen by DCFS.

Certification of Accreditation or Affiliation offers credibility to a school’s status within the education community and within the Montessori community. It confirms a school’s staunch support of and faithful implementation of Montessori principles.

Accreditation and affiliation are issued to schools that have met the following standards:

- One Montessori trained teacher will be present for the appropriate age level in each class;
- Assistants, if present, are non-teaching aides;
- A consultation is conducted at least once every three years;
- There shall be a complete set of materials from an AMI or AMS authorized manufacturer in each classroom;
- The philosophical approach is consistent with what is presented in AMI or AMS training courses;
- Classes made up of children representing a three to four-year age range:

Parent Infant:	6 weeks - 18 months (infants and parents)
Toddler:	15 months - 2 ½-3 years
Primary:	2 ½-3 - 6 years
Elementary:	6 - 12 years (6 - 9; 9 - 12 classes)
Adolescent:	12 - 14 years

- Classes include a well-balanced division of ages, as well as an appropriate number of children to ensure social development.

Designated class size:	
Toddler	15 children
Primary	30 children
Elementary	27-30 children
Adolescent	15 children

- Classes are scheduled five days per week with substantial uninterrupted work periods of designated length provided each day: and
- An extended day (this includes an afternoon work period in addition to the morning work period) is provided five days per week for the older children in a primary class, as well as for the elementary children.

MSLF is a member of AMI, AMS, and the Association of Illinois Montessori Schools (AIMS). Our Toddler program is also licensed by the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services. MSLF is recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education as a Non-Public School for its elementary and secondary programs.

SECURITY PROCEDURES

1. Parents are responsible for completing and, if necessary, revising the "Release Form," which identifies the people they have authorized to pick up their children from school. Parents are responsible for informing MSLF of special domestic situations, including court orders or orders of protection, which restrict family members from visiting a child or warrant additional precautions. When a child is being picked up by another school family for a social event or other occasion, the family of the child being picked up is required to provide a written permission slip, signed by the parent or guardian, to the office, that identifies the person picking the child up and the date of the event.
2. Parents of Toddler students in the Breakfast Club and the After School Club must sign their children in and out of school every day.

3. **All** parents visiting the school must sign in and out at the receptionist's desk. Parents visiting the school should never ask a child to open a door in order to gain access to the building.
4. No child or parent may enter the school building before 7:30 a.m. Children using carpool should be dropped off at the school not earlier than 10 minutes before the scheduled starting time of the class and picked up from school no later than 10 minutes after the scheduled dismissal time. Additional fees will be charged if a child is picked up late. Extra Hours Care can be arranged in advance with the receptionist.
5. Parents must accompany and supervise their children inside and outside the school building at all times, except when children are attending class or are registered for Extra Hours Care.

STUDENT RECORDS

Certified copies of transfer students' records must be requested by the parents within 14 days of enrollment. MSLF sends unofficial records of students transferring to other schools within 10 days of receiving a request for records from another school.

The Montessori School of Lake Forest will flag the records for any current or former student reported as missing by the Illinois State Police. The Montessori School of Lake Forest maintains alumni student records for a period of 10 years after the student leaves the school.

TEACHER GIFTS

At times parents and children may want to give a teacher a gift. Gifts should be small. Whether they are personal gifts or for the classroom, they should be meaningful to your child. Significant gifts should be made out to the school in the name of the teacher you wish to honor.

TRANSITIONING TO AN UPPER LEVEL

Toddler and Primary students can transition to the next level at any time during the year, depending on their age and readiness (social, emotional, and academic). The child's current teacher, a teacher from the next level, the Enrollment Director, and the Executive Director determine a child's readiness by looking for signs that a child is entering the next stage of development. You will be notified in writing when your child is ready to begin transition visits to the next level classroom. These visits, which gradually lengthen, often take place over a long period of time. Divisions also acknowledge transitions with annual "Stepping Up" ceremonies.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

The transportation of students is the responsibility of parents. The school does not legally assume responsibility for carpools. If someone other than a regular driver is to transport a child from school, a signed, written note must be sent to the office. Children must have a completed Release Form in their file. The Release Form identifies those adults, including parents, authorized to pick up a given child. Should you need to add or delete names, please come to the office to update your Release Form.

Please observe the "SLOW, CHILDREN" signs. The on-campus speed limit is 10 mph. When walking in the parking lot, please have your child with you at all times. Please be considerate to others by not parking or standing in an obstructive manner. Should the school parking lot not have available spaces, please park on the street alongside the curb. We are not responsible for any consequences arising from unauthorized parking. Please heed all NO PARKING signs. Please be aware that some parking spaces in the west lot are reserved for families that "purchased" spaces at MSLF's Annual Benefit.

TRANSPORTATION FOR FIELD TRIPS

The Montessori School of Lake Forest will provide transportation services for school related activities by renting buses and/or vans from independent contractors.

TUTORING AND BABYSITTING POLICY

MSLF greatly appreciates its teachers' and school personnel's dedication to its students and their academic experience and advancement. However, in order to uphold a professional relationship between school personnel and MSLF families of current and former students, and avoid any conflict of interest situations, MSLF school personnel are prohibited from engaging in tutoring or babysitting services for current or former MSLF students, or the siblings of current or former MSLF students per the limitations set forth in this policy. MSLF school personnel shall use their best judgment, keeping in mind the professional boundaries that exist between school personnel and students and families, when having any contact with students outside of school hours and school-sponsored activities.

While students may at times require or show interest in before and/or after school tutoring, employees may not tutor current or former MSLF students, or the siblings of current or former MSLF students, at any time, including during the summer months. Classroom teachers, and other school personnel, are prohibited from tutoring students currently enrolled in their class or another MSLF class. MSLF school personnel may only engage in tutoring services with MSLF students through a school-sponsored program, if any, and such tutoring services will take place at a school-approved location and under the supervision of an MSLF administrator, or his/her designee. Exceptions to this policy must be granted in writing and approved by the Executive Director in his/her sole discretion.

In addition, MSLF employees may not engage in babysitting services for current or former MSLF students and their families, including babysitting the siblings of current or former students. Exceptions to this babysitting policy are limited to circumstances where there is a close familial relationship between the MSLF employee and the family, or where an MSLF employee is engaging in babysitting services for a co-worker, who is also an MSLF employee and parent.

This policy is not intended to limit MSLF employees from engaging in tutoring or babysitting services for students who attend a school other than MSLF and for non-MSLF families.

MSLF expects its teachers and school personnel to uphold the limitations of this policy and maintain the highest level of professionalism at all times with current and former students and their families. Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

VIDEO RECORDING

For privacy reasons, video recording by parents is not permitted on school property.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

DONATIONS

As a private not-for-profit institution, MSLF depends on generous donations of time, talent, and treasure by parents, relatives, alumni, and friends to support its activities. Financial contributions to MSLF are tax deductible and may be sent to the Annual Fund or designated for a special purpose. Gifts in memory or in honor of individuals are also welcome. Donations of specific items needed for classrooms or grounds are always appreciated.

In addition to tuition payments, all parents are expected to participate in MSLF's Annual Fund and occasional capital campaigns. It is a well-known fact of private education that tuition alone does not cover all of a school's costs. Annual Funds and capital campaigns provide for enhancements and meet needs above and beyond operating costs. The 100% participation of MSLF's staff, faculty, and teachers makes the school eligible to apply for grants from outside funders, and it convinces them that we believe in ourselves, and thus are worthy of donating to.

ANNUAL FUND

The Annual Giving campaign during the late fall is MSLF's major fundraising drive. Your contribution shows your support for Montessori education. The corporate donors and foundations, from which the school seeks additional funds, look first for evidence of widespread parental support. As a private, not-for-profit institution, MSLF counts on 100% parent participation to bridge the gap between tuition and operating expenses.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

The parents and staff of MSLF plan yearly fundraising, social, and community events that offer parents the opportunity to share their talents in service of the school's mission. By getting involved, parents work together as a community and become active in the school's community. Fundraising events entail long-term planning and the resources of many parent volunteers. There are many ways for you to get involved, and the MSLF faculty, staff, and Board, as well as your children, all count on you to do so.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Every year, MSLF hosts the following special events which succeed because the MSLF parent community, faculty, and staff help organize and support them.

FALL FEST

The Annual Fall Fest is hosted by the faculty, staff, and administration of the school. We welcome all families within the MSLF community as well as enjoy seeing alumni students and their families. Food and family-centered activities are enjoyments shared by children and adults on this festive day.

GRANDPARENTS' AND SPECIAL FRIENDS' DAY

Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day is an event much anticipated by the children during Thanksgiving week. The children especially look forward to showing their invited guests the many wonderful things MSLF offers to them inside and out of doors.

SPRING BENEFIT FUNDRAISER

The MSLF community comes together in the spring for a fundraising event, which is typically focused on a specific fundraising initiative or campus project.

SCHOOL PICNIC

To celebrate the accomplishments of a successful year, the annual picnic provides closure for the children, families, faculty, and staff. This popular event is attended by ALL!

BUILDING AND GROUNDS PRESERVATION FUND

Upon initial entry into the school, each family is required to make a one-time, non-refundable payment to the Building and Grounds Preservation Fund. The Building and Grounds Preservation Fund payment shall be the property of MSLF to be used as directed by the MSLF Board of Directors to maintain and improve the facilities and the natural beauty of the campus.

For new families joining the school after August 1, 2025, the Building and Grounds Preservation Fund payment is \$2,000.

TUITION AND FEES

SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM TUITION

A \$2,000 deposit is required for each student enrolling in a School Year program. This tuition deposit is due in March for the following school year and reserves a space in the class for your child. Withdrawal of a student's enrollment with a paid deposit will forfeit the deposit. The school's operating budget is determined based on deposits and enrollment contracts for the following year. The \$2,000 deposit is applied to a family's last invoice of the school year if the student is not re-enrolling.

Parents may elect to pay tuition with one of three payment plans or as determined upon enrollment:

- One payment for the total tuition balance paid on August 1
- Two payments divisible by the total tuition balance paid on August 1 and December 1
- 10 equal payments of tuition balance from 8/1 through 5/1, being paid by the 1st of every month

Payments can be made by check, ACH/direct debit, or credit card (with 3% transaction fee per transaction). ACH/direct debits and credit card payments will be processed on the 1st of each month, from 8/1 through 5/1.

Parents are required to give 30 days' notice in writing prior to withdrawal and shall be liable for tuition up to the end of the 30-day notice period.

Tuition will be prorated for School Year students enrolled and starting after the first three weeks of the school year. Tuition will not be prorated for School Year program students who terminate their enrollment contract early. Tuition is not prorated by day during the phase-in process for Toddler and Primary students.

Students who withdraw from a School Year Program and then seek to re-enroll will be put on a waiting list. If re-enrollment becomes possible, a re-admittance and application fee will be charged.

FULL YEAR PROGRAM TUITION

A \$2,000 deposit is payable for each student enrolling in Full Year programs. This tuition deposit is due in March for the following school year and reserves a space in the class for your child. Withdrawal of a student's enrollment with a paid deposit will forfeit the deposit. The school's operating budget is determined based on deposits and enrollment contracts for the following year. The \$2,000 deposit is applied to a family's last invoice of the school year if the student is not re-enrolling.

Parents may elect to pay tuition with one of two payment plans or as determined upon enrollment:

- One payment for the total tuition balance for the 12-months paid on August 1
- Two payments divisible by the total tuition balance paid on August 1 and December 1
- 12 equal payments of tuition balance being paid by the 1st of every month, 8/1 through 7/1

Payments can be made by check, ACH/direct debit, or credit card (with 3% transaction fee per transaction). ACH/direct debits and credit card payments will be processed on the 1st of each month, from 8/1 through 7/1.

Parents are required to give 30 days' notice in writing prior to withdrawal and shall be liable for tuition up to the end of the 30-day notice period.

Tuition will be prorated for Full Year students enrolled and starting after the first three weeks of the school year. Tuition will not be prorated for Full Year program students who terminate their enrollment contract early. Tuition is not prorated by day during the phase-in process for Toddler and Primary students.

Students who withdraw from a Full Year Program and then seek to re-enroll will be put on a waiting list. If re-enrollment becomes possible, a re-admittance and application fee will be charged.

PROGRAM CHANGES

We understand that situations may arise during the course of the year that require a family to change the program in which they are enrolled, including adding or dropping before or after care programs. We ask that parents submit as much advance notice as possible when requesting a program change, so that we can notify the classrooms accordingly, and so that the shift causes a minimal amount of disruption. Parents shall be liable for tuition up to the end of the thirty-day notice period.

UNPAID TUITION POLICY

Tuition payments are due on the 1st of the month. A tuition reminder will be emailed for payment not received by the first of the month. If tuition is not received by the 1st of the applicable month, a \$100 late fee will be applied to the account. In the case a payment is late more than once, the late fee will be \$250 per instance.

If tuition is past due more than one month, another reminder will be issued referring to the policies stated in the Parent Handbook and to the right to dismiss a child for non-payment of tuition or fees. Parents must then make arrangements in writing with the Director of Finance and Operations.

Re-enrollment contracts will not be honored until all past due tuition and fees are paid.

No exception to the unpaid tuition policy can be made without written approval of the Board of Directors.

OTHER FEES

APPLICATION FEE	\$150 non-refundable fee with application for all School Year and Full Year students new to the school and students who return after withdrawing.
LATE PAYMENT CHARGE	\$100 for tuition payments not received by the 1 st of the month. Charge will be invoiced upon occurrence. \$250 per instance if a payment is late two or more times.
RETURNED CHECK CHARGE	\$100 for checks returned NSF. Charges will be invoiced upon occurrence and a re-issue of payment from the parent must apply.
DECLINED CREDIT CARD CHARGE OR ACH PAYMENT	\$100 per instance of credit card or ACH payment declined by the bank. Charges will be invoiced upon occurrence and a re-issue of payment from the parent must apply.
LATE CHILD PICK UP CHARGE	Charges will be considered Extra Hours Care and will be invoiced upon occurrence. \$30.00 per quarter hour will begin to accrue after the end time of the child's enrolled program.
EXTRA HOURS CARE	\$25 per hour billed in one-hour increments
AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES	Payment for all after-school activities must be made in full upon enrollment.

FINANCIAL AID

The Montessori School of Lake Forest is committed to sustaining an economically diverse community by assisting qualified families who, without aid, have no other resources with which to meet the full cost of an education at MSLF. Families who are seeking financial aid should review this policy carefully and may ask for further information from the Executive Director.

MSLF's financial aid grants vary in range depending upon each family's financial resources. Financial aid is applied toward school tuition only. Parents are responsible for any remaining tuition balance plus any applicable fees, and for covering the cost of Before and After School Care. All families are expected to contribute to their child's education. To meet the school's budgetary requirements, parents applying for assistance will also have to be able to **pay 50% of each child's tuition** before being considered for financial aid. The primary obligation for a child's education rests with the parents. Families are expected to make education a spending priority. MSLF's financial aid will not subsidize a family's discretionary spending choices. MSLF will not award financial aid when a family possesses substantial assets, whether those assets are liquid. MSLF's financial aid is directed toward the support of families who do not have other resources.

To assess financial need, MSLF uses FAST to process financial aid applications. FAST is a service of Independent School Management (ISM). Based on the financial information a family provides, FAST estimates the amount the family should be able to contribute to education expenses. This determination is based on the FAST formula and considers income, assets, cost of living, debts, other tuition obligations, and other family expenses.

MSLF expects that all information provided by parents or others as part of fulfilling the financial aid application process will be complete and accurate. Inaccurate information will cause rejection of the application and/or loss of subsequent financial aid.

In cases of separated, divorced, or never-married families, both natural parents must complete and submit separate financial aid applications and supporting tax documents. A letter explaining any unusual family circumstances or expenses which may affect ability to pay for the student's education should be sent to MSLF's Executive Director.

A final offer for financial aid will be provided only after a complete application and all supporting documents have been submitted. It is important to note that an offer of enrollment to MSLF does not guarantee a financial aid award.

Parents of returning students must submit a complete financial aid application each year. Failure to do so may result in the loss of aid. A family's application for aid will not be considered for the next year until their account is current and they are in good standing with the Business Office.

MSLF is unable to offer financial aid to every family who qualifies.

GOVERNANCE

THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

MSLF is a private not-for-profit corporation with the mission of operating a school for children from birth through age fourteen in accordance with the educational philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori. Unlike a private business, the school has no owners in the traditional sense, and all monies received are directed toward supporting and improving the school's educational mission. The school distributes no profits and pays no dividends.

MSLF is governed by a Board of Directors and employs an Executive Director, an administrative staff, faculty, and support personnel to implement the school's programs and to manage day-to-day operations. The school is non-sectarian and rejects all forms of invidious discrimination in hiring, enrollment, and programming. The school qualifies as a tax-exempt charitable organization under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Like all private schools, MSLF depends on parents to support its educational programs with contributions of their time and money. MSLF relies on the contributions of wealth and talent that its parents have to offer, and thanks all for the many ways, big and small, that their gifts, as volunteers and as contributors, enhance the quality of their children's education.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A Board of Directors is comprised of volunteer parents and community leaders. The Board's primary responsibilities are to establish overall policy and to ensure the financial stability of the school. Please refer to the Bylaws chapter in this manual for further information on the function and operation of the Board of Directors.

Regular meetings of the Board of Directors are held the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Montessori School of Lake Forest, 13700 West Laurel Drive. You may request that the Board add an item to its agenda by writing to its President seven days in advance of a scheduled meeting.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The Board of Directors guides itself and the Montessori School of Lake Forest according to its Strategic Plan.

Board of Directors 2026-27

Executive Committee

Emily Van Bel	President
Scott Edgar	Vice President
Mike McNitt	Treasurer
Erik Carrier	Secretary

Members

Jaimeen Brahmbhatt	Member
Ashley DeBruin	Member
Johanna DeYoung	Member
Phil Doetsch	Member
Christina D'Onofrio (Fenza)	Member
Kevin Flynn	Member
Linda Fraunhofer	Member
Lauren Kugler	Member
Claire LaFont	Member
Punit Parikh	Member
Laniel Razdolsky	Member
Hope Allegretti	Executive Director

2026-2027 Board meetings:

August 27	Retreat – TBD
September 17	February 18
October 15	April 22
November 19	May 20
January 21	

BYLAWS OF MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF LAKE FOREST

Article One Name

- 1.1 The name of the corporation is Montessori School of Lake Forest ("MSLF").

Article Two Offices

- 2.1 The principal office of this corporation shall be located at 13700 West Laurel Drive, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Article Three Purposes

- 3.1 The purpose of this corporation is to care for and educate children between birth and age fifteen. The corporation also promotes and disseminates the educational philosophy and principles of Maria Montessori as adapted to the American educational and cultural environment. This institution shall not discriminate against students, applicants for admission, faculty, other employees, or parents on the basis of race, color, sex, religion or national ethnic origin.

Article Four Membership

- 4.1 The members of the Board of Directors shall be the sole members of this corporation and shall have all the rights and duties afforded them by law, the articles of incorporation of this corporation and these bylaws.

Article Five Board of Directors

- 5.1 General Powers: All powers of the corporation shall be vested in a Board of Directors. The Board shall manage the affairs of this corporation.
- 5.2 Number: The Board shall consist of a maximum of twenty Directors in addition to ex officio members. No fewer than ten members shall comprise the Board.
- 5.3 Ex Officio Members: The Executive Director shall be an ex officio member of the Board of Directors.
- 5.4 Terms: Directors shall be elected for an initial term of three (3) years. An initial term shall begin as proscribed in section 6.4 of the MSLF bylaws.
- 5.5 Consecutive Terms: A member of the Board of Directors may be selected for a consecutive term of three years. The selection of a board member for a consecutive term shall be at the discretion of the Committee on Directors.
- 5.6 Term Limit: A member of the Board of Directors shall not serve more than two consecutive terms. Exception for Board President: Service as President of the Board of Directors shall toll the term limit; further, the President of the Board of Directors may remain on the Board for up to three (3) years after service as President has ended regardless of years of service on the Board.

5.7 Un-expired Terms: If a vacancy occurs on the Board, the Committee on Directors may nominate candidates for the un-expired term pursuant to the provisions of Article Six of the bylaws. The Board may elect replacement Board members at any regularly scheduled or special Board meeting. The new member shall take office immediately following election. The service from the date of election until the annual meeting shall not count as part of the three-year term.

5.8 Attendance: Directors shall attend 80% of the regular Board meetings between July 1 and June 30 each year. The Committee on Directors may recommend to the Board of Directors that a Director be removed for failure to attend 80% of the meetings.

5.9 Removal of a Director: A Director may be removed from the Board of Directors, upon recommendation of either the Committee on Directors or the Executive Committee, by an affirmative vote on three-fifths of the Directors at a regularly scheduled or special meeting. Prior notice that this issue will be considered must be given to Directors as soon as known, but no fewer than seven days, before the meeting to consider a motion to remove a Director. A Director may be removed from the Board of Directors with or without cause. Removal of a Director shall be effective immediately.

5.10 Conflict of Interest: A Director may not vote on a motion that directly affects the Director or the Director's immediate family. A Director may not vote on a motion to purchase services or products from a business that either employs or otherwise may compensate a Director. This restriction does not apply to stock or bond income received from a publicly traded company.

Article Six Selection of New Board Members

6.1. Nominations: The Committee on Directors shall be responsible for soliciting nominations for new Board Members. All nominations shall be submitted to the Committee on Directors on a written nomination form. All completed nomination forms shall be retained by the Board for five (5) years, regardless of whether the nominee is selected to serve on the Board.

6.2. List of Nominees: The Committee on Directors shall create a list of nominees that best meets the current needs of MSLF. The Committee on Directors shall submit the list of nominees to the entire Board, along with the completed nominations form, and any supporting written documentation, at least ten (10) days prior to the Board meeting at which the confirmation of a nominee is requested by the Committee on Directors.

6.3 Confirmation: Confirmation of a nominee shall be done by confidential vote at a regularly scheduled Board meeting. Confirmation by 75% of the Board is required for the selection of a nominee.

6.4 Notice: The Board President, or any member of the Committee on Directors, shall inform those confirmed that they have been selected to serve on the MSLF Board of Directors. Service shall begin immediately upon said notice.

6.5 Persons Ineligible for Board Membership: No person shall be eligible for membership on the Board of Directors if a member of his or her immediate family is employed by MSLF.

6.6 The Committee on Directors and the MSLF Board of Directors shall follow the MSLF *Board of Directors Guidelines* in the selection of new members.

Article Seven Officers

- 7.1 Officers: The officers of the corporation shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- 7.2 Qualifications: The Officers of the corporation shall be elected by majority vote from among the voting members of the Board of Directors.
- 7.3 Vacancy in office of President: If the office of President of the Board of Directors becomes vacant, the Committee on Directors shall nominate a replacement for the un-expired term. The Vice President shall call a special meeting of the Board of Directors for the sole purpose of electing a new President. The Vice President shall serve as Acting President until a new President is elected. The new President shall take office immediately upon election.
- 7.4 Vacancy in office other than President: If an office becomes vacant, the Committee on Directors shall nominate a replacement for the un-expired term. The new officer may be elected at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors. The new officer shall take office immediately upon election.
- 7.5 Removal of an officer: An Officer may be removed from Office, upon recommendation of either the Committee on Directors or the Executive Committee, by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Directors at a regularly scheduled or special Board meeting. Prior notice that this issue will be considered must be given to Directors as soon as known, but no fewer than seven (7) days, before the meeting to consider a motion to remove an Officer. An Officer may be removed from Office with or without cause. Removal of an Officer shall be effective immediately.
- 7.6 Terms: Officers of the Board of Directors shall be elected for a term of one (1) year. Terms shall begin at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors. Officers shall be elected after the election of Directors.

Article Eight

Meetings of Directors

- 8.1 Annual Meeting: The annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held in May or at any time the Board shall designate. The purpose of the meeting shall be the election of Directors; the election of officers and the transaction of such other business as may be properly brought before the meeting.
- 8.2 Regular Meetings: The Board of Directors shall meet regularly at such times and dates as shall be established at the Annual Meeting. The President may cancel or reschedule a Regular Meeting in his or her discretion.
- 8.3 Special Meetings: Special Meetings of the Board of Directors may be called at any time by the President. The President shall call a special meeting at the request of two officers or three members of the Board.
- 8.4 Quorum and Voting: A quorum for both regular and special meetings shall be one-half of the voting members; no fewer than three shall be officers. Each Board member who is present at the meeting shall have one vote. There shall be no proxy voting. Ex officio members shall not have a vote.
- 8.5 Executive Session: An executive session may be called during any regular or special board meeting at the discretion of the Board President or by the request of any voting Board member. During an executive session, all non-voting members may be excluded.
- 8.6 Minutes: Minutes of all regular and special Board meetings shall be recorded by the Board Secretary. Board members may suggest additions or corrections to the minutes. Minutes shall be voted on and passed by

majority vote of voting members at any subsequent regularly scheduled or special Board meeting. At the discretion of the Board President, an executive session may be included in the Board minutes.

Article Nine Executive Committee

9.1 Members: The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Chair of the Committee on Directors, and the Executive Director as an ex officio member. The President of the Board of Directors shall be the Chair of the Executive Committee.

9.2 Quorum and Voting: Three voting members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum. An affirmative vote of the majority of the voting members of the entire committee shall be required to take action. The Executive Director shall not have a vote.

9.3 Powers: The Executive Committee shall have the power to act between regular meetings of the Board of Directors on matters where the circumstances require an immediate decision and it is not practical to call a special meeting of the Board of Directors. The need for an Executive Committee meeting shall be determined by the President. The President shall inform the Board at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting that an Executive Committee meeting has taken place and shall explain the nature of said meeting. Any action taken by the Executive Committee shall be included in the minutes at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

9.4 Restrictions on Executive Committee Authority: The Executive Committee shall not: act inconsistently with a prior decision of the Board of Directors; remove or appoint the Executive Director; dispose of real property; or amend the bylaws without authorization from the Board of Directors.

Article Ten Committees

10.1 Standing Committees: Standing committees shall be listed in the *MSLF Board of Directors Guidelines*.

10.2 Chairs: The chairs of the committees shall be appointed by the President of the Board of Directors from among the members of the Board of Directors.

10.3 Meetings: Committees shall meet as frequently as necessary to accomplish their assigned responsibilities.

10.4 Decision making: Specific decision making ability may be designated to a committee. Committees shall make written reports to the Board of Directors on all issues requiring expenditures of funds, changes to the building, changes to policies and creation of and amendments to a strategic plan or development plans, or amending the Bylaws.

10.5 Ad Hoc Committees: The President may annually appoint such ad hoc committees as he or she deems necessary. The President shall follow the *MSLF Board of Directors Guidelines* in forming said committees.

10.6 Duties of Standing and Ad Hoc Committees: All Standing and Ad Hoc Committees shall refer to the *MSLF Board of Directors Guidelines* for instruction on Committee responsibilities and procedure.

Article Eleven Executive Director

11.1 Duties: The Executive Director shall be the chief executive officer of this corporation. The Executive Director shall exercise general supervision over all the affairs of the Montessori School of Lake Forest. The Executive Director shall implement the educational program, employ and discharge personnel, and have responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the school. The Executive Director shall enroll students and families consistent with the admissions policies approved by the Board of Directors. The Executive Director may dismiss a student or a family when the school cannot adequately serve the needs of the student or that family. The Executive Director shall have the authority to disburse funds within the annual budget authorized by the Board. Any expenditures outside the annual budget in an amount in excess of \$5,000.00 must be approved by the Board by majority vote. The Executive Director shall have the authority to disburse funds outside the annual budget in an amount less than \$5,000.00 but shall report said expenditures to the Board President. Additionally, any expenditures outside the annual budget in an amount less than \$5,000.00 shall be recorded in the minutes at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

11.2 Appointment: The Board of Directors shall elect a new Executive Director by two-thirds vote of the Directors at either a regular or special board meeting.

11.3 Termination: A decision not to renew or to terminate the Executive Director's contract shall be by majority vote of Directors at either a regular or special meeting.

Article Twelve Amendments

12.1 These bylaws shall only be amended by affirmative three-fifths vote of the Directors at either a regular or special board meeting.

Article Thirteen Dissolution

13.1 Upon dissolution or liquidation of the corporation, and after payment of all liabilities, all remaining assets shall be transferred to one or more not for profit organizations selected by the Board of Directors which are dedicated to the educational philosophy and principles of Maria Montessori.

Article Fourteen Miscellaneous

14.1 Liability and Indemnification: A corporation may indemnify any person who was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative (other than an action by or in the right of the corporation) by reason of the fact that he or she was a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation, or who is or was serving at the request of the corporation as a director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection with such action, suit or proceeding, if such person acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interests of the corporation, and with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner which he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the corporation or, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, that the person had reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

Approved:	October 1994
Amended:	July 1995
Amended:	November 1998
Amended:	August 1999
Amended:	April 2001
Amended:	November 2003
Amended:	August 2006
Amended:	April 2007
Amended:	September 2009
Amended:	May 2010
Amended:	February 2012
Amended:	April 2012
Amended:	October 2012
Amended:	May 2013
Amended:	May 2014
Amended:	May 2015
Amended:	May 2016