



## CYPRESSWOOD MONTESSORI SCHOOL

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# PARENT HANDBOOK

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of Cypresswood Montessori is to cultivate an environment where each child's unique learning journey is supported and nurtured. Our dedicated and caring staff empower students to develop self-confidence, resilience, and a deep respect for cultural diversity, focusing on the growth of the whole child. Through this approach, we aim to build a peaceful world.

### **Welcome**

**Welcome to Cypresswood Montessori School! We value each and every child and we value the partnership we form with parents. If you have any concerns or questions, please free to talk to the owners or Director at any time. Your suggestions and observations are imperative to maintain and improve the outstanding education and care your child will receive. The school's owners, Director, teachers, staff, and other members in the school have a responsibility to protect the health, safety, and well-being of your child. The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, Licensing Division, is part of this partnership, too.**

The information provided in this handbook clearly defines the school's mission, goals, policies, and the operation of our program. We thank you for allowing us to share in the growth of your child. All of us at the school look forward to being of service to you.



### **International Montessori Society (IMS)**

Cypresswood Montessori School is proudly certified by the International Montessori Society (IMS). We are dedicated to upholding the principles of the natural laws that guide our educational approach. Our school prioritizes fostering an environment where children's innate guidance, self-direction, and natural curiosity are respected and nurtured. This commitment supports the development of harmony, order, cooperation, and a love for their environment.

In alignment with Montessori philosophy, we believe in guiding children with respect for their individuality and developmental needs. Discipline at our school is focused on empowering each child to cultivate self-discipline and internalize positive behaviors. Adults at Cypresswood Montessori engage with children thoughtfully, using respectful, non-punitive strategies to support self-regulation.

In line with this approach, adults encourage compliance and cooperation through methods such as leading by example, offering clear and constructive directions, engaging in reasoning, using distraction when appropriate, and applying reflective language and open-ended questioning to guide the child towards understanding and self-correction.

### **The Montessori Philosophy**

Montessori education nurtures the development of the whole child by providing individualized instruction tailored to each learner's needs and pace. This self-directed approach uses a variety of multisensory materials to engage the child's senses and support active learning. A central element in Montessori education is the prepared environment, carefully designed by the teacher to encourage exploration and discovery.

In this method, the teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding the child's learning rather than directing it. The child interacts with the materials, learning through purposeful play and hands-on experiences. Simple exercises are used to foster key qualities such as independence, self-reliance, responsibility, movement coordination, order, and a deeper awareness of the surrounding environment.

### **Licenses**

Cypresswood Montessori School is licensed by the Texas Health and Human Services and abides by the Minimum Standards for Licensed Child-Care Centers. Parents are invited to review and discuss with the Director any questions or concerns about policies and procedures of the school. The following contact information is provided to assist parents:

- Local Licensing Office: 713-940-5278
- Website: [www.hhsc.tate.tx.us](http://www.hhsc.tate.tx.us)



## **Admissions**

Enrollment in our program is open to all families in our community, and we operate on a non-discriminatory basis. No child will be excluded from any program due to race, color, religion, disability, sex, or national origin. Only a child's parent or legal guardian may enroll them (proof of custody may be required).

Before a child's first day of attendance, the following must be on file with the Preschool's office:

- Registration Form
- Enrollment Form
- Physical Health Statement and Immunization Records
- Statement of allergies and Food Allergy Emergency Care Plan
- Tuition Agreement

We keep all personal information confidential and require parents to update emergency contact details, including addresses, phone numbers, and authorized pick-up individuals.

Cypresswood Montessori must be informed of any custody situations in advance, and appropriate paperwork must be provided. Parents are expected to follow all state regulations and the center's rules as outlined in this Parent's Handbook.

## **Hours of Operation**

Cypresswood Montessori School is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm.

- Director Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM
- Parent Conference Hours: Monday - Friday 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM
- Meeting with the owners is upon request.

## **Programs**

Cypresswood Montessori is a year-round program that offers preschool education and care for children ages 6 weeks to 6 years. Our core curriculum is rooted in the Montessori environment, fostering independent learning within the classroom.

Our daily schedule is flexible, thoughtfully designed to offer a diverse range of activities and challenges that cater to the developmental needs of children across all age groups.

We are open 12 hrs. – Options available part time and full time.

**For the benefit of your child(ren), and not interfere with their daily curriculum, we encourage parents not to do drop-off's after 9:30**



### **Mixed Age Grouping**

The Montessori program promotes mixed-age grouping to create a rich learning environment that respects each child's unique development, interests, and abilities. Children, typically at least one year apart in age, may be placed together during certain parts of the day. Our trained staff ensures this approach prioritizes the child's development and safety. Mixed-age grouping offers several developmental benefits, including:

- Older children learn to be helpful, patient and tolerant, while developing increased confidence in their own skills and abilities.
- Younger children have the opportunity to learn more advanced cognitive and socialization skills from the older children.
- Individual differences in development are better accommodated.
- Children are challenged to think about problems in a more creative and flexible way as they observe children of different ages approaching problems differently than they do.

### **Record Keeping**

Children's records are available to staff during operating hours for emergencies or licensing visits. Parents can access their child's records during parent conferences.

We maintain the following records for each child, which are kept for three (3) months after their last day:

- Registration Forms
- Doctor Authorization Form
- Medical Form
- Immunization Records

The following records are also kept on file for three (3) months:

- Incident/Illness Report Form
- Attendance Log

### **Updated Records**

Parents must inform the center of any changes to home or work phone numbers, addresses, or pick-up information to ensure we can reach you in an emergency. For your child's safety, someone listed on the Pick-Up Permission form must be available to pick up a sick child or one the school determines needs to go home, within 30 minutes' notice. All changes to phone numbers, employment details, addresses, or pick-up contacts should be provided to the office immediately. Please submit written notice of any changes to the Director as soon as possible.



## **Financial Policies**

### **Registration Fee**

A registration fee is due at the time of registration and is non-refundable.

### **Supply Fee**

A supply fee is collected once a year, due August 1 to help defray the cost of consumable supplies. It can also be paid in three installments (August, September, October). It will be prorated depending on when the child is enrolled. There will be no refund of the supply fee.

### **Tuition Fees Online Via Procare**

Tuition invoices are sent online and may be paid via Procare and is a fixed monthly fee, regardless of attendance, as parents are paying for the spot their child occupies in our school. This fee is outlined in the enrollment contract. The tuition fee structure may be adjusted periodically, typically before the start of a new month, at the administration's discretion based on space availability.

Families have the option of setting up their payments to monthly, biweekly or weekly invoices. If tuition is not received by the 25th of the current month, the child will be automatically withdrawn.

- Monthly Payments: Due by the 1st of the month. Late Fee: \$5 for each day after the 5th.
- Biweekly/Weekly Payments: Available upon request. Due Date: On the day the invoice is sent (Monday). Late Fee: \$5 for each day after the following Monday.

A \$35 fee will be charged for all returned checks and declined bank drafts or credit cards. The school reserves the right to request cash for future payments.

### **Transaction Fees**

Credit Card: 2.7% + \$0.30 fee.

ACH Transfer: \$1 flat fee. Debit Card: \$1 flat fee + 2.7% fee after processing.



Our preferred payment methods are ACH transfers or checks, as these options help you avoid incurring additional fees.

**Tuition and fees must be paid in full, regardless of absences, as staffing and operational costs are based on fixed enrollment and are not reduced when a child is absent.**

Accounts may not carry a balance unless prior arrangements have been approved by the Owners or Director. Payments should be made to *The Woodlands Discovery School* and can be given directly to any administrative staff member or placed in the payment box outside the office. If paying by cash, please be sure to request a receipt.

### **Receipts and Tax Statements**

Paid receipts will be sent to you via Procure. Annual statements for tax and accounting purposes are available on the platform.

### **Future Enrollment**

To reserve a spot for upcoming enrollment, all required documents must be submitted, and the registration fee paid.

### **Late Pick up Policy**

The school closes at 6:00 PM, we ask that parents pick up their child by then. If you are going to be late due to an emergency, please call the school and notify the staff. A late fee of \$15 will be charged for the first 15 minutes, with an additional \$5 for every 10 minutes thereafter. Late fees are due at the time of your next tuition payment.

While we understand emergencies happen, please aim to keep the 6:00 PM pick-up time. The school is licensed for care until this hour, and staff are scheduled accordingly. Repeated tardiness may result in the withdrawal of your child from the school.

### **Discounts**

Cypresswood Montessori School is happy to offer the following discounts, only one applies per family:

- **Sibling Discount:** 10% off each additional child, applied to the lower tuition rate.
- **Professional Discount:** 10% off tuition for military members, teachers, first responders, and healthcare professionals (doctors/nurses).
- **Referral Discount:** A \$50 credit to the referring family's tuition account, after the new enrollee has been with the school for one month.



We appreciate the opportunity to support our families and the community!

### **Holiday Closures – No Reduction in Tuition**

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day (In service training)
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day (In service training)
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve Day
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve (close at 3:00 PM)

If a holiday falls on the weekend, the closest weekday will be observed as the holiday (e.g., if Christmas Eve is on Sunday and Christmas is on Monday). We reserve the right to close additional days if needed.

### **Bad Weather Closures**

Any day Klein ISD is closed due to bad weather, Cypresswood Montessori School will also be closed. Parents will be contacted to pick up their child if unsafe conditions arise and children are already in school. There will be no tuition or schedule adjustment due to inclement weather.

CMS reserves the right to close the school if weather is detrimental.

### **Vacation Week Deduction Policy**

After a child has been enrolled full-time at the school for two years or more, they are eligible for one week of vacation per school year (August to August). The monthly tuition will be prorated based on the full month's rate, without any sibling or other discounts. Parents are responsible for notifying the administrative staff to request this deduction.

### **Extended Absences**

**Summer Vacation:** Two months (June and July) may be taken off without tuition payment, as long as the August tuition is paid by the end of May. Please note that you are paying to hold your child's spot, so time off at any other time does not result in a tuition reduction.



**Exception to Vacation/Hold Spot Policy:** Military families may pay half the tuition amount if their child is absent for 2 weeks or less, due to the nature of their work. This will be honored only when a legal order is provided.

### **Withdrawal**

A **30-day written notice** and completion of the withdrawal form is required if you intend to withdraw your child from the program. Families are responsible for paying any amounts up to the 30-day notice. We encourage you to speak with us about any concerns or issues that may affect your decision to keep your child at the school.

### **Cancellation of Enrollment**

Cypresswood Montessori strives to create a safe and nurturing environment for all children. We reserve the right to dis-enroll a child if their behavior becomes disruptive or poses a safety concern for other children. Additionally, if a parent or guardian exhibits an uncooperative or aggressive attitude towards the school, its policies, or staff, we may request the dis-enrollment of their child.

If any concerns arise regarding a child's behavior, a meeting will be arranged with the parents or guardians, the child, the teacher in charge, and administration to discuss the situation. Our goal is always to work together with families to ensure the best possible outcome for each child and the overall well-being of the school community.

## **Arrival and Dismissal Procedures**

### **Drop-off and Pick-up**

Parents must accompany their child(ren) to the school reception area each morning and check them in immediately after dropping them off at their respective classrooms. This ensures direct contact with a staff member, allowing for early detection of any illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior that may affect the child or the group. If any concerns are noted, the child will not be allowed to remain at school.

Check-in and check-out are essential for emergency purposes. A code generated by Procure is required for this process, and you can change it at any time.

### **Release Policies**

All individuals authorized to pick up your child must be listed on the pick-up permission form. If you need someone not listed to pick up your child, please:

- Call the school and leave a message with the details of the person picking up.
- Email the school with their information or send a message through Procure.





Please do not share the door code with anyone not listed on the permission form. The person picking up your child will be asked to provide a photo ID, and a copy will be made for our records.

### **Custody Situations**

Unless the school has custody orders on file, both biological parents are legally authorized to pick up the child.

### **Parking**

For your safety and security, we strongly encourage you to turn off and lock your car when dropping off or picking up your child(ren). Cypresswood Montessori is not responsible for any items lost or stolen from vehicles, the parking lot, or the facility. Please refrain from leaving siblings in the car or leaving your vehicle running while you briefly enter, as this may not always go as planned.

## **General Guidelines and Policies**

### **Health and Medical**

#### **Medical Records**

A written statement from a health-care professional who has examined the child within the past year, immunization record, Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan (if needed) and an authorization to obtain emergency medical care statement must be on file prior to the child's first day of attendance.

#### **Emergency Medical Consent Form**

This form grants us your consent to call an ambulance or your child's doctor if emergency care is needed. Please provide your child's doctor's name, preferred hospital, and contact information, including phone numbers, addresses, and additional emergency contacts. We strongly recommend listing all emergency contacts on your Pick-up Permission form.

If your child has any allergies or is on medication, please include this information on the form, and complete the relevant food or non-food allergy forms. If you do not specify a preferred hospital, we will list our default location: HCA Houston Healthcare Northwest Hospital.

#### **Immunizations**

Children at CMS, must have up to date immunization records to be enrolled and provide documentation for immunizations throughout the year (as scheduled). If the parent has religious,



philosophical, or moral beliefs that are opposed to such immunizations, they must submit an affidavit stating the reason why they oppose such immunizations. If it is for a medical reason, a letter from the doctor stating why the child is unable to be immunized is required.

If a child is exempt from immunizations and there is an emergency or epidemic declared by the commissioner of the health department, the child may be excluded from school.

### **Allergies**

Children with allergies must have a Food Allergy Emergency Care Plan on file in the Preschool's office. This form must be signed by the child's physician and give clear instructions in the event of exposure and/or allergic reaction. Any medication that is included in the instructions, such as epi pen or Benadryl, must be always kept on hand.

### **Illness and Continuous Health**

If, in the opinion of the teacher or Director, a child becomes ill at school, parents will be notified and will need to make arrangements to pick up the child. The preschool does not have a nurse or sick room and cannot keep an ill child. All communicable diseases must be reported to the Director. The Texas Department of Health requires we maintain this information and, in some cases, report diseases directly to them.

An ill child will not be admitted at school if one or more of the following exists:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the activities.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children.
- Any of the following: vomiting, diarrhea, an undiagnosed rash, or a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher. State licensing regulations also require that a child be sent home if any of these symptoms develop during the school day.

Children should be free of fever, diarrhea, and vomiting at least 24 hours, without the aid of medication, before returning to school. In cases of a communicable disease being suspected in the classroom (strep throat, pink eye, influenza, etc.), parents will be notified in writing. In return, we request that you report to the school when your child has been exposed or diagnosed with a particular infection or disease. Parents may be required to obtain a physician's statement certifying that the child is well before returning to school following absence due to a contagious illness.



### **Medication**

All medication must be in the original bottle with the child's name and clear instructions from the doctor or pharmacy. Medications must not be expired. Non-prescription medications should have a label with the child's name and the date the medication was dropped off. A "Permission to Give Medication" form must be completed before any medication is administered. Medications should be handed directly to the teacher along with the form at drop-off. The school administers medication only at noon.

Cypresswood Montessori reserves the right to refuse medication if the dosage is unclear or doesn't match the label. For non-prescription medications, we may request a doctor's consent in the form of a handwritten prescription. Once the medication course is completed, the remaining medication and completed form will be returned to the parent.

We only administer over-the-counter medications, such as cough, cold, asthma, allergy medications, topical ointments (like diaper cream), insect repellent, and sunscreen. Pain or fever-reducing medications will not be given.

### **Inhalators Waiver Form**

We strongly encourage parents to administer inhalers and breathing treatments themselves. However, if you require our staff to assist, you must sign a complete waiver of liability form and provide detailed instructions on the procedure to the staff member administering the treatment.

### **Insect Repellent and Sun Screen**

The school does not provide insect repellent or sun screen. You will need sign the Sunscreen & Insect Repellent for us to be able to apply sunscreen and bug spray you bring from home.

### **Accident / Incident Reports**

Safety is a top priority at Cypresswood Montessori. If a child has an accident or incident with another child requiring more than basic care, a report will be completed detailing the event and any first aid administered. The report, signed by the teacher, will be available for you to sign at the front desk to confirm you were notified. We ask that you respect privacy by not requesting the name of the other child involved. All behavior issues will be handled professionally. The report will be kept on file for three months.

In case of a serious accident, a parent or other designated persons will be notified. The Director will also contact Emergency Medical Services, administer first aid or CPR, if necessary, and contact the child's physician that is specified by the parent on the medical form. For this reason, it is imperative that the school have the necessary information and authorization for medical care for each child enrolled.



## **Vision and Hearing Screening**

Texas State Law requires vision and hearing screenings for the following children:

- All children who turned 4 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>
- All kindergartners, first, third, and fifth graders (Montessori ages 5, 6, 8, & 10)
- All first-time entrants from another Texas school who are not in the above categories, unless they provide written documentation from the previous school

All first-time entrants (ages 4 through 5th grade) from an out-of-state school.

## **Children Requiring Special Accommodations**

Cypresswood Montessori follows the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other regulations for individuals with disabilities. We aim to accommodate children with special needs when possible, whether through professional recommendations, equipment modifications, or removing physical barriers. These accommodations will be recorded in the child's file, and all staff will follow them. For any questions, please contact the administrative staff.

## **Staff Vaccinations**

CMS's staff are encouraged to receive the Covid-19, influenza (annually) and DTap (pertussis) vaccinations, however, they are not a requirement.

## **Daily Operation**

### **Curriculum**

At Cypresswood Montessori, we believe children learn best through hands-on experiences, exploration, and repetition. Our curriculum is based on the Montessori approach, which supports children's natural curiosity and development. Learning is joyful, natural, and driven by the child's interest.

Research shows that 90% of brain development happens from birth to age five, which is why our Montessori environment is designed to promote growth in these crucial years. Children in our classrooms are encouraged to explore, experiment, and problem-solve with materials that foster creativity, fine motor skills, language, and social development. In a Montessori setting, children are given the freedom to choose activities and learn at their own pace, guided by teachers who support and observe their progress.

Our curriculum focuses on independence, self-confidence, and a love of learning. We provide an environment where children learn through doing, using specialized Montessori materials that encourage active participation. We also incorporate additional programs to support their



development, including our "JumpStart" exercise program, yoga, and Creative Dramatics. These activities help children develop both physically and emotionally.

For Toddlers, we offer a monthly curriculum designed to meet their developmental needs. In our Primary classrooms, we provide a more structured weekly curriculum. This balance of Montessori-based learning and enrichment activities ensures children develop in all areas—cognitive, physical, emotional, and social—at their own pace and according to their unique needs.

### **Extra Curriculum Activities**

All outside instructors and parties are thoroughly background-checked and receive an orientation on the school's policies and procedures to ensure they align with our values and standards. These specialists offer enrichment programs, including Music, Dance, Soccer, and Tae Kwon Do, designed to enhance the students' learning experience.

### **Daily Schedule: (General)**

While your child's schedule may vary from day to day, here's an overview of a typical day's activities:

- **Outdoor Time:** Gross motor activities in the classroom's outdoor space to promote physical development.
- **Classroom Time:** Engaging in the Montessori environment with curriculum-based activities, arts and crafts, and hands-on learning.
- **Naptime/Rest:** Children under 5 are required to rest or nap to support their growth and well-being.
- **Snack and Meal Time:** The school provides two snacks daily, along with lunch and a late afternoon snack.

### **Snacks and Lunches**

The school serves two healthy snacks each day, one in mid-morning and one in mid-afternoon. The children are served two food groups at both times. Water is available all day long. Please indicate on the enrollment form food allergies of your child.

If your child has a severe allergy, we require a doctor's note. The school prepares lunches on site and the program very parent friendly! A simple and nourishing meal can be bought either on a daily basis. You can sign up for the school lunches on the front desk. Lunches that are brought from home should be *labeled on the outside*. All lunch boxes will be kept on the food cart. Please use a cold pack in an insulated, soft-sided lunchbox. Good nutrition is very important; we encourage you to send healthy lunches. A sandwich, fruit and raw vegetables



or low-fat snack (pretzels, cheerios, wheat crackers, etc.) is a good lunch. Do avoid processed foods (canned or refrigerated lunch packs) and sweets, as they are high in fat and sugar. We will provide milk and/ or water with your child's lunch. No frozen items.

If you did not send a pack lunch for your child and also did not sign up for school lunch, your child will be served school lunch and the price will be added to your invoice.

**Our school is a nut-free environment to ensure the safety of all children. We ask that parents do not send any snacks or lunches containing nuts. Please be sure to check ingredient labels carefully to avoid any nut products.**

### **Rest Time**

Rest times for children are set based upon age level and may be adjusted as the year progresses. Children enrolled in Primary 3, who are 5 and older, and Kindergarten programs may have a short "brain break" instead of a rest period.

In the case of children who do not nap, the child will be given adequate time to fall asleep and if the child is not sleeping, he or she will be provided a quiet activity during rest time.

Nap mats are to be provided by parents and will be taken home on Fridays. The mats are to be laundered regularly and must have their child's name.

### **Outdoor Play**

During outdoor and gym time, children will develop their gross motor skills, strengthen muscles, and socialize with their peers. Weather permitting, children will have 30 minutes of outdoor play in the morning and 30 minutes in the afternoon. We monitor the weather via the local weather channel, and if the heat index exceeds 95°F or drops below 50°F, we will use the gym for gross motor activities instead.

Outdoor activities may include the playset, merry-go-round, sandbox, teeter-totter, bikes, cars, nature exploration, and playhouse. Indoor gym activities include balls, large LEGO builders, bikes, tumble mats, and cars.

We encourage parents to apply sunscreen and insect repellent before arriving at school. If you'd like us to reapply these products in the afternoon, please complete the authorization form. Children are required to wear closed-toe shoes while at school for safety.



### **Ozone Watch**

When an ozone watch is issued, children will remain indoors for the day. We monitor ozone levels and weather updates through the ABC 13 Houston app to ensure the safety and well-being of the children.

### **Birthday Celebration for Infants and Toddlers**

Birthdays are an important day in a child's life, teachers will provide recognition in an appropriate way. Please consult with your child's teacher about anything special you might wish to share with your child's classmates that day.

### **Primary Children's Birthday Celebration**

The Celebration of Life is a special way to honor your child's birthday by reflecting on their journey and accomplishments. It's a memorable event that celebrates the milestones of their life so far.

To make this celebration personalized, please provide one photo for each year of your child's life (e.g., one at birth, age one, two, three, etc.). These photos will help us tell the story of their growth and achievements. If your child is able, we encourage them to choose the photos and write their own life story, highlighting the milestones they reached each year. This makes the celebration even more meaningful and unique to your child.

The celebration takes place from 9:30 AM to 10:00 AM. A candle representing the sun will be lit, and the story of your child's life will be shared. The child will walk around the "sun" (circle) once for each year of their life, pausing to hear their accomplishments. The children will sing, *"The Earth Goes Around the Sun."* After the final orbit, your child will share their age, and the group will sing *Happy Birthday* before they blow out the candle.

We are excited to honor your child's special day and celebrate their unique journey with us!

### **General Guidelines for Birthdays**

If you're planning a celebration for your child at the school, please note the following guidelines:

**Allowed:** Muffins (*no chocolate chips*), fruit bowls, yogurt, apple juice (small cartons)

**Not Allowed:** Iced cakes, party bags, balloons, candles





## **Discipline and Guidance**

Discipline is the process of teaching a child appropriate behavior. Discipline and guidance should be consistent and tailored to each child's individual needs and developmental level. Teachers work to promote positive self-esteem, self-control, and acceptable behavior. Children are redirected to other activities, encouraged to use words, and given choices. Teachers utilize natural consequences and help children develop problem-solving skills. Learning appropriate behavior is a vital part of developing social skills during the preschool years.

There will be no cruel, harsh, or unusual treatment of any child, and no child will ever receive corporal punishment. If needed, methods such as redirection or, in situations where a child is harming themselves or others, a brief supervised separation from the group may be used. Should further guidance be required, parents may be asked to pick up their child from school. If a child struggles with the normal routine, structure, and rules of the classroom, the Director reserves the right to consult with parents and, if necessary, remove the child from the program.

## **Teachers**

At Cypresswood Montessori, we are committed to providing nurturing, high-quality care in an engaging and interactive learning environment. Our dedicated, qualified staff plays a vital role in fostering this environment. The selection process for our faculty includes:

- A thorough interview and screening process.
- State-approved background checks, which include cross-referencing state and federal criminal records and child abuse reports to ensure a clear record.
- Fingerprinting as required by Texas Licensing regulations.
- Compliance with state CPR and first aid certification requirements.
- Annual training in various developmental areas.

We are deeply committed to the ongoing professional development of our educators. Each staff member has qualified to work with children through specialized training courses, including college-level classes focused on early childhood education and child development. We encourage all of our employees to exceed the state's minimum training requirements, ensuring they remain well-prepared to provide exceptional care and support for your child.

## **Transition to Upper Grades**

Cypresswood Montessori has a thoughtful transition plan for students moving from Infants to Toddlers and then to the Primary Classes. The administration will keep you informed throughout the process and provide updates as your child's transition approaches. Each child is evaluated individually and will transition when he/she is ready, not necessarily by age. Typically, transitions are gradual and take place over the course of a month to help your child adjust





comfortably to their new environment. Tuition will remain the same during this transitional period until your child has fully moved into the new classroom.

Any other changes will be communicated to parents, and there will always be an opportunity to meet the new teacher before the transition takes place.

### **Kindergarten**

We highly recommend keeping your child at Cypresswood Montessori for their kindergarten year. Our kindergarten graduates are well-prepared, reading chapter books, mastering fractions and multiplication, and achieving so much more! This strong foundation makes the transition to 1st grade in public school seamless. Plus, they will have the chance to develop leadership skills, setting them up for future success. If eligible to start the kindergarten program, we will schedule a meeting with Ms. Kimberly to share more details about our program.

### **Summer School**

The summer program at Cypresswood Montessori maintains the same structured environment as during the school year, with the added benefit of weekly themes. Activities include hands-on art projects, music, sports, yoga, creative movement, and theatre, all aligned with the theme of the week. While academic growth remains a priority, older students are provided with workbooks to continue advancing in language arts and math. The program also features exciting field trips, water/splash days, and in-school activities. We are happy to welcome siblings and children who have attended CMS up to 10 years old. Any additional costs for field trips will be communicated to parents at the start of the summer program.

### **Transportation Policy**

A permission form is on file with the enrollment forms to allow the school to transport your child in case of an emergency. Which include EMS services and staff personal vehicle.

### **Evaluations**

Progress reports will be provided twice a year, once each semester, for children aged 15 months and older. For children under 15 months, parents will receive an Ages & Stages Questionnaire, which can be shared with your pediatrician. A plan will be created to support the child's growth and progress. We believe in keeping parents informed and involved in their child's development every step of the way.

### **Conferences**

Parents of all children will be asked to attend at least one scheduled parent conference during the school year. Formal discussion of your child's progress may be requested at any time



during the year that is convenient for both parent and teacher. Teachers will send progress reports.

### **Parent Communication through Procare**

The success of our program relies on a strong partnership between parents and staff. Open communication ensures your child has a positive learning experience. We will keep you updated on your child's day and development through Procare.

Parents are encouraged to download the app, where you can access:

- A code to check in/out your child
- Messages
- Daily reports for infants and toddlers
- Photos of your child throughout the day and during special events
- Invoices

### **Verbal Communication**

We strive to maintain open communication during drop-off and pick-up times. However, these moments are not ideal for extended conversations, as staff members must attend to the needs of all children in the group. Additionally, the person caring for your child at pick-up may not be the one who spent the majority of the day with them. This is because many children spend 10 hours at the center, while most staff work 6-8 hours.

To ensure you get the most accurate and detailed information about your child's growth and development, we recommend speaking directly with your child's "lead" or "primary" teacher. If you'd like to check in during the day or have a more in-depth conversation, the best time to call is during nap time.

A member of the administration team is always available to speak with you in person or by phone. You can also email us at [info@cypresswoodmontessori.com](mailto:info@cypresswoodmontessori.com) for any inquiries.

### **Problem Resolution**

If a parent feels there is a situation causing concern between the teacher and the child, teacher and parent, or Director and parent, the following procedure should be used:

1. Parent(s) should schedule a conference with the teacher/Director to address the concern.
2. If a parent(s) feels the situation is still unresolved, they should inform the teacher that they are bringing their concern to the Director.
3. The Director will review the concern, and then schedule a conference with the parent(s) and the teacher.



### **Parental Involvement / Volunteers**

One of the key factors in the success of any school program is the involvement of interested caring parents/volunteers. There are many opportunities for parents to be actively involved with the Preschool. We encourage all parents to participate in their child's education. Parental involvement is crucial to the success of any child care program. Children thrive when parents are actively engaged in their learning journey.

For younger classes, visits are usually easier once children have fully settled into their new classroom and with their teachers.

Parents wishing volunteer at the center must go through our screening process if they will be visiting for more than one day per semester. This includes: Filling out a volunteer form and go through a background check which determines eligibility to be present.

Cypresswood Montessori offers an open-door policy, allowing parents to visit during operating hours. We also offer various ways for parents to get involved, such as:

1. Special events like Cultural Day, Anniversary Celebration, and Parent Social Evening
2. Easter Egg Hunt participation
3. Parent/Teacher Appreciation Days
4. Having lunch with your child
5. Classroom volunteering or reading to the class
6. Book Fair
7. Field Trips and Splash Days during the summer

If parents have other ideas for involvement, they are encouraged to contact the school office.

### **Parental Responsibility**

Anytime a parent is on the school's premises during the school day, parents bear the liability of their children in case of accident or injury.

### **Items and Toys from Home**

Cypresswood Montessori has a wide variety of work, manipulative, games and other resources to offer children during school time. Toddlers and Primary classes have "show and tell" related to the week's lesson. Personal toys are not permitted in the school, as they can cause disputes and can be broken or lost. The exception to this is show-and-tell or sleep-toys which should be labeled with the child's name. Cypresswood Montessori is not responsible for stolen, lost or



broken toys, items, or clothing.

### **What to Bring to School**

Each child should bring a backpack to school each day. Please make sure that the backpack is large enough to hold a change of clothes and artwork that will be sent home. Please remember to change the extra clothing based on the time of year. Part of our curriculum is to build self-independence where we encourage the children to carry their own things. Please check your child's backpack to ensure it remains free of any valuable belongings or small items which may pose a choking hazard.

### **Infants**

All personal items must be labeled with child's first full name and initial of last name. The Infant room is equipped with bottle warmer, microwave and refrigerator. Licensing requirements restrict us from serving prepared baby food from previously opened jars. Any unused baby food will be sent home or thrown away each evening. Breast milk must be handled in a manner consistent with universal precautions. Please clearly identify all breast milk.

1. All personal supplies come from home: diapers, wipes, food, ointments, milk, etc.
2. Infant Care Sheets need to be updated monthly.
3. All food containers/bottles, etc. to be labeled with child's first full name and initial of last name.
4. Apart from stud earrings, no other jewelry is allowed.

### **Toddlers**

All personal items must be labeled with child's first full name and initial of last name. The First Steps and Explorers rooms are equipped with microwave and refrigerators.

1. All personal supplies come from home: diapers, food, ointments, milk, etc.
2. Nap-time: crib sheet, blanket and soft toy (if needed)
3. Snacks and lunch: school offers 2 snacks a day but if your child is staying until late, please provide some extra snacks, for example fruit cup, crackers, yogurt, applesauce, etc.
4. Daily reports are through Procare.
5. Toddler lunches will be warmed up for few seconds.
6. All food containers to be labeled with child's first full name and first initial of last name.

**For ages 1 year and up, we offer school lunch, snacks, and 2% milk,**



## **Primary Classes**

All personal items must be labeled with child's first full name and initial of last name.

1. All Children under 5 years are required to take a nap or rest on their mats.
2. A crib sheet for the mat and a small blanket for rest time. A nap mat is also a good option.
3. If your child prefers a stuffed animal/doll for resting. Please be sure to provide one daily or leave one in the child's cubby at school.
4. After 45 minutes, students are given a book to read.
5. No pillows unless attached to a nap roll

## **Clothing and School Uniform Shirts for Primary Students.**

We encourage students to dress for play and comfort as the seasons change. Because our program is based on play and exploration and independence. Your child will get dirty! It is required that you bring one set of extra clothes for your child in case of a spill or accident. We have some extra clothes available, but we may not have the item your child needs in his/her size. If your child comes home in center clothes, please wash the clothes and return them within one week. Please be aware with changing season and update your child's clothes as need, it is also best to always keep a light jacket available for your child.

It is strongly suggested that all clothing brought or worn to the school have the child's name on it.

## **Toilet Training**

Toilet training is best accomplished with the cooperation of teachers, parents and children. Children learn toileting skills through consistent positive encouragement from adults and home and at the school.

Each child begins at a different time and progress at a different rate. The staff will provide documentation of your child's progress each day. The director and staff are available as a resource to answer any questions about your child's toilet training progress at Cypresswood Montessori. Several complete changes of clothes should be kept on-center during this process.

## **All children enrolled in Primary 1, 2, and 3 programs must be toilet trained.**

Policy on soiled clothing due to runny or regular bowel movement: Solid excrement will be tipped away in the toilet. The soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag, tied with the child's other belongings so that parent is not likely to miss the bag. If possible, the staff present at



the time of pick up would verbally let the parent know of the incident and hand over the bag of soiled clothes.

### **Safety**

Some of the things the staff will help the children learn are: how to use the play equipment safely, walking while in the building, stranger safety, fire safety drills, and inclement weather drills including but not limited to flood, tornado or hurricane). Fire drills will be conducted monthly. Severe weather and lock down drills will be conducted quarterly. If the facility must be evacuated due to medical emergency, communicable disease outbreak, intruder with weapon, explosion, the children will be taken to Benfer Elementary.

Cypresswood Montessori also has a Crisis Management Plan that has been evaluated by the Harris County Fire Marshall which gives detailed instructions for handling the following types of emergencies: intruders, shelter-in-place, evacuation to alternate locations, fire, bomb threats, severe weather alerts, power outages, threatening and/or violent behavior, civil disturbances, medical emergencies, accidents, injuries or deaths, suspicious packages, and school closings. A copy of the plan may be obtained from the School's Office.

### **Portraits and School Pictures**

A "Photo Release Form" is included with your paperwork, allowing you to grant or deny permission for us to take and use your child's picture. We frequently photograph students during activities, and these images may be used for digital displays, advertising, newsletters, and on the school's website and social media.

### **Insurance Requirements**

Cypresswood Montessori School complies with the minimum insurance coverage as required by State licensing. All legal forms are posted on the Parent Bulletin Board for your information.

### **Child Abuse Reporting Policy**

The State of Texas requires child care facilities to report any suspected cases of child abuse to the authorities. To report abuse, call 1-800-252-5400.

At Cypresswood Montessori School, our staff is required by law to report suspected abuse to Child Protective Services (CPS). We cannot conduct our own investigations and must report anything suspicious. Parents should inform staff of any noticeable injuries, like bruises, to avoid suspicion of abuse.

If abuse is suspected involving a staff member, the following steps will be taken:



- The staff member or anyone suspecting abuse must notify the Director or senior leadership immediately.
- The Director will investigate and, if necessary, report the concern to CPS and our state licensing authority.
- Based on their advice, the staff member may be suspended.

If a staff member is found guilty of abuse:

- The staff member can appeal the decision.
- The Director or leadership will review the case and decide on further actions based on licensing guidelines.
- If the appeal is unsuccessful, the staff member will be terminated, and parents will be informed.

As a licensed early childhood facility, Texas law requires us to post the following announcement.

*"Reporting Abuse and Neglect: Texas law requires caregivers to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or law enforcement. Call 1-800-252-5400 to make confidential reports. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a crime. Employers are prohibited from retaliating against caregivers who make reports in good faith." Reports and information are located at: [www.hhsc.state.tx.us](http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us).*

**Do not leave any child unattended in a car for any amount of time, it is against the law.**

### **Intruders**

The safety of the children is our top priority. While we have an open-door policy and welcome parents to visit, we also have a responsibility to the other families in our program. Since we cannot verify the background of anyone who has not gone through our screening process, we cannot allow parents to spend extended periods of time in our facility without meeting certain screening and training requirements, as mandated by state law and our policies.

Any individual who does not comply with our safety policies regarding "Visitors" and "Volunteers" will be considered an intruder, and appropriate action will be taken as outlined in our "Intruder" and "Safety and Evacuation" policies.

### **Gang Free Zone**

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a childcare center is designated as a gang-free zone. Criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity that occur within this zone are subject to enhanced penalties.



### **Gun Free Zone**

Texas Minimum Standards and the Texas Penal Code states that firearms, hunting, knives, bows and arrows, and other weapons are prohibited on the premises.

### **Animals**

If the school decides to have animals on the premises, we will notify you in writing when animals are present or will be introduced. We are committed to ensuring that the animals do not create unsafe or unsanitary conditions.

### **Pesticides**

Pesticides are applied quarterly. These services are performed at the end of the day to minimize disruption. Our service provider, Green Pest Guys, uses eco-friendly methods. A notice will be posted 48 hours in advance of any scheduled treatment.

### **Additions and Changes**

Cypresswood Montessori reserves the right to edit or adapt the policies in this handbook as the needs arise. The school will make all changes and additions available at the time these changes are made. Parents will be notified of these changes through the normal written communication system of the school at the time they are made effective.

### **Privacy Statement**

HHSC values your privacy. For more information, read our privacy policy online at: <https://hhs.texas.gov/policies-practicesprivacy#security>.





### **INFANTS: Operational Policy on Infant Safe Sleep**

This form provides the required information per minimum standards §746.501(9) and §747.501(6) for the safe sleep policy.

**Directions:** Parents will review this policy upon enrolling their infant at Cypresswood Montessori School and a copy of the policy is provided in the parent handbook. Parents can review information on safe sleep and reducing the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SIDS/SUIDS) at: <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/agesstages/baby/sleep/Pages/A-Parents-Guide-to-Safe-Sleep.aspx>

### **Safe Sleep Policy:**

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at Cypresswood Montessori School will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS):

Always put infants to sleep on their backs unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception Form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2427 and §747.2327].

- Place infants on a firm mattress, with a tight-fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full-size cribs and for non-fullsize cribs [§746.2409 and §747.2309].
- For infants who are younger than 12 months of age, cribs should be bare except for a tight-fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that should not be placed in a crib include: soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices [§746.2415 and §747.2315]. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing [§746.2429 and §747.2329].
- Do not use sleep positioning devices, such as wedges or infant positioners. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe. Their use may increase the risk of suffocation [§746.2415 and §747.2315].
- Ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult [§746.3407(10) and §747.3203(10)].
- If an infant needs extra warmth, a sleep sack will be used, such as sleepers or footed pajamas) as an alternative to blankets [§746.2415 and §747.2315].
- Place only one infant in a crib to sleep [§746.2405 and §747.2305].



- Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. But the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk [§746.2415 and §747.2315].
- If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing, or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately, unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception Form 2710 signed by the infant's health-care professional [§746.2426 and §747.2326].
- Our child care program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas child care operations (this includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers) [§746.3703(d) and §747.3503(d)].
- Actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound [§746.2403 and §747.2303].
- If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position [§746.2427 and §747.2327].
- Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally [§746.2427 and §747.2327].
- Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception Form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2428 and §747.2328].