



Woodland

Montessori School

Parent Handbook

2023-2024



Welcome to Woodland

Welcome to Woodland! We are so glad you are here!

This parent handbook provides important information about attending school at Woodland. Please review it prior to the beginning of the school year. It will help you to prepare for your child’s first day at school, learn about WMS policies and procedures, and discover opportunities for engaging with your child’s classroom and the Woodland community. If you’d like more detailed information about Woodland’s policies, you can find the complete [WMS Agency Policies and Procedures](#) on our website. Woodland is a true community and we welcome your input! Don’t hesitate to reach out with questions or feedback; we believe input makes us stronger.

Contact Information

Main Phone	(608) 256-8076
Toddler House	(608) 256-5660 (<i>unlisted</i>)
Emergency Line	(608) 256-6605 (<i>unlisted; rings in the Preschool classroom</i>)
Fax Number	(608) 256-5423

Support Team (Administration and Program Specialists):

Head of School	Lisa Berry	lberry@woodland-montessori.org
Program Director	Sarah Harrison	sharrison@woodland-montessori.org
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	Jim Hansen	jim@woodland-montessori.org
Registrar	Kristin Knutson	kknutson@woodland-montessori.org
Office Administrator	Jenny Alejandro-Torres	jalejandrotorres@woodland-montessori.org
Diversity & Equity Specialist	Anu Chalke	achalke@woodland-montessori.org
Inclusion Specialist	Jennifer Hoyt	jhoyt@woodland-montessori.org
Outdoor Classroom Specialist	Nicole Wilson	nwilson@woodland-montessori.org
Parent Resource Specialist	Amanda Isaksson	aisaksson@woodland-montessori.org
School Photographer	Kelly McKenna Patterson	McKennaPattersonPhotography@gmail.com
Social Media Coordinator & Videographer	Diana Smith	dsmith@woodland-montessori.org
Facilities Manager	Aaron Mitchell	amitchell@woodland-montessori.org



Classroom Lead Teachers:

Toddler 1 Lead	Becky Jones	bjones@woodland-montessori.org
Toddler 2 Lead	Amanda Isaksson	aisaksson@woodland-montessori.org
Classroom 1 Lead	Misty Sjachrani-Swift	mswift@woodland-montessori.org
Classroom 2 Lead	Angie Olson	aolson@woodland-montessori.org
Classroom 4 Lead	David Wahle	dwahle@woodland-montessori.org
Kindergarten Lead	Heather Dommershausen	hdommershausen@woodland-montessori.org

[WMS COVID-19 POLICY](#)

During the pandemic, the WMS COVID-19 Policy governs the school. Please refer to [this link](#) for the full WMS COVID-19 Policy. The following WMS Parent Handbook has been marked in red ink where WMS COVID-19 Policy should apply.



WMS 2022-2023 Daily Schedules:

Classroom 1 Schedule (8:00a to 5:30p)

8:00a - 8:30a—Early Arrival

8:30a - 10:30a—Montessori Work Cycle & Individual Snack

10:30a - 11:00a—Morning Meeting

11:00a - 11:45a—Outdoor Classroom

11:45a -12:30p—Lunch

12:15p - 12:30p—Dismissal

12:30p - 2:30p—Quiet Time

Kinders have **Afternoon Kindergarten Programming** in Classroom 3

Preschoolers rest on mats for 30 minutes or longer

Quiet Work/Outdoor Classroom for Non-Nappers

2:15p - 2:30p—Dismissal

2:30p - 4:30p—Afternoon Work Cycle & Individual Snack

4:15p - 4:30p—Dismissal

4:30p - 5:30p—Late Day Work Cycle

5:15p - 5:30p—Dismissal

Classroom 2 Schedule (8:00a to 5:30p)

8:00a - 8:30a—Early Arrival

8:30a - 10:30a—Montessori Work Cycle & Individual Snack

10:30a - 11:00a—Morning Meeting

11:00a - 11:45a—Outdoor Classroom

11:45a -12:30p—Lunch

12:15p - 12:30p—Dismissal

12:30p - 2:30p—Quiet Time

Kinders have **Afternoon Kindergarten Programming** in Classroom 3

Preschoolers rest on mats for 30 minutes or longer

Quiet Work/Outdoor Classroom for Non-Nappers

2:15p - 2:30p—Dismissal

2:30p - 4:30p—Afternoon Work Cycle & Individual Snack

4:15p - 4:30p—Dismissal

4:30p - 5:30p—Late Day Work Cycle

5:15p - 5:30p—Dismissal



Classroom 4 Schedule (8:00a to 5:30p)

8:00a - 8:30a—Early Arrival

8:30a - 10:30a—Montessori Work Cycle & Individual Snack

10:30a - 11:00a—Morning Meeting

11:00a - 11:45a—Lunch

11:45a -12:30p—Outdoor Classroom

12:15p - 12:30p—Dismissal

12:30p - 2:30p—Quiet Time

Kinders have **Afternoon Kindergarten Programming** in Classroom 3

Preschoolers rest on mats for 30 minutes or longer

Quiet Work/Outdoor Classroom for Non-Nappers

2:15p - 2:30p—Dismissal

2:30p - 4:30p—Afternoon Work Cycle & Individual Snack

4:15p - 4:30p—Dismissal

4:30p - 5:30p—Late Day Work Cycle

5:15p - 5:30p—Dismissal

Toddler House Schedule (8:00a to 5:30p)

8:00a - 8:30a—Early Arrival

8:30a - 10:30a—Montessori Work Cycle, Toileting, and Individual Snack

10:30a - 11:30a—Outdoor Classroom

11:30a - 12:30a—Toileting & Lunch

12:15p - 12:30p—Dismissal

12:30p - 2:30p—Rest & Nap

2:15p - 2:30p—Dismissal

2:30p - 4:30p—Toileting, Individual Snack, and Montessori Work Cycle

4:15p - 4:30p—Dismissal

4:30p - 5:30p—Afternoon Meeting, Montessori Work Cycle, Toileting, and Individual Snack

5:15p - 5:30p—Dismissal



Getting Started at Woodland

Classroom Orientation [see WMS COVID-19 Policy for most updated policy & procedure](#)

Once enrollment is confirmed, a required 30-minute orientation is scheduled to provide an opportunity for the child and family to meet the Morning Lead Teacher and to familiarize themselves with the environment. It also allows the teacher to make some basic assessments of the child's skill levels and readiness for the program. Woodland recommends that all parents or guardians responsible for picking up or dropping off the child attend the orientation.

We prefer to complete the child's file by the time of the orientation. The required forms are as follows:

- Child's Tuition Agreement (signed & dated)
- Health History and Emergency Care Plan (green form)
- Child Care Enrollment ("Authorized Persons" form)
- Day Care Immunization Record. Vaccinations must be up to date or the appropriate waiver paperwork must be submitted.
- Child Health Report - Child Care Centers (completed & signed by child's pediatrician)
- WMS Permission Forms (Sunscreen/Insect Repellent Release, Permission to Take Walks, Media Release, Woodland Family Directory Release)
- Intake for Child Under 2 Years - Child Care Centers (for Toddler 1 families only)
- Emergency Contact Information Form
- Pet Consent

The First Day of School

The first day of school is an exciting time each year! Make sure that your child comes prepared on Day 1 to ensure a smooth start to the school year.

Forms and Tuition Due

Tuition is due on the first day of school and the child's file must be complete in order for the child to start school. If you're not sure whether your child's file is complete, check with Kristin, the WMS Registrar.



Required School Supplies [see WMS COVID-19 Policy for most updated policy & procedure](#)

Current WMS COVID-19 supply list can be found [here](#)

	Parent Sends	Woodland Provides
<i>Clothes</i>	1-2 complete changes of seasonally appropriate clothes (including socks and shoes). If your child is also in Late Day Montessori (after 2:30), send 2 complete changes of clothes.	WMS has some emergency clothes in the event that a child runs out of spare clothing. Parents should return any borrowed clothing, washed, as soon as possible.
<i>Nap Items</i>	Blankets for toddlers.	Toddler House: WMS provides nap cots and sheets. Preschool: WMS provides nap mats and sleeping bags (which are sent home regularly for washing).
<i>Toileting</i>	Diapers for toddlers.	Diaper wipes.
<i>Snacks</i>	Allergy free snacks if outlined in allergy plan with Lead Teacher.	Morning and afternoon snacks provided.
<i>Sunscreen</i>	-	WMS will apply the school brand unless parents send an alternative (as indicated on the permission form).
<i>Insect Repellant</i>	-	WMS will apply the school brand unless parents send an alternative (as indicated on the permission form).

Lunch [see WMS COVID-19 Policy for most updated policy & procedure](#)

Parents are responsible for sending lunch every day in an easy-to-open container. Lunch boxes will be stored in the classroom on shelves until lunchtime. If contents need to remain cold or hot, we recommend using insulated lunch boxes or thermoses. Any uneaten food is put back in the lunch box so that parents can see what was eaten (except for opened disposable containers)



such as yogurt, applesauce, or juice boxes). Candy or treat items are discouraged. WMS provides milk for all children, as well as utensils, glassware, and plates.

IMPORTANT: Woodland is a peanut- and tree-nut-free school. For the safety of all children, do not pack nuts or nut products in your child's lunch.

Attendance Information

Drop-off and Pick-up Information [see WMS COVID-19 Policy for most updated policy & procedure](#)

Parking

Our location in a quiet residential neighborhood means that parking can be tricky.

Please remember to:

- **Respect our neighbors:** Don't park in front of their driveways, use their driveways to turn around, or block trash bins.
- **Keep sidewalks clear:** Avoid parking directly at the corner of Colby and Van Deusen Streets. We need to keep the sidewalk clear for all children and adults with disabilities.
- **Go slow:** We realize that parents are sometimes in a hurry to drop off or pick up children, but the presence of pedestrians means it's important to drive slowly. The speed limit is 25 mph.
- **Don't idle:** To keep our air quality clean, don't leave your car running while in the school.
- **Avoid a ticket:** Check the street signs for street-cleaning information. The city cleans streets on Mondays through Thursdays, May 1st through November 15th. If you're in a No Parking zone between 10:30a - 2:00p during these months, you might get a ticket.

Drop-off [see WMS COVID-19 Policy for most updated policy & procedure](#)

Woodland has a two-part method of keeping attendance: *sign-in/sign-out sheets* and *plastic attendance tags*. Every day, be sure to follow the drop-off procedure:



1. Sign in.

In the arrival/departure area for your child's classroom, you'll see a clipboard with the sign/in-sign-out sheet. Record your arrival time and initial the form.

2. Give your child's name tag to the teacher.

Each child has a small plastic name tag with their name and birthdate hanging from a pegboard or ring in the arrival/departure area. After signing in, find your child's name tag on the peg board or ring and hand it to the teacher. The name tag will stay with the teacher responsible for your child throughout the day. This is also a symbolic passing of responsibility from parent to teacher in addition to allowing for some parent/teacher contact. At the end of the day the teacher will hand the name tag back to you.

IMPORTANT: This two-part attendance method ensures that teachers can keep careful track of all children, so please remember to follow both steps every day.

Pick-up [see WMS COVID-19 Policy for most updated policy & procedure](#)

At the end of the day,

1. Take your child's tag from the teacher and replace it on the pegboard or ring.

This exchange symbolizes the transfer of responsibility from the teacher to parent or authorized adult. Once responsibility has been transferred to the parent or authorized adult, he/she is responsible for the child, his/her whereabouts, and any of his/her behaviors thereafter.

2. Sign out. Record the pick-up time and your initials.

If a child is to be picked up by someone other than a parent or authorized adult, the school must be notified in advance in writing. WMS will not release a child to any unauthorized person without prior approval from the parent or guardian. WMS staff will ask for identification from any authorized person picking up a child who is not recognized by the WMS staff. There is a section on the Child Care Enrollment form (DCF-F-CFS0062) to authorize additional adults to pick up a child.

Late Pick-up Policy

We expect parents to arrive no later than their contractual pick-up time, but occasional unforeseen events can cause the late pick-up of a child. In recognition of these situations, WMS grants three late pick-ups of no more than five minutes each per family per academic school year, before having to meet with the HOS to discuss remedies to the situation. Any pick-up more than five minutes after the contractual pick-up time will result in a \$20.00 fine (including the three mentioned above), unless the late pick-up has been pre-arranged following the drop-in



procedure. After three late pick-ups, the parent(s) will be required to meet with the HOS to discuss remedies to the situation. Remedies will include additional fines and may include extension of the child's scheduled hours and/or the termination of enrollment. WMS retains the right to terminate enrollment in cases of continued failure to pick up the child at the contractual time.

Absence

If a student is ill, on vacation, or taking a day off, contact Jenny Alejandro Torres, at (608) 256-8076, or via email at kknutson@woodland-montessori.org. Administrative staff takes attendance every morning and contacts families within two hours of the child's scheduled arrival time if there are unexpected absences.

Tuition & Fees *see WMS COVID-19 Policy for most updated policy & procedure*

The monthly tuition payment outlined your tuition agreement is due on the first of every month—regardless of student absence or school closing. Checks are made payable to Woodland Montessori School and should be put in the locked tuition box outside the Preschool office or mailed by the first of the month. There is a five-day grace period for making payment, after which the family will be charged a \$25.00 late fee. Families are to contact the CFO if they need to discuss payment arrangements. Deposits are refundable on the last month of the tuition agreement or with 90 days written notice. Deposits may be carried over from one program or school year to the next (i.e. the academic school year deposit may be applied to the summer program deposit). If a family has paid tuition in advance, and they give 90 days notice for withdrawal, any unused tuition will be refunded on the last day of attendance.

Days Closed

Woodland attempts to follow the Madison Metropolitan School District Calendar as closely as possible, though there may be some exceptions. A complete calendar can be found on the WMS website's [online calendar](#).

WMS is closed on the following days:

- Labor Day Holiday
- Fall & Spring Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Fall & Spring Professional Development Day
- Thanksgiving Holiday in accordance with Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD)
- Winter Vacation in accordance with MMSD



- Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
- Spring Break Vacation in accordance with MMSD
- Memorial Day Holiday
- Independence Day Holiday (or the Friday of that week if July 4th falls on a weekend)
- Fall Preparation Week (Preschool & Toddler House Closed)
- Summer Camp Preparation Week (Preschool & Toddler House Closed)

Snow Days

WMS closes when winter driving is hazardous and when MMSD closes. School closing announcements are reported on designated radio and TV stations and played on the school's outgoing phone message. WMS does not have late starts or early-release days; if MMSD has a late start or early release, WMS is open the entire day. WMS does not schedule make-up days.

Schedule Changes

Temporary Changes (Drop-in) **Temporary Changes (Drop-ins) are not allowed during WMS COVID-19 Policy**

Drop-in refers to a rare temporary request for an extension of a child's daily schedule (which will appear as a drop-in fee on the following tuition invoice). Drop-in requests can be granted only if there is room in the program according to state- and school-mandated ratios and group-size requirements in the child's classroom. It is preferred that drop-in requests be made 24 hours before needed. Effort will be made to accommodate a drop-in request made within 24 hours, but the request may not be granted, even if space is available, as there might not be administrative time to ensure all proper procedures are followed. Drop-in requests must be made through the WMS office via email or phone to the Registrar, or HOS or CFO if the Registrar is unavailable. Drop-in requests are meant to be used for emergency situations that result in a late pick-up, if the office is contacted prior to the normal pickup time. The Registrar will communicate drop-in information to the appropriate teaching staff and to the CFO for billing purposes. There is no drop-in option after 5:15p at the Toddler House or 5:30p in the Preschool.

Permanent Changes

WMS considers parent requests for a permanent schedule change only if space is available in the program. The Registrar and Head of School (HOS) must approve all permanent changes to hours of enrollment. Parents who add hours will be assessed an additional tuition amount to cover the additional hours. If the change occurs before the 16th of the month, the full month will be assessed at the new schedule. If the schedule change occurs after the 16th of the month, the month will be prorated to half of the new tuition amount. Requests to decrease hours must be



received in writing or email to the office. Parents will be charged tuition at the contracted rate for 90 days after the request for decreased hours is received. All schedule changes must be five-day-per-week changes. Toddler House families are committed to the hours outlined in their tuition contract unless another family has requested a change of hours and an exchange of time-slots can be made. This coordination must go through the WMS office. The 90-day notice to change a child's schedule does not apply to Toddler House families due to the 12-month contract obligation.



Health and Safety

Injuries and Incidents

The WMS staff and administration work hard to keep children safe; however there are times that children are injured while at Woodland. All staff are certified in child CPR as required by state licensing rules, and approach all injuries using universal precautions including the use of latex gloves when attending to open wounds. Injuries are classified as either “serious injuries” or “minor injuries”. For any injury, parents will receive an incident report at pickup. Detailed information about WMS procedures for both types of injury are included in the [WMS Agency Policies and Procedures](#).

Illness **see WMS COVID-19 Policy for most updated policy & procedure**

Illness includes (but is not limited to) any of the following symptoms: being unable to participate fully in the daily activities, sore throat, fever (a temperature greater than 100), persistent uncontrolled coughing, unexplained rash or outbreak, vomiting, diarrhea (more than two uncontrollable bowel movements within an hour), any indication of the presence of a communicable disease or condition such as lice or pinkeye. If an illness is detected, the following procedure is followed:

1. Once a child’s illness is discovered, the child’s parents will be contacted as soon as possible.
2. If the parents are unavailable, or have not returned attempted contact by the school within 45 minutes, the person designated as the alternative emergency contact on form CFS-64 will be contacted to pick up the child.
3. The child will be isolated from the other children at WMS until the child’s parents or emergency contact retrieves him/her. In the Preschool the ill child will be brought to the office. In the Toddler House the ill child will be given a cot in the room in an area separate from the other children.
4. If a child is not picked up within 45 minutes of the initial phone-call, the subsequent authorized adult will be called to pick-up the child.
5. A Teacher or Support Team member may determine illness and call the parent.
6. If a child is sent home from WMS due to illness, the child may not return to school the following day.
7. When the child does return to WMS, the child must be free of illness symptoms, or receiving treatment and no longer contagious as outlined by the Wisconsin Division of Public Health department, or have a physician signed note on file that the child can attend school and is no longer contagious.



To determine appropriate periods of exclusion, Woodland uses the guidelines provided by the WI State Department of Health Services: [Wisconsin Childhood Communicable Diseases](#).

NOTE: Woodland posts notices for known contagious diseases on the doors to the building in which the contagious disease is present.

Special Diets and Allergy Plans **There is no school provided food as per WMS COVID-19 Policy (unless requested by an individual family in need)**

If a child has a special diet for philosophical, religious, or health reasons, the parent or guardian will work with the child's morning teacher to determine the most supportive plan for serving the child the approved foods at school. This plan will be called the child's *special diet* or *allergy plan*. This will be discussed at the child's orientation, and must be recorded prior to the child's first day of attendance.

Special diet or allergy plans might include:

- Providing the teacher with a list of diet appropriate brands to be purchased;
- Keeping a bulk supply of special diet snacks and beverages at the school specifically for that child; and/or
- Sending special diet-approved snacks in the child's lunch box in addition to the child's lunch.

The child's morning teacher will submit a copy of the special diet or allergy plan to the office to be kept in the child's file. The teacher will also post the plan in the classroom confidential folder.

Medical condition. A special diet based on a medical condition, excluding food allergies, but including nutrient concentrates and supplements, may be served only upon written instruction of a child's physician and upon request of the parent.

Food allergy. A special diet based on a food allergy may be served upon the written request of the parent. Staff members, substitutes, and volunteers that have direct contact with the children will review the list of all food allergies and special diets posted in the confidential folder before serving any food.

If a child's allergy requires access to an epi-pen, it shall be kept in a marked container near the locked medical box and out of reach of children. The container will not be locked due to the immediate need for this type of medication. All other procedures and policies apply to epi-pens as outlined in the medication policy section of the [agency policies](#).



Child Guidance Procedure

There are times in a child's development where they need more support to show positive behavior in the classroom. If a child's behavior has potential to be disruptive or harmful to themselves or others, the teacher may use a variety of strategies to support the child.

When classroom supportive strategies aren't sufficient to address the behavior, Woodland teachers follow the following steps, as needed:

1. Use supportive strategies in the classroom
2. Seek additional support beyond the classroom team
3. Hold a parent check-in meeting
4. Develop an action plan
5. Hold a follow-up meeting

1. Supportive Strategies in the Classroom

Teachers at WMS may use the following strategies:

- Offering consistent day-to-day expectations
- Offering appropriate choices
- Redirecting children towards more constructive activities
- Stating the problem and asking that it cease
- Positioning themselves near a child who is indicating a possible loss of control
- Having the child remain with the teacher for a duration of time
- If undesirable behavior persists, the teacher states the problem and removes the child from the situation in a non-humiliating manner in order to interrupt the unacceptable behavior and the child is offered a more appropriate activity

Teachers at WMS do not:

- Use the term "time out" with children, even when removing the child from the group. Whenever possible, WMS advocates for "time with" as the teacher is thought to be a grounding presence for the child who has lost control. Time-outs are never used for children under three (as per state guidelines).
- Use any of the prohibited punishments (see the [Prohibited Punishments section](#))

2. Support Beyond the Classroom Team

If a child's behavior is an ongoing concern, the Morning Montessori Teacher will notify the family that the school is seeking support for their child beyond the classroom team. Support resources at Woodland include:

- Inclusion Specialist
The Morning Montessori Teacher may schedule a time for the WMS Inclusion Specialist



to observe the behavior in the classroom, then suggest strategies for the classroom teachers to use.

- Program Support Specialist or Positive Discipline Specialist

The Morning Montessori Teacher may also contact their Program Support Specialist or Positive Discipline Specialist to schedule a meeting with the teaching team to focus on specific classroom strategies and accommodations to support a specific child. The Inclusion Specialist's observations and suggestions may inform this meeting, which might result in a "Teachers Helping Teachers" support session for the teaching team and/or the scheduling of a parent check-in meeting.

3. Parent Check-in Meeting

A parent check-in meeting can be called if at least two of the following agree that it is necessary: the HOS, The Inclusion Specialist, The Program Support Specialist, and/or the Morning Montessori Teacher. A member of this team will schedule the check-in meeting with the parents/guardians.

The purpose of a check-in meeting is to:

- Gather additional information and exchange ideas between the school and home about how to best support the child.
- Communicate with the family that the child's behavior has resulted in a need for ongoing support beyond the classroom team.
- Initiate the creation of an action plan, which is developed by the Morning Lead Teacher with input from the family and other meeting participants.

4. Action Plan

The action plan is a written plan to support the child after the check-in meeting. The action plan may be written using Positive Discipline methodology as well as input from the teachers and parents and any other specialists.

Action plans might include:

- closely shadowing a child
- limiting the amount of choice a child has
- requesting that the family seek outside evaluation of the child
- removing the child from the classroom, and/or
- arranging for parents to pick up the child if behavior rises to an unmanageable level.

The action plan is given six weeks to determine its effects on behavior. During that time, parents may reach out to the Morning Montessori Teacher with any questions or concerns. A copy of the action plan is kept in the child's file, an additional copy is kept in the "confidential" folder in the



classrooms substitute training area. At the end of the six-week period, WMS will evaluate the status of the action plan and communicate with the parents. If the behavioral issues are not resolved, a follow-up meeting might be scheduled.

5. Follow-up Meeting

The follow-up meeting occurs when it is necessary for the parents, teaching team, Early Intervention Specialist, and HOS to discuss the status of the action plan. The follow-up meeting might result in modifications to the action plan or a decision that it has reached success and can be discontinued. The follow-up meeting can also result in termination of enrollment. Enrollment termination is taken very seriously and is determined when the classroom teaching team along with the HOS determines that WMS is not equipped to support the child, or that the family has failed to follow their part in the action plan, which might include seeking outside evaluation and/or assessment. A reasonable last day of enrollment will be determined and announced to the family. If enrollment termination or discontinuation of the action plan is not the result of the meeting, the action may be modified, and another follow-up meeting scheduled.

Prohibited Punishments

All punishments that are humiliating or frightening to a child are prohibited. The following punishments that are prohibited at WMS even at parent request:

- Spanking, hitting, pinching, shaking, or inflicting any other form of corporal punishment
- Verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about the child or family
- Physical restraint, binding or tying to restrict movement, or enclosing in a confined space such as a closet, locked room, box or similar cubicle
- Withholding or forcing meals, snacks, or naps
- Punishment for lapses in toilet training

Child Guidance and Food

Children are never forced to eat. If a child does not want to eat, he/she is quietly asked to pack up and wait for others to be finished without disrupting children at his/her table that are still eating. WMS staff may not make children eat even if requested by the parents. Food is never used as a form of discipline or a reward. Teachers serve as health role models for the children and bring healthy food choices in their lunches. If a teacher consumes soda, it is poured in a mug so that the contents are concealed. WMS staff avoid eating fast food or high-sugar foods in the presence of children. Teachers attempt to follow the same meal and snack expectations as the children.



Parent Communication

At Woodland, we believe that like no two children are alike in how they learn, process the world, or communicate. We also recognize that no two families are alike regarding their best forms of communication. Therefore, we provide many avenues for you to communicate with the teaching team and Support Team (Administration) at WMS.

ENews

We send regular e-newsletters and informational emails to all Woodland families. These emails contain images, information, parent education information, classroom news, and schoolwide news. Contact Kelly, Communications Coordinator, for deadline and submittal information.

Daily Communication Methods [see WMS COVID-19 Policy for most updated policy & procedure](#)

- **Visit or observe a classroom (observations and visits are not permitted during COVID-19 Policy)**

You are welcome to join your child's classroom for lunch. We also invite parents to observe any classroom through one of the one-way mirror windows in the Preschool classrooms, or by scheduling an observation for one of the other classrooms.

- **Talk with teachers**

Drop-off and pick-up times are a good time for brief communication with your child's teacher; for important or sensitive information, we encourage phone calls or email.

- **Write in the notebook (notebook communication does not occur during COVID-19)**

Classroom communication notebooks (located next to the sign-in/sign-out sheets) are another way for you to send a message to staff, such as notification of a planned absence. A similar parent-to-administration notebook can be found on the shelf below the tuition box. Teachers and administration check these notebooks daily.

- **Check your parent mailboxes (there are no parent mailboxes during COVID-19)**

Parent mailboxes are located near the Sign In/Sign Out clipboard and hold invoices (invoices may also be received electronically) and may be used to distribute family-to-family notes.

- **View the Snack Menu (there is no school provided food during COVID-19)**

Snack menus are posted in the classroom and near the classroom's Sign In/Sign Out clipboard. Teachers may also list request for snack donations.



- **Use the website**

Our newly redesigned website, woodland-montessori.org has a calendar of events, policy information, email, and other great content available to families.

Parent Involvement **see WMS COVID-19 Policy for most updated policy & procedure**

WMS thrives because of parent involvement! We host several special school events for parents to connect with the school and with each other. These include an Open House in your child's classroom, our annual Parents' Night Out Auction & Fundraiser, and regular parent education evenings.

We also send out a Parent Involvement survey in the fall that assesses parent interest in other involvement opportunities, including:

- Membership on the WMS Board of Directors
- Volunteering as a WMS Room Parent
- Volunteering on an WMS Committee, such as
 - Annual Giving Letter Committee (part of Development Committee)
 - Auction Committee (part of Development Committee)
 - Communications & Technology Committee
 - Diversity & Equity Committee
 - Finance Committee
 - Garden Committee (part of Building & Grounds Committee)
 - Spruce-Up Day Committee (part of Building & Grounds Committee)
 - Ad Hoc Committees
- Small sewing projects
- Providing baked goods or snacks for WMS sponsored events
- Becoming trained as a substitute teacher or classroom reader

Open Door Policy **only Contracted Staff and Enrolled Students are allowed in the building during COVID-19**

All parents of WMS students are welcome in the school any time that we are open. (The only exception is in situations where access is denied to a parent by court order.) While you are welcome to visit any time, there are times that are more supportive of the child and program for visiting than others, so check with your child's teacher for a list of the best times/days to visit.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice a year (fall and spring) with the child's Morning Lead Teacher unless the child is in the Kindergarten/Leadership Year—then the Kindergarten



Lead Teacher performs the spring conference. Additional conferences may be scheduled if desired by the family, the WMS Inclusion Specialist, or the Morning Montessori Teaching staff.

Addressing Parent Concerns

The following procedure is designed for parents to follow to seek resolution regarding concerns or issues around classroom practices and procedures, as well as for the appeal of administrative decisions.

1. Meet with the teacher.

If you have a concern, issue, or question, please first bring the concern to the Morning Montessori Teacher. We believe at WMS that many issues are often resolved by increasing communication between the teaching team and the family. You can ask the teacher to call or email you. Avoid discussing the concern at drop-off or pick-up or in front of children. We recognize that childcare can be an issue for meetings, so we offer our drop-in program free when families need to meet with a teacher.

2. Contact the Head of School.

If you are not satisfied with the resolution or course of action, please contact the HOS to discuss the concern.

3. File a Grievance.

At Woodland, we put a lot of energy into trying to resolve problems before they would get to this point. However, if a family is not satisfied with the resolution proposed by the HOS, the parent may file a grievance with the WMS Board of Directors by emailing current President (contact information is listed [on the WMS website](#)). Use the subject line “HOS Grievance”. The Board President will follow WMS bylaws to respond to the family’s grievance and may hold a closed session with the Executive Committee or full Board if deemed appropriate.

About Woodland

Woodland Montessori School (WMS or Woodland), founded in 1970, is a non-profit corporation governed by a Board of Directors consisting of parents, staff, and community representatives. WMS has a long and successful history in Madison and a strong reputation for high quality Montessori and Early Childhood Education in the surrounding area.

WMS offers a carefully prepared Montessori environment, rich in variety and learning experiences that lay the foundation for a lifetime of learning. Our long-term faculty is comprised of Montessori and Early Childhood professionals who are committed and dedicated to the education and development of young children.



WMS partners with families to form a caring community to best support every child enrolled. Families and staff work together with the child as the center of all decisions and aspects of the school operation. It is our hope that everyone involved in the WMS community will find a rich and rewarding experience that always seeks to do what is best for children.

Vision and Mission

Our Vision: All children have an educational foundation that empowers them to be global citizens who lead with kindness, empathy, and respect for themselves, each other, and the environment.

Our Mission: Woodland educates children, families, and our community through the Montessori philosophy, with an emphasis on inclusivity, diversity, and environmental stewardship.

Initiatives

Diversity & Equity

Woodland has developed a Diversity Statement and Anti-Bias Curriculum which we honor throughout our programs. Our onsite Diversity & Equity Coordinator serves as a resource and works in tandem with the staff to improve inequities, celebrate diversity, and provide ongoing support to the community at WMS honoring our commitment to diversity at an institutional, as well as a practical, level.

Nature-Based Education

Our school explores nature at a deep level with Montessori's ideas and commitment to nature clearly exhibited in our Outdoor Classroom. Our on-site Outdoor Classroom Specialist facilitates work with children in the gardens, outdoor play-yard, seasonal cooking in the classrooms, taking outings to be mindful in the outdoor world, and so many more quality outdoor experiences. WMS values the significance of our relationship to the natural world in every decision we make at Woodland.

Inclusion

Our Inclusion Specialist supports Woodland with expertise and experience in both Montessori and special needs inclusion. At WMS we work to adapt environments and support all students with different physical, cognitive, or behavioral needs. WMS puts the lens of inclusion on all decisions we make at Woodland to ensure all people are always included in the work we do here at Woodland.



Montessori Education

Child-Centered and Child-Led

The hallmark of the Montessori classroom is that it is the child's classroom, not the teacher's classroom. This approach can be seen in how the room is set up as well as how the schedule of the day unfolds. The first Montessori classroom was in fact called The Casa Dei Bambini, or the Children's House. Montessori coined the name because of her beliefs that the children, not the teacher, should be the center of the classroom. In the Montessori classroom, there are not rows of desks, instead, children work at tables or on the floor, rolling out mats on which to work and define their work space. The classrooms are designed so that children may be successful in their daily work with tools made of their size and are hung at their level. There are open-ended work times during which the students move freely throughout the environment, choosing what material they want to work on, and engaging in periods of deep concentration around this interest-based learning.

The Prepared Environment

The classroom is prepared mindfully and from the perspective of the child. There is not an expectation that children be still; on the contrary, movement is expected, encouraged, and often part of a lesson or material. Montessori developed rich sensorial activities which are used often with children of various special needs today. There are particular areas and materials that are inherent to the Montessori classroom, and then aspects of the environment that are developed for the particular children of that given time period. This may differ from school to school depending on the training system that is aligned with any one particular school. Each classroom is carefully and lovingly prepared, replenished, altered, and cared for on a daily basis by the teacher for the child.

Thoughtful and Observant Teachers/Guides

The educators in the Montessori environments are better described as guides. Their primary role being to both carefully prepare the environment to reflect the needs of the children and to daily observe and take notes on the students in order to better prepare the materials and the classroom. The guide observes his/her students to identify "sensitive periods" or moments when a child may have an easier time learning a concept, and then scaffolds that learning need with lessons and the appropriate materials. The educator may use context, interest, or a previous observation to spring-board learning. The environment goes through constant change and transformations as the students learn, change, and their needs shift. There is no expectation that



children all perform or learn the same lesson, at the same time, or in the same way. The environment is constantly evolving and adapting to meet the needs of all the children.

A Natural and Purposeful Setting

Montessori believed in a natural setting for educating children, this belief can be seen in many ways in her classrooms. Montessori classrooms are multi-aged. For example, a child typically starts in a pre-primary classroom at age three, and will stay in that same classroom with those same teachers and children through age six. Mixed ages allow for children to teach one another with skill and confidence, as well as allow the educators to develop deep and knowledgeable relationships with the children so that they become the experts on the students, their learning styles, successes, and needs. Another way in which the classrooms are natural and purposeful is in Montessori's lessons and areas of practical life. Practical life lessons and activities are opportunities for children to learn practical skills and to work towards being independent (buttoning, preparing food, cleaning, dressing, etc). Practical life activities allow children to contribute in a purposeful way to the day and the community of the classroom. Montessori's view of supporting the whole child toward independence through practical life experiences is a lesser known aspect of her philosophy than her system of strong academics, but is a vital and important component of the Montessori classroom. Montessori classrooms and teachers are also geared to support and develop a deep sense and reverence for the natural world. It is not unheard of for the Montessori prepared environment to include outdoor features such as vegetable and herb gardens to harvest for cooking preparation in the classroom, cutting gardens for daily flower arranging, a respect and protection of living plants and animals including the insects we share the space with, and even live animals such as goats or chickens are often part of the natural setting found in Montessori schools.

The Belief that Children are Inherently Good and Want to Learn

Maria Montessori wrote extensively about the belief that there is a good, special, and vulnerable space in every child, and it is our job as educators to reach out to that space with much love and respect. She also believed that children have a strong innate desire to learn and if they are presented with a rich environment that meets and calls out to their needs, they will be joyful and content in their learning. Montessori believed that teaching need not be something that is forced on children, but instead can be something they cannot wait to do each day. Teachers that are trained in Montessori develop this belief in children and carry it with them in their practice and work with children.