

Parent Handbook  HARMONY
DAY SCHOOL
2024-2025

*Harmony Day Montessori School, Inc. values a diverse community and
complies with all applicable laws regarding nondiscrimination*

SECTION I. Who We Are

Harmony Day Montessori School, Inc. does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, handicapped status, nationality, or ethnic origin with regard to hiring, admissions, or in the administration of any of its programs.

We are a thriving Montessori community of children, parents, and educators working individually and together to be:

- Responsible
- Respectful
- Compassionate
- Independent
- Loving
- Enthusiastic

And a vital part of our families, our community, and the world.

We are a morning Montessori school that offers an all-day Montessori care option.

Hours of Operation:

Early Arrival	7:30 to 7:55 am	M - F
Full Day Session:	8 am to 3:00 pm	M - F

Drop In Fees:

Upon occasion you may find it helpful to have your primary aged child come to school earlier than usual. So long as we stay within state ratio requirements, this is no problem. However, we do require 48 hours' notice via email. Payments will be set up on your TUIO account or you may pay by cash. Available to primary students ONLY.

Early Arrival Drop In: \$8/day

SECTION II. Admission Eligibility For Toddlers:

Children who have independently given up a morning nap are eligible. Children must be a minimum of 18 months old on their first day attending school. Toilet Training is part of our toddler classroom curriculum.

For Primaries

Students who are 3 years of age and fully toilet trained are eligible for enrollment in the Primary Program.

SECTION III. For Parents

Back to School Meetings

All parents are required to attend a Back to School Zoom Meeting. This will keep your family informed of any format changes and added school programs. Please consult the school calendar for dates.

Winter Discovery Day

Offered once each year, Discovery Day allows parents to get to know one another, our staff and learn more about their child's school day experience and how the Montessori materials are used by students. Discovery Day changes from year to year and is therefore strongly encouraged that all families attend. It is best if both parents attend this special event. Coffee and light snacks will be available throughout this event. There is no childcare provided for this event, so please plan accordingly.

Parent-Guide Conferences

Offered twice each year, conferences are specific times set aside to discuss your individual child's school progress, future academic goals, and address your questions and concerns. Conferences are an invaluable part of linking the school experience to the home environment and are therefore mandatory. Additional conferences may be scheduled by either school or parents should concerns arise. There are no children permitted at conferences, so please plan accordingly.

Class Observations and School Tours

HDMS encourages parents and family members to observe their child's classroom work. This is a necessary part of the Montessori experience. We want parents as partners in their child's education. We ask that you observe through our observation windows, whenever possible. An anonymous observation of your child will give you an accurate and objective picture of your child's school day experience. If you, or another family member, would like to observe, please schedule this 48 hours in advance with the Head of School by emailing her at HDMSexedirector@gmail.com

School tours are available to interested prospective parents by appointment only.

Holiday Open House & Sweethearts Cafe

Twice a year, we ask parents to spend the afternoon celebrating with us and their child. Open Houses are offered from 3 to 4:30 pm. When you arrive, you are responsible for the care of your child/children. Parents sign up in advance to provide a dish to share at our potluck, our students perform a few songs and together, all families work on a family project.

Parent Volunteer Hours & Fundraising

Each HDMS family is asked to share their time and talents with the school community by giving 15 hours of volunteer time per enrolled child, per school year. The school office will maintain a log of volunteer hours, so please notify the School Office (HDMSexedirector@gmail.com) when volunteering. In addition to our school fundraisers, our school offers 2 parent workdays each school year to assist parents in fulfilling their volunteer hours and to assist staff in maintaining the Harmony Day School building. These are held on Saturdays from 9 am to noon and with advanced notice we will have limited spots for childcare. For those unable to fulfill their volunteer hours, there will be a charge of \$25 per hour that is unfulfilled, which will be charged to your ACH account along with the May 1 tuition payment. Your volunteer hours obligation include:

- One member of each family will serve on one of the HDS parent committees.

The school office will track the fundraising efforts of each family. Those unable to fulfill their fundraising requirement of \$500, will pay the balance due with the May 1 tuition payment.

Dispute Resolution Process

Disputes concerning contracts, tuition, etc. must be expressed in letter form and addressed to the "Harmony Day School Board of Directors" and emailed HDMSboardoftrustees.com.

Please include your reasons for making the request and all supporting documentation. The board will be back in touch with you as soon as they have reviewed your request and have reached a decision regarding your dispute.

Contracting, Policy, Payment Questions

Should you have questions regarding school contracts, tuition payments, the school calendar

and school policy or procedures, please contact the school office by emailing -

Harmony Day School Office

HDMSexedirector@gmail.com

Changing your Child's School Schedule

We permit changes to a child's school schedule so long as:

- 1) We have space available in our programs to make such a change and
- 2) the change INCREASES the time your child spends at Harmony.

Because we use student contracts to set our annual budget and establish staff salaries, it is impossible to REDUCE the time a child spends at school after the point of contracting.

Weather Related School Closures

Harmony Day Montessori School uses the upmost caution when making a decision regarding Winter Weather school closures, putting the safety of our families and staff first. Should HDMS need to close due to weather/road conditions you will receive a Brightwheel message no later than 6:30 a.m. the morning of the closure.

HDMS will operate on a 1-hour delay:

- When FCPS operates on a 1-hour delay
In the event of an unusually harsh winter (one that requires school to be cancelled 8 or more days), the days missed beyond 8 *will* be made up.

For information about Harmony weather related school closures, please have Brightwheel notifications turned on.

Contacting Classroom Guides

Should you have specific questions regarding your child's classroom experience, specific questions about the days' happenings or to arrange for your child's birthday celebration, please contact your child's lead guide by emailing at the following addresses or messaging them via the Brightwheel app-

Primary Guide

HDSPRIMARYGUIDE@gmail.com

Toddler Guide

HDSTODDLERGUIDE@gmail.com

Food at Harmony Day School

Our school is Whole 30 compliant. 90% of our snacks are fresh fruits and vegetables. We see great value in preparing food with our students when we are able – do not be surprised to hear your child ask for guacamole! They love it! And this is one example of a food preparation we may do with your child during the school year. Hummus and fruit/kale Greek yogurt smoothies are a few others!

All our students will need to bring a healthy and nutritious lunch in the 3-sectioned box provided by the school. Lunch items must be prepared so they are manageable for your child to eat independently. Toddler students need foods diced into small bites so they can be scooped with a spoon. Soups, cottage cheese, yogurt and other foods that are of a loose or liquid consistency, or long strands of pasta are extremely difficult for young children to manage while self-feeding. We do not spoon feed your children, so please think about items they can self-feed successfully. Please keep this in mind when preparing lunches.

Lunches must include healthy, “real” food. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. **NO beverages, desserts or processed foods of any kind are permitted at school.** Please see the school lunch ideas on pages 16-22.

If you wish to include hot lunch items, please provide them heated and packed in a thermos.

Provided lunch boxes will be returned to Harmony on the last full day of school in May. They must be returned with all 4 parts (full container compartment, ½ container compartment, two ¼ container compartments and the lid. If any or all of these items are missing, you will be expected to replace your child’s lunch box.

Registration/Supply Fee

Each family is responsible for providing the school \$300 to be used to purchase snacks and other consumables required for day-to-day classroom operations.

Arrival and Dismissal

Early Arrival is available between 7:30 am and 7:55 am. Please park your car in the side lot, message the school phone or via Brightwheel that you have arrived and walk your child up the ramp to the glass

side door where they will be greeted by our Early Arrival Staff. Absolutely no parking in the street or in the parking lot entryway.

Morning Arrival begins at 8 am. Please arrive promptly to the school and utilize carline. Pull into the parking lot staying close to the right side of the lot. A staff member will greet you, conduct a health and safety check of your child and assist them from their car seat. After your child is removed from the car and the door is closed, turn left and circle around to exit the parking lot.

All children arriving to school outside of the 8 am carline will need to follow late arrival procedures.

Late Arrivals The Montessori work cycle is an intricate part of your child’s day. Minimizing disruptions and distractions are integral in developing concentration, coordination, and independence for your student. Please try your very best to arrive prior to the end of carline. There will be no arrivals permitted after 9:00 a.m unless approved by the Head of School in advance.

If you arrive after 8:15 and your child is in the Primary class, please get your child out of their car seat, walk them up the stairs/ramp to the glass **side** door, call the school phone and let them know you have arrived. Someone will come and greet you as quickly as they can.

Toddler Class late arrival. Please get your child out of their car seat, walk them to the **front** door and call the school phone to let them know you have arrived. Someone will come to greet you as quickly as they can.

Dismissal Any dismissal other than the 3:00 p.m. carline will need to be communicated via Brightwheel or the school phone no later than the morning of. It is very disruptive to nap time for a child to be picked up between 12:30 – 2:30, please try to avoid this!

***PLEASE NOTE:** Drop off and Pick up times are not appropriate times for asking your child’s guide specific questions about your child or their school day experience.

If you have information that needs to be shared before or after the school day, please send a message via the Brightwheel app.

If you need to speak directly to your child's classroom guide, please call the school phone and leave a message. Your call will be returned at our first available moment. We want to maintain open communication and your thoughts and needs are very important to us.

Separation Anxiety

New children and children who have gotten out of routine due to school breaks or prolonged illnesses may exhibit some signs of separation anxiety when getting back into routine or during their first few weeks of attending school. Help your child by maintaining your composure; be kind, reassuring and brief, and leave as quickly as possible. Be sure to return for your child promptly at the time you are expected.

Late Pickup

It is important that all students be picked up promptly at the time listed in the annual contract, unless alternative arrangements have been made in advance. Guides and staff use this time for cleaning up the classrooms and preparing new lessons. Parents arriving late will incur a \$25 late fee, assessed via TUIO.

Authorized Emergency Contacts

It is required by law that the school has on hand a list of people and phone numbers of all persons permitted to pick up your child from school. If, in the case of an emergency, someone other than those listed must pick up your child from school, the school will need a hand-written, signed note from you prior to or on that day. All ID's will be checked of any non-traditional pick-up's.

Children who Enroll Mid-School Year

Children joining our classrooms after the beginning of a term are accepted on a two-week trial basis. In most instances, new students enter the classroom and fit right in among their peers. Upon occasion, adding a student mid-term can be disruptive to the existing class dynamic, as the class has already begun creating a harmonious bond. In these instances, a parent-teacher conference will be scheduled.

All students enrolling after the school year begins **must:**

1.) attend every day of school for their first 3 weeks of enrollment.

AND

2.) maintain their regular arrival/departure procedures and schedule.

These are of critical importance.

Employee Identification Number

Our Federal Employee Identification Number is 27-1521372. Your business may request this number for childcare reimbursement plans, or you may wish to include this to claim childcare credit on your annual tax return.

SECTION III. For the Child Outside Activity

Children are offered opportunities to explore and play outdoors daily. Please apply sunscreen and bug spray as appropriate and see that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather.

Dress Code

NO flashing lights or clothing that makes sounds. Absolutely NO cartoon character (Winnie the pooh, Peppa the Pig, Paw Patrol, Batman, etc.) clothing including nap blankets, pillows, socks, etc. as these are an enormous distraction for young children.

Shoes. Children unable to tie shoes are to wear basic tennis shoes with Velcro closures. Children able to tie their own shoes may wear basic tennis shoes with tie closures.

Tops. Simple, solid colored or striped soft cotton shirts, with sleeves that are easy to push up.

Bottoms. Please assist your child in developing independence by having them dress in pants with elastic waists. Dresses and skirts may be worn but must have shorts, leggings or tights beneath.

All Students. Please provide an extra set of weather appropriate clothing to be kept at school (pants, tops, socks, shoes, underwear).

Please label all school clothing with your child's name.

Personal Property (Yours and Ours)

We ask that children NOT bring backpacks, lunch boxes, bags, toys, candy, gum, money, jewelry, etc.

to school. It becomes a major distraction throughout the day.

Young children tend to pocket small items of interest. Please return any item that belongs to the school in an envelope inside your child's tote bag for safe return to the classroom. It is unnecessary to include any identification with the item return. Remember that this behavior is normal and not a moral issue. If you feel the need to say something to your child about the item, please keep it simple and free from shame (e.g. "school things must stay at school for all children to use").

Animals

Please plan with the classroom teacher before bringing live animals to school. This policy includes insects.

Birthdays & Religion

Birthdays are very special to young children. Your child may wish to bring a book for the class in honor of their birthday. Please check with our Head of School for appropriate book ideas.

To honor our toddler aged students, you may wish to have one family member read a special short story to their classmates to commemorate their birthday. Please set this up with your child's classroom guide.

We honor our primary aged child's birthday by offering them a "Walk around the Sun"—a special concrete celebration that includes you, the child's parent. Please discuss with your child's Guide what day and time will best work for you to attend. We ask that you bring a photograph of your child at birth and on each birthday thereafter. These photos will be made into a timeline and your child will share their timeline one-on-one with each of their classmates.

Montessori programs have been established in schools of the world's major religions, but the Montessori program itself does not have specific religious persuasion, nor does Harmony Day School. Religions of the world are a small part of our cultural studies especially during celebrations of cultural holidays. Parents are encouraged to contribute celebrations of their homeland holidays in our classrooms. If your family celebrates any special holidays, please let us know! We love learning about different traditions.

Student Tote Bags

Your child will be provided an HDMS lunch bag (to be returned in May of each year) to carry to and from school each day. In this bag you will find some of the work your child is engaging in at school. You may be thinking "Some? Not all?" Yes, only some of the work can be brought home. Much of the work in our classrooms are hands-on, making use of the beautiful Montessori materials from the shelf. By no means does the paperwork in your child's bag indicate all that your child is accomplishing at school. They are accomplishing many challenging and important lessons every day.

You may wish to go through this bag with your child and let them tell you about the work. Tell them you can see that they are working on their numbers, letters, cutting and sewing or whatever else might be in their bag. Encourage them by saying you like the way they make their letters, or by asking them to tell you what they like best about their work. Refrain from over praising ("wow! That's so good!") Or judging their work ("you didn't do that right"). The child will enjoy bringing home their work to share with you. Most of all, enjoy what you learn from your child about school and their work.

If you need to get a message to your child's classroom teaching staff, please send a note in your child's lunch bag, or message the staff via Brightwheel. Please check your child's bag each day as notes from the school could be sent home this way.

Student Nap & Rest Periods

Children will require the following items:

- A small travel pillow (13" x 18" available @ Walmart)
- A small blanket (no bulky quilts)
- A small stuff animal - no larger than 6" tall

Please NO cartoon characters of any kind. Absolutely no pacifiers.

If your child does not use any of the items listed above to nap (or rest) at home, please bring only what your child is used to using.

Nap items will be sent home each Friday to be laundered. Please send them back in each Monday morning.

Community Diapers (Toddler Students)

We ask that diaper wearing toddler families provide 1 box of wipes and 1 box of diapers in their child's current diaper size when turning in your child's supply items. (preferably 120 count box of diapers or larger)

As diapers in any size are used and new diapers in that size are needed, they will be added to that weeks shopping list for replenishment. If your child outgrows a diaper size and you have extras at home, HDMS would gladly take the extras off your hands for you.

If your child has a medical reason that requires them to use a specific brand of diaper, please provide a written doctor note detailing this information. Once received by the school office, you will be notified when your child's personal diapers are low at Harmony so that you may purchase and send another package for use by your child only.

Diaper wipes and Aquaphor Healing Ointment are also shared among the toddler community and added to the weekly shopping list as needed for replenishment.

Medications & Illness

While attendance is important, if your child is sick, please keep him/her at home. A bad cough, excessively runny nose, sore throat, fever, or a contagious illness are all good reasons for a child to stay home. Children with a temperature *must stay home a full 24 hours after the fever breaks*. Children taking antibiotics *must stay home for a full 24 hours after beginning medication*.

If possible, please schedule medication doses so they can be administered outside of class times. If medication must be taken at school, there are guidelines for dispensing the medication that must be followed. A signed note must accompany the medication asking the school to administer. If the medication is liquid, please include a dosing spoon. The medication container itself must contain the following information—time to be taken, the dosage information, refrigeration requirements, and the child's name.

If a child has any of the following, she/he **must** be kept home from school:

- A temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher

- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) must be on drops for 24 hours before returning
- Head Lice
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chicken Pox
- Strep Throat
- Showing signs of contagious infection, i.e. green nose, runny eyes, rattling cough, etc.

Communicable diseases like chicken pox, influenza, strep throat, scarlet fever, conjunctivitis, head lice, etc. must be reported to the school immediately.

Sunscreen

Children will go outdoors most days - primary students, every day. Please apply sunscreen and bug spray to your child before school.

Attendance

Education and attendance go together. For a child to grow and thrive in a Montessori program and excel in all areas, as well as academics, attendance is essential.

The school day and school functions should take priority over other activities. Vacations should, whenever possible, be planned when school is on break. In the event of an absence, please message via the Brightwheel app or call or text the school (859.519.6759).

Absences, Late Arrivals & Early Pick Ups

Please message via Brightwheel or text or call the school office at (859) 519-6759 to report your child absent.

All children arriving or leaving school outside of the 8 am and 3:00 pm carline will need to communicate with the Head of School as to where they will bring or gather their child from.

For afternoon carline, please do not start lining up in the parking lot until at least **2:45**. This is a shared space and we want to be courteous to our neighbors.

School Security

Harmony Day School is in lockdown during the school day. The side entrance will be open for carline at 8 am and 3:00 pm dismissals.

In Case of an Emergency

Contacting the School. If you have a situation in which you need to reach the school, simply message us via Brightwheel or call, or text the school phone at (519 - 6759) and leave a message. Messages will be checked throughout the school day. However, if you have a family emergency requiring the early retrieval of your child from school, **please come to the school immediately (do NOT wait for a returned phone call)**, park in the school lot and walk to the side entrance to the school. A staff member will assist your child in preparing to leave school. In the event of a **tornado**, students will remain in classrooms where they will be positioned according to the instructions provided by the Fayette County Fire Marshal. Children and guides will remain there until the threat of danger has passed. Tornado drills are practiced quarterly.

In the event of an **earthquake**, students will be positioned under classroom tables until the threat of danger has passed. Earthquake drills are practiced quarterly.

By signing below, I am stating that I have read and agree to all information and policies enclosed in this parent handbook.

Signature of Parent 1

Date

Signature of Parent 2

Date

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In the event there is need of a **lockdown**, students will remain at school with staff until such time that the threat of danger has passed. Lockdown drills are practiced quarterly.

In the event, the school building should need to be evacuated due to:

- **Fire:** Students will be led from the school in a calm and safe manner, through the school playground to the backside of the Bluegrass GreenSource building.

Students and guides will remain there until such time that the building is deemed safe for us to return and classes resume. Fire drills are practiced monthly.

- **Hazardous Materials** - Students will be transported by staff across our parking lot to Bluegrass GreenSource – a “safe” place. Parents should plan to pick up their child at this location unless notified of another location.

