



PARENT HANDBOOK

2017-2018

Discover the Joy of Learning

STATEMENT OF MISSION AND VISION

Racine Montessori School is part of a global community that guides the whole child toward a life-long love of learning. Children develop independence, confidence, moral responsibility, social purpose and inner peace through teacher guidance on self-directed work in a non-competitive atmosphere. Our school strives to offer strong academics and support in a setting of self-respect, respect for others and respect for our environment.

2317 Howe Street
Racine, WI 53403

School 262.637.7892
Child Care 262.637.1745

SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS

7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Children's House	8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Extended Day Class	8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Elementary Class	8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

CHILD CARE PROGRAM HOURS

Before School	6:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
After School	11:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

**Racine Montessori School
Parent Handbook
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RACINE MONTESSORI SCHOOL STAFF

PRIMARY 3-6 **TEACHERS & ASSISTANTS**

Diane Kelly
Kathy Schrandt

Bobbie Poppie
Dawn Amundson

Nicole Fuentes
Mary Kay Herness

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

Rainforest Canopy 6-9

Katie Principe
Linda Boman Reading Teacher

Tree House 6-9

Cara Lewis
Annette Varnes Reading Teacher

Shooting Stars 6-9

Daiana Kern
Lisa Porter Reading Teacher

The Green House 9-12

Lisa Holewa
Idy Nelson Teaching Assistant

The Meadow 9-12

Lisa Toraño
Meredith Gonzalez Teaching Assistant

Adolescent Program 13-15

Colin Lewis
Carrie Gayle

CHILD CARE TEACHERS

Davena Boldus
Meredith Gonzalez
Veronica Harris
Denise Predny
Jane Seggelink
Sarah Teskoski
Idy Nelson

SPECIALISTS

Denise Zingg Art/Computer
Melissa Grigg Music
Anna Ptacek French/Elementary
Laura Bond Spanish/Primary
Anna Ptacek Phy Ed
Lisa Porter Librarian

ADMINISTRATOR

Rita C. Lewis

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Jane Duchac

2017 – 2018 RMS CALENDAR

Thursday, Aug. 10	Room Parent Tea, 10 a.m.
Tuesday, Aug. 29	Staff Day
Wednesday, Aug. 30	Fall Cleaning Day, 9:00 – 11:00
Thursday, Aug. 31	New Student orientation/Primary
	New Parent Night, 6:30
	Elementary Info Night, 6:30
Friday, Sept. 1	New Student orientation/primary
Monday, Sept.4	Labor Day – no school or CCP
September RMS Tie-Dye T-shirt Sale	Watch for order forms!
Tuesday, Sept. 5	First day of school
Saturday, Sept. 9	Lula Roe Fundraiser
Friday, Sept. 15	Wine Tasting at Lochnaiar Inn, 6:00 - ?
Saturday, Sept. 16	Spirit Walk
Thursday, September 21	Day of Peace (peace celebration)
Friday, September 22	ALL RMS Tie-Dye T-Shirt Sales DUE
Wednesday, Oct. 4	School Pictures, Elementary
Thursday, Oct. 5	School Pictures, Primary & Adolescents
Friday, Oct 6	Farm Trip, Nicole
Tuesday, Oct 10	Farm Trip, Bobbie
Friday, Oct 13	Farm Trip, Diane
Wednesday, Oct. 25	Home visits, 1 st level - no school for elementary classes
Thursday, Oct. 26	Fall conferences (no school – CCP open)
Friday, Oct. 27	Fall Conferences (no school – CCP open)
Saturday, Nov. 11	Cleaning Day, starting at 9:00-11:00
Thursday, Nov. 16	Family Night, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
Wed., - Fri., Nov. 22 – 24	Thanksgiving break – no school or CCP
December (Date to be Determined)	Racine Montessori Book Fair (Early December)
Fri., Dec.1	St. Nick's Celebration
Friday, Dec. 8	Santa Lucia Day
Friday, Dec. 15	Yule Log Celebration
Mon., Dec. 18 - Jan. 1	Holiday Break – no school or CCP
Tuesday, Jan. 2	School and CCP resume
Friday, Jan. 12	Lakefront Artist Fair meeting, 9:00 a.m.
Monday, Jan. 15	Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday (closed)
Tuesday, Jan. 23	Elementary Info Night, 6:30
Thursday, Jan. 25	Extended Day Info Night, 6:30
Thurs., Fri., Feb. 15 – 16	Winter Conferences, no school, CCP open
Tuesday, Feb. 27	Blue Day
Wednesday, Feb. 28	Red Day
Thursday, March 1	Yellow Day/Cleaning night 5:00-7:00
Friday, March 2	RMS Day
Sunday, March 4	Spring Open House, 1:00 – 3:00
Friday, March 9	Professional Day – no school
Friday, March 16	Jury LAF, 9:00
Friday, March 30	Spring Break begins - no school or CCP
Monday, April 9	School and CCP resume
Saturday, May 5	37 th Annual Lakefront Artist Fair
Friday, May 18	RMS Talent Show
Monday, May 28	Memorial Day – no school or CCP
Friday., June 1	Games Day – Last day of school
Mon, Tues., June 4 & 5	Spring Conferences for elementary

As of 8/28/2017

RACINE MONTESSORI SOCIETY

Welcome to Racine Montessori School! Early in the twentieth century, Dr. Maria Montessori developed educational materials and methods based on her belief that children learn best by doing, not by passively accepting other people's ideas and pre-existing knowledge. It was an innovative concept. Montessori believed that learning should take place in multi-age classrooms where children at various stages of development learn from and with each other. Her developmentally appropriate approach was designed to fit each child instead of making each child fit the program. Montessori teachers know that children learn more by touching, seeing, smelling, tasting and exploring than just by listening. Teacher training prepares them to create dynamic, interactive learning environments that encourage each child to reason, cooperate, collaborate, negotiate, and to understand. Their goal is the development of an autonomous individual, competent in all areas of life, not just someone with the "right" answers!

Our school has maintained a wonderful reputation for over 50 years, and we look to the future with optimism and joy! We know that, by offering an excellent education in an environment of peace and harmony, we serve an important function for your child and for your family. We are glad that you are here!

Sincerely,
Rita



Parents of children attending the school automatically become members of the Racine Montessori Society. The purpose of the society is to operate the school and promote the educational philosophy of Maria Montessori.

Affairs of the Society are managed by the Board of Directors, consisting of nine members elected at the annual meeting, one alumni member, and one member at large, chosen by the board. Directors serve for three years. The board elects officers from its members to serve a one-year term. Each member of the Racine Montessori Society has one vote for the election of directors and all other matters the board refers to the group, with a maximum of two votes per family. Board meetings occur at 6:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month in the school lounge and are open to all members of the society.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chris Lohman, Callie Ehmcke, Melissa Dreifuerst,
Gladys Strauss Peterson, John Buchaklian, Carter
Hanson, Angie Hrouda, Naison Nyamatutu, Kristina Stadler
and Erin Tollaksen, Steve Torosian

Racine Montessori School is a non-profit organization founded in 1963 by a group of parents who were interested in the Montessori philosophy.

We want our parents to be well-informed on Montessori issues and about what's going on at school. We have a lending library, containing books and magazines about Montessori and regarding parenting issues. New parents must attend parent information meetings before their children can attend our school so that they will better understand the Montessori concept and the "personality" of Racine Montessori School. We also conduct informational meetings in February to explain our extended day and elementary programs, and there are three (3) parent/teacher conferences during the year.

Classes are organized by a three-year model providing a familiar setting that encourages long-term friendships and allows for maximum advantage of the relationship between the students and the teachers.

The **Primary** program (for ages 3-6) provides a prepared environment that encourages independence and active participation in the learning process. The major areas of the curriculum are Practical Life, Sensorial, Language Arts, Math, Science, Geography and Art. Developmentally appropriate manipulative materials enable the children to progress at their own pace. Children receive individualized and group instruction in a joyful atmosphere of cooperation and non-competitiveness.

While the students in our Children's house are absorbed with ordering the environment, the **Lower Elementary child** (ages 6-9) is concerned with the reasoning mind. The program respects that the six-to-nine year old is entering a sensitive period of the imagination. The Lower Elementary child continues to work with a sequence of materials which progress from the concrete to the abstract. The curriculum helps the child to find meaning in knowledge and to transcend the narrow confines of a self-centered existence.

In the **Upper Elementary** (ages 9-12), the child continues to build upon previously acquired skills. Concrete materials are still present but less evident as the child is working more abstractly. The child delves into many areas of research and becomes familiar with a variety of information sources, a process that can be used throughout life. Children enjoy collaborating in small and large group activities. Group processing and problem-solving activities within the classroom prepare them to function responsibly and sensitively toward others.

Our **Adolescent** Program (ages 13-14) allows the students to continue learning in the peaceful, respectful environment that has been an important factor in the prior years of their Montessori education. At this age, students explore the needs of humanity and sense the need of service in the community, and this, along with academic studies, becomes the foundation upon which their education is built.

The **Child Care Program (CCP)** offers excellent before and after school care in a warm, inviting setting. You must register for child care before the beginning of each academic year. In order to provide the right teacher/child ratios, we cannot guarantee room for your child(ren) in the event your needs change. Please contact CCP immediately if you become aware of a “permanent” or long-term change to your child care needs and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Child Care Rates are \$5.00 per hour when used more than 10 hours per week and \$6.00 per hour when used 10 hours or less per week or no contracted hours. **Child Care Hours** are 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. & 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. A late fee of \$10 will be charged for each 10-minute time increment after 5:30 p.m. ***Families will be billed for contracted hours unless a call to Childcare is made prior to 9 a.m. (637-1745).*** The contract may be changed at any time with one week prior notification. Child care billing will be included on monthly statements and are payable by the 15th of the month.

SECURITY and LOCKED DOOR POLICY is a priority for the safety of our students. All exterior school doors will remain locked at all times. A call box is located outside the front door. In order to enter our school, you must ring the doorbell. There is a camera for us to see you before we open the door. If we don't recognize the person at the door, we ask for name, the reason for visit and then we go directly to the door for verification. We would like to ask for your help, too. Please do not allow another person to follow you into the building. Our friendly, welcoming natures suggest that we hold the door for the next person coming, but we'd prefer that each person (family) entering the school ring the bell so we can monitor the comings and goings. **Also, if you do come into the building, please either report directly to the office or to our Child Care Program, if you are picking your child up.** We appreciate your cooperation in keeping everyone safe.

DROP OFF/PICK UP PLAN is an important part of the Montessori philosophy of independence. Cars will enter the campus from 24th Street and proceed in a line through the parking area. Greeters will be available from 8:20 - 8:40 a.m. to get your child out of the car and into the school building. At the 11:30 Children's House dismissal time also enter the campus from 24th Street and proceed in a line through the parking lot drive-through line to pick up your Children's House-aged child. The classroom assistant will bring your child to the car. “Walk ups” are discouraged! The children must shake a teacher's hand before leaving, in order to keep an accurate count of who has been picked up. The 2:30 Extended Day dismissal follows the same procedure. At the 3:30 Elementary dismissal, there will be one teacher dismissing students who take the bus, and one teacher at the drive-through line, dismissing those children who are being picked up. The students are required to stand on the brick walkway, waiting in an orderly manner.

STUDENT HEALTH POLICY For the well being of the children, a child **MUST NOT** be sent to school when ill. If a child becomes sick during the school day, the parents will be notified. All parents are required to have an alternate care system in place in the event of illness. **There is no infirmary on the school grounds.**

STUDENT HEALTH POLICY (cont.)

All sick children must be picked up by an authorized adult within one hour of contact by the school. Parents must comply with the decision of the staff.

Racine Montessori will follow the recommendations set forth by the Racine Health Department should we receive information regarding community wide outbreaks.

PLEASE follow these steps to promote a healthy environment for all the children. No child should be sent to school with the following:

FEVER must be absent for 24 hours **without fever reducing medications**

before returning to school

COLDS accompanied by colored nasal discharge, sneezing, coughing, congestion

FLU vomiting, body aches, fever (see above)

STREP THROAT

SORE THROAT

DIARRHEA

EAR INFECTIONS

PINK EYE

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

SKIN OR INTERNAL PARASITES

RASHES.

We prefer not to administer medication to children who attend Racine Montessori School for morning-only classes. When necessary, medication will be given to children who attend school for the entire day. Parents must provide the office with specific written instructions and must complete a medication form, available in the office.

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS The state of Wisconsin requires that we keep a record of immunizations of all children. All immunization records must be received by the school office by September 15th so we can fulfill our compliance requirements for the State of Wisconsin. For your convenience, you can access your child's immunization records at the Wisconsin Immunization Registry site <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/publicaccess.htm> and select [registry](#) to reach the [Public Immunization Record Access](#) to find and print a copy of your child's records.

ATTENDANCE – ABSENCES Parents are requested to call the school office by 9:00 a.m. if a child will be absent for any reason. Please do not make plans that will keep your child out of class. Family vacations should coincide with school vacations. Every attempt should be made to schedule doctor or other appointments for your child after school hours or during school breaks.

TARDINESS Out of respect for our teachers and students, please arrive at school between 8:20 a.m. and 8:40 a.m. Students who must arrive before 8:20 should make arrangements to stay at our Child Care Program until it is time to go to class.

ALTERNATE SCHEDULE FORMS must be filled out if there will be a change in the way you normally pick your child up. Please fill these bright orange forms out in advance of a change to your normal routine or child care schedule, keeping in mind that you must pre-arrange your child's stay in CCP. Changes must be made in writing.

DISCIPLINARY POLICIES

Although teachers strive to deal flexibly and creatively with situations as they arise, there are certain behaviors not tolerated by the school:

- Physical fighting or any type of bullying
- Using rude or foul language
- Writing or drawing graffiti on walls, desks, books, etc.
- Destroying school property
- Bouncing or throwing balls at dismissal time
- Throwing snowballs
- Chewing gum
- Using, cell phones, electronic games or toys in school

SNOW DAYS Racine Montessori School follows the closing policy of Racine Unified School District regarding snow days. Parents are encouraged to listen to one of the local radio or TV stations, or check the RUSD website at www.racine.k12.wi.us for school closing announcements. **IF RACINE UNIFIED SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER, OUR SCHOOL AND CHILD CARE PROGRAM WILL ALSO BE CLOSED.** If Racine Unified announces a delayed start time or early release, Racine Montessori School and CCP will operate on its regular schedules. However, we ask you to use your own judgment in regard to bringing your children to school during inclement weather.

CLASSROOM VISITS from parents of students in the class are encouraged. In order to get an accurate perception of the class, parents will be asked to sit and observe and refrain from interacting with the students. Parents may also be asked to complete an “observation form”, which can serve as a helpful tool for parents and teachers at conference times. The school discourages social visits from former students during scheduled school hours as the excitement of a visitor tends to disrupt the class. Alumni students may visit during lunchtime and/or recess by notifying the office prior to the visit.

TELEPHONE USE Students may not use cell phones or other electronic devices during school hours. Parents may leave messages for teachers or their children by calling the main office. Classes will not be interrupted by telephone calls unless there is an emergency.

RECYCLING Racine Montessori School recycles all glass, plastic and aluminum products and we encourage our families to be conscientious in packing lunches. We discourage the use of juice boxes (please use a thermos!) and unnecessary wraps. We recommend reusable containers for food. Reusable sandwich and snack wraps are available for purchase in the school bookstore.

INFORMATION & UPDATES will be distributed via **SCHOOL WAY** to all families throughout the school year. Please visit the Racine Montessori website, at www.racinemontessori.com, the primary source for school information (i.e. the monthly calendar). We are also on FACEBOOK at <https://www.facebook.com/racine.montessori/>, additional information will be sent home in your child’s backpack so make sure to check it each day.

TUITION BILLING is sent home at the beginning of each month in your child's backpack. Tuition is billed over 12 months, beginning in June for each academic school year and is due by the 10th of each month. We encourage families to use our, tuition electronic funds transfer (EFT) from your bank on the 10th of each month. Please contact the office to register for EFT if you are interested. You may be assessed a late fee if tuition is not paid in a timely manner and Racine Montessori School reserves the right to suspend or dismiss any students whose tuition is not paid on a timely basis.

FIELD TRIPS In the Primary program we feel the children are more comfortable in the classroom; therefore we plan a limited number of off-campus field trips. We usually plan a farm field trip in the fall and a trip to a nature center in the spring. The Elementary students often take trips to the Golden Rondelle or perhaps to Milwaukee to see a play in addition to their smaller "going out" excursions upon completion of their research projects. Field trips are planned in advance and parents are notified. If a child must be absent on the day of a trip, the school should be notified so that the trip is not delayed. If parents choose not to send the child on a field trip, the child should remain at home for that day. Parents who volunteer to drive on a field trip must provide the school with current car insurance information prior to the trip. All children who are eight years old or younger or less than 80 pounds must be in a car seat or booster seat.

ROOM PARENTS Each classroom has at least two room parents who support the class by providing a communication link between the school and the families in the class. Room parents coordinate volunteers for cleaning, food needs for family night, open house or announce special events pertaining to the class or the whole school.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS are especially needed and appreciated at Racine Montessori School! Each year, we ask RMS parents to complete a "**volunteer form**" indicating where their talents can best be used. Successful school operations depend heavily on parent contributions of time and talent.

In addition to volunteering time and talent, each family is required to donate one cleaning time per child enrolled* and to support the Lakefront Artist Fair as an event volunteer in May. Without the gifts of parents' time, energy and expertise, our many fundraising events and activities would not exist. They help with class activities, field trips, going outs, gardening and with building/room maintenance tasks, etc.

Parents who serve on the Board of Directors and on essential committees, are involved in long-range planning and offer a wide range of professional advice.

(*Families who do not meet the required cleaning obligation will be charged \$150. The amount will be added to your tuition billing at the end of the year.)

FUNDRAISING We are in need a Fundraising Chairperson and committee to set our yearly Fundraising Calendar and organize volunteers for the events.

Our biggest fundraiser, the Lakefront Artist Fair, takes place each year on the first Saturday of May. Traditionally, we earn a profit of at least \$25,000 from this one-day event! These earnings help us keep our tuition costs as reasonable as possible. As such, we expect all of our families to participate in this important event so mark your calendar now!

We also participate in **SCRIP** (details below). Other easy fundraisers that benefit our school: register to shop at Target and AmazonSmile, through their sites, and we collect ink cartridges and Box Tops here at school to send in for cash!

SCRIP is an on-going fundraising program that we use at Racine Montessori School. Included in SCRIP are gift cards to a variety of restaurants, stores, gas stations and other retailers. You pay face value for the gift card; however, RMS purchases them at a discounted price. The profit earned is divided between the school and the family who orders SCRIP (in the form of a tuition rebate two times per year). You may order SCRIP online at www.shopwithscrip.com. SCRIP orders are placed on Mondays at 9:00 a.m. and are sent home in your child's backpack or are available for pick-up in the office on Fridays. We call this the "painless" fundraiser because you purchase cards for items you ordinarily use anyway! Invite family members and friends to participate, too!

RMS BOOKSTORE, located in the office, contains the best in award-winning children's literature as well as carefully selected books on parenting. We also carry greeting cards and high-quality plush items. All merchandise in our bookstore is reduced by 20% with each sale resulting in a 20% profit for the school. We can special order nearly any book (childrens or adults). The bookstore is open during regular school hours.

HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS We are very proud of our ethnic and cultural diversity. We try to be sensitive to the great "mixture" and certainly hope not to offend anyone. From time to time, mention may be made (sometimes through song, etc.) of a particular holiday or celebration, but we try to balance that with the mention of other holidays. We also have families who choose not to celebrate holidays, and, of course, we are respectful of that. We encourage parents to visit their child's classroom to give presentations on ethnic and cultural celebrations. If you are interested in presenting this type of information, please contact your child's teacher.

LOST AND FOUND There is a lost and found bin on the lower level, near the art room and in our child care area.

PRIVACY POLICY Racine Montessori School refuses requests from businesses and merchants who want to contact our families. Class lists are for your personal reference only.