



August 30, 2021

Dear CHML Community,

Welcome to Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan, we are excited to be back in our newly modernized learning school, our teachers are eager to get settled in and make this year truly remarkable despite the current health challenge facing our nation. As DCPS updates our COVID-19 Operations Handbook a copy will be made available electronically. Please be sure to visit the [dcpsreopenstrong.com](https://dcpsreopenstrong.com) website where you will find the latest health and safety updates.

This handbook is intended to provide information about Capitol Hill Montessori philosophies, policies, and programs. This handbook is supported by the teachers, school staff, Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO), and the Local School Advisory Team (LSAT). The school handbook will be revised annually with input from the CHML community.

All the policies are thought of with children's safety, welfare, and success in mind. We encourage you to read the whole handbook, then discuss and reinforce the information with your child(ren). Together, we can create a safe, welcoming environment that educates every child well.

Sincerely,

Kim Adutwum, Principal

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Vision**

We are a caring community helping all students reach their full potential in preparation for becoming productive members of society.

### **Mission Statement and Montessori Philosophy**

The mission of Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan (CHML) is to educate the whole child for the whole world. Our concept of the whole child encompasses and celebrates the social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual aspects of being human.

Montessori is a philosophy of education and teaching method that was founded in 1907 by Dr. Maria Montessori, the first woman in Italy to become a physician. She based her educational methods on scientific observation of children's learning processes. Guided by her discovery that children teach themselves, Dr. Montessori designed a "prepared environment" in which children could freely choose from several developmentally appropriate activities. Montessori education is found all over the world, spanning ages from birth to adolescence.

In Montessori classrooms, each child learns at his or her own pace without rigid expectations and without limits to their progress. The children in the classroom display respect, manners, and social skills. There is an abundance of learning materials in the classroom that teach children concepts that are building blocks for what they will be learning in the future.

Montessori focuses on teaching for understanding. There are many instances where children are taught to memorize correct answers or methods of arriving at the correct answer but do not truly understand the concept. Montessori creates a concrete sensorial experience that gradually allows the child to form a mental picture of concepts like: How big is a thousand? How many hundreds make a thousand? What is really going on when we borrow or carry numbers in a mathematical equation?

The classrooms provide a prepared environment where children are free to respond to their natural tendency to work. The children's innate passion for learning is encouraged by giving them opportunities to engage in spontaneous, purposeful activities with the guidance of a trained adult.

Through their work, the children develop concentration and joyful self-discipline. Within a framework of order, the children progress at their own pace and rhythm according to their individual capabilities.

### **Role of the Montessori Teacher**

The role of a Montessori teacher is that of an observer and guide whose goal is to intervene less and less as the child develops. The teacher creates an atmosphere of calm, order, and joy in the classroom and is there to help and encourage the children in all their efforts, allowing them to develop self-confidence and inner discipline. With the younger students at each level, the teacher is more active, demonstrating the use of materials and presenting activities based on an assessment of the child's requirements. Knowing how to observe constructively and when, and how much, to intervene, is one of the most important talents the Montessori guide

acquires during a rigorous course of training at American Montessori International (AMI) or through American Society of Montessori (AMS) centers accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE).

### **CHML School Pact**

#### *Student Commitment*

- ï Arrive on time to my classroom by 8:45 a.m. every day
- ï Come to school ready to learn and do my best
- ï Respect myself and others
- ï Respect classroom materials and school grounds
- ï Act with grace and courtesy always
- ï Follow school and classroom agreements

#### *Parent/Guardian Commitment*

- ï Ensure that my child(ren) is punctual and strives for 100% attendance
- ï Discuss and reinforce school and classroom rules with my child(ren)
- ï Pick up my child(ren) on time
- ï Respect drop off and pick up procedures to ensure safety of all students
- ï Attend parent-teacher conferences and parent education nights
- ï Read school handbook and discuss with my child(ren)
- ï Participate in the PTSO through volunteering and giving
- ï Monitor my child(ren) while on the playground with them

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Primary Program (ages 3-6)**

At three years of age, the mind becomes “conscious” or aware of those things which are presented. A Montessori primary classroom is a child-sized world. The outside world is incorporated meaningfully into the classroom. The teacher carefully selects material so that a child can explore life on a level he can understand. Materials and curriculum center around practical life, sensorial, language, math, geography, history, science, art, and music. Teachers model behaviors that students learn to master such as graceful movement, speaking with inside voices, and acting with dignity and courtesy. Children learn to work independently and explore concepts deeply at their own pace. Children are given individual lessons on specific materials that explore key concepts in math and literacy, as well as other subjects. They learn early concepts in understanding the universe, basic geography, and the path of human development.

### **Elementary Program (ages 6-12)**

In the elementary program students are expected to deepen their understanding of key concepts and sharpen essential skills. They begin to analyze more, explore more and work on small-group projects. CHML offers both Lower Elementary (ages 6 – 9) and Upper Elementary (ages 9 – 12) classrooms.

The elementary children shift their focus from family and home to their peer group. Learning how to live in the small community of the classroom is a central part of their work during this six-year period. It is through this work that they build the strong social skills we often associate

with Montessori such as how to lead and follow, how to take responsibility for oneself and others, how to publicly present and perform, and how to care for others. The child enters the elementary program between six and seven years of age. The curriculum is organized into subject areas including math, geometry, language arts, history, geography, biology (botany/zoology), music, theatre arts, and art. Lessons are given in small groups, with occasional lessons given to an individual or to the entire class. Students are required to read, write, organize their work, work productively with others, exercise time management skills to accomplish their work, and master math facts and concepts.

### **Middle Grades Program (ages 12-14)**

The CHML middle grades program serves sixth through eighth graders. The Montessori middle grades program includes:

- ï Meaningful experiential learning and practical management outside the classroom through integrated partnerships with local agencies, businesses, and organizations.
- ï A rigorous core academic program with a strong focus on integrated science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education as well as social sciences, geography, language arts, and fine arts.
- ï Small group seminars and projects that allow for both independent and collaborative learning and prepare students for the demands of the real world.
- ï Curriculum aligned to Common Core and based on the modern middle grades curriculum—the Montessori National Curriculum Framework for the Adolescent Program—with an emphasis on both the natural world through the study of the environment and local ecosystems, as well as the progress of human civilization.
- ï A warm, diverse, and supportive community that takes a holistic approach to middlegrades students’ academic, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual development.
- ï Foreign language instruction
- ï A purposeful focus on the transition to high school, including a conscientious approach to preparing the Montessori student for traditional high schools.
- ï Leadership opportunities.

### **Moving Up**

In the spring of each school year, Primary (Kindergarten) students can visit a Lower Elementary classroom to get a feel for what the Elementary community is like, how it differs from their Primary classroom, and so that teachers can determine their social readiness for transitioning to Elementary for the upcoming school year. The Lower Elementary (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) students do the same with Upper Elementary. In the spring, teachers collaborate across levels to make student placement recommendations for the administration. With the goal to ensure the classes are balanced, they consider academic and social factors, diversity, boy/girl ratio, and number of students. In the rare case that a child is not ready to move to Elementary, the Primary teacher will work with the administration to develop a plan for a gradual transition and then communicate this to the parents. Upper Elementary students (5<sup>th</sup> grade) prepare for their transition by visiting the Adolescent program informally throughout the year, as well as participating in a more formal “shadow” program in the spring.

Both Lower and Upper Elementary teachers work to build a new community when they welcome in new students, just as Primary teachers do when they welcome in new three-year-olds; it's a new beginning for everyone each year in terms of bonding with adults and peers. While children from the same Primary class do not always end up in the same class, Lower Elementary children do share lunch and recess.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Admission**

CHML is a specialized city-wide program and is designated as "100% out of boundary." Sibling preference is the only preference to admission. Admission into CHML is done through the MySchoolsDC lottery process. Lottery applications are made available by MySchoolsDC in December of the year preceding entry into the next school year. Placement is made on slots available basis through the lottery process. More information on the application procedure can be obtained by calling the school's main office or visiting the DCPS website.

Children are accepted at three years old by September 30th of the year they start. Transfers are accepted for grades PK through 8 if there is space available.

### **Registration**

Only residents of the District of Columbia are eligible to receive a free public education in the District. Consequently, all public-school students in the District are required to provide proof of their residency in the District or pay tuition. The current Residency Verification Rules governing the process of residency verification are designed to ensure that only those students who are District residents attend public schools in the District without paying tuition (Title 5 DCMR Chapter 50). Persons enrolling a student must show original documents as proof of residency. Annual verification of residency must take place during the re-enrollment season, and prior to the annual enrollment audit each year, or within ten (10) days of the time of initial enrollment.

In addition, health documentation forms must be submitted. DCPS requires that students provide completed physical and dental examination forms. DCPS also requires proof that students have had the following immunizations: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTP), Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) Hepatitis B and Chicken Pox. Students who do not provide immunization records may be excluded from school. Parents can find information about free, year-round clinics to assist with immunization in the office at each school, by calling DCPS at 576-7130, or by visiting the DC Department of Health website, <http://doh.dc.gov/>.

## **Attendance**

The District of Columbia has a mandatory attendance policy in accordance with the Compulsory School Attendance Law, under which all students are required to regularly attend the school in which they are enrolled (DCMR2102.1). The District of Columbia Compulsory School Attendance Law requires that children from the age of five be enrolled in and attend school regularly. Student attendance is monitored daily. The Connect Ed system, an auto-dial system, is used to notify parents of unexcused absences. We also expect that every student should be on time daily. All enrolled students count toward our school's attendance goals.

## **Absences**

If your child will be absent or tardy, please contact the front office and your child's teacher by 8:30 a.m. DCPS specifies the following as valid reasons for absence from school:

- ï Illness of the student (a doctor's note is required for an absence of more than five days)
- ï Medical reasons such as a doctor's appointment (a doctor's note should be provided for medical appointments scheduled during the school day)
- ï Observance of a religious holiday
- ï Death in the student's immediate family
- ï Necessity for a student to attend a judicial proceeding

In the cases of frequent or prolonged absences, a written note from the parent must be given to the front office upon the student's return to school. The note must state the dates, the reason for the absence, and if necessary, include doctor's documentation.

When a school-aged student is absent from school without a valid reason, with or without parental approval, these absences are considered unexcused, and the student is considered truant. Some examples of unexcused absences include:

- ï overslept
- ï babysitting
- ï running errands
- ï vacations

## **Tardy Arrivals**

Please help your child(ren) arrive at school on time as tardiness compromises work time and affects the classroom climate. A child who arrives late will miss instruction and cause disruption to the class.

School starts at 8:45 a.m. Any students arriving to school after 8:45 a.m. must report to the office to obtain a "late slip" before going to the classroom. Tardy arrivals are reported on a child's school record. Excessive tardiness will require a parent conference, could have an adverse impact on achievement in the classroom, and possibly result in legal action under DCPS truancy laws.



## **Truancy**

Truancy is the unexcused absence from school by a minor (5 – 18 years of age) with or without approval, parental knowledge, or consent. Students who have unexcused absences will be asked to participate in: individual or group counseling to address attendance needs; the creation and monitoring of an Attendance Intervention Plan. Parents of students with five unexcused absences will be requested to participate in a conference regarding their child(ren)'s attendance. Elementary and middle school students with 10 or more unexcused absences will be referred to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) for suspected educational neglect. For more information on truancy, please visit the DCPS website or contact the school attendance counselor.

## **Dress Code**

CHML does not have a mandatory uniform policy. DCPS provides discretion to principals for establishing and implementing mandatory uniform policies. Where school uniforms are not mandated, children are still held to a high standard of neatness, cleanliness, and appropriateness as dictated by the school dress code. Parents will be notified in the event of inappropriate clothing being worn to school.

Students at CHML are expected to wear weather-appropriate clothing and footwear for recess and physical education. Clothing should be simple, washable, and sturdy. It should allow for freedom of movement and participation in occasional messy activities. Clothing for Primary children should be easily handled by children, so they can take care of restroom needs independently. On days when students participate in Physical Education, they should wear proper footwear and appropriate clothing that will allow for full participation in physical activities. Sneakers and rubber soled shoes are recommended.

Flip-flops and open toed sandals are not allowed because they are dangerous and a deterrent to active participation in all aspects of school activities. Crocs are discouraged. Light-up shoes are prohibited as they are very disruptive in the classroom. In addition, all character apparel (e.g., superheroes, Disney characters, etc.) is prohibited, including backpacks, lunch boxes, water bottles, and nap bedding.

## **Electronic Device Policy**

Students should not bring electronic devices to school. If a student needs a cellular phone to travel safely to and from school, he or she must check in the cellular phone with his or her teacher upon entering the school. Students will then be able to collect their cellular phones at the end of the school day. Students must check in all electronic devices upon entering school as well and can collect those at the end of the school day.

Any electronic device on campus not checked in upon entering the school will be confiscated and returned to a parent or guardian only. Students will be subject to disciplinary action. We do not advise bringing any electronic devices to school. If iPods or other portable music players, iPads, electronic gaming devices or laptops are with a student and in sight or

heard during school hours the devices will be confiscated and returned to a parent or guardian who must come to school to pick them up. In addition, electronic devices are not permitted to be used by students prior to the start of school when the student is at school, such as during drop-off. CHML cannot be responsible for or ensure the safety of any electronic devices on school grounds.

### **Computer Use Policy**

All students must adhere to the DCPS/CHML Student Technology User Agreement. Technology User Agreements are sent home and signed at the beginning of the school year. Students may use the CHML school computers only with the express permission of a faculty or staff member.

Computers are to be used for academics only. Students who abuse the computer use policy may lose the privilege to access school computers at CHML.

### **Emergency Situations**

DCPS has an emergency management plan that each school must follow. The designated safe place for CHML is Ludlow Taylor Elementary School at 7th and G St. NE. If CHML must evacuate to the designated safe place, parents will be notified via Blackboard voice and text notification.

Students participate in fire drills, earthquake drills, shelter in place drills, and learn and review appropriate evacuation procedures throughout the school year.

### **School Closings**

School might open late, close early, or close for the entire day due to bad weather or emergency situations. In such cases, families will be notified via robo-call as soon as possible. Information about school closings is also posted on the DCPS website ([www.dcps.dc.gov](http://www.dcps.dc.gov)). Parents can also register free of charge with DC Alerts at <http://hsema.dc.gov/page/alertdc> and receive school-specific emergency alerts via, email, text message or page. Parents can monitor local news sources for emergency information and updates such as WTOP 820 AM or 103.5 FM.

If school is dismissed early, all after-school activities will be cancelled. No child is dismissed unless a parent, guardian or emergency contact person has been contacted and arrangements have been made for pick-up.

### **Security**

DCPS provides security guards at schools to ensure safety of students during school hours. All visitors must sign in and show photo ID to the security guard when entering the building. All visitors must report to the main office to obtain a visitor pass and wait in the main office until the nature of your visit is determined. To ensure the safety of everyone in the building, you must enter and exit through the doors in the main lobby only.

### **Playground and Recess Rules**

The CHML playground is a space meant for safe, peaceful, and productive play. Please keep in mind that CHML does not provide staff supervision on the playground before or after school. After school, parents and caregivers must supervise their children while on the playground. Unsupervised children will be taken to the office to wait for parent/guardian pickup. Please do not eat food or drink; we need to keep our playground sanitary and in good condition for years

to come. Place any trash in the trash can on the playground.

Please remember the main office closes at 4:30 p.m., so people who are still on the playground after this time may not be allowed inside to access the restrooms or water fountains.

The following agreements are to be always applied on the playground:

Agreement 1: Students shall respect other students and teachers/staff members that are on recess duty. Each child shall listen to and follow rules given by those on duty. Failure to do this can result in disciplinary action (e.g., time-outs and/or being sent to an administrator).

Agreement 2: Students shall respect the personal space of others. No physical contact involving hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, or shoving.

Agreement 3: Each child must inform a teacher or an adult on recess duty if there is an emergency, an injury, find anything on the grounds that can pose harm, or a need to leave the playground for any reason.

Agreement 4: Students shall respect the playground equipment and school materials that they are using.

## **Discipline**

At CHML it is our goal to help your child interact with the learning environment and school community in a positive, responsible way. The goal of discipline in Montessori is to develop inner control of self-discipline. Montessori philosophy believes in natural and logical consequences as opposed to “punishment.” In primary classrooms, many behavior lessons are taught through grace and courtesy lessons, including respecting personal space, and not interrupting work. Since preschool-age children have problems understanding the ramifications of their behavior, diversion is the first tactic used if a child is misbehaving. A teacher or staff member will redirect the child’s attention from the thing that is causing the issue. If redirection does not work, the child will be removed from the problem (unless danger is present and then the child is removed immediately). On occasion, the child may have to be removed from the classroom for a break or to observe in another classroom.

Elementary aged children begin to understand the ramifications of their behavior. They are encouraged to think about how they are behaving and how that behavior will affect others and the things around them. The teacher will let the child know that a certain behavior is not appropriate. If the child continues the behavior, a teacher may take away privileges and/or remove the child from the situation. If problems continue, parent and teacher collaboration will be necessary to discuss the behavior and how to address it.

Mandatory physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or the withholding of physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) will not be used as punishment.

CHML also follows and enforces all DCPS disciplinary policies subject to the DC Municipal Regulations regarding Student Discipline and Student’s Rights and Responsibilities. To access these documents, please visit: <http://dcps.dc.gov>.

### **Resolving Problems**

If a parent or child encounters a specific problem or concern during the school year, the following steps should be taken: 1. Contact your child's teacher or other staff member with whom the problem was encountered. 2. If the problem was not resolved in step 1, call or make an appointment with the assistant principal. 3. If the problem was not resolved in step 2, call or make an appointment with the principal.

### **Notice of Non-discrimination**

The DC Public School district (DCPS) does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, physical handicap, matriculation, or political affiliation in its programs and activities. Discrimination will not be tolerated and persons engaging in such will be subject to disciplinary action. The following office has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies: Equal Employment Opportunity Office, DC Public Schools, 1200 First Street NE, 6th floor, Washington, DC 20002, (202) 442-5424. For general information about DC Public Schools, call (202) 442-5885 or visit [www.dcps.dc.gov](http://www.dcps.dc.gov)

### **Energy Conservation**

The CHML community is committed to energy conservation. Efforts to reduce energy use include, encouraging families to participate in fuel free Fridays, encouraging participation in Bike to School Day, and ensuring that our students have the credentials they need to take advantage of free public transportation for DC students commuting to school. Within our school walls, CHML also reduce energy use by working with DGS and DCPS to ensure the most efficient lighting, HVAC system, and other infrastructure are procured for our school.

## **CLASSROOM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Siblings**

The following are the guidelines for siblings being in the same classroom:

- ï Siblings are sometimes allowed in the same primary classroom, if the older sibling is in their final year of the three-year primary cycle.
- ï Twins and triplets are generally not allowed in the same primary classroom.
- ï Siblings are sometimes allowed in the same elementary classroom if their workethic is not negatively impacted by them being in the same classroom.
- ï In the case of siblings in the same classroom, the decision will be made in consultation with the parents and teacher, with the final decision coming from the principal.

### **Grace and Courtesy in the Classroom and Throughout the School**

Good manners and kind behavior are an intrinsic part of the Montessori education. Lessons in respect, self-control, and elegance in movement are interwoven through all areas of study and are practiced throughout the day. Some examples of the lessons in grace and courtesy are:

- ï Saying "please," "thank you" and "excuse me"
- ï Sneezing into one's elbows
- ï Genuine apologies offered

- ï Waiting one's turn with good grace
- ï Patience, when helping a peer or younger friend with work or with a piece of material
- ï Compassion and empathy for a classmate who is frustrated/tired/disappointed
- ï Good posture and attentive manner when sitting during circle time
- ï Respecting the need for quiet when a classmate is engrossed in work
- ï Using a quiet voice and walking while moving through the hallways

### **Home Activities**

Homework, in a Montessori sense, is work that the child does at home as an extension of his or her own interests. Traditional homework is generally not a major part of CHML, though older students may have academic work that goes home because it is unfinished, is a specific follow-up task, or part of an independent project. Teachers may suggest activities for parents and children to do outside of school hours, whether to support academic development or just for fun. Sharing an activity that has great meaning to you can expand your child's outlook and build a bond around that shared activity, enriching their life well beyond the specific experience. For more information, please contact your child's teacher directly.

### **Classroom Observations (When COVID-19 restrictions are lifted)**

Parents are encouraged to visit and observe your child(ren)'s classroom. Contact your child's teacher to set up a time. Regular classroom observations will begin in November and continue until the end of May; allowing teachers time at the beginning of the year to settle into their work routines before observations begin and for closing activities at the end of the year. On the day of the scheduled observation, report to the main office first to obtain the classroom observations policy sheet. When entering the classroom please do so quietly without causing disruption. While in the classroom, please do not initiate conversation with the children; if you are greeted, respond appropriately without prolonging the conversation. Sit quietly and observe all the children; do not follow a particular child around. If you wish to examine the materials more closely, please let your teacher know after your visit is over. Please do not remove materials from shelves and never interfere with the work of the children.

Here are some things to look for when observing: individual choice of work by the children; responsibility for the environment, orderly use of materials, a variety of work in progress from mathematics to geography, language to music, and freedom within limits—the children work on one thing at a time.

## **SCHOOL OPERATIONS**

### **Arrival**

School hours are from 8:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Monday through Friday. Children may arrive no earlier than 8:15 a.m. unless they are enrolled in AlphaBest before care. Please adhere to the following schedule:

- ï 6:30 a.m. – 8:40 a.m.: AlphaBest before care is available.
- ï 8:15 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.: Any student arriving prior to 8:45 primary students report to designated spaces outside of their classroom. Lower elementary students report to the library. Upper elementary students report to the cafeteria. Middle school students report to the Student Commons.
- ï 8:45 a.m.: Students are escorted to their classrooms to eat breakfast.
- ï 8:15 a.m. -8:45 a.m. Primary students enter through the Children’s House entrance on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, NE. Lower through Middle School students enter through the main entrance on 215 G Street, NE. Please be aware that this is a very busy time, and many others will be waiting to drop-off. Please make carpool departures as brief as possible.

*Classroom Environment (When COVID-19 restrictions are lifted)*

We ask that parents please wait outside of the classroom for either the teacher or an assistant to receive the students for the day. It is helpful if parents take their children to the restroom before coming to the classroom. Please say good-bye to your child(ren) outside of the classroom door as adults are not to enter the classroom or wait at the windows while the children are inside. Children begin their work as soon as they enter the class. Taking care of undressing, greeting friends, helping others, and getting ready to choose work are all part of class work. Adults in the class can distract the children and hinder their independence.

**Dismissal**

The school day ends at 3:15 p.m. Primary students are picked up outside of the Children’s House entrance and other designated classroom specific spaces.

Please avoid picking up your child before the scheduled dismissal time, as it disrupts the class. Parents are to pick up their children from the classroom after the dismissal bell. If the student needs to be dismissed early, parents must sign the early dismissal log in the main office. Elementary students are called to the office for early dismissal. The parents are sent to the classroom to pick up the primary students. If someone other than the child’s parent or guardian must pick up the child early, the parent must notify the school, in writing, of the change. Children who are late being picked up will be taken to the cafeteria and the parent will be contacted.

**Breakfast, Lunch, and Recess**

Sodexo Magic provides all school meals. Parents may choose to send children to school with lunch made at home. Please see the restrictions identified below on certain foods brought from home.

*Breakfast*

Breakfast takes place in designated spaces just outside the classroom from 8:15 a.m. until 8:35 a.m. for primary students and from 8:45am-9:00am for lower through middle school students. Breakfast is free to all students.

### *Lunch*

Primary students eat family style in their designated classrooms, while a few teachers create a hallway café for ease of clean-up. Lower elementary through middle school eat in designated spaces in classrooms, outdoor or in the cafeteria depending on the weather.

**For school year 21-22 lunch is provided free of charge for all students.** Typically, school lunch is provided at a cost determined by DCPS which is currently \$2.10 per meal for elementary (Preschool – 5th grade) and \$2.60 per meal for secondary (6 – 12 grade). Payment can be made to the Food Service Manager in the cafeteria or by using the online service [myschoolbucks.com](http://myschoolbucks.com). Applications for free or reduced-price meals can be downloaded from the DCPS website.

School breakfast and lunch menus are on display in the cafeteria, in the school front office, and are available online (<http://dcps.dc.gov/menus>).

For students who bring their lunch, please respect the following general rules: no sodas and no sweets/candy. We forbid and strictly monitor food sharing at lunch because of food allergies and difference in family food preferences; except for special class or school occasions, there is no need for your child to bring extra for their friends.

### *Recess*

Students have 30 minutes of outdoor active recess period every day (indoor recess on inclement weather days). During school recess time, children are supervised by teachers or assistants. Students may receive tutoring or choose to participate in voluntary club activities during their recess.

### **Nap**

Nap time is after lunch and recess from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Students are encouraged to bring a blanket or nap mat. Cots are provided. No stuffed animals or other lovelies are allowed. At the end of each week, students take home their blanket or nap mat to launder. Nap time is supervised by the classroom assistants



## **SCHOOL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Events and Activities Notice Policy**

CHML has a strict policy of requiring at least two weeks advance notice for all school-wide special events and activities. Proper advance notice requires that all the following (where relevant) be done at least two weeks before the event or activity:

1. Obtain principal's signature on any required permission slips.
2. Ensure that permission slips are sent home with students.
3. Post a notice of the activity on the Friends of Montessori listserv and/or relevant class listservs.
4. Put the activity on the school calendar.
5. Notify Cafeteria Management if the event will impact lunch.

Please note that this rule and these requirements apply to all school-wide events regardless of who is doing the planning (teachers, parents, staff, or students). After the initial two-week advance notice is provided, event planners will also ensure that reminders are regularly communicated to families and staff via our regular communication channels.

At the classroom, club, or small group level there will be exceptions to this rule. Sometimes two-week advance notice is not possible because opportunities arise within that window through outside channels that the school and teachers/staff do not control. This is especially true of Montessori where "going-outs" are an integral part of education particularly in upper elementary and middle grades.

At the beginning of each school year, CHML faculty and PTSO work together to map out a school calendar, including both school-wide events and any known classroom events with their approximate dates/weeks. The resulting calendar will give families a way to plan, with the understanding that as the dates for the events approach there may be some scheduling changes. Changes for major school-wide events will not occur within the two-week window. The only person who can make exceptions to this rule is the principal and such exceptions will be made rarely and only in special circumstances.

Any item intended for all students—or related to a school-wide event—must be approved by the Principal or Assistant Principal prior to distribution or posting.

### **Grace and Courtesy During Group Events and Assemblies**

In the classroom, Montessori students approach work in a quiet and focused manner and exhibit kindness and compassion toward each other, teachers, and staff. It is important that students take care to exhibit this behavior outside the classroom, at group events both in and out of school. Teachers, staff, and parents, when they are present, must work together to ensure that students speak and behave in ways that are respectful of each other, teachers, staff, and people from outside the school community. This includes sitting quietly and listening attentively when that is appropriate. Teachers will impart this message and their expectations to their students as part of their lessons and preparation for special events. Parents should regularly impart the same

message, especially in advance of special events, to ensure that students, even very young students, understand what is expected of them.

## **CHML Events**

Below is a list of events that CHML has held in the past. Please be sure to check the school calendar for an updated list of events and details.

*Back to School Night.* In September Back to School Night is an annual event hosted by the principal, teachers, and staff to introduce the parent community to the school and specific classrooms.

*Bike to School/Walk to School Days.* CHML participates in International Walk to School Day in October and International Bike to School Day in May events on Capitol Hill. Meet up at Lincoln Park to hear speakers, grab some snacks and be counted; then participate in the biking/walking train to CHML.

*Easy Giving.* The following partners will give CHML money back when you spend there—at no additional cost to you: Café Fili, Harris Teeter, Giant, Safeway, Amazon and Target. The CHML website has all the information you need to sign up. In addition, check out whether your employer has any giving programs that can benefit CHML, such as matching programs. For example, one parent's employer provides a donation based on volunteer hours of the parent. If you have any ideas or questions, you can email [president@capitolhillmontessorischool.org](mailto:president@capitolhillmontessorischool.org).

*Fuel Free Fridays.* CHML believes in encouraging exercise while helping the environment. We join others across the nation in encouraging Fuel Free Fridays by inviting families to bike and walk to school with their children.

*Garden Workdays.* Gardens are a priority to support health and wellness as well as being a core part of the Montessori philosophy. Periodically weekend workdays are held to keep our gardens kept up and aligned to seasonal needs.

*Haunted Harvest Festival.* This unique event is a CHML signature event. It is part fundraising, part fun. In October the Haunted Harvest Festival Committee transforms the school into part Haunted House, part Harvest Celebration with a little bit of mad science thrown in. We also add a low-cost chili and dog dinner that is a hit. The broader community is invited.

*International Day.* International Day is a CHML tradition that celebrates the importance of cultural diversity and strength in our own community and world-wide. This celebration kicks off with an opening event in the morning for students. The in-school celebrations and educational activities culminate in a community celebration of food and culture. In the evening classes organize tables celebrating a specific culture with food and information, and students perform.

*Open Houses.* The school hosts two open houses for prospective families. The principal organizes the events. The PTSO finds family volunteers to provide refreshments, serve refreshments, and be available to answer questions of prospective parents. Open houses are held December – January.

*PTSO Board Meetings.* The PTSO Board meets monthly to move forward and coordinate the work of the school and parent communities. Board representatives are expected to attend. Committee chairs may attend.

*PTSO Community Meetings.* Over the course of the year, the PTSO hosts community meetings. These are important meetings to develop community agreement on the PTSO direction, engage volunteers, and collaborate with the principal on the school strategy. Every family member of students and every staff person and teacher is invited and encouraged to attend. The meetings typically take place from 6:30 – 7:30 pm on the first Thursday of the month on ZOOM.

*Teacher Appreciation Week.* The National Teacher Appreciation Week is in May. During this week there are special events to recognize the teachers and staff.

*Family Education Nights:* Several nights per school year the CHML staff hosts parent education night on a variety of topics including supporting Montessori education in the home, literacy, and mathematics.

### **Student Activity Fund**

DCPS has an online payment service for parents and guardians. Payments for student activities such as class dues, field trips, athletic fees, fundraisers, uniform purchases, laboratory fees, etc., \* can now be made using a debit card (with the Visa or MasterCard Logo) or major credit card (Visa, MasterCard, and Discover). Please note there is no fee to use this service!

Here are a few reasons to begin making online payments:

- ï Safety: You no longer must worry about your child carrying money to school.
- ï Convenience: Payments can be made from the comfort of your own home, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Payment confirmations will be sent electronically.
- ï Efficiency: Make payments for all your children in one step, even though they may attend different schools within our district.

\*Payments for school lunch and after school programs are not accepted through this program.

\*Student ID and zip code will be required to make payment.

## GETTING TO SCHOOL

### **Bicycles and Scooters**

Students are encouraged to ride bikes and/or scooters to school. According to DC law, properly fitting helmets must be worn by all riders under the age of 16, including riders on bike seats or bike trailers. CHML requires that bikes and/or scooters be firmly locked to the bike racks in front of the school building during the day to prevent thefts. Parents are invited to register their child's bike with the National Bike Registry, with which the DC Metropolitan Police collaborates. The school is not responsible for damage or theft.

### **Students Using Public Transportation**

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) offers fare assistance through the School Transit Subsidy Program. This program provides free travel for DCPS students who use Metrobus, Metrorail, or the DC Circulator to commute to and from school.

### **Drop-off and Parking**

Please consider walking or biking to school to alleviate traffic congestion, burn calories, and reduce emissions. Also consider parking several blocks away and walking to avoid congestion. All pedestrians/bike riders should use the crosswalks or cross at intersections only.

Parking is available on the streets surrounding the school. Please adhere to following rules when parking and driving near the school to ensure the safety of students and others:

#### *Vehicular Idling*

Parents should limit idling of vehicles on and around school grounds. Idling vehicles produce numerous harmful gasses and particulate matter that cause or exacerbates asthma and allergic reactions and contribute to other diseases later in life. Because of the proximity of the cars to the school, our students are particularly vulnerable. Commercial vehicles used for pickup and drop off must follow DC Anti-idling law.

*Parking Lot*

The parking lot is available for staff parking only.



## **HEALTH AND NUTRITION**

### **Food allergies**

If your child has a food allergy, you must report it to the school nurse with doctor's instructions. In addition, please report the condition to your child's teacher. Parents must fill out and turn in appropriate DCPS forms to the school.

### **Health Services**

A registered nurse is on duty from 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The nurse is available for first aid, health screening, and to promote the health and safety of the entire CHML school community. Confidentiality on all health matters is respected. The nurse's office is located on the first floor, room 110 and the number is (202) 698-3797.

### **Administration of Medication**

DC policy requires that appropriate forms be completed by both parent and physician before any prescription or over-the-counter medication can be administered to a child. These forms are available from the school nurse. No child is permitted to carry medications except for an asthma inhaler.

### **Chronic Illness**

Parents of children with a history of any chronic illness (food allergy, asthma, etc.) that may affect school performance should contact the school nurse to develop an individual health plan.

### **Infectious Disease**

Parents are required to report immediately any child's infectious illness (e.g., strep throat, chicken pox, lice, flu, etc.) to the school nurse. Students with possible contagious eye infections, undiagnosed skin eruptions, head lice, or illness will be excluded from class. Parents will be notified to pick up the child. Children should be fever, vomit, and diarrhea free for 24 hours before returning to school. Children being treated for communicable illness should not return until they have been treated with antibiotics for at least 24 hours.

### **Accident or Sudden Illness at School**

The school nurse will contact parents to advise them in case of illness or accident. Please be sure to provide the school with the best number to reach you. The school must have the number of a relative, friend, or neighbor in case parents cannot be reached. If emergency transportation is required, the student will be accompanied by a staff member if the parent is not present.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Between Home and School**

Communication between school and home is critical to a positive educational experience. There are many ways information is shared at CHML, including: The Principal Snapshot, school website, social media, the school-wide "Friends of Montessori" listserv, classroom listservs/emails, parent-teacher conferences, PTSO meetings, and e-mails from teachers.



### *Principal Snapshot*

The Principal Snapshot is emailed using a list of email addresses compiled upon registration. If you do not receive the Principal Snapshot directly, please contact the main office. The Principal Snapshot is also shared to the Friends of Montessori listserv. The Principal Snapshot contains CHML news and updates and is emailed approximately every two weeks.

### *School Website*

The PTSO, in collaboration with the school, maintains the school website [www.capitolhillmontessorischool.org](http://www.capitolhillmontessorischool.org). The website includes information for parents and the community on school policies, programs, and events. In addition, the PTSO maintains the school Facebook and Twitter accounts. News and updates are shared through these outlets.

### *Friends of Montessori Listserv*

Parents are highly encouraged to join the school “Friends of Montessori” listserv which provides a forum to share information and updates on school news and activities via emails. Please note the participation is limited to parents, guardians, and staff to provide a direct link to the school. To subscribe to the Friends of Montessori listserv, please visit [https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/friends\\_of\\_montessori](https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/friends_of_montessori) to request an invitation.

### *Classroom Email Lists*

In addition to the school wide listserv, individual classrooms maintain email lists. This provides a forum for the teacher and/or classroom parent to communicate specific classroom news and information. It also allows parents to communicate and coordinate for school events. Please make sure you join your class email list as well. This can be done through your teacher and/or classroom parent.

PTSO meetings are held approximately every month (excluding January and December). During these meetings, the principal and PTSO give updates on school events, programs, and fundraising efforts and present information on selected topics including the school budget, testing, student retention, advocacy, and the middle grades program, there is also an open Question and Answer period at the end of each PTSO meeting for parents to engage on any issue or topic.

### **Teacher Communication**

Parents will receive reports of the educational progress of their child(ren) through parent-teacher conferences and report cards/progress reports. Most teachers will communicate more often through informal means: a quick conference, phone call, text, or email. Teachers may also use announcements/flyers and class meetings.

### **Parent Communication**

Parents are asked to inform the classroom teacher of any family changes, household crises, or medication that may affect your child's learning readiness and behavior. In addition, inform the teacher and attendance counselor if your child will be late and/or out of school.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

There are three conferences scheduled each school year. All teachers will use an electronic sign-up platform to schedule conferences about a week beforehand. Parents sign-up for a 15 – 20-minute time slot that is convenient for them. All parents are strongly encouraged to attend these conferences; they are an opportune time to discuss the progress of your child(ren). Of course, if at any time you have concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your teacher to schedule a time to talk.

### **Room Parents**

Room parents are an important liaison between teachers, parents, and the PTSO. Each classroom has at least one room parent who supports the teacher and PTSO in many ways. These include but are not limited to sharing information to the class email list, assisting with raising funds for the classroom, assisting with school wide special events such as Teacher Appreciation Week and International Days. Parents may volunteer by indicating their interest to their teacher, who will provide direction; the PTSO will also provide information to be shared.

### **Report cards**

Parents will receive quarterly progress reports (pre-school and pre-kindergarten) and report cards (kindergarten – 8th grades). Issue dates are on the school calendar.

## **OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

### **Before and After Care**

AlphaBest provides both before and after care services for CHML students. Drop off and pick up are in the main building. In addition to general aftercare, AlphaBest offers fee-based electives. For more information on AlphaBest at CHML, please visit [www.alphabest.com](http://www.alphabest.com). AlphaBest before care drop off is available from 6:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. After care starts at 3:15 p.m. for registered families in PK-8<sup>th</sup> grade. After care ends promptly at 6:30 p.m. The PTSO offers scholarships for families that qualify. Please contact an AlphaBest representative to apply.

### **Sports**

Athletics are an important part of the school experience. Beginning in upper elementary (4<sup>th</sup> grade) students are eligible to represent CHML on sports teams that compete in the DC

Interscholastic Athletics Association (DCIAA). Currently, CHML has a track-and-field and a cross-country team.

### Clubs

There are a variety of clubs available for elementary and middle grades students. Some of the clubs include Logan Club, K Kids, Builder’s Club and Student Council, as well as a host of after school programs. Information on specific club opportunities will be provided through classroom teachers or via school communications (see Communication section of the handbook).

## ACADEMIC SERVICES

### Student Support Services

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) formerly known as SST/RTi are school-based committees charged with helping schools provide all students with opportunities to learn and progress in the general curriculum. Many factors can affect the learning process and sometimes teachers need assistance in identifying those factors. The MTSS consists of you the parent, your child’s teacher, the school administrator, and other school support staff. The other support staff can be the school social worker, school psychologist, school counselor, reading and math specialist. Teachers and parents can initiate the MTSS process. MTSS can address issues such as learning difficulties (e.g., retention/recall abilities, concerns about socio-emotional growth, etc.), poor attendance, discipline and/or behavior concerns, and health related issues. Please contact your child’s teacher for more information.

Each student who qualifies for special education services will have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), developed by a team of professionals, which states educational goals and objectives; describes learning needs and abilities; and lists the needed related services. In accordance with the IEP, a student is included in the regular education program to the maximum extent possible, participating in “pull-out” services and/or inclusion as appropriate.

### Assessments

The table below includes information on all the Assessments given at CHML.

i-Ready	Grades K-8	Computer-based assessment that measures baseline math skills and progress to guide instruction.	Administered three times per school year	~45 mins	DCPS
TRC	Grades K-2	Students read 1-on-1 with teacher to measure baseline reading comprehension and progress to guide instruction.	Administered three times per school year + Progress monitoring, as needed	7-15 mins per child per test	DCPS
DIBELS	Grades K-2	Measures baseline phonics skills and progress to guide instruction.	Administered three times per	~45 min per child	DCPS
Reading Inventory	Grades 2-8	Measures reading comprehension according to Lexile levels	Administered three times per	~ 8.5 hrs	OSSE
PARCC	Grades 3-8	Computer-based assessment that measures students' progress toward meeting the ELA & Math	Administered in spring		

		Common Core State Standards (CCSS).			
DC Next Gen Science	Grade 5 (Alternative form available)	Computer-based assessment that measures students' progress toward the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).	TBD by OSSE	TBD	
DC Health Test	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	
ACCESS for ELLS	Grades K-5 *ELL students (Alternative form available)	Measures English language learners progress toward meeting the academic English language proficiency (ELP) standards.	Administered in spring	2 hrs	OSSE
STAMP	Grade 5	Web-based and computer adaptive assessment that assesses student proficiency in world languages. Used for student placement and to inform curriculum and instruction.	Administered in spring	90 mins	DCPS
SAGE	Grades 6-8	Computer-based assessment that measures student growth toward Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies.	Pre-test: First four weeks of course Post-test: Last four weeks of course	Pre-test: 45 mins Post-test: 90 mins	DCPS

### **Common Core State Standards**

DCPS utilizes curriculum standards that lay out what students should be able to know and do from kindergarten through 12th grade. From English/Language Arts to Mathematics, the Common Core Standards help you understand what your child should learn each year to be successful. The Common Core Standards will use assessments designed to measure student learning and progress toward mastery of the standards.

## **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND GIVING**

### **CHML Staff/Parent Organizations**

#### *Local School Advisory Team*

CHML Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) is an advisory group to the principal and is responsible for signing off on the annual school budget and works in tandem with school administrators on internal policies affecting school operations and on long-range strategies. Members are elected annually at the end of each school year.

## *PTSO*

Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) consists of parents, teachers, and students that partner together to support CHML. A board is elected annually at the end of each school year. The PTSO focuses on supporting the faculty, staff, and students through fundraising, hosting community building events, engaging with the broader community, and working closely with school administration to align activities and spending towards common goals. All parents/guardians are automatically members of the PTSO. We ask for 100% family participation in volunteering and giving in a way and amount that fits each family. PTSO community meetings are held monthly in the evenings, except for December and January.

### **Ways to Give**

- ï Give to the General PTSO Fund
- ï Give to your classroom teacher through the PTSO
- ï Annual Online Auction
- ï Link your current spending to receive no-cost money back to the school (Amazon, Safeway, Giant, etc.).
- ï Clip Box Tops from store-bought products.
- ï Please see school website for Easy Giving options.

### **Gifts**

CHML aims to always maintain the strongest ethical standards possible. This applies to giving, too. To stay within the spirit of the ethics guidelines for all DCPS employees, any gifts to individual teachers should not exceed \$10. Any giving for classroom and school support should be given through the PTSO which is a 501(c)(3). Parents can designate any PTSO donation for a specific classroom or the general PTSO fund.

## **FACILITIES**

### **Facilities Use Agreement Process (Once COVID-19 Restrictions are lifted)**

When a community partner or another entity requests to hold an event or program in a DCPS school building, on DCPS school grounds, or at another DCPS facility outside of regularly scheduled hours, they are required to complete a usage agreement with the Department of General Services Realty Office. The usage agreement and procedures below are the only ways that an outside entity can hold an event in a DCPS building or on DCPS school grounds and therefore must be followed. Usage agreements must be sent to the Department of General Services at least 20 business days prior to the event.

The steps to the usage agreement are outlined below. Detailed Policies and Procedures for Use of School Facilities and Grounds are also on the DCPS website.

- ï Step 1: Event host completes a building use agreement at least 20 business days prior to the event.
- ï Step 2: Event host submits the form to the DCPS Principal for review
- ï Step 3: DCPS Principal provides signature of approval on page 2
- ï Step 4: Event host submits the form to the DGS Realty Office

- ï Step 5: DGS Department of Realty processes the request by working with the DCPS Office of School Security and the Metropolitan Police Department to determine security cost and availability for the event
- ï Step 6: Confirmation is sent to the requestor within 7 to 10 business days prior to the event. If your event is cancelled or postponed, please notify the following offices immediately:
  - DGS – Department of Realty – 202-442-5199
  - DCPS – Office of School Security – 202-576-5033 or 5040

### **Policies and Procedures for Use of School Grounds**

Department of General Services (DGS) Realty Office 2000 14th Street, NW, 5th Floor  
Washington, DC 20009

### **School Related Organizations**

The following groups may use buildings and grounds, except leased facilities, at a reduced rate during normal hours for purposes not conflicting with the school's operations and not generating any additional costs to DCPS:

- ï PTA's and HSA's
- ï Local School Community Boards
- ï Parental and School Advisory Committees established pursuant to federal and local laws
- ï City-wide education organizations or local affiliates of national educational associations
- ï Organizations providing volunteer support services to the school.

HSA/PTA are entitled to four free meetings per year outside of the normal operating hours of their schools.

### **Prohibited Uses of School Buildings and Grounds**

The following will NOT be permitted in any school facility at any time:

- ï smoking
- ï alcoholic beverages
- ï gambling
- ï discrimination against any person on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, citizenship status, political affiliation, handicapped condition, or any other basis of unlawful discrimination under the laws of the District of Columbia
- ï any purpose that violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution
- ï no user or lessee shall be permitted to erect a sign on the exterior of the premises without prior written approval of the Chancellor

### **User Fee Schedule**

Current user fees will be charged for anyone not listed above.

- ï Each classroom
  - \$ 35.00/day
  - \$ 360.00/month
- ï Gymnasium or Auditorium

- children's event: \$ 70.00/day
- adult's event: \$137.00/day
- \$480.00/month
- ï Kitchen: \$ 70.00/day \*
- ï Cafeteria: \$100.00/day
- ï Field/Stadium for soccer or other vigorous sport: \$95.00/hour

\*A DCPS Food Service worker must be on duty when food is prepared in kitchens or if kitchen equipment is used. There is an additional charge for these services. Please contact the DCPS Food Services Office for current costs at (202) 576-7400.

Payments are by money orders or certified checks ONLY made payable to the D.C. Treasurer.

Additional Fees:

- ï Custodial overtime fee varies (actual costs will be calculated on a per hour basis by the DGS Realty Office)
- ï Security Services fee: varies according to the contracted service