



A community of curious, independent, and compassionate lifelong learners

2026-27
Community Handbook
Woodstock Campus

5235 SE Woodstock Blvd · Portland, OR 97206

503-768-3847

www.sunstonemontessori.org

Cathy Elliott, Head of School

Mission

Sunstone Montessori School develops the whole child by providing an academically strong, emotionally nurturing, and socially supportive environment in accordance with AMI guidelines for Montessori education.

Vision

Our vision is a community of curious, independent, and compassionate lifelong learners.

Commitment to Diversity

Sunstone Montessori School welcomes students and staff of any race, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, color, nationality and ethnicity, religion, and family constellation to all programs and activities at the school. The school does not discriminate in its educational, hiring, admission, or school-administered policies. It is our goal that Sunstone Montessori School reflects the rich diversity of our community, including varied cultures, economic status, and individual and diverse educational needs.

Land Acknowledgement

The Portland Metro area rests on traditional village sites of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin, Kalapuya, Molalla, and many other peoples who made their homes along the Columbia River creating communities and summer encampments to harvest and use the plentiful natural resources of the area ([Portland Indian Leaders Roundtable, 2018](#)). We take this opportunity to thank the original caretakers of this land, and we commit to honoring their descendants.

Our Story

Sunstone Montessori School has a rich history of growth, evolution, and collaboration with the vibrant Montessori community of Portland, Oregon. Sunstone Montessori was born in 2007 from the successful merger of two well-established Montessori schools, Odyssey Montessori School (ages 6-12) and Two Rivers Montessori School (ages 2 ½ to 12), each with its own campus in SW Portland, OR.

In spring 2012, Sunstone Montessori School's Board of Trustees leased Portland Public Schools' "Terwilliger School" building in John's Landing. After five years in two different locations, Sunstone Montessori was going to be under one roof.

Renovations occurred over the summer so that the 2012-13 school year could begin with Primary and Elementary students together on one campus. In fall 2013, we launched our first Toddler classroom, expanding our program to serve children 16 months to 12 years.

In summer 2021, PPS reclaimed the Terwilliger School for their *Access Academy* program and, after an extensive search, Sunstone relocated to our current location in SE Woodstock. Prior to moving in, we had a substantial interior and exterior remodel done including classroom spaces, bathrooms, administrative offices, and the courtyard. In summer 2022, we had a complete playground renovation as designed by Learning Landscapes Design, a local landscape architect company that specializes in creating outdoor spaces for using natural materials.

In spring 2024, we were fortunate enough to lease 12 acres of land in SE Milwaukie, OR. Located just 4 miles south of our Woodstock campus, our new bucolic campus was perfectly situated for a Middle School modeled after Dr. Montessori's farm school. Renovations of the existing structures on the property began in summer 2024 in time to open our new Middle School

and two new Toddler classrooms for the start of the 2024-25 academic year. In fall 2025, we opened a fourth Primary classroom at this campus as well.

Table of Contents

School Calendar.....6

Important Numbers and Emails.....6

Parent Portal of the Website.....7

Information and Procedures7

Drop Off & Pick Up7

 Drop-Off Map 8

 Late Pick Up Fees..... 10

 Pick-Up Authorization..... 10

Attendance..... 11

 Late Arrivals..... 12

 Early Pick Up 12

 Late Pick Up & Fees 12

Extended Care 13

Accidents & Illness..... 13

 Sick Policy 14

 24 Hour Rule..... 14

 48 Hour Rule..... 14

 Important Note for Toddler Families: 14

 Medication 15

 Head Lice 15

Inclement Weather 16

 Air Quality Index 16

 FlashAlert..... 16

Emergency Plan 16

Communication & Participation..... 17

 Contacting Sunstone 17

 Parent Portal of the Website..... 17

 Directories..... 17

 Weekly Communications..... 17

 Other Communications 17

 Community Participation 18

 Parent Education 18

Annual Fund.....	18
Observations & Conferences.....	19
Aspects of the Day.....	20
Morning Work Period.....	20
Snack.....	20
Lunch.....	20
Outdoor Play.....	22
Afternoon Work Period.....	22
School Policies.....	22
Shorter Day Policy.....	22
Bringing Personal Items to School	22
Celebrations at School	23
Computers and Video.....	23
Dress	23
Student Records	24
Immunization Policy	24
OCC Rights of Parents and Guardians	24
Adult Conduct.....	24
Separation, Divorce, and Custody.....	25
Withdrawal and Disenrollment.....	25
Aggressive Behavior and Discipline	26
First Plane Aggressive Behaviors Addendum	27

School Calendar

Calendar Highlights, <https://sunstonemontessori.org/calendar-highlights/#2526>

The link above highlights the first and last days of school, no school days, late starts and early dismissals. This list does not reflect the entire school calendar of events. Please visit the website calendar for the complete calendar of events.

Website Calendar, <https://sunstonemontessori.org/parents/sunstone-event/>

We highly recommend that you familiarize yourself with our website calendar. This calendar reflects the most current dates for both campuses for the entire school year and is updated throughout the year as needed.

Important Numbers and Emails

Office: 503-768-3847

Attendance: woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org

*If your child will be absent, tardy, or needs an early pick up, please email **Woodstock attendance and your child's Guide**, or call the office.*

Medication/Medical Permissions: woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org

Order a Sack Lunch: kitchen@sunstonemontessori.org

Place order by 10:00 a.m. day-of. Sack lunch will be delivered to your student and \$5 per lunch will be billed to your account.

Monthly Lunch Orders: Facilities Manager, Jack Graham, jgraham@sunstonemontessori.org

Program, Student and Classroom Inquiries:

- **First:** Child's Guide
- **Second:** Program Director, Caitlin Sweeney, csweeney@sunstonemontessori.org

Schedule an Observation: Program Director, Caitlin Sweeney, csweeney@sunstonemontessori.org

Afterschool Enrichment: Program Director, Caitlin Sweeney, csweeney@sunstonemontessori.org

Transparent Classroom: Woodstock Campus Coordinator, Emma Nix, enix@sunstonemontessori.org

FinalSite Enrollment Forms: Program Director, Caitlin Sweeney, csweeney@sunstonemontessori.org

FinalSite Enrollment Contracts: Finance Manager, Dee Kuns, dkuns@sunstonemontessori.org

Financial Inquiries, Billing, Tuition, Financial Aid: Finance Manager, Dee Kuns, dkuns@sunstonemontessori.org

Parent Portal of the Website

The [parent portal](#) of the website is an excellent resource and your go-to place for finding the information that you need all in one place. We highly recommend you familiarize yourself with the parent portal:

School Calendar • Handbook • Important Numbers/Emails • Directories • Lunch Program @ Woodstock • After School Classes @ Woodstock • Parent Education • *Communications* Archive • Community Participation • Emergency Plan & Flash Alert • Respiratory Virus Policy • Social Media • Photo Gallery • Immunization Rates

Information and Procedures

Important Gate Note

The courtyard gate will be open from **8:10-8:25 a.m.** and again from **3:00-3:15 p.m.** If the courtyard gate is closed, please push “Directory>School” on the keypad to the RIGHT OF THE GATE, and a staff member will release the gate lock or meet you at the gate. **Please ensure the gate closes securely behind you.**

Drop Off & Pick Up

Beforecare: 7:30-8:10 a.m.

Drop Off: 8:10-8:25 a.m.

Toddler & Primary Drop Off First Wednesdays: 8:30-8:45 a.m.

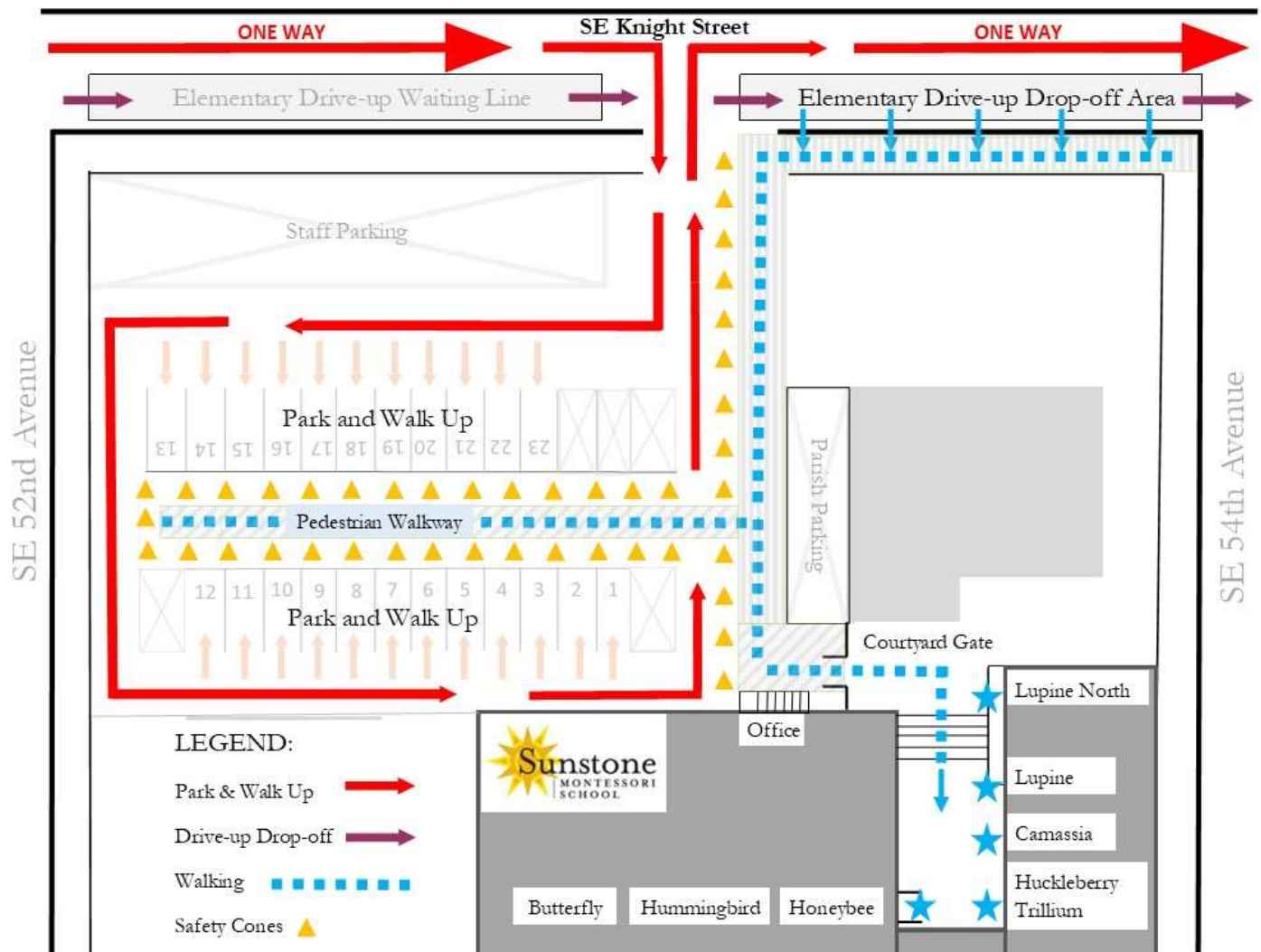
- Toddler & Primary classrooms start at 8:30 a.m. on the first Wednesday of each month (excluding September and January, and April), for classroom management and planning.

Pick Up: 3:00-3:15 p.m.

Aftercare: 3:15-5:30 p.m.

Drop-Off Map

IMPORTANT: Traffic is ONE WAY (eastward) along Knight St. and ONE WAY (counter clockwise) circulation in the parking lot during drop off.



Drop-Off Procedure

Beforecare 7:30-8:10 a.m.

- Elementary beforecare will be held in Lupine North (NE corner of the courtyard). Toddler and Primary beforecare will be held in the classrooms.
- Please park in the parking lot, ring the office through the gate keypad, and walk your child through the courtyard to their beforecare door. Please knock on the door and wait for staff to greet you. You can say your goodbyes at the door.

School Day Drop Off 8:10-8:25 a.m.

Please make every attempt to arrive on time and make late arrivals a very, very rare event.

- **Toddler** families can park in the parking lot and walk their child through the courtyard gate to their classroom door. Please knock on the classroom door and wait for staff to greet you. You can say your goodbyes at the door.
- **Primary** families can park in the parking lot and walk their child through the courtyard gate to the double doors at the SW corner of the courtyard. A staff member will greet your child and you can say your goodbyes at the double doors.
- **Elementary** families please use the drive-up drop-off lane along SE Knight St. (See map above).
 - Please form ONE car lane along the curb of Knight St. (school side)
 - Pull forward as far as you can along the curb, being sure to keep the parking lot driveway clear!
 - **Parents, please stay in your cars.**
 - Children exit cars on the SIDEWALK SIDE ONLY. Staff will be present to assist.
 - Children use the cordoned off PEDESTRIAN LANE through the parking lot and go directly into their classroom. **Running in the parking lot is not permitted.**

Pick-Up Procedure

3:00 p.m. Dismissal

- **Toddlers** will be dismissed from their classroom. Please park in the parking lot and walk into the courtyard. Please knock on the classroom door and wait outside for staff to dismiss your child. Please give each other plenty of space and wait your turn.
- **Primary students** will be dismissed from the gym foyer. Please park in the parking lot and walk into the courtyard. Please wait in the courtyard outside of the gym foyer and staff will dismiss children after visual confirmation of the child's designated pick-up person.
- **Elementary students** will be dismissed from their classrooms. We do not have enough parking space in the lot for all of our families so we ask that **Elementary families please park along 54th Ave. and enter and exit the courtyard through the 54th Ave. gate.** Please wait in the courtyard outside of your classroom door and staff will dismiss children after visual confirmation of the child's designated pick-up person.

Aftercare Pick Up

- Pick up is 3:15-5:30 p.m.

- All families can park in the parking lot and walk to their pick-up location. Staff will dismiss children after visual confirmation of the child's designated pick-up person.
 - Toddlers will be in the courtyard or their classroom.
 - Primary will be on the playground or gym.
 - Elementary will be on the playground or Lupine North (NE corner of the courtyard).
- To enter the courtyard gate, please press the button to the RIGHT OF THE GATE to call the Sunstone Office and be buzzed in. **Please ensure the gate is closed securely behind you**

Late Pick-Up Fees

If you know you will be late, please [email attendance](#) or call the office, 503-768-3847.

3:15-5:30 p.m.:

- Students who are not contracted for aftercare and have not been picked up by 3:15 p.m. will be escorted to aftercare by their Guide, incurring the \$50 drop-in fee. Parents can pick their child up from aftercare when they arrive.

Aftercare:

- Families will be charged \$5/minute/child starting 5 minutes after their contracted pick up time
 - 4:30 p.m. pick up will start charging at 4:35 p.m.
 - 5:30 p.m. pick up will start charging at 5:35 p.m.

Pick-Up Authorization

Email: woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org

Phone: 503-768-3847

According to state licensing requirements, **we can only release students to parents, legal guardians, and persons listed on the Approved Adults section of your child's Emergency Information Form in FinalSite.** We must also have verbal or written permission, from a parent or legal guardian of the child being picked up, **each time** we release a child to someone other than his/her parent or legal guardian. If the person picking up isn't on your Approved Adults list, and we don't have verbal or written permission, we cannot release your child.

To add a new person to your authorized pick-up list:

Email woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org, or call the office, 503-768-3847

To release a child to someone on your authorized pick-up list:

- Email woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org or call the office, 503-768-3847, each time to give verbal permission for pick up. **Scheduled weekly pick-ups or carpool arrangements are excepted from this rule.** (Please see the *scheduled weekly pick up* section below.)
- If your authorized pick-up person is not a parent of a child at Sunstone, please have them come to the office before the first time they pick up. Staff will check their ID and direct them to the appropriate pick-up station. Once they have been checked, they no longer need to come to the office prior to picking up your child.
- Please explain our dismissal procedures to anyone who will pick up your child, prior to them picking up, in order to avoid any confusion.

Scheduled Weekly Pick Ups/Carpool Arrangements

Email: woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org

Phone: 503-768-3847

If a person other than a parent or legal guardian picks up your child on a regular basis, you can schedule them as a regular weekly pick up or carpool arrangement. To do this, [email Woodstock attendance](#) with a schedule and include days, times, adults, and children involved. Once we have received this schedule, you are set for the year and need only email attendance if your current arrangement needs to change.

Attendance

Email: woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org

Phone: 503-768-3847

If your child will be absent, tardy, or needs an early pick up, please email [Woodstock attendance](#) and [your child's Guide](#), or call the office. Consistent attendance and on-time arrival is vital to the success of your child's experience at Sunstone. The school will contact you in the morning if your child is absent and we have not heard from you by 9:00 a.m.

Extended Absences

In cases of extended absences, please email [Woodstock attendance](#) and [your child's Guide](#) with as much notice as possible, and let them know the timing and duration of the absence.

Late Arrival, Early & Late Pick Up

Email: woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org and [your child's Guide](#) with as much notice as possible.

Please make every attempt to arrive on time and schedule appointments outside of the school day.

When you arrive late, please bring your child to the Admin office (down the stairs below the Sunstone sign). A staff member will need to escort them to their classroom.

Children who arrive late typically have a hard time transitioning into the flow of the classroom and engaging with activities. A late arrival is disruptive to your child's classmates, as well as to the Assistant, Guide, and support staff who are put in the position of facilitating a stream of late arriving children. Your child will thrive with a consistent on-time schedule in which they are able to start their day with the rest of their classmates. **Please help us by making late arrivals a very, very rare event.**

Late Arrivals

If you know you will miss the drop-off window, please email woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org and your child's Guide with as much notice as possible.

On-time Arrival 8:25-8:45 a.m.:

- **Huckleberry:** When you arrive you can walk your child through the courtyard to the classroom door.
- **Primary and Elementary:** When you arrive, you can say goodbye at the courtyard gate and your child can walk to the classroom. Staff will be present at the gate and the double doors to assist as necessary.

Late Arrival After 8:45 a.m.:

- **Huckleberry:** When you arrive please ring the courtyard gate and you can walk your child through the courtyard to the classroom door.
- **Primary and Elementary:** When you arrive please bring your child to the office (down the stairs opposite the gate) and they will be escorted to their classroom. If you plan to arrive after 9:00 a.m. your Guide may suggest an alternate time that supports the integration of your child into the school day.

Late Arrival for Appointments/Support Services

If your child requires an appointment or support services outside of the classroom, please contact your child's Guide well in advance to coordinate a schedule that best supports your child and the rest of the classroom community.

Early Pick Up

Email: woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org and your child's Guide with as much notice as possible.

- **Toddler and Primary:** Please email [Woodstock attendance](mailto:woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org) and your child's Guide with as much notice as soon as possible. If your child has an afternoon appointment or needs to be picked up before 3:00 p.m. for any reason, they are welcome to attend the morning work cycle and be dismissed at the 12:00 p.m. Toddler dismissal or the 1:00 p.m. Primary dismissal.
- **Elementary:** If your child needs to be picked up before 3:00 p.m., for any reason, please email attendance and your child's Guide with as much notice as possible. You can pick your child up from the office.

Late Pick Up & Fees

If you know you will be late, please email woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org or call the office, 503-768-3847.

3:00 p.m. Late Pick up: Students who are not contracted for aftercare and who are not picked up by 3:15 p.m. will be signed into aftercare, and parents will be billed the aftercare drop-in rate of \$50. Parents can pick their child up from aftercare when they arrive. Families will be charged \$5/minute/child after 5:30 p.m.

Aftercare Late Pick Up: Families will be charged \$5/minute/child starting 5 minutes after their contracted pick up time. short aftercare will start charging at 4:35 pm. long aftercare will start charging at 5:35 pm.

Extended Care

Email: woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org

Phone: 503-768-3847

Sunstone offers care before and after school as a service to families. Space is limited. First come, first served. Families can contract extended care at the time of enrollment as space allows.

Toddler extended care is included in tuition. Primary extended care is contracted annually and included in your tuition contract (except for contracted 3:00 p.m. dismissal families who can contract beforecare separately at a monthly rate). Elementary families may contract for care at a monthly rate or use the service at the higher drop-in rate when space is available.

Beforecare:

- 7:30-8:10 a.m.
- Toddler and Primary beforecare takes place in the classroom.
- Elementary beforecare takes place in Lupine North.

Aftercare:

- Toddler aftercare runs from 3:00-5:30 p.m. and takes place in the classroom.
- Primary aftercare runs from 3:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m. or 3:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m. and takes place in the classroom, gym and the playground.
- Elementary aftercare runs from 3:00pm-4:30pm or 3:00pm-5:30pm and takes place in Lupine North and the playground.

Drop In: A beforecare drop-in spot is \$25. Aftercare drop-in is \$50 with pick up from 3:00-5:30 p.m. Families contracted for 4:30 p.m. aftercare can drop-in to 5:30 p.m. aftercare for \$25. **Dropping in is by availability only and families must check availability first by contacting woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org.**

Late Fees: Families will be charged \$5/minute/child starting 5 minutes after their contracted pick up time. Short aftercare will start charging at 4:35 pm. Long aftercare will start charging at 5:35 pm.

Contract change for Elementary families ONLY: Due to the exponential growth in demand for these programs, we unfortunately can no longer guarantee that there will be space for your family to make a contract change during the year. If you want to change your contract, we require that we receive a written request by the 20th of the month so that we may let you know whether your change can be accommodated in time for the next billing cycle. This contract, until changed, is what you will be billed for the rest of the school year.

Accidents & Illness

Accidents: Minor injuries will be addressed at school, and you will receive an Accident Report describing the incident. If your child is seriously injured at school, we will contact you or your emergency contact immediately.

Illness: If your child becomes ill at school, has diarrhea, vomiting, or a fever of 100 degrees, or cannot participate in normal class activities, we will contact you, or if you are unable to be reached, an emergency contact, for immediate pick up. We will help your child feel comfortable until they can be picked up.

Serious Accidents or Illnesses: If necessary, we will call 911 or transport your child for emergency care.

Sick Policy

Email: woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org

Phone: 503-768-3847

If your child is ill, please email [Woodstock attendance](#) and [your child's Guide](#) with symptoms and any test results so that we can alert other families of contagious conditions and take preventative measures in the classroom. We will notify families of communicable conditions such as respiratory virus, strep throat, head lice, chickenpox and other childhood diseases.

Being in a community is much more demanding than being at home. A child who seems well at home may deteriorate quickly at school, requiring an early pickup. **Children who are unable to participate in normal class activities or outdoor play time should be kept home.**

Children unable to participate in normal class activities may be sent home at the discretion of your child's Guide. In this case, parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child within 30 minutes. If you will not be able to pick up your child in 30 minutes, please provide us with a contact who can.

24 Hour Rule

Children with communicable diseases (including respiratory viruses, serious colds, sore throats, persistent coughs, rash, conjunctivitis/excessive eye discharge, excessive mucus, and other conditions) or had a fever over 100 degrees, **must be kept at home until they are symptom free and fever free without medication for 24 hours.**

- Please see our [Respiratory Viral Illness Policy](#) in the parent portal of the website for our COVID related policies and procedures.
- Please see our [Measles Policy](#) in the parent portal of the website for exclusion policies.

48 Hour Rule

Children who have vomited, where there is no explanation for the vomiting, **and/or had diarrhea must be kept at home until they are symptom free and fever free without medication for 48 hours.**

Important Note for Toddler Families:

Parents of toddlers should anticipate their child will miss about four weeks of every calendar year due to illness. Participating in a community is much more demanding than being at home, and we have observed that longer days can be extremely stressful, particularly for our younger students when they are not feeling well. Children recover faster if they are given adequate time to rest at home. Please plan accordingly.

Toddlers who are unable to nap due to coughing or congestion may require early pick up at 3:00 p.m. or earlier.

Medication

Children are not permitted to administer their own medication, vitamins, cough drops, ChapStick, Aquaphor (etc.), or pain relievers while at school. In order for staff to administer medication of any kind during the school day, the proper form must be filled out and submitted.

Medication for Non-Life-Threatening Condition

If your child needs to take medication, whether prescription or “over the counter,” during the school day, for a non-life-threatening condition (e.g. eye drops, cough drops, ChapStick, Ibuprofen, vitamins, diaper cream, etc.) you will need to fill out the *Medication Authorization Form*.

- First, email woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org or stop by the office and we will assign you the *Medication Authorization Form* in Transparent Classroom.
- Fill out and submit the form.
- Bring the medication to the office, in its original container, with your child’s first and last name clearly labeled on it.
- Staff will administer the medication per the instructions on your *Medication Authorization Form*.

Medication for Serious Allergy or Medical Condition Requiring a Medical Protocol

If your child has a serious diagnosed allergy or other medical condition requiring a medical protocol (for example: allergies which may create a breathing emergency, a need for epi pens, antihistamine, seizures, severe asthma etc.) you will need to fill out the *Medication Authorization Form* and submit a *Medical Action Plan*.

- First, email woodstockattendance@sunstonemontessori.org or stop by the office and we will assign you the Medical Information and Permissions Form in Transparent Classroom.
- Open the form and follow the instructions for the ‘*Medical Action Plan*.’
- Please bring the signed *Medical Action Plan* and medication to the office, in its original container, with your child’s first and last name clearly labeled on it.
- Staff will administer the medication per the instructions on your forms.

Head Lice

Head lice are a common concern in schools everywhere. Head lice can be extremely inconvenient and time consuming to treat, and can cause discomfort, but they do not cause or spread disease. We follow the most current recommendations of the county Health Department in these situations.

- Prevention: Sunstone employs a professional head lice screening and removal service to check the heads of all children three times a year.
- Lice at School: If live lice or nits are observed on a child at school, we will contact parents immediately and the child must be picked up and treated. You may treat your child at home or have them treated professionally. However, before children can return to school, they must be checked and cleared by a professional lice removal business, such as Linda’s Lice Out. All Sunstone families will be alerted that lice have been observed, and all children may be checked for lice as the situation warrants.

Inclement Weather

For school closures, delays and schedule changes due to inclement weather, **we follow the Portland Public School (PPS) district schedule and monitor Clackamas county before making a final decision.** If PPS distinguishes between east and westside, we follow the eastside schedule.

Sunstone will send out a whole school email announcement and post a FlashAlert (see below) **if school is closed, delayed or otherwise has a schedule change.** Our greatest concern is for the safety of you and your child. Regardless of our schedule, please feel free to keep your children home if you feel conditions are not safe.

PPS closures and schedule changes are available at:

- **web:** https://www.oregonlive.com/weather/page/oregon_school_closures_delays.html
- **for PPS text message alerts:** text YES to 68453

Air Quality Index

Students and staff will refrain from outdoor activities when the AQI registers 120 or above at our campus location. In these circumstances we will utilize the gym for gross motor movement.

FlashAlert

Subscribe Now: <https://www.flashalert.net/id/sunstone>

Sunstone families should subscribe to the Sunstone FlashAlert channel, as it will be our primary way to communicate any emergencies, inclement weather, school closures, delays, early pick ups and more. Once you are subscribed you will automatically receive emails alerting you to and updating you on any emergency situations or inclement weather communications directly related to Sunstone.

Get the App

After you are subscribed to FlashAlert, we highly recommend that you get the FlashAlert messaging app for your smartphone. The app is free, easy to install, will sync with your Sunstone FlashAlert account, and will flash an alert on your phone's screen without you having to check your email.

Emergency Plan

If an evacuation of the school facility is necessary, our planned assembly places are the parking lot, playground, and Woodstock Park. In the case of an earthquake, we will assemble in the parking lot and move to the playground or Woodstock Park as necessary. We will connect with families using cell phones. Sunstone has developed a detailed emergency plan with contingencies for illness, accident, fire, earthquake, local hazard, lockout/lockdown, and evacuation.

[See the full plan](#) in the parent portal of the website.

Communication & Participation

Contacting Sunstone

Telephone: Call 503-768-3847 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Guides and Assistants are generally not available to speak on the phone during class time and can best be reached via email, but time-sensitive messages may be left with the office. If you reach voicemail, please leave a detailed message.

Email: Email is an effective way to communicate when an immediate response is not necessary. The [staff directory](#) is published in the [parent portal](#) of the website under “Directories,” Password: Sunstone.

In Person: Administrative staff are available during the school day. You are welcome to stop by the office anytime between 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., M-F. If you wish to meet with a Guide in person, please arrange a time with them outside of school hours via email. The [staff directory](#) is published in the [parent portal](#) of the website under “Directories,” Password: Sunstone.

Parent Portal of the Website

The [parent portal](#) of the website is an excellent resource and your go-to place for finding the information and links that you need all in one place. We highly recommend you familiarize yourself with the parent portal:

School Calendar, Directories, Lunch Program, After School Classes, Community Participation, Parent Education, *Communications* Archive, Emergency Plan & Flash Alert, Sunstone Handbook, Sick Policy, Social Media, Immunization Rates

Directories

Parent Portal of the Website: You can find all of the classroom, staff, board, and room parent directories in the [parent portal of the website](#). The directories will be live in August and are updated as needed throughout the year. This is a password protected page. Password: Sunstone

Transparent Classroom: You can find your child’s classroom directory only in [Transparent Classroom](#).

Weekly Communications

Communications is a weekly email newsletter and your main and most important source of information at Sunstone. If it’s important, it will be in *Communications*. Please read this email every week. If you miss a week, you can find all *Communications* archived in the [parent portal](#) of the website. Password: Sunstone

Other Communications

Communicating with families: Sunstone communicates primarily via the weekly *Communications*. We also use email, Transparent Classroom, FinalSite, FlashAlert, and social media.

Email: Guides will use email to distribute their monthly newsletter and any pertinent classroom information. The admin will use email for time-sensitive communications or emergencies. Room Parents will use email to communicate classroom gatherings and news.

FinalSite: [FinalSite](#) (FS) is your online portal for enrollment contracts, enrollment forms, and billing invoicing. For questions about FinalSite enrollment or forms please contact Program Director, Caitlin Sweeney, csweeney@sunstonemontessori.org. For questions about FinalSite billing please contact Finance Manager, Dee Kuns, dkuns@sunstonemontessori.org.

Transparent Classroom: [Transparent Classroom](#) (TC) is your online portal for medical forms, conference reports, your classroom directory, and photos of your child. For questions about Transparent Classroom please contact Emma Nix, enix@sunstonemontessori.org.

Flash Alert: Subscribe at <https://www.flashalert.net/id/sunstone>.

Sunstone families should subscribe to the Sunstone FlashAlert channel, as it will be our primary way to communicate any emergencies, inclement weather, school closures, delays, early pick-ups and more.

Instagram: Follow us @Sunstone_Montessori_School for photos and insights.

Community Participation

You can find the complete parent participation expectations, details, and sign ups in the parent portal of the website under [Community Participation](#).

The Sunstone Montessori School Community is made up of 230 children, 170 households, 49 staff members, 8 Board members, and an ever-growing network of alumni and friends. Together, we work in our roles towards the common goal of creating and sustaining our vision, mission, and a strong, sustainable, first-rate AMI Montessori school.

Your involvement at Sunstone is vital to fulfilling our mission of providing an academically strong, emotionally nurturing, and socially supportive environment for all! We depend on your participation and partnership to support the classrooms, build community, and nurture the development of your child(ren).

Parent Education

You can find the complete list of parent education events, details, and sign ups in the parent portal of the website under [Parent Education](#).

Your children thrive when we are in partnership. In support of this partnership, we offer parent education on topics including child development, Montessori, and parenting. We expect families to attend the parent education opportunities relevant to their child. It is also our expectation that every family will participate in the Silent Journey and Discovery at least once during your child's enrollment at Sunstone.

Annual Fund

Each year our community supports Sunstone by [giving to the Annual Fund](#) in a variety of ways. Our goal is 100% Annual Fund participation from our board, staff and **parent community**. You can help us reach our goal through one of our several Annual Fund giving opportunities:

- Fall Campaign (September - December)

- Giving Tuesday (November)
- Year-End Campaign (December)
- Paddle Raise and Cash Donations at our annual Gala & Auction (Spring)
- True Tuition Donation (\$1,500)-the difference between tuition and the actual cost of educating your child
- True Tuition Plus (\$3,000)-true tuition for your child and one other
- Monthly Contributor
- Corporate Matching (anytime)-eligible employers match your donation thereby doubling your contribution
- One Time Donation (anytime)

Please contact Cathy Elliott, celliott@sunstonemontessori.org with any questions.

Observations & Conferences

Observations

Classroom observations are scheduled to begin in October. Sign ups will be announced in the weekly *Communications*.

IMPORTANT: If your Toddler or Primary child is new to the classroom this year, please check in with the Guide before scheduling an observation to be sure that your child is emotionally ready for you to observe without causing too much of a disruption to their day.

To schedule your observation:

Please email Program Director, Caitlin Sweeney, csweeney@sunstonemontessori.org

Observation is an essential element of the Montessori philosophy. We limit observations during the first month or so of school while the children are orienting and adapting to the environment. After that, parents are welcome to observe our classrooms by scheduling an appointment.

Observation is an opportunity to see the functioning of the classroom in its undisturbed state; however, your own child is likely to behave differently with you there. The more you can minimize your presence, the more accurate picture you will get.

Conferences

Parent-Guide conferences are scheduled twice a year, once in the fall and again in the spring. Please see the [website calendar](#) for exact dates. Conference sign ups will be available online via *Communications* emails approximately one month before conferences. Additional conferences can be scheduled with the Guide as the need arises.

During fall and spring conferences, the school provides a single, 20-minute conference slot for each child. Parents with separate households can attend simultaneously, as the focus is on the child and we want to share a consistent message.

Sunstone provides free childcare for enrolled students during your conference slot(s).

During your conference, your child's Guide will share your child's work with you, report on his or her personal and academic development, and discuss any other relevant issues. Feel free to ask questions and bring up any issues or concerns you might have.

Aspects of the Day

Morning Work Period

A Montessori classroom offers a long, uninterrupted work period in the morning, during which children can come to lessons, choose work, and develop sustained concentration and engagement with their activities. As much as possible, we work to protect this time from unnecessary intrusions and disruptions. Of course, some events and activities, such as visiting experts and outside performances, are scheduled as needed.

Snack

A nutritious breakfast at home will get your child off to the best start for the day. Still, younger children generally require mid-morning and afternoon snacks.

Toddler & Primary: Nutritious, balanced snacks are provided by Sunstone. Our chef lovingly prepares a healthy morning snack in-house, from scratch, using fresh ingredients. An afternoon snack is provided for those in aftercare. All snacks are consciously prepared in alignment with USDA guidelines and our students' food allergies and dietary preferences. [See sample snack menu.](#)

Elementary: Elementary children are invited to bring a nutritious morning snack. They will have an opportunity during the morning to eat their snack if they wish. Please check with your child's Guide for the classroom's snack guidelines and classroom allergies. Sunstone provides a nutritious, afternoon snack for elementary children in aftercare.

Lunch

Toddler: A nutritious, balanced lunch is provided by the school. Lunches are lovingly prepared in-house by our chef. All meals are made from scratch, using fresh ingredients, and consciously prepared in alignment with USDA guidelines and our students' food allergies and dietary preferences.

- [See sample lunch menu](#)
- **Drinks:** Water and milk will be available for the children. Alternate milk can be available if needed. Please contact your Guide. We use only bottled water for drinking and cooking. We do not prepare infant formula. Each classroom and common area has a water dispenser for this purpose. **Please do not send juice boxes, milk cartons, or sodas.**

Primary and Elementary:

Under OCC (licensing rules) lunches brought from home must align with the USDA guidelines and include the following items. This pertains to Primary lunches all year round, and Elementary lunches during spring and summer break care:

- One grain (granola bars and popcorn do not count as a grain)
- One protein
- Two fruits and/or vegetables

- **Lunch Box:** Children can bring lunch from home in a reusable bag or box **without media characters**. Children's participation in making their own lunches as much as possible supports their independence.
- **Packaging:** Please provide food items in reusable containers that children can open by themselves and avoid single serving packets, excessive packaging, plastic bags, etc. **Any food that is not eaten will be sent home.**
- **Healthy Lunches:** A balanced lunch that contains a protein, a grain, and a solid fruit or vegetable helps the children sustain their energy levels throughout the day. Candy, junk foods, and sugary desserts are not permitted, and highly processed foods (such as Lunchables) are strongly discouraged. We are happy to offer suggestions if you need.
- **Hot and Cold:** Some classrooms have microwave ovens available; please check with your child's Guide to find out if it is an option to occasionally send food that needs to be warmed. There is no refrigerator space available for children's lunches, so please do not send food that requires refrigeration throughout the morning. According to state requirements:
 - Children must keep their lunches cold using cold packs for their foods.
 - Lunches must be prepared in the morning or kept in the fridge overnight until ready to leave the house.
 - Any leftover food from lunch shall be discarded by the parents.
- **Sunstone Montessori Flatware:** Sunstone provides spoons and forks for children to use with their lunches. Occasionally this flatware will accidentally go home with children in their lunchboxes. Please be mindful of this and return any flatware to the classroom. Thank you.
- **Drinks:** Water (and milk in Toddler and Primary) will be available for the children. Alternate milk can be available if needed. Please contact your Guide. We use only bottled water for drinking and cooking. Each classroom and common area has a water dispenser for this purpose. **Please do not send juice boxes, milk cartons, or sodas.**

Sunstone Lunch Program

Primary and Elementary families can order nutritious lunches, made from scratch with fresh ingredients every day that school is in session as follows:

- Hot Lunch Mondays – Thursdays, and Sack Lunch on Fridays [See sample lunch menu](#).

Matt Howard, our kitchen manager and school chef, prepares healthy menus on a monthly schedule from which you can pick and choose. Each month, **starting in August**, you can place your entire order for the next month. Simply click the lunch order form link in the weekly *Communications*, or in the [parent portal of the website under Lunch Program](#). You can browse the menu and mark the days that you would like to order lunch for your child and your child(ren) will be delivered a delicious and nutritious lunch on the days of your choosing. Each child will need a separate order form. **Our business department will bill your account \$9.00/meal Mondays-Thursdays and \$5.00/sack lunch on Fridays.**

Sunstone Sack Lunches: Sunstone's commercial kitchen offers an "Oops, I forgot my lunch" option. If you ever find yourself at school minus a lunchbox, just email kitchen@sunstonemontessori.org **before 10:00 a.m.**, include your child's name and classroom, and if you need a vegan and/or gluten free option, and we will deliver a healthy sack lunch to your child and bill your account \$5/lunch. The sack lunch includes a sunflower seed butter and organic strawberry sandwich, Tillamook medium cheddar cheese slices, whole wheat crackers, and fresh fruit.

Food Sensitivities

Sunstone is not a “nut-free” school, but we will communicate serious food sensitivities to families in affected classrooms and some classrooms may end up being “nut-free.”

How to Add a Food Sensitivity or Allergy

- If you need to add food sensitivities, allergies, or medication due to an allergy, please email milwaukeeattendance@sunstonemontessori.org or call the office at 503-768-3847.

Outdoor Play

We go outside in all weather, so please send **appropriate clothing labeled with your child's name/initials**. Raincoats or rain suits with hoods and rain boots are encouraged during the wet season.

Afternoon Work Period

Children who stay for the full day have a second work period until 3:00pm. Younger children who nap in the afternoon, do so in the classroom.

School Policies

Shorter Day Policy

Children are expected to behave safely, respectfully, and responsibly, according to their stages of development. Behavior outside these expectations is typically addressed through Grace & Courtesy lessons, conversation, redirection, and/or increased scaffolding, as deemed appropriate by the Guide or extended care staff.

Children unable to participate in normal class activities may be sent home at the discretion of your child's Guide. In this case, parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child within 30 minutes. If you will not be able to pick up your child in 30 minutes, please provide us with a contact who can.

Bringing Personal Items to School

School Supplies: The annual materials fee covers the cost of paper, pencils, and other supplies. It is not necessary for your child to bring in any school supplies unless specifically requested by the Guide for a special project.

Electronic Devices: iPods, cell phones, etc. are not permitted at school. Older children who carry mobile phones must drop them off in the office **on arrival**. Students may pick up their phones or other electronic devices from the office at the end of the day **as they depart**. Use of these devices by children is not permitted while they are under Sunstone supervision, except in emergencies or other special circumstances.

Skateboards, etc.: Skateboards, longboards, roller skates and wheeled vehicles other than bicycles or scooters must be dropped off at the office on arrival and picked up at departure. Bicycles and scooters can be parked in Sunstone's covered bike parking in the courtyard.

Toys, Fidgets, and Precious Items: These items can be distracting and may be lost or damaged. **Avoid sending them to school unless recommended by a special education professional.** Inappropriate items will be held until the end of the school day and then returned.

Sharing: Interesting items can be brought to share with the class according to individual classroom guidelines. Natural specimens, handmade items, cultural objects, etc., are best for this activity. Please check with your child's Guide before bringing in an item.

Lost and Found: PLEASE LABEL ALL YOUR CHILD'S CLOTHES. Unclaimed items will be taken to the Lost and Found in the courtyard. Clothing and belongings that are clearly labeled with names or initials are easiest to reunite with their owners. Unclaimed Lost and Found items are donated to charity several times each year. We will give notice to families when donations are scheduled.

Celebrations at School

Holidays: Holidays and cultural celebrations are observed in classrooms based on the students' and Guides' interests. Explorations of a holiday's cultural background typically include art activities, true stories, books, and songs. Please consult with your child's Guide before making plans to contribute to classroom celebrations.

Birthdays: Please contact your child's Guide in advance to arrange for the celebration of your child's birthday at school. Please do not distribute invitations at school for your family's birthday party. To avoid hurt feelings, please mail invitations separately.

Computers and Video

Classroom Use: Computers and video presentations are not used in Primary classrooms. Video may occasionally be used in Elementary classrooms to supplement an area of study. Students in the Upper Elementary may make occasional use of computers, learning and using research and document production skills.

At Home: Based on research on the effects of screens on children's attentiveness, relationship skills, and self-regulation skills, we request that children have **NO television, video game, or computer activity before school**, and that screen time be limited at home, especially during the school week. Video games are not permitted at school at any time.

Dress

Clothing: Children should wear comfortable, functional clothing suited to the season. Children need to be able to work comfortably in the classroom and run easily and play outside in any weather.

- Mark all hats, gloves, coats, boots, sweaters, socks, and extra sets of clothing with your child's name or initials.
- No clothing with media characters or imagery please. Thank you!

Independence: Please support your child's independence by choosing clothing they can manage independently, take off and put on by themselves, especially around toileting (fasteners, buckles, buttons, and zippers can be obstacles for young children's independence).

Appropriate Appearance: Sunstone Montessori School Woodstock campus serves children ages 16 months to 12 years. For that reason, we want to foster appropriate dress across our whole community. Attention-getting items detract from the classroom's atmosphere of calm and ordered learning. Children whose personal attire or grooming that distracts the attention of other children or teachers from schoolwork will be required to make necessary alterations. The intention is to create and

foster a safe, orderly setting in which all children can concentrate on their educational endeavors with minimal distractions. Parents' understanding and support is vital to achieving this goal. When a child is dressed inappropriately, parents may be contacted to provide a change of clothes before the child may return to class.

Student Records

Student records may consist of, but are not limited to, attendance records, health and emergency information, assessments, developmental and academic progress reports, accident reports, and parental authorization for various school activities. Parents and legal guardians have the right to inspect and review all records, files, and data directly related to their children.

Immunization Policy

Sunstone Montessori is required by law to keep up-to-date copies of each student's immunization record on file. Oregon law also requires that all students either are up-to-date on immunizations for their age group, have a medical exemption from a medical professional, or have completed the non-medical exemption training module online or with a pediatrician. While Sunstone can access immunization records for the state of Oregon, parents must provide a copy of all immunization records from other states, medical exemption documents or non-medical exemption certificate of completion, and in the case of a non-medical exemption, sign the non-medical exemption box on their Oregon immunization record.

OCC Rights of Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians have the right to enter and inspect their child's classroom without notice during normal operating hours and while their child is receiving care. Parents and guardians have the right to inspect childcare certification by the State of Oregon Office of Child Care. These documents are available in the school office during normal office hours. Parents and guardians have the right to report unsatisfied complaints about pre-school and after-hours care to:

State of Oregon Office of Child Care
700 Summer Street NE Suite 350
Salem, OR 97301
(503) 947-1400

The following OCC notices are posted in each licensed building:

- Notice of Arrival & Departure Procedures
- Notice of Rights of Parents/Guardians to Center Access
- Notice of Rights of Parents/Guardians to Certification & Inspection
- Notice of Rights of Parents/Guardians to Report Complaints
- Notice of Sunstone Montessori School Guidance & Discipline Policy

Adult Conduct

Adults in the Sunstone community, including Sunstone staff, parents, and extended family, are expected to behave safely and respectfully. We ask that all adults observe the following guidelines:

Communication: If there is a problem, it is best to communicate clearly and directly with the person who can address it. For classroom issues, communication should begin with the classroom Guide. Conflicts among adults should be addressed in a calm and private manner.

Privacy and Confidentiality: Adults should consider the privacy of children, parents, and staff. Staff and parent personal information, including email addresses and phone numbers, should be kept confidential. Directory information is intended for school-related business only.

Serious Issues: Some behavior is grounds for immediate withdrawal from the Sunstone community:

Sexual abuse and sexual assault are illegal and will not be tolerated. Allegations of abuse or assault will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate actions will be taken. This applies to all employees, parents, students, volunteers, and subcontractors.

Discrimination or harassment of any person in the Sunstone community on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, disability, source of income, and place of residence or business is counter to our values and will not be tolerated. Allegations of discrimination will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate actions will be taken. This applies to all employees, parents, volunteers, and subcontractors.

Consequences: Every effort will be made to address community conflicts constructively. However, if no mutually agreeable resolution can be reached, it may be necessary for a separation from the school, either by termination of an employee or termination or non-renewal of an enrollment agreement, at the sole discretion of the School.

Separation, Divorce, and Custody

In the case of separation, divorce, or legally directed custody arrangements, Sunstone will grant access to children and school records unless we have a court order or other legal document specifying the rights accorded to each parent.

Without a court order, a copy of which is provided to us by the custodial parent, our ability to deny access is limited to notifying the custodial parent and/or police if needed (should an unsanctioned contact be attempted or occur at Sunstone). Staff members are instructed to not attempt to mediate a custodial dispute, put themselves or the child in jeopardy, nor try to enforce a court order. Again, staff is instructed to simply call the custodial parent and/or police if needed.

In addition, in these cases, Sunstone requires the permission of **both** custodial parents to add other adults to a child's pick up list.

Please let the school know if there is a change in your family status along these lines. Although these situations can be fraught with emotion and conflict, we are best able to serve your child if we have good information and clear communication.

Withdrawal and Disenrollment

Tuition amounts are due in full as agreed and outlined in the Parent Financial Commitment form. You are eligible to file a claim for a partial refund of unused tuition if you paid for tuition insurance.

If you wish to withdraw or disenroll your child from the program, you must send a letter or email to Cathy Elliott, Head of School, celliot@sunstonemontessori.org. The date of the email, the postmarked date of a letter, and the delivered date if delivered in person, are considered the date of notice for purposes of this policy. Please indicate "Notice of Student Withdrawal" in the subject line of the email or letter and include the following text in your correspondence:

Please accept this email as notice of our intent to withdraw our child, [enter child's name], from Sunstone Montessori School. [Name of child]'s last day in the program is expected to be [enter effective date of withdrawal].

We will confirm our receipt of your written notice, and if a refund is due, we will process that prorated amount in accordance with the terms of the Parent Financial Commitment form you signed. As a reminder, there are no refunds of tuition or fees for missed days of class due to absences, illness, medical conditions or medical emergencies, disability, testing, family emergencies, vacations, inclement weather, moving/relocation, extracurricular activities, or other events that may cause your child to be absent from school.

Please Note: If you decide not to re-enroll your child at Sunstone, we respectfully request that you postpone telling your child of the upcoming change until the end of the school year. Children under age six, in particular, are very present-moment focused and have difficulty understanding that this change is happening in the future, not immediately, but even some Elementary aged children struggle with this news when it is delivered prematurely. We have observed that children of all ages with advance knowledge sometimes disengage from the classroom, materials, and their Guide, creating an unsuccessful experience for the child and the entire classroom community. Thank you for your support in allowing the children to have the most cohesive and engaged classroom experience possible!

Aggressive Behavior and Discipline

Sunstone is a warm, welcoming space where we do all that we can to ensure the safety of the children and provide them with an optimal educational experience. We educate children for life, which includes fostering the development of emotional intelligence, problem-solving skills, and the grace and courtesy of everyday living.

Sunstone believes in a preventative approach to discipline. Guides work with the children to create an environment conducive to work and personal development. Children are expected to behave safely, respectfully, and responsibly, according to their stages of development. Behavior outside these expectations is typically addressed through Grace & Courtesy lessons, conversation, redirection, and/or increased scaffolding, as deemed appropriate by the Guide.

Inevitably, part of this work with children may address aggressive behaviors. Biting, hitting, etc. are particularly common for children aged 16 months to three years, and less common for children aged 3-12 years; for this reason, we hold developmentally appropriate perspectives on these behaviors across our program levels. *Please refer to our First Plane Aggressive Behavior Addendum for more insight into our developmental perspective and approach with children ages 6 and under.*

In instances of aggressive behaviors, each situation will be assessed individually and discussed with the Program Director, and the parents of both children will be notified of the incident. The names of children involved will not be discussed in accordance with the National Association for the Education of Young Children recommendations. Your child's Guide will communicate with you in the case of any serious or ongoing behavior problems. In cases of physical aggression or persistent disruption, the school reserves the right to remove the aggressive child from the classroom and/or set firm limits. We reserve the right to request that the child be picked up by a parent at the time of disruption.

Relational aggression, also known as peer mistreatment, is also taken very seriously within our school. Relational aggression is defined by Sunstone as any persistent behavior that harms others through damage or threat of damage to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion. Examples of such behaviors include unwelcome teasing, name-calling, excluding, humiliating, spreading rumors, playing harmful practical jokes, threatening to isolate or harm, disrespecting another's property, coercing, or manipulating power in a relationship.

In cases of serious and/or ongoing behavior problems, including disruptive behavior, physical aggression, and relational aggression, parents can expect the following steps:

- The Guide will call a meeting with the parents to address concerns and develop a solution-oriented action plan. Subsequent meetings may be held between the Guide and the parents to evaluate progress.
- If the behaviors continue, a meeting will be called with the Guide, parents, Program Director, and/or Head of School as needed. The child may be referred to see a counselor or other professional at this time.
- In the case of extreme or persistent behavior issues that resist improvement, Sunstone will assess whether suspension or termination of enrollment is best.

Below, please find a list of *some* qualifying behaviors:

- Biting
- Pushing
- Stabbing
- Scratching
- Spitting
- Hair pulling
- Tackling
- Hitting
- Punching
- Choking
- Intense anger directed at another
- Use of profane words
- Use of hurtful words (“kill,” “shoot,” etc.)

First Plane Aggressive Behaviors Addendum

Toddler:

Children aged 16 months to 3 years are in a unique place developmentally; they are developing impulse control, language skills, experimenting with cause and effect (which is not yet internalized), learning what is socially acceptable, and so on. Toddlers are being introduced to and practicing skills that are a part of socialization: processing and expressing emotions, sharing, engaging with other children/adults, exploring ways to gain attention, finding space when needed, and communicating.

Toddlers’ physical stage of development can easily lead to biting behavior, as children teethe during this period and are very oral. Many toddlers go through a biting phase, or at least try it out at some point or another. While this can be frustrating and stressful for all parties involved, we come from a place of understanding the child’s stage of development and view biting incidents as opportunities to help toddlers learn that these and other aggressive behaviors are not okay and instead, we can be compassionate and learn how to care for ourselves and others.

Despite the fact that preventative measures are taken and the children are supervised at all times, aggressive behaviors are often triggered quickly and unexpectedly. Staff are not always able to prevent them. We work with the children to help them to know what they can do, utilizing Grace & Courtesy lessons to practice using their words, getting help from an adult, learning what you can do if a child does something to you that you don’t like or that hurts, using gentle hands, and asking before touching another (such as offering a hug), for example. We use Non-Violent Communication, Positive Phrasing and Discipline, and build strong relationships with each child, which helps us know where they are developmentally and what their individual needs are.

When biting, hitting, pushing, or another aggressive behavior occurs, we respond with the particulars of the incident in mind, while maintaining consistency with our overall approach to aggressive behaviors. Toddlers are not yet able to modify their behavior even if they know it is 'wrong'. This is especially true if they are not yet verbal or are upset. We make a point to let the child know that biting is not acceptable, but we recognize that they may not be able to help it. Sending children home and other forms of discipline often have no impact on the behavior at this developmental stage.

As children grow older and transition to the second sub plane (3-6 years) they begin to have the capacity to modify their behavior and to better connect a consequence such as being sent home. Children who are preparing to transition to Primary and are still displaying frequent aggression, such as biting, may require additional intervention and support. Staff will meet with the family to come up with a plan to prepare for the different expectations in Primary.

Primary:

While some of what holds true for Toddlers (above) also holds true for Primary children, the three- through six-year-old child is moving out of the oral stage and has typically furthered their development of impulse control and self-regulation. Because of this developmental maturity, we take a stronger stance with Primary age children by setting firm limits to help them understand that excessive aggression is unacceptable.

When a child bites in Primary we will tend to the child who has been bitten, helping to demonstrate caring for others and making sure the child is comforted and feels safe and okay. The biter will be moved to an area where they have space, away from the other children, without a strong emotional response or reaction—the attention will be focused on caring for the injured child.

The situation will be assessed and discussed with the Head of School, and the parents of both children will be notified of the incident. The names of children involved will not be discussed in accordance with the NAEYC recommendations as well as other experts. For the safety and comfort of the children, as well as to set firm limits, the biter may be sent home.

Aggressive behaviors will be tracked in the children's files, and upon three incidents a meeting will be arranged with the family to discuss the behaviors, observations at school and at home, reactions to such behaviors, and an action plan moving forward. Safety of the community is our number one priority, and as such, if the behaviors continue, Sunstone Montessori School will assess whether continued enrollment is best.