

2023 - 2024 Family Handbook



**5246 East Rotamer Road
Janesville, Wisconsin 53546
608-868-4844**

*"Let us give the child a vision of the whole universe...for all things are part of the universe,
and are connected with each other to form one whole unity" -Maria Montessori*

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Contents

Mission and Vision of RPMS	3
Code of Ethics of the International Montessori Council	3
Code of Conduct for Students and Parents	4
School Management Structure	5
School History	6
Programs	7
Admissions and Enrollment Process	9
Waiting List	12
Returning Family Enrollment	12
Withdrawal Policy	13
Tuition and Invoicing	13
<i>Financial Aid, Invoicing & Discounts, Delinquent Accounts, Transportation Reimbursement</i>	
Communication	14
<i>Email, Text Alerts, Website, Conferences, Chain of Command</i>	
Student Records	16
Child Custody Concerns	17
School Calendar	17
Holidays	17
Office Hours/Phone Calls	17
Attendance	17
<i>Policy, Tardy, Arrival and Dismissal, Late pickup, Pickup authorization</i>	
Smart Watch / Cell Phone Policy	19
Health Policy	20
<i>Illness, Communicable Disease, Accident/Injury, Allergies, Medications, Physical Examinations, Immunizations, Abuse and Neglect, Nutrition (snacks / lunch), Sunscreen/Insect Repellent</i>	
Safety and Security	25
<i>Locked Doors, Outdoor Policy, Severe Weather Closings/Delays/Early Release, Safety Drills, Possession of Firearms, Smoking and Alcohol Use</i>	
Parent Involvement	26
<i>Classroom Observations, Family Service Hours, RaiseRight</i>	
Fundraising	28
Donations	28
Referral Bonus	28

Mission Statement

We create a peaceful, nurturing Montessori environment in partnership with families and our larger community, where children grow in lifelong purpose through curiosity and meaningful exploration.

Vision Statement

Our Rock Prairie community offers an authentic Montessori education, supporting children in reaching their full potential by fostering independence, responsibility, and confidence. Students develop a lifelong love of learning, rooted in respect for one's self, their school community, and the environment. Through caring relationships, peaceful leadership is instilled within our children as they become engaged global citizens.

We Strive to Educate by:

- Providing educational excellence, guided by Montessori principles and authentic Montessori practice.
- Offering an impeccable curriculum including outstanding mathematics and geometry, global social studies, language, the sciences, geography, the arts, physical education, and practical life skills.
- Maintaining carefully prepared learning environments and indoor and outdoor state-of-the-art facilities.
- Attracting and retaining exceptional and caring teachers, passionate about child-centered education.
- Promoting virtues and qualities, such as respect, charity, order, independence, morality, honesty, self-discipline, freedom, the intrinsic motivation to learn, and diversity spanning cultures, languages, and economics.

Code of Ethics of the International Montessori Council

As a member of the International Montessori Council, we pledge to represent our school truthfully and accurately to the general public and internally to our parent community.

We further pledge ourselves to respect the diversity of the community of Montessori schools. We will not engage in negative public relations nor make any negative statements about another Montessori school. Our school honors its financial commitments to parents, staff, vendors, and others.

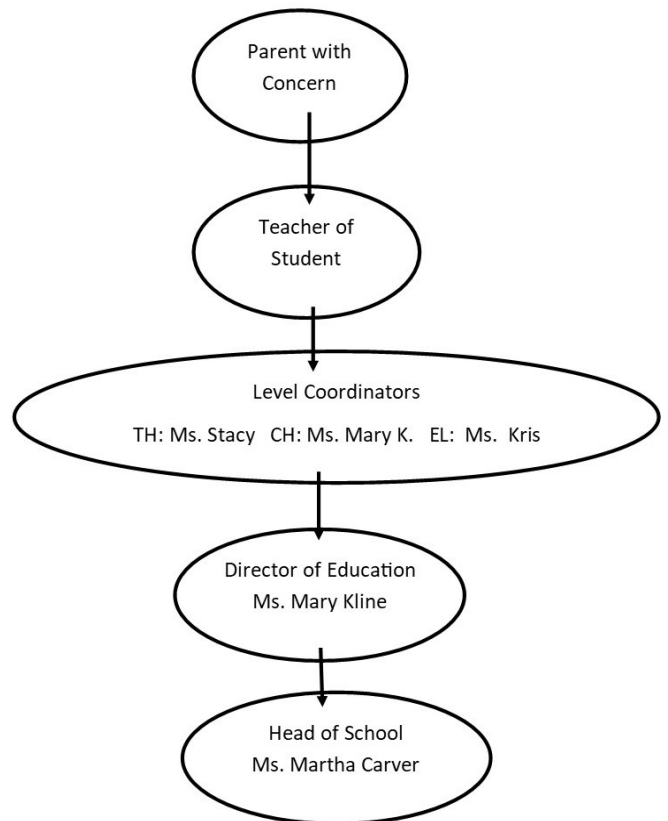
A Family Commitment

Families of eligible children must be willing to make an extraordinary commitment to their child's education. Our Montessori program is based on a cooperative type of learning that involves family and community spirit. Therefore, commitment to the School's mission and educational philosophy will manifest itself in the signing of the Handbook Acknowledgement form which will include a requirement of at least 10 hours of family service per year from each family in our school and an agreement to follow our school policies.

Code of Conduct for Parents and Students

RPMS is founded on the Montessori ideals on the expectation that every person deserves respect. We expect parents/guardians, students, visitors and staff to demonstrate kindness, courtesy, and respect toward each other. A Code of Conduct gives clarity to behaviors that are expected of adults and children within our community. Adherence to a Code of conduct ensures that everyone will be respected.

- Parents/guardians, students, visitors and staff must work together in a cooperative and friendly manner for the benefit of our children.
- All school/classroom rules will be followed to ensure consistency and help the children understand them.
- You will convey to the children a supportive attitude toward education and the school.
- All parents/guardians, students, visitors and staff in our school community should be treated with respect. This includes that no abusive behaviors either via written communication, language or attitudes shall occur towards anyone who is a parent/guardian, student, visitor or staff member and none will be considered acceptable by Rock Prairie Montessori School. Parents/guardians will be asked to leave the school if necessary.
- You will set a good example in your own speech and behavior to demonstrate respect towards all parents, students, visitors and staff.
- If you have a concern you must respectfully first approach your child's Teacher, then if needed the Curriculum Coordinator for that level. If needed after the Curriculum Coordinator then the Director of Education (Ms. Mary Kline), And lastly the Head of School (Ms. Martha Carver). Following these steps are necessary to communicate in good faith to help resolve any issue.



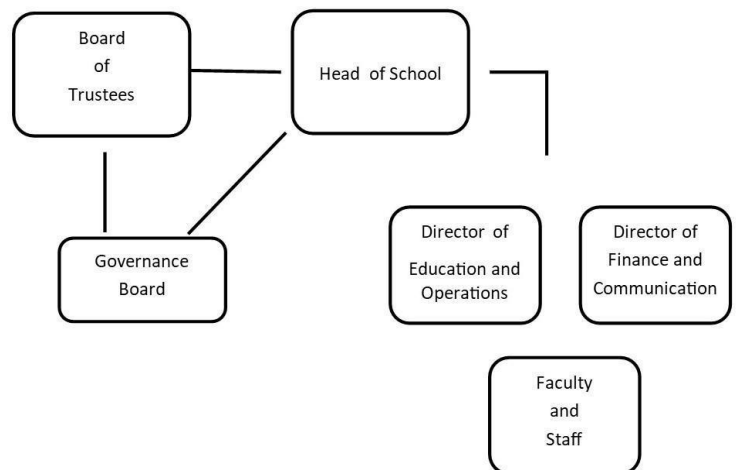
In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment the school cannot tolerate parents/guardians, students, visitors or staff exhibiting the following:

- Disruptive behavior and or harassment of any kind which damages or interferes with the operations of any area of the school or damages school property.
- Using loud, threatening or offensive language, cursing or displaying temper.
- Any abusive, harassing or threatening email or text/ voicemail/ phone message or other written communication. Mailboxes in the foyer are used for official RPMS communication only; requests for exceptions must be approved by the Head of School (ie, birthday invitations, thank you cards, etc.).
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the students, visitors, parents or staff at the school. This includes, but is not limited to: in person or via any digital forum such as Facebook, or other social media sites and business directory listings. Do not use a picture of another child, parent or staff without their permission in social media or any other kind of media.
- Any emotional abuse, physical aggression, intimidation or threatening behaviors of any type towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment or emotional abuse against your own child on school premises.
- Approaching someone else’s child or another parent in order to discuss with them or chastise them because of the actions of one child towards another child.

School Management Structure

Head of School—Organizes and evaluates operations of school and makes all educational decisions Together with the Director of Education and Operations and the Director of Finance and Communication oversees all daily aspects of school management.

Board of Trustees—Board of Trustees consists of parents/guardians and community members elected by the membership. The Trustees work with the Head of School on large scale financial decisions, policy review and strategic planning. Detailed responsibilities and composition of the board can be found in the RPMS By-Laws on the Board web page at <https://www.rockprairiemontessori.com/board>. Trustees meet once per month (unless otherwise posted). If you are interested in becoming a Trustee, applications are available at our website or from the office.



Governance Committee—The Head of School, President of the Board of Trustees, and up to 3 community members work as an advisory entity for the HOS and the Trustees. Within this scope, the Governance Committee strives to maintain a diverse Board, support plans for leadership succession, and offers suggestions for professional development of Trustees.

Director of Education and Operations—The Education and Operations Director fulfills the mission of the school by working with the Head of School in the management of the school, faculty, students and families with major emphasis on curriculum and instruction. Duties also include marketing, fundraising, and communications on behalf of Rock Prairie Montessori School.

Director of Finance and communication —The Director of Finance will oversee all financial matters related to school business. Duties include, management of family accounts, accounts payable and receivable, and budgeting. Duties also include marketing, fundraising, and communications on behalf of Rock Prairie Montessori School.

Coordinators -- Each educational level has a coordinator that offers guidance and helps maintain educational continuity and direction for their level.

Faculty and Staff—RPMS employs highly trained teachers and support staff to oversee the care and education of children daily.

School History

Rock Prairie Montessori School (RPMS), a non-profit corporation, began in September 1994, in the former Harmony School, 4243 East Rotamer Road, Janesville, WI.

The Hedberg Foundation pledged \$650,000 toward the purchase and building of a permanent site. Peggy and Mark Stich donated start-up funds for the purchase of Montessori materials, furniture and equipment. The Hedberg Foundation contributed additional funds for scholarships to assure diversity and equal economic opportunity.

Our school, built in 1997, is located on a ten-acre wooded site. Our building has seven classrooms for children ages 18 months through 8th Grade with an expanded outdoor environment for play and nature study/care.

Programs

Curriculum—A philosophy developed by Maria Montessori, Montessori education is based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning within an autonomous caring environment. Children make creative choices in their learning, while guided by a highly trained Montessori teacher. Classrooms are beautifully crafted environments designed to meet the needs of children in a specific developmental range. Every material in a Montessori classroom supports an aspect of child development, creating a match between the child's natural interests and purposeful activity. Children learn through their own experiences, at their own pace to gain knowledge to reach their fullest potential. After Toddler House, all programs are based on a 3-year cycle.

Toddler House—The Toddler House program is for children 18 months through 3 years old. The program is 5 mornings, 8:30 – 11:30 am. Children do not need to be toileting independently to enter this program. A child's readiness for transitioning to Children's House is determined by the teacher. A child demonstrates readiness for Children's House by having an interest in learning with increasing focused attention, independence in dressing and toileting, and has an ability to manage emotions as developmentally appropriate.

Children's House— This Montessori preschool program is for ages 3 through 6 years old. This mixed age program is 5 mornings, 8:30- 11:30 am. The environment is beautifully prepared where younger children learn by observing the older students, who in turn benefit from their responsibilities as role models. The classroom is divided into distinct curricular areas which encourages a child's exploration for an independent learning experience guided by their teacher.

Kindergarten—Children 5 years old by September 1 may be eligible for admission into the all-day Kindergarten program. This program is 5 days per week 8:30 – 3:30 pm. As the final year of the Children's House 3-year cycle, kindergarten students remain in their familiar mixed age classroom during the morning, then transition to an afternoon environment with continued Montessori work with same age peers. Readiness for kindergarten is determined by the teacher, Head of School, and Director of Education.

Lower Elementary—Lower Elementary is composed of 1st through 3rd grade students. The school day begins at 8:20 am and ends at 3:30 pm. Throughout the day, guided by the teacher, each student works on an individualized curriculum using concrete materials with hand-written extensions. This structure provides the cornerstone of the learning environment while developing critical thinking, collaboration, and innovative skills as well as self-confidence.

Upper Elementary—Upper Elementary is composed of 4th through 6th grade students. The school day begins at 8:20 am and ends at 3:30 pm. As in Lower Elementary, students work on an individualized curriculum as well as have leadership opportunities to take responsibility for organizing the classroom community. Upper Elementary is an extension of the Lower Elementary curriculum, further developing critical thinking, collaborative and innovative skills.

Increased emphasis on in-depth study skills, written work and abstraction prepares the student for middle school.

Middle School—Middle school is composed of 7th and 8th grade students. Students attend 8:20 – 3:30pm. **Middle School begins one week prior to the start of the regular school year with a community building Leadership trip.** The Montessori middle school program offers core curriculum studies as well project-based learning opportunities, open-ended research, seminars; a discussion-based approach of learning about different topics, field studies, and entrepreneurial experiences. Applications may be accepted with or without previous Montessori experience.

Montessori Enrichment—11:30 – 3:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Montessori Enrichment is an optional program for children needing care in addition to our core program options. It is a continuation of the Montessori morning model. Children must be enrolled in a Toddler House or Children’s House program to participate. There is no requirement on how many days a child needs to be enrolled. To receive a guaranteed child care rate; a set schedule must be maintained. Changes can only be made on a monthly basis to maintain the guaranteed care rate. A processing fee of \$10.00 is applied if more than one change a month is requested.

Drop-in care service—For non-scheduled care needs, a drop-in request may be submitted through the school website or in the office. A 48-hour notice is requested to process your request. Space is limited for drop-in service and may not be available.

Before School and After School Care ages 18 months-6th Grade —These add-on hours provide care outside of our regular school day. Guaranteed or drop in rates apply – See tuition schedule on our website.

- Before Care; Monday through Friday, 7:20 – 8:10 am. Children will be escorted to their morning classroom at 8:15. Before care is based on a flat rate not time.
- After Care; Monday through Friday. Care requested in half hour increments. 3:30 p.m. to either 4:00, 4:30, 5:00, 5:30.

Summer School—Summer school begins the second week after the school year ends through the middle of August (there is a three-week break before the school year begins). Summer camps run Monday through Friday with care available 7:20-4:00 pm under the same procedures as our school year programs.

Summer program offerings include;

- Toddler House and Children’s House, 5 two-week camps.
- Elementary (includes rising Kindergarteners) 10 one-week camps.

Enrollment must be for a full camp session.

Summer school applications become available in the spring. Summer school is a separate enrollment than the school year enrollment.

Space is limited in our summer programming; therefore, placement is not guaranteed. Summer school applications are available under the Admissions > Enrollment: Summer School tab of our website.

Admissions and Enrollment

Admissions

Acceptance into Rock Prairie Montessori School is given with much thought and care. Our responsibility is to ensure that each child accepted and enrolled at RPMS has an opportunity to reach their fullest potential so they can flourish in the environment socially, emotionally and intellectually.

Non-Discrimination Policy—RPMS is dedicated to providing equal opportunities to all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any factor that is a prohibited consideration under applicable law.

RPMS does not discriminate in admissions, educational programs, or employment on the basis of any factor outlined above or prohibited under applicable law. Students, faculty, and staff are assured of participation in all programming and in the use of facilities without such discrimination.

Special Needs and Student Exceptionalities—Children with special needs will be addressed on an individual basis as they apply. Due to the small size of our school, we do not have any separate classrooms or extra assistants dedicated to special needs students. Therefore, they must be able to be serviced in the same classroom as regular students and be able to fit within the Montessori model of teaching. RPMS does not have a special education staff. We work with Milton School District for services under a private school service plan for speech and language generally. The administrative educational team will meet to determine if a student's special needs can be met at our school or if they can be better served at another school.

Toddler House and Children's House Admission (New Families)

Application Process for New Families to Toddler and Children's House—Applications are accepted beginning in February for the following school year. Applications for a mid-year start are continually accepted throughout the year, however, applicants may be placed on a waiting list if the program is at capacity. To apply it is requested you follow the process below:

1. **Request a Tour.** Please request a tour online <https://www.rockprairiemontessori.com/request-information> or call the school at 608-868-4844 to set up an appointment. The 30- to 45-minute tours are generally scheduled Monday – Friday during the morning work cycle between 9:00 – 10:30 am. Other arrangements can be made if needed.
2. **Submit Application.** Create an account using TADS services at <https://mytads.com/a/rockprairiemontessori>. The link is also on our website under the Admissions > Enrollment School Year part of our website. Once an account is created, fill out an application per instructions.
3. **Acceptance into Program.** It is our goal to ensure that RPMS is a good match for each child/family applying. RPMS reserves the right to accept enrollment into our programs to keep balance of age, sex, and Montessori experience in mind. ***All students accepted into our programs are enrolled on a provisional basis for two months.*** It is possible that a child does not adjust or be suited for a Montessori environment. In that case, a team of educators from RPMS along with the parents will review the child’s engagement and success in the environment. This may result in withdrawal of the student from RPMS
4. **Completing Enrollment and Tuition Agreement.** Upon application acceptance, parents will need to log back in to their TADS account to complete their enrollment (verifying information, including adding any supplemental care, allergies, etc.). When enrollment is complete parents will receive a final email asking to complete a Tuition Agreement. This allows families to pick a payment plan. **Enrollment will not be considered complete until this contract is completed and submitted.**

Elementary and Middle School Admission Requirements (new and existing students)

Student candidates must be in good academic standing and demonstrate developmentally appropriate social and behavior expectations. Also, the following two key qualities are essential to qualify a student for enrollment in our elementary/middle school programs:

- A willingness and ability to work independently
- An ability to follow through and complete tasks with sustained focus.

These additional qualities would most likely contribute to the success of a student in this Montessori learning environment:

- Passion for learning
- Self-motivation
- Willingness to investigate and take risks
- Enjoyment in choosing among several options
- A self-directed learner
- Respect for self, the environment, and others
- An awareness of personal responsibility
- Ability to work with others

Application Process for New Families Lower and Upper Elementary and Middle

School—Applications are accepted at any time within the current school year. In February (after re-enrollment of current students) applicants can apply for the upcoming school year. To apply, please follow the process below.

1. **Request an Appointment with the Head of School.** Please call the school at 608-868-4844 to set up an appointment. This meeting typically lasts up to one hour and includes a tour of the school. Appointments are generally scheduled Monday – Friday during the morning work cycle between 9:00 – 11:00 am. Other arrangements can be made if needed.
2. **Application Submissions.** Provide a release to obtain current school records. Release forms can be requested and filled out in our school office, which will forward the request to your child’s current school. Create an account using TADS services at <https://mytads.com/a/rockprairiemontessori>. Once an account is created, fill out an application per instructions.
3. **Teacher Observation Visit.** Once your application has been confirmed a student guest visit is scheduled. ***This three-day visit is designed to give the student, faculty, and parents more information regarding the students learning style/needs and the potential match to the Montessori environment.*** These visits are scheduled prior to May 15 of the current school year. Shorter observation visits can be scheduled as needed at the discretion of the Head of School.
4. **Application review.** The educational team of the Head of School, Director of Education, Elementary Coordinator and the Elementary teacher will review the student’s potential for success in the environment, considering the student's learning style and needs within a Montessori classroom and its ability to meet that student’s learning style and needs.

5. ***If accepted into the Elementary or Middle school program, the student is enrolled on a provisional basis for two months.*** If the entire process is unable to be fulfilled (records unavailable, 3-day visit shortened) the student may still be accepted, however, the enrollment will be based on a 6-week provisional basis. At any time, the RPMS educational team may determine, in its sole discretion, to reassess a student enrollment due to academic or behavioral concerns. Working with the family it may be determined that enrollment at RPMS would then cease.
6. **If application is denied.** Written notification will be given in a timely manner.
7. **Completing Enrollment and Tuition Agreement.** Upon enrollment acceptance, parents will need to log back in to their TADS account to complete their enrollment (verifying information, including adding any supplemental care, allergies, etc.). When enrollment is complete parents will receive a final email asking to complete a Tuition Agreement. This allows families to pick a payment plan. **Enrollment will not be considered complete until this contract is completed and submitted.**

Waiting Pool:

If a student applies for a program that is full, or if a child is not yet old enough to attend, they will be placed in the waiting pool for that program. RPMS reserves the right, at their sole discretion to balance program needs, student/staff ratios, and consider previous Montessori experience. If all factors are equal, preference will be given to a student who has other siblings enrolled in our programs. After consideration of these determining factors, availability will be based on the date of initial application.

Returning Family Enrollment

The beginning of February marks the start of the re-enrollment process for current students at RPMS. If there is a concern regarding a student's future success in continuing in a Montessori environment, re-enrollment may not be recommended. If a student is not recommended for re-enrollment, an education team consisting of the family, teacher and administration will review the student's enrollment as to the child's potential for on-going success in the Montessori environment. Current families will have 2 weeks to complete their re-enrollment contract for the following school year. Sibling and then public enrollment will be accepted after the initial two week period.

Withdrawal Policy

Family Request—RPMS requires a 30-day written notice to withdraw from all programs. An Enrollment Contract Amendment Request form is available through the office and must be received 30 days prior to end of enrollment. The entire tuition payment remains in effect until the Head of School grants release from the contract in writing. Enrollment fees are non-refundable.

School Request—Rock Prairie Montessori School may, and at its sole discretion, discontinue a student's enrollment at any time if it is determined that:

- Student or parent/guardian violates the RPMS Code of Conduct.
- Student's academic needs are not being met.
- Student needs a learning/behavioral/developmental evaluation requested by the educational team and the parent/guardian refuses.
- Student's behavior consistently has a negative impact on classmates or the learning environment.
- Students or parents/guardians repeatedly fail to follow rules and policies.

Tuition and Invoicing

Geraldine Hedberg Financial Aid Program—Rock Prairie Montessori School is fortunate to provide a limited amount of financial aid yearly. Application for assistance is available in early spring. Deadlines and how to file are on our website under "Admissions" then "Tuition and Discounts" at <https://www.rockpraiemontessori.com/tuition-and-discounts>.

Tuition and Invoicing—We utilize a third-party system for billing and tuition management. Please go to our website under "Admissions" then "Tuition and Discounts" for further information and payment options.

Sibling Discount-- RPMS offers generous discounts to families with more than one child attending.

- Highest tuition, no discount
- 2nd highest tuition receives a 15% discount
- 3rd highest tuition receives a 25% discount

Delinquent Accounts—A late fee will be applied after a 5-day grace period for all tuition monies due. (The fee is kept by TADS and cannot be removed by RPMS.) After that, if a contract or

payment plan cannot be worked out, at 60 days past due, the account may go to small claims court and services by RPMS may be terminated.

Transportation Reimbursement—Children in Kindergarten through 5th grade who live two or more miles from RPMS and live within the Janesville School District as well as students in 6th grade who live in a rural area may qualify for a transportation reimbursement from the Janesville School District. A list is automatically provided by RPMS to the district and the Janesville District then will mail qualifying families a contract. Please contact RPMS office staff with questions.

Communication Systems

Clear, respectful communication between teachers, staff, and parents ensures a safe environment for all and is paramount to the success of a child.

Email -- Email is the school's primary form of communication. Bi-weekly school updates, invoices, and other important information is sent to the email addresses listed on each student's enrollment record. If you are not receiving emails from the school, please contact the office to verify we have your email address correct in our system.

Text Alert System -- This system, Callmultiplier, allows us to send texts to your cell phones when emergencies happen (snow closings, etc.). Upon enrollment your primary contact numbers will be added to the Text Alert system. If you need additional family members added such as a nanny, grandparent or other caregiver, please let the office know and we will add them as well.

Correspondence – At times there are some items that are sent home in your child's backpack or their class folder. Please check these daily to keep well informed.

RPMS Website -- We try to direct parents to our website as a constant resource to find any information they might need. Under the "Parent Resources" tab, you will find the school calendar, health forms, Scrip forms, and electronic forms to request Guaranteed Care and Drop-In Care. The "About Us" tab lists information such as board and staff directories. Our website also has the link to join or follow us on social media. You can find us on Facebook and Instagram.

Conferences at RPMS --A designated conference day (no school for students) and one evening opportunity is scheduled for the Fall and Spring. The daytime conference schedule will have childcare available for you to use if needed during your conference time. These dates are posted

on the RPMS calendar. **Conferences need to be scheduled on the designated dates and times posted; please make note of conference dates now and plan ahead.**

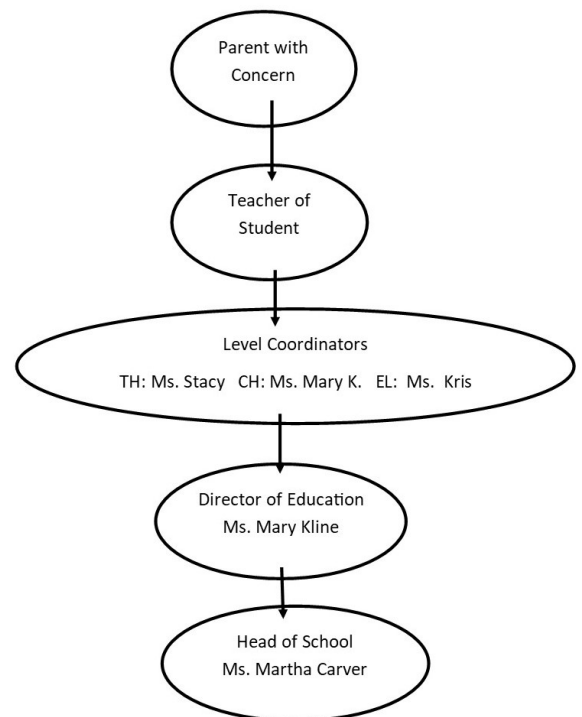
- Families may request additional conferences at any time.
- Every effort should be made to include all parents/guardians at one conference
- Elementary and Middle school students receive progress reports twice yearly at the end of each semester.

Communication from Developmental Levels -- Each educational level at RPMS communicates to families in accordance as to what is developmentally appropriate for that level. Therefore, communication will not be the same in content or frequency from the varying levels. The communication tool each level uses will differ as well using a web-based, secure provider.

- Teachers may be contacted any time by voice mailbox or email.
- Teachers may be available for a minute during drop-off or pick-up, but be aware that this is not a private time. Any communication requiring more time or privacy should be done via phone, email or scheduled at a mutually convenient time.
- Teachers and staff may place items of written communication in your child's backpack and should be checked daily.
- Each staff member has an email address (first initial and last name @rockprairiemontessori.com). A staff directory is posted on our website.

Chain of Communication

- Strong family and teacher communication is the foundation of Montessori education and RPMS.
- Questions and concerns should be discussed with teachers first.
- The Director of Education is able to assist, clarify and problem solve with families and staff from Toddler and Children's House students.
- The Head of School is able to assist, clarify and problem solve with families and staff from Elementary and Middle School students.
- The Director of Education and Head of School, while having separate roles and responsibilities, communicate on all family, teacher and student issues and will cover for each other in absences.



- The Head of School makes final decisions on Handbook, Code of Conduct and policy interpretation.

Student Records-- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act*

- Parents have the right to access their children’s educational records.
- Rock Prairie Montessori School, although not a federally funded school, follows FERPA guidelines.
 - Parents have a right to:
 - Inspect and review the student’s educational records.
 - Seek amendment to the student’s educational records that the parent believes to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights.
 - Consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in a student’s educational records.
- Transfer of records from Rock Prairie Montessori to another school can only be completed after a transfer of records request is signed by a parent/guardian and on file in the school office.
- A request of student records by a **new** school will be granted upon receiving written parent/guardian confirmation from the requesting school.

Child Custody Concerns

RPMS is dedicated to the total development of each unique child. We believe that all children need a loving, supportive family. When a family separates, it is especially difficult for the children. Their loyalties are torn as they love and need both parents. The school will be supportive, open, and welcoming to both parents.

- RPMS will remain neutral in conflicts between parents.
- School records, conferences, meeting information, educational materials and similar items are available to both parents.
- Best practice supports asking parents/guardians to schedule joint conferences with the teacher, but accommodations can be made for separate conferences if needed.
- Parents, regardless of the custody arrangement, are entitled to information about the activities of the school and access to certain records. These records include: medical, dental and school records, day care provider's records, and notification of meetings regarding the child's education.
- Billing information is made available to any person who has signed the financial contract.

- The school will not limit a parent's access to his/her child unless there is a court order on file in the child's records at the school limiting or specifying particular conditions for a parent's access to the child.

School Calendar

- A year-long calendar is made available in February for the next school year. This calendar is ***subject to change***.
 - It includes: start and end session dates, vacation dates, staff in-service dates, half days, parent-teacher conference dates as well as any school-wide special events.
- An online Google calendar is consistently kept up to date and changes are made to this. Families should refer to this monthly.

Holidays

- Rpm's is a diverse school community that includes families with many different beliefs and customs connected to holidays, celebrations and cultural traditions. Our approach to the holidays is to recognize the event and take the opportunity to broaden our awareness of cultures and historical events in place of having a celebration.

Office Hours and Phone Calls

- The office is open between 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. when school is in session. Messages may be left on voicemail after hours. There is a drop box in the office door where payments and other paperwork can be dropped off outside of office hours.
- Visitors are requested to check in the main office and wear a visitors pass while in the building.
- Staff members have voicemail boxes. Office staff or voice prompt will guide you to staff voicemail.
- Staff will not answer their classroom phones during class hours. For emergencies, please contact the school office.

Attendance

Consistent attendance is the most important component of success in school, including arriving at school on time. Regular, punctual attendance is necessary for your child to receive the full benefit of the Montessori program. Additionally, it is imperative that the school keeps accurate and timely records for safety.

Attendance Policy

- Families should notify the office no later than 9:00 a.m. if your child is unable to attend school.
- Please inform the office if your child contracts a contagious disease. More information can be found under the “Health Policies” section.
- **Wisconsin state statutes allow school-age children 10 absences in a school year.**
- An absence is missing more than half of the scheduled day.
- Absences may be excused with a doctor/dentist note.

Absence Due to Extended Illness for Kindergarten, Elementary, Middle School

- After 3 days of being absent with illness, your child’s teacher will offer classwork to be completed at home.
- Synchronous virtual learning during absence is **not** offered.

Planned Absence - Vacation

- Keep in mind that while family vacations are important, school attendance cannot be replicated.
- Please be aware that as a student gets older an absence during the school week becomes more burdensome to make up the required work.
- **Both** your teacher and the office should be notified as soon as possible and no less than two weeks prior to a planned absence.
- Absent children are encouraged to read daily and journal about their experience.
- Upon return there may be increased work expectations in the classroom and or work to be completed at home as needed to catch up on missed lessons and assignments.
- The returning student will be given a set completion date for all missed assignments.
- Synchronous virtual learning during absence is not offered.

Late Arrival / Tardy

- A **late arrival/tardy is arriving more than 5 minutes** after scheduled arrival.
- Any students arriving late **must be brought to the office** by the adult that is dropping them off and **must be signed in**. The office staff will bring your child to their classroom.

Arrival and dismissal

- Drop-Off Service - For those families not parking, a drop-off service is available starting at 8:10, RPMS staff will greet and assist with your child's transition to school. Children are monitored as they walk to their classrooms. ***Parking in front of the building in the fire lane is prohibited at any other time.***
- Arrival - Children will be greeted at the classroom door by a staff member.
 - Before Care 7:20 - 8:10
 - Toddler 8:10 - 8:30
 - Children's House 8:10 - 8:30
 - Kindergarten 8:10 - 8:30
 - Elementary 8:10 - 8:20
 - Middle School 8:10 - 8:20
- Dismissal - Dismissal typically takes place from designated outside spaces. During inclement weather dismissal of all students will be from the front entrance of the building.
 - Toddler 11:15 - 11:30
 - Children's House 11:15 - 11:30
 - Montessori Enrichment 3:15 - 3:30
 - Kindergarten 3:15 - 3:30
 - Elementary 3:30
 - Middle School 3:30
 - Aftercare 3:30 - 5:30 Children in the aftercare program ***not picked up by 5:35 will have a \$1.50 per minute charge assessed to their accounts for each minute past 5:30.***

Pick-up authorization

- Students will not be released to anyone other than parents, guardians, or individuals on the child's authorized pick up list.
- Families may add or delete people from the pick up authorization list throughout the year. Please inform the office of changes and they will notify staff.
- Written or email communication is required for short notice changes.
- RPMS has the right to ask for identification and refuse release if authorization is not clear.
- RPMS reserves the right to refuse release of a student to an impaired parent/guardian or authorized pick-up person.

Smart Watch and Cell Phone Policy for Students

In Toddler through Upper Elementary, Smart watches/devices and phones of any kind are not allowed at RPMS. We value the privacy of all students and adults. Unsupervised technology

use by children in a school setting can lead to distractions, unintended consequences and are not necessary. A student can ask an adult any time if they need to communicate with home. Typical watches that do not have communication access, or potty watches that remind young students to use the bathroom are allowed within reason and practical limits.

Health Guidelines and Policies

We urge sound judgment in determining whether your child is healthy enough to go to school. This is essential in minimizing exposure to contagious diseases for the whole school community. Your child should be healthy enough to participate in normal activities including going outdoors at recess time. A Health Update Form will be sent home if the child does not seem to be acting typical, such as being more tired or sensitive, yet not having symptoms of illness.

Illness-- If your child is displaying symptoms/signs of illness they should stay home from school, or if at school, parents/guardians will be contacted and requested to pick up their child in a timely manner. Listed are some main health concerns that would warrant exclusion from school.

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Eye inflammation, redness or discharge
- Earache, or discharge from ear
- Excessive persistent cough
- Rash
- Excessive thick mucus from nose
- Persistent pain
- Needs of care are greater than staff can provide

Students who have been out due to illness need to be fever-free for 24 hours or when a physician states that the child is no longer contagious before returning to school.

Communicable Disease-- If a child is thought to have or has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, RPMS must be notified immediately. Exposure to a communicable disease is reported to the school community via email (no names used - just classroom). RPMS uses the Wisconsin Department of Health Services criteria to guide recommendations of exclusion and return to school policies.

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p4/p44397.pdf>

If your child returns to school from an illness and still has symptoms of a persistent cough or excessive mucus, your child may be asked to wear a mask until symptoms subside.

Contagious Illness Precautions - We take health and safety seriously, and have set up protocols to facilitate safe in-person learning.

- If your child displays any sign of illness they are to remain at home.
- A child becoming ill at school will be asked to be picked up within 30 minutes.
- Staff or children ages 3 and up may be asked to wear a mask if they are recovering from an illness, especially if coughing and mucus are persistent.
- We will continue to follow ventilation and cleaning procedures that reduce transmission of germs.

Accident/Injury-- Any time your child sustains a minor injury at school (slight bump, scratch, cut, or bruise) an **Incident Update Form** will be filled out by the teacher present explaining the conditions surrounding the accident and the action taken or first aid (if any) given.

- **Head Injury.** At any time, if your child has an injury to their head, including minor accidents, parents/guardians are notified by phone.
- **Medical Emergency.** In the event of a life threatening emergency or debilitating injury RPMS will contact emergency services by calling 911.
 - Qualified staff will provide first aid until emergency services arrive.
 - Parents/guardians will be contacted. **It is extremely important to keep contact information current.**
 - If the situation is life-threatening, the student will be transported to the nearest medical facility.
- **Insurance.** RPMS does not provide any type of health or accident insurance for injuries incurred at Rock Prairie Montessori School.

Allergies -- It is required when enrolling at RPMS that the school receives written documentation of any known allergy. If allergy is life-threatening please provide the following:

- Physician identification of allergen(s)
- Physician-prescribed treatment that non-medical professionals can administer.

Medications -- The following steps are required for the school to administer medications. **No medication orally or topically can be administered without consent of parent/guardian.**

- Prescription and over the counter medication must be in their original container.
- A Medication Administration Form needs to be completed to include;
 - Name of medication
 - Dosage to be given
 - Time of administration
 - Duration of treatment

- Proper storage of medication (refrigeration or shelf)
- Signature of parent/guardian
- First dose of medication must be administered at home.
- Include proper dispensing devices with medication.
- Discuss any and all information regarding illness or medication with teacher and office staff.
- All prescription and over the counter medication must be stored in the office. No medications including cough drops, vitamins etc. can be placed in a student's backpack.
- If medication needs to be administered longer than 30 days an updated M.A. form is required to be signed by a physician.
- Stored medication will be reviewed quarterly. If medication is close to expiring, the /guardian will be notified. 10 days after notification the medication will be discarded.

Physical Examinations-- All preschool age children must have a physician-signed Child Health Report on record. Examination requirements for enrollment at RPMS as follows:

- 18 months - 2 years
 - Initial exam dated not more than 6 months prior or 3 months after student start date
 - Follow up examinations every 6 months until a child turns two.
- 2 years - 5 years
 - Initial exam dated not more than 1 year prior or 3 months after student start date
 - Follow up examination at least once every 2 years after admission
- **Kindergarten, lower and upper elementary, and middle school do not require an examination.**

Immunizations-- An Immunization Record form must be completed and on file for all children attending RPMS age 18 months through middle school.

- Yearly updated immunization documentation must be received in the school office **by the end of the first week of school.** *Note that all schools and child care centers are required, by law, to submit information collected through the Immunization Assessment form.*
- Parents/guardians must complete and sign the Immunization Record, an electronic printout from your physician can be attached to the Immunization Record form.
- **Waivers.** The Wisconsin student immunization requirements can be waived for personal conviction, religious, or medical/health reasons. Children for whom waivers are filed are compliant with the Wisconsin Student Immunization Law; however, these children may be subject to exclusion from child care in the event of an outbreak of a disease against which they are not completely immunized

For more information on immunizations follow the links to the Wisconsin Department of Health.

Preschool requirements <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p4/p44329.pdf>

School age requirements <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p4/p44545.pdf>

Abuse and Neglect -- All school staff members are required by law to report any suspected abuse or neglect to the Rock County Human Services Department according to section 767.11.

Nutrition

- **Snack** – We ask families to provide a nutritious snack daily that your child enjoys. We have found that children appear to eat better and are more satisfied when eating snacks that are familiar and sent from home. If your child stays past 3:30 daily, please provide two snacks per day. Please also send a water bottle with your child’s name on it daily. Milk is always available during snack time for your child to drink if they wish.
- **Lunch** – All students bring a cold lunch from home.
 - Lunch containers are not placed in the refrigerator. Please use an insulated lunch box and ice pack to ensure desired temperature.
 - Microwaves are not available. Please use a thermos to keep food warm.
 - Suggested lunch offerings: protein source (cheese, peanut butter, meat, beans) 3 or more servings of vegetables and fruit, and a whole grain option.
 - Milk and water are available at all times.

Sunscreen and Insect repellent

- **When needed, sunscreen and or insect repellent should be put on at home before arriving** at school. This will provide coverage for your child during the first outdoor recess.
- If your child stays for lunch, parent/guardian must complete a Medication Administration form if you would like sunscreen or repellent reapplied. Place desired sunscreen or repellent in a ziplock bag with the form and give to the supervising teacher. RPMS staff will reapply specified sunscreen or repellent at next recess.
- RPMS follows best practice in mosquito control management.

Safety and Security

Security -- The safety and welfare of children, teachers, and families is our number one priority.

- **Locked Doors.** Main exterior doors are locked at all times. (except for morning arrival when staff is present)
- Parents/guardians are issued a personal 5-digit code to access the building during school hours.
- All parents/guardians, guests and staff entering and exiting the building are asked to use the front doors.
- Front doors and parking lots are monitored by cameras.

Outdoor Policy -- Students will be outdoors for recess as weather permits. RPMS follows the following guidelines.

- In cold weather, Toddlers will have outdoor recess if the temperature is 20 °F or above.
- In cold weather, Children's House will have outdoor recess if the temperature is 10 °F or above.
- In cold weather, Elementary age students and above will have outdoor recess if the temperature is 5 °F or above.
- Children must bring appropriate clothing for weather conditions. During cold months be sure to send mittens/gloves, boots, snow pants, hat and a warm coat.
- RPMS monitors all weather conditions (wind, approaching storms, etc) to determine outdoor safety before having outdoor recess.

Severe Weather-- Due to RPMS's location in a semi-rural area, we generally follow the Milton School District closing schedule.

School Closing information

- All primary parents/guardians are opted into our text alert system to receive text alerts
- Tune in to WCLO or WJVL at 1230 AM or 99.5 FM
- View RPMS website or Facebook page
- Madison local television stations

School Delays

- Delays are based on regular school hours; no before care will be held if we have a school delay. Our school day normally begins at 8:30 am.
 - If Milton School District has a **one hour** delay, RPMS students may arrive beginning at 9:15 a.m. for a 9:30 am start time.
 - If Milton School District has a **two hour** delay, RPMS students may arrive beginning at 10:15 a.m. for a 10:30 am start time.
- Dismissal/pick-up times are unaffected by any delays.

Early Release

- If Milton School District closes school early, RPMS gives notification via the text alert system, website, Facebook, and by telephone, if needed. **Parents/guardians are requested to pick their child up as soon as possible and no later than the specified time listed in RPMS communication.**

Safety Drills -- RPMS will practice these safety drills; fire, tornado, and intruder alerts as required.

Possession of Firearms and Dangerous Weapons on School Grounds– It is a felony for a person to knowingly possess a firearm (concealed or otherwise) on the grounds of a school. Wis. Stat. § 948.605(2)(a).

It is a forfeiture for a person to knowingly possess a firearm (concealed or otherwise) at a place that the person knows or has reasonable cause to believe is within 1,000 feet of the grounds of a school. Wis. Stat. § 948.605(2)(a).

Exceptions:

There are a number of exceptions to the restrictions on possessing a firearm in or on school grounds or within 1,000 feet of school grounds. It is lawful to possess a firearm in or on the grounds of a school or within 1,000 feet of the grounds of a school as follows:

- On private property that is not part of school grounds. Wis. Stat. § 948.605(2)(b)1m and 18 USC 922(q)(2)(B)(i).
- By a law enforcement officer acting in his or her official capacity. Wis. Stat. § 948.605(2)(b)1m and 18 USC 922(q)(2)(B)(vi).
- The firearm is not loaded and is encased or in a locked firearms rack that is on a motor vehicle. Wis. Stat. § 948.605(2)(b)3a and b.
- By a state-certified commission warden acting in his or her official capacity. Wis. Stat. § 948.605(2)(b)2m.

- A person who is a CCW licensee or out-of-state CCW licensee may possess a firearm within 1,000 feet of the grounds of a school, but not in or on school grounds. Wis. Stat. § 948.605(2)(b)1r.

Smoking and Alcohol Use Policy

Per state mandate, the use of tobacco, in any form, is prohibited in the school building and on school grounds.

The use of illegal drugs and controlled substances is prohibited in the school building and on school grounds. Alcohol is not to be consumed on the premises when school is in session. Events that include alcohol must be approved by the Head of School and must be conducted in accordance with Wisconsin liquor laws.

Parent Involvement

Classroom Observations--Montessori education is based on the art of observation. We encourage parents/guardians or other family members to observe. Each classroom door has a one-way film which allows you to see into the classroom without being easily seen. If you would like an observation in the classroom, please schedule with your child's teacher.

Observation visits count towards family service hours.

Basics of an Observation:

- An adult-sized chair will be available for you to sit upon entering the room. This seat will provide a good view for observing the entire classroom.
- Children may say hello or ask what you are doing. Continue to observe after a quick smile or hello. A gentle reminder to go back to their work may be expressed.
- Please stay seated during your observation.
- An observation guide to help you make the most of your visit will be provided.
- Questions should be written on an observation guide and the teacher will get back to you.
- You are welcome to observe for approximately 20 minutes.

Family Service Hours-- It is recognized that tuition alone is insufficient to fund all expenses aimed at providing excellent educational environments. Thus additional support – in time and money – is necessary to offer our high quality of education and services. Being a trustee-governed/non-profit school, the team approach where “everyone pitches in” is the only way to keep costs down and educational excellence soaring. Requirements include:

- Each family must fulfill a minimum of 10 hours of unpaid service each school year. Families who start after November 1 require 7 hours of service, and families who start after January 1 have 5 hours, and any family starting after March 1 do not have any required hours for the current school year.
- Extended family members can complete service hours on behalf of an enrolled family.
- Service can be done in a variety of ways at school, home, or by donation of goods. Emails and weekly update newsletter often lists volunteer opportunities.
- Conferences, observations, and committee work counts towards service hours.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for tracking service hours by recording the hours online via a form (found on the front website's "Quick Links"). Service hours must be completed by the end of the year to be counted for the current school year.
- Families who do not meet the required service hours by the last school day in May **must "buy out" the balance of those hours.**
- "Buy out" rate is \$10.00 per remaining service hours. Parents/guardians will receive a separate invoice for any balance due.

RaiseRight-- RaiseRight is a well-established and unique program designed to help nonprofit organizations and their members benefit through rebates from hundreds of participating retailers on the face value of their gift cards. Purchases for gas, groceries, and other everyday needs can be purchased through the Scrip program.

- Each family is required to purchase a minimum of \$2000.00 of RaiseRight over a 12-month period (June 1 - May 31). A prorated requirement will be calculated for families enrolling after September first.
- RPMS retains the first \$100 in rebate received.
- RPMS collects 50% of rebate after the initial \$100.00.
- Each family receives 50% of rebate after initial \$100.00. Families can choose how their rebate is distributed by the following options:
 - A tax-deductible donation back to RPMS.
 - Receive rebate as cash payout.
 - Apply rebate to next school year's tuition. (Credit given in August)
- Parents/guardians not wanting to participate in the program will **be charged a "buy out" fee of \$100.00.** If some RaiseRight was purchased but not the required minimum, **a "buy out" balance will be invoiced to equal the \$100.00 minus any rebate earned.**

Fundraising

The Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees, work diligently each year to keep tuition costs at a reasonable rate while maintaining quality operations and staffing. As a private nonprofit institution, Rock Prairie Montessori's main sources of funding are tuition and fundraising efforts. While RaiseRight is the only mandatory fundraiser, in order to meet fundraising goals, all families are strongly encouraged to participate in all fundraising events throughout the school year. Fifty percent of fundraising is designated towards the Geraldine Hedberg Financial Aid Program. (See Tuition and Invoicing)

Donations

RPMS, as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, may accept contributions from any source consistent with the values and goals of Rock Prairie Montessori School. Corporate and private gifts are always gratefully received. Donations to Rock Prairie Montessori School are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please request a donation form if needed or submit a monetary donation by check, cash or by using PayPal located on our school website.

Referral Bonus

A \$250.00 referral bonus is offered to currently enrolled families, board members, and staff members for referral/recommendation of new families to RPMS. The bonus will be paid out in June if the referred family completes one full school year in good standing.

*The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html?src=rn>