



PARENT HANDBOOK

2019-2020

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.

Racine Montessori was established in 1963 as a 501(c) non-profit organization.

SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS

7:30 a.m. – 4:30 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.

2317 Howe Street
Racine, WI 53403
School 262.637.7892
Child Care 262.637.1745

**Racine Montessori School
Parent Handbook
Table of Contents**

Racine Montessori School Staff	1
Racine Montessori School Calendar	2
Racine Montessori Society Board of Directors	3
Montessori Programs	4
Primary	
Lower Elementary	
Upper Elementary	
Adolescent	
Child Care Program	
Policies & Procedures	5
Security & Locked Door Policy	
Drop off/Pick Up	
Student Health Policy	
Immunization Records	6
Cell Phones & Electronic Devices	
Attendance/Absences	
Tardiness	
Alternate Schedule Forms	
Snow Days	
Classroom visits	
School Hour Messages	
Accident or Injury Policy	7
Disciplinary Policy	8
Recycling	9
Information & Updates	
Tuition Billing	
Privacy Policy	
Field Trips	
Lost & Found	
Parents As Volunteers	10
Fundraising	
SCRIP / Amazon Smile	
Holidays & Celebrations	

RACINE MONTESSORI SCHOOL STAFF

Office

Lisa Toraño	Administrator
Jane Duchac	Administrative Assistant

PRIMARY TEACHERS & ASSISTANTS 3yrs-6yrs.

Diane Kelly	Teacher
Kathy Schrandt	Assistant
Beth Zimmerman	Teacher
Dawn Amundson	Assistant
Nicole Fuentes	Teacher
Mary Kay Herness	Assistant

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

Rainforest Canopy 6-9

Katie Principe	
Linda Boman	Reading Specialist

Tree House 6-9

Cara Lewis	
Anna Mennenga	Reading Specialist

Shooting Stars 6-9

Lisa Torano	
Lisa Porter	Reading Specialist

The Green Meadow 9-12

Dr. Prisca Moore	
Anna Ptacek	
Meredith Gonzalez	Teaching Assistant

Adolescent Program 13-15

Colin Lewis	
Carrie Gayle	

CHILD CARE TEACHERS

Linda Greeley	
Alice Bertram	
Davena Boldus	
Julie Nelson	
Denise Predny	
Julie Konan	
Jessica Koenan	
Jane Seggelink	

SPECIALISTS

Denise Zingg	Art
Lisa Porter	Librarian
Melissa Grigg	Music
Joe Luba	Gym
Letty Nyamatutu	Spanish Club

**2019-2020
RMS School Calendar**

Sunday, Aug. 11	School Potluck Picnic and Playground Clean-up
Tuesday, Aug. 27	Fall Cleaning Day, 9-12 noon
Wednesday, Aug. 28	All School Orientation Meeting/Classroom Info. Night 6:30
Thursday, Aug. 29	New Primary Student Interviews, individual appointments
Tuesday, Sept. 3	First Day of School
Friday, Sept. 27	Peace Day celebration, 1pm in Peace Garden
Monday, Oct. 14	School Pictures, Primary students and Adolescents
Tuesday, Oct. 15	School Pictures, Lower and Upper Elementary
Wed-Fri, Oct 23-25	Fall Conferences and 1st level home visits, No School- CCP Open
Friday, Nov. 5	Retake Picture Day, All Classes
Saturday, Nov. 9	Cleaning Day, 9:30am
Thursday, Nov 14	Family Night 4:30-6:30
Saturday, Nov 23	Holiday Fair and Winter Concert 10am-2pm
Wed-Fri, Nov 27-29	Thanksgiving Break- No School - CCP Closed
Friday, Dec. 6	St Nick Celebration
Friday, Dec. 13	St. Lucia Celebration
Wednesday, Dec. 18	Yule Log Celebration
Thursday, Dec. 19-Jan 5	Winter Break- No School- CCP Closed
Monday, Jan. 6	School and CCP Resume
Monday, Jan 20	Martin Luther King Jr. No School-CCP Closed
Tuesday, Jan 28	Elementary Info Night 6:30
Thursday, Jan 30	Extended Day Info Night 6:30
Thurs-Fri., Feb. 13-14	Winter Conferences, No School-CCP Open
Tuesday, Feb. 25	Blue Day
Wednesday, Feb 26	Red Day
Thursday, Feb 27	Yellow Day/ Last Cleaning Night
Friday, Feb. 28	RMS Day
Sunday, Mar. 1	Spring Open House, 1-3pm
Thurs-Fri., March 12-13	Professional Development Days, No School- CCP Open
Friday, April 10	Spring Break Begins, No School- CCP Closed
Monday, April 20	School and CCP resume
Friday, May 21	Spring Concert and Talent Show 6:30
Monday, May 25	Memorial Day, No School, CCP closed
Monday, June 1	Games Day- LAST DAY OF SCHOOL
Tues-Wed., June 2 &3	Spring Conference- Elementary and Adolescents

RACINE MONTESSORI SOCIETY

Welcome to Racine Montessori School! Early in the twentieth century, Dr. Maria Montessori developed an educational method based on her diligent observations of children and her deep understanding of childhood development. She discovered that children are not passive learners rather that they actively seek out work that will develop their intelligence and passions. Montessori believed that the best way to support this development was by providing a prepared multi-age learning environment where children at various stages of development could use hands-on materials and receive key presentations by their teachers in a community of children that could also learn from and with each other. Her developmentally appropriate approach was designed to fit each child instead of making each child fit the program. Our classroom environment and staff encourage each child to reason, cooperate, collaborate, negotiate, and to understand. The Montessori Method strives to develop an autonomous individual, competent in all areas of life as well as an individual that has an appreciation for all humanity and for the world we live in.

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,
Lisa

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. **Before the beginning of each school year, we have an orientation meeting in which all of the Parent Handbook and other important information are given to parents.** We also conduct classroom meeting to inform parents of classroom procedures/schedules and informational meetings in February to explain our extended day and elementary programs. There are three (3) parent/teacher conferences during the year for elementary and adolescent children and two for the Primary children.

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

Callie Ehmcke President
Tiffany LeMay Vice President
John Buchaklian Treasurer
Brittany Reuwer Secretary

Naison Nyamatutu
Cindy McCarrier
Rita Lewis
Rebecca Byrne
Chris Lohman
Jamie Williams
Rachel Gage

RACINE MONTESSORI PROGRAMS

The **Primary Program**, otherwise known as the Children's House (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, and Geography. 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 children in our **Lower Elementary Program** (ages 6-9) are concerned with ordering their reasoning minds. The program also respects that the six-to-nine year old is entering a sensitive period of the imagination and becomes interested in all aspects of his community and culture. Our curriculum helps the child to find meaning in knowledge and to transcend the narrow confines of a self-centered existence. Our Lower Elementary children continue to work with a sequence of educational materials which progress from the concrete to the abstract.

In the **Upper Elementary Program** (ages 9-12), the children continues to build upon previously acquired skills. Concrete materials are still present but less evident as the children are working more abstractly. The children 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.

Childcare Program

The **Child Care Program** (CCP) offers excellent before and after school care in a warm, inviting setting. In order for RMS to develop our staff schedule, we ask that you register for child care before the beginning of each academic year. We want to be prepared with adequate staff that will ensure all of our children are well cared for. 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. **We bill in 15 minute increments.**

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. Child care billing will be included on monthly statements and are payable by the 15th of the month. . Please let us know as soon as possible if you are going to make any changes in your child's childcare schedule. We have forms available in the office that can be used for this purpose.

Policies and Procedures

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 leave through the front gate. **We do not allow the children to cross the street to their car alone. If you do park across the street, please come to the gate for your child.** We will also have one teacher at the drive-through line, dismissing those children who are being picked up. Students are required to stand on the brick walkway, waiting in an orderly manner.

STUDENT HEALTH POLICY For the wellbeing 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.**

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)

RASHES: that have not been diagnosed by your child's physician as non-contagious

STREP THROAT

EAR INFECTIONS

SORE THROAT

PINK EYE

DIARRHEA

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

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.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices are not allowed at Racine Montessori during the school day or at childcare. Please make sure your children are aware of this policy. If you feel that your child needs to bring their cell phone for communication after school, they must check their phone in with their teacher during school and childcare hours. Please email the office, if your child will need to bring their device along so that we can notify their teacher.

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. They must have a child care contract to do so.

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.

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 Parents of children already attending our school are welcome to visit their child's classroom by making arrangements in the school office or directly with their child's teacher beforehand.

Alumni students may visit during lunchtime and/or recess by notifying the office prior to the visit.

School Hour Messages 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.

Racine Montessori School Accident and Injury Policy

We take every precaution to provide a safe environment for your child. However, accidents and injuries do happen.

The following outlines the measures taken by staff in the event of injury occurring at RMS or while attending school events off school premises.

In the event of accident/injury:

1. A qualified teacher will administer first aid and make the child as comfortable as possible.
2. If puncture wounds or bites occur that break the skin occur, the office will attempt to notify parents to seek preference for washing wound and/or applying Neosporin. Until parents are reached, the wound will be gently cleansed with water and covered with a bandage.
3. An Accident / Incident Report Form will be written by staff responsible for the child's care at the time of the incident to inform parent(s) of the details. A copy of this report will be kept in each child's folder in the school office.
4. Parents will be asked to read and sign the form to signify that they have been informed of the details and return the form back to school by the following day.

Parents will be notified immediately in the event of fever/serious health symptoms, excessive bleeding, or head injury.

1. A qualified teacher will administer first aid and make the child as comfortable as possible.
2. Parents of the child will be notified of the accident/incident and asked to pick the child up from school. When in need of emergency medical assistance, an ambulance will be called, and parents will be asked to meet the child at the hospital.
3. A staff member will accompany the child in the ambulance to the hospital and stay with the child until a parent arrives.
4. An Accident / Incident Report Form will be written to inform parent(s) of the details. The child's parent will be asked to read and sign the form to signify that they have been informed of the details.

It is very important that parents always keep emergency contact information in the office up to date. This information should include current home, cell and business telephone numbers, addresses, medications and food allergies

Racine Montessori School

Discipline Policy

Children are always expected to show respect for each other, the teachers and the environment. We provide them with clear examples of positive behavior and how to act in specific situations through our Montessori lessons of Grace and Courtesy and the practices within our Montessori community. Through gentle redirection, the setting of clear limits and teaching in neutral moments, the discipline of the classroom is maintained. If these measures don't work and a child lacks self-control, a teacher may separate the child from the group and have someone sit with him/her until he/she regains their control to resume normal class activity.

At no time will harsh or abusive punishment be used, nor will the child be neglected or humiliated. It is understood that children need to learn to respond to their emotions in a positive and constructive manner. One function of the school is to guide children through this process of developing self-discipline and awareness of their role in a group.

While RMS will look at each incidence and each child's behavior on an individual basis, the behaviors described below will elicit the following course of action:

1. The teacher will ask the parents for a conference to notify them of the problem and to discuss it.
2. The staff will make careful, written observations of child's behavior, decide on a plan to assist the child in modifying his/her behavior and make the administrator aware of the steps that will be taken.
3. If the behaviors continue, the parents may be asked to:
 - a. Reduce the child's schedule
 - b. Withdraw the child until a later date
 - c. Withdraw the child from the program.

These behaviors include:

1. Overly aggressive
2. Physical fighting or any type of bullying
3. Consistent Inability or unwillingness to follow a simple request
4. Destruction to school property or the personal property of another individual.
5. Using foul language

These measures are taken in the best interest of the child, the parents and the other children. Sometimes the behavior is only temporary in the child's life, but the school cannot be responsible to modify difficult behavior patterns. Only parents can handle this task. RMS will always seek to support the parents of our students.

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 through email. Our website, at www.racinemontessori.com, will also have school information under the parent tab (i.e. the monthly calendar). We have both a public FACEBOOK page (<https://www.facebook.com/racine.montessori>) and a closed parent group page used for family community building as well as a repeat of RMS announcements. We have information on how to access these pages in your family packet. In addition, some information such as pizza order slips, permission slips and individual classroom events/activities will be sent home in your child's backpack. Please be sure to check it every day.

TUITION billing takes place on the first of the month and statements will be emailed to you at that time. Please make sure we always have your updated email address in our files. Payments are due on the 15th of the month. We encourage families to use our tuition electronic funds transfer (EFT) . Your tuition payment will be withdrawn 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.

We are also now set up to take charge cards for tuition payment. You will however, be charged an additional processing fee of 2.75%, subject to change. Please call the office or stop in to make your charge card payment.

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.

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 trip in the early fall to a nature center or farm. The Elementary students 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. The Upper Elementary plans a trip to Nature's Classroom for several days in the winter and the Adolescents plan a trip every other year to Washington D.C. 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 and younger or less than 80 pounds must be in a car seat or booster seat.

LOST AND FOUND There is a lost and found area located just inside the main front doors. If we find clothing articles or other objects that are not labeled with a student name, the items will remain in the lost and found until after conference times and then given to a charitable organization. Labeling your children's personal items is the best assurance for personal property to be returned to you in the event your child leaves something outside or somewhere in the building other than their classroom or child care.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS are especially needed and appreciated at Racine Montessori School! Without the gifts of parents' time, energy and expertise, our fundraising events and activities would not exist. Parents help with car line, 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.

We ask that all parents fill out the **Time and Talent Survey** so that we can let you know when we need help in specific areas. If you do not have one on file, it will be included in your family packet at the beginning of the school year.

In addition to volunteering time and talent, each family is required to fulfill one cleaning obligation per child enrolled* and to support the Lakefront Artist Fair as an event volunteer in May.

(*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 Our fundraising calendar is included in your family packet. The Lakefront Artist Fair, our major fundraiser, 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**, an on-going online 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!

AmazonSmile is another easy fundraiser that benefits our school so if you do online shopping at Amazon, this would be a wonderful way to support our school.

We have included instructions on how to register for AmazonSmile and Scrip in your family folder and this year, **we will have volunteers in the teachers' lounge during fall conference to help you set up your log in for either site if you need assistance.**

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.