

Parent/Student Handbook  
School Year 2017/2018



**HUDSON COUNTRY MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

44A Shelter Rock Road, Danbury, Connecticut 06810  
[www.hudsoncountry.org](http://www.hudsoncountry.org)

# Mission Statement

Hudson Country Montessori School's mission is to create a learning environment that promotes students innate curiosity and love of learning by integrating their evolving interests and abilities with a highly individualized learning path. This student-centered process is intrinsically motivating and helps our students achieve their highest potential in each area of the curriculum. The outcome of our progressive Montessori pedagogy is students who are creative thinkers, as well as independent, confident and motivated achievers. Each HCMS student knows that, "With hard work and perseverance, I can do anything!"

Hudson Country Montessori School is a family-friendly school that appreciates diversity and embraces differences. We strive to help our students become respectful, socially-adept and compassionate leaders.

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## **Dear Parents:**

Hudson Country Montessori School is a school where children blossom! We seek to inspire a passion for excellence and to nurture curiosity, creativity and imagination. Our goal is not only to give students knowledge, but to prepare them with thinking and leadership skills needed to succeed in the ever evolving work force of tomorrow. Our former students have gone off to become very successful in high school, college and in their careers. But more importantly, they are filled with self-confidence and doing things that are important to them, while being mindful of their responsibility to protect the environment and to have compassion for others less fortunate.

We know that this goes beyond the scope of traditional education, but then, Hudson is a rather unusual school.

We work hard to create a sense of community and extended family at Hudson. In most cases, children and their parents make lifetime friends at Hudson. In this booklet, you will read about the many activities we have scheduled to create this sense of community at Hudson and we hope you will get involved and participate.

We also believe that your child's success in school is related to our partnership with you, the parent. We strive for open lines of communication and invite you to ask any questions at any time. We also hope you will join us at the many informative events designed to help our children through their many developmental stages.

Welcome again to Hudson!

*Mark F. Meyer*

Head of School

## BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE MONTESSORI APPROACH

*The most favorable time for a child to learn is when he/she wants to do it himself/herself. – Maria Montessori*

### THE MONTESSORI CLASSROOM:

**Montessori classrooms are bright, warm, and inviting. They are filled with plants, animals, art, music, books, and interest centers filled with intriguing learning material, fascinating mathematical models, maps, charts, fossils, historical artifacts, computers and scientific apparatus.**

**You will not find rows of desks in our classrooms. Students are typically found scattered around the classroom, working alone or in small groups. They tend to become so involved in their work that we cannot help but be tremendously impressed with a sense of calm and concentration.**

**It may take a moment to spot the teachers within the classrooms. They can be found working with one or two children at a time, advising, presenting a new lesson, or quietly observing the class at work.**

**In her research, Dr. Montessori noted specific characteristics associated with the child's interest and abilities at each plane of development. Rather than fight the laws of nature, Montessori suggested that we "follow the child" and allow our children to show us how to facilitate the development of their human potential.**

**Her focus on the "whole child" led Montessori to develop a very different sort of school from the traditional adult-centered classroom. The Montessori classroom is not the domain of the adults in charge, it is a carefully prepared environment designed to facilitate the development of the children.**

**This is a true community of children. They move freely within the rooms, selecting work that captures their interest. When they are hungry, they prepare their own snack and drink. When something spills, they help each other carefully clean things up. It is clear to even the casual observer that this environment belongs to the children.**

**The Montessori Classroom is commonly referred to as a prepared environment. This expression reflects the care and attention that is given to creating a learning environment that will reinforce the children's independence and intellectual development.**

### **RESPECT, INTELLIGENCE AND INDEPENDENCE**

**We know that young children are full and complete individuals in their own right. They deserve to be treated with the full and sincere respect that we would extend to their parents. Respect breeds respect and learning is facilitated in an environment of mutual respect.**

**Dr. Montessori believed that intelligence can be increased by exposure to a broad array of experiences early in a child's life. The nature of the Montessori experience is to provide children with an stream of developmentally appropriate experiences to allow each child's potential to evolve. Because these experiences are individualized to the child's interest, children are more engaged and committed to their own cognitive development.**

**By allowing children to develop a meaningful degree of independence and self-discipline, Montessori sets a pattern for a lifetime of good work habits and a sense of responsibility. Students are taught to take pride in doing things for themselves carefully and well.**

### **TEACHING CHILDREN TO THINK FOR THEMSELVES**

**The program is designed to help each student discover and develop his/her own talents. We know that no two students will learn at the same pace, nor will they share the same interests at the same time. Therefore, we strive to be flexible and creative in addressing each student as a unique individual.**

**Rather than present students with "better answers," Montessori teachers ask students "better questions." They lead students to think and to discover the answers for themselves. Learning becomes its own reward, and the habit of successfully finding answers fuels a child's desire to discover even more.**

### **SOCIALIZATION, COLLABORATION, FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND INDEPENDENTLY CHOSEN WORK**

**Montessori children are free to move about so they can work alone, with others or with the teachers during the work period. They may select any**

activity and work as long as they wish, provided they do not disturb anyone, and things are put back where they belong.

At various points during the day, the students work together in groups for specific lessons, recreation, and “specials” such as Gym, Music, Art, Drama and Spanish.

In an atmosphere where children learn at their own pace and compete only against themselves, they learn not to be afraid of making mistakes. They quickly find that few things in life come easily and they can try again without fear of embarrassment. Before a child is allowed to advance to more challenging work they must demonstrate proficiency in earlier lessons. We do not issue grades because every child is required to get an “A” before advancing to new work. By removing the punitive aspects of school and enhancing the experiential aspects of learning, our students actually enjoy learning and they become fully engaged in their own education.

Through the Montessori Method each child gains the self-esteem and self-awareness that leads them towards personal peace. With this, the child is then able to reach out to others in constructive, collaborative and ultimately peaceful ways.

## INTEGRATED MONTESSORI CURRICULUM

The Montessori curriculum uses an integrated, thematic approach that ties the separate disciplines of the curriculum together. We also evaluate and integrate components of the traditional curriculums such as *Connecticut Preschool Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks*, *Connecticut Curriculum Framework K-12*, *Common Core Standards* and the *New Rochelle New York Curriculum Outline K-12* to best meet the needs of all our children.

Literature, the arts, history, social issues, political science, economics, science and the study of technology all complement one another. As an example, when our students study Africa in world history, they will read African folk tales in world literature, create African masks in art, learn Swahili songs in music, make hieroglyphic calendars in math, as well as study African animals in zoology.

Our mathematics curriculum follows a European model of unified mathematics through which students are introduced to concepts in algebra, geometry, mathematical logic, and statistics from the early years of their education, rather than waiting until high school, as is normal in the United States.

The same is true in our science curriculum, weaving principles of physics, chemistry, the earth sciences, botany, and zoology together from the

preschool years and up, with far greater emphasis on the sciences in general than is common in most American elementary curriculums.

Hudson acknowledges that Professional Development is a crucial part of maintaining a higher level of education and quality of care. Hudson teachers are expected to and are encouraged to be life long learners. Each teacher has their own professional growth plan to help track their professional development.

## TYPICAL CLASS SIZE

Our Montessori Elementary classrooms are made up of approximately twenty-four children ages six to nine (Lower Elementary) and ages nine to twelve (Upper Elementary- Middle School) taught by at least one certified Montessori Teacher and an Assistant Teacher. We prefer co-teacher teams such that both teachers are Montessori certified. Although we believe this is a better model for Montessori education, it is not essential, not guaranteed and is not typical of Montessori schools on the whole.

Our Montessori Primary classes are made up of approximately twenty-two to twenty-eight children, three to six years old taught by a certified Montessori Teacher and an Assistant Teacher.

There are approximately 60 children in our Infant/Toddler Community that consists of an Infant Group starting at age 8 weeks of age, a Waddler Group (mobile infants) and a Toddler Group. Each group is taught by a Montessori Teacher, an Assistant Teacher and an appropriate number of Teacher's Aides. Ratios are approximately 1:4 children in Infants; 1:4 children in Waddler and 1:7 children in Toddlers.

**All class placements are determined by the child's social, emotional and academic readiness rather than chronological age.**

## THE PURPOSE & BENEFIT OF MULTI-AGE CLASSES

Montessori classes encompass a three-year age span. Students not only learn "with" each other, but "from" each other. Younger students benefit from the daily stimulation of older role models who they desire to emulate. Older students benefit from enhanced self-esteem and the development of leadership skills while testing the depth of their own knowledge.

Some parents worry that having younger children in the same class as older ones will leave someone shortchanged. However, the concept for the multi-age groupings was actually modeled after the family. In most families, the children are of different ages and yet none of them are shortchanged. In fact, Montessori educated children typically work at a grade level that is one to two years ahead of children trained in traditional school settings.

**Academics aside, the multi-age classroom offers one emotional benefit not available in the family setting. Because in the Montessori classroom each child has an opportunity to be the youngest, the middle and the oldest, he/she thereby acquires the positive character traits of each “position.” The benefit to younger children in a class comes from the desire to imitate older more competent child role models. The benefit of being an older child comes from the responsibility each older child has for various rotating leadership roles required of the oldest students. Much research has been done on the impact of birth order and numerous studies demonstrate that the leaders tend to be oldest children. (It is worth noting that seventy percent of US Presidents were oldest children.) Thus, the three year cycle provides a unique environment to teach *all* children how to be leaders.**

**The multiage grouping also allows gifted children the stimulation of older intellectual peers while at the same time allowing normal social/emotional/physical development with same age peers.**

**Working in one class for three years also allows students to develop a strong sense of community with their classmates and teachers. In our classrooms, two thirds of the children typically return each year. Since the teacher knows most of the children and their parents they only need to learn about a few new children/families each year. Conversely, the returning children know the teacher, classroom rules and classroom culture and the older children begin practicing leadership by helping the new students adjust to the classroom environment. By virtually eliminating the learning curve at the start of the year, learning begins from day one, making multiage classrooms significantly more efficient for teaching/learning.**

## **MONTESSORI MATERIALS – A ROAD FROM THE CONCRETE TO THE ABSTRACT**

**Dr. Montessori noted that children learn most readily from concrete experience and direct interaction with people and things in their environment. This led Montessori to develop concrete learning tools, which have become known as “Montessori Materials”. We hope you attend our parent education presentation called; “The Journey” which is an overview of the Journey a child takes from the Infant Room through Middle School. Throughout the Journey you will experience, first hand, how the materials promote *understanding* of concepts that most of us who attended traditional education schools had to learn by rote.**

## Administrative Matters

### THE OFFICE:

The administrative office handles the school's overall business affairs, correspondence, and telephone calls. Please call with any questions or concerns you may have.

Formal office hours are from 8:00am – 4:00pm, Monday through Friday. However, there will also be an administrative person in the building from 7:00-8:00am and 4:00-6:00pm who will be able to assist you.

Telephone: (203) 744-8088

Facsimile: (203) 748-3403

E-mail: [Info@hudsoncountry.org](mailto:Info@hudsoncountry.org)

Web Address: [www.hudsoncountry.org](http://www.hudsoncountry.org)

### 24 HOUR EMERGENCY CONTACT:

If you need/want to speak with someone outside of school hours you may contact Mark Meyer (203-512-1536) or Megin Meyer (203-512-3508) on their cell phones. Mark & Megin Meyer hope that you will call if you need immediate verbal communication or if you need to report something of an urgent confidential nature.

If you need to speak with Mark or Megin Meyer on a non-emergency basis, you can leave a message on the school telephone answering machine (203) 744-8088 or email us at: [markmeyer@hudsoncountry.org](mailto:markmeyer@hudsoncountry.org) or [megin@hudsoncountry.org](mailto:megin@hudsoncountry.org).

### SNOW DAYS/EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS:

The Internet is usually the best source of information about school closings, delays and early dismissal. To access this information, go to:

[www.hudsoncountry.org](http://www.hudsoncountry.org) A banner at the top of the home page will be updated by 6:00am or [www.ctweather.com](http://www.ctweather.com)

**Click on “School Cancellations”**

**Scroll down until you see Hudson Country Montessori School.**

**Radio and television stations have been unreliable in getting our information on the air. If it seems like everyone is closing or delayed except us, check the Internet. We rarely close for the day, but we may delay opening and/or close early. The following local radio and television stations are given announcements for our school; however, these stations do not always provide information in a timely fashion. If you do not hear announcements for our school, you should check another station or use one of our other services.**

**Television Stations:**

**Channel 3**

**Channel 6**

**Channel 8**

**Fox Channel**

**PUBLIC SCHOOL CALENDAR ONLY - If your child is on the Hudson’s “Public School Calendar”, announcements on radio and television regarding Danbury’s Public schools will apply to you also. If you have signed up for the Public School Calendar and send your child when the Public Schools are closed but Hudson is open, you will be charged extra for the day. If it happens more than twice, you should consider enrolling your child in our “Hudson Calendar” schedule, which includes snow days.**

**PROFESSIONAL DAYS:**

**As the School continues to develop its curriculum and educational program, our teachers will spend several days each year in professional workshops and seminars. These professional days represent an essential investment in the teacher’s continuing education. Whenever one teacher in a class is away from school for a Professional Day, the other teacher(s) will stay in school to manage the class with a substitute teacher.**

**FAMILY INVOLVEMENT:**

**The School is founded on a partnership between the students, parents, faculty and administration that work together as a community. Families are encouraged to get involved with school activities and to participate on one of the many parent committees.**

**If joining a warm and welcoming community is not reason enough for you to get involved in school events, you should know that there is a growing body of research that correlates student success in school with parental involvement. That said; we hope to see you at many parent events!**

## SCHOOL SESSIONS (summer hours are slightly different):

Early Session	7:00am	–	9:00am
Half Day AM	9:00am	–	12:00pm
Half Day PM	12:00pm	–	3:00pm
Full Day	9:00am	–	3:00pm
Late Session I	3:00pm	–	4:55pm
Late Session II	4:55pm	–	5:55pm

## CONFERENCES, EVALUATIONS AND REPORTS:

**Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled during the late fall, mid-winter and a third optional conference is scheduled in the spring.**

**Progress reports will be prepared for all Infant through Primary children in the late Fall and late Spring. These will be used in parent conferences. Report cards will be prepared for all Elementary children in the late Fall, and late Spring of each school year. When possible, both parents should attend.**

**A meeting with the Head teacher can be arranged any time that you have a concern or question. Please feel free to call the school to set up an appointment. Also, please let us know of any changes in your home situation that might affect your child in school.**

## STANDARDIZED TESTING:

**Working closely with your children on individualized learning plans is normal in the Montessori classroom. We do not need a test to tell us how your child is progressing. However, standardized testing is a tool that helps us ensure that our own evolving curriculum remains richer than the traditional school curriculum across all academic areas.**

**The School administers the CPAA student assessment from Educational Records Bureau (ERB) to children in Pre-K to Grade 3. CPAA is a computer based assessment tool that is used approximately three times per year to measure student progress through the curriculum. The curriculum test questions were designed by Professors at Columbia Teachers College and the software was designed at MIT. The algorithms change the test questions for each student depending on his/her answers in order to assess exactly what a student does and does not understand about each subject. Since no two children will take the same test, these tests can not be normed. However, the assessment does provide useful insight into your child's developing skills with a comprehensive parent report that you will receive at conference time. The report will also give you activities that you can do with your child at home to further skill development.**

**The School administers the CPT4 student achievement test from Educational Records Bureau (ERB) to all students in Grades 4 and up. The CPT4 is similar to most normed standardized achievement tests except that there is a very heavy emphasis on thinking skills. As a result, the test is much more difficult than standardized state tests.**

**Individual test results are strictly confidential and we will share your child's results with you at a conference or through the mail. The results will also become part of your child's school records that are only released with your written consent. The school may publish average or aggregated results for the various age groups.**

**Your child will participate in the testing process unless we receive a request from either parent/guardian stating that they do not wish a child to be tested. If the parent/guardian does not want a child to be tested but the child is sent to school on a test day, the child will be invited to take the test with his/her friends but the test will not be scored and the answers will be discreetly destroyed upon conclusion of the test.**

**Both the CPAA and the CPT4 tests are primarily administered to students in Private Schools. As such, they are much more difficult than State tests administered by public schools.**

**The CPAA and all or part of the CPT4 test is typically administered to new students entering Hudson in the fall.**

## **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

**Bus transportation is available for children who are five years old and older and who are Danbury residents. Transportation is provided by the Danbury public school board. For details, please contact the office.**

**Parents should discuss their transportation concerns with the schools office manager if special needs are required for their child.**

## **HELP WITH PICK-UP / DROP-OFF IN THE FRONT OF SCHOOL**

**Special conditions may come up and as a school community; we understand that there may come a time where you need assistance dropping off or picking up your child (sick infant in the car/ sick parent/ pregnancy, etc). The school will**

**make an extra effort to help during this time. Please contact the front office for more information.**

#### **NOTICES:**

**News bulletins and notices are distributed primarily through email and through the white boards in the front lobby. Each classroom also has a mail box with a paper and pencil inside so you can write notes to your teacher.**

#### **CLASSROOM COMMUNICATIONS:**

**The school is working toward having all teachers communicate with parents through email. Some of the teachers of our younger children are still acquiring the habit of email communication but every year we improve. Teacher email addresses are available through the intranet portion of the website. Register online and receive more information. Each classroom also has a mail box with a paper and pencil inside so you can write notes to your teacher.**

#### **SCHEDULE CHANGES/INTERRUPTIONS:**

**Vacations planned during the school year interrupt the continuity of your child's education. We strongly suggest that you time your vacations to coincide with the Danbury Public School vacation calendar. Information on the public school calendar and closing days can be located at <http://www.danbury.k12.ct.us/>**

**Maintaining a consistent daily routine will help your child develop his/her physical and intellectual abilities to the fullest. If, however, a circumstance should arise whereby you need to extend your child's day (i.e., AM child to remain at school for the PM session), you may make arrangements through the office at least 48 hours in advance to reserve the space. In most circumstances, we are able to accommodate the need to stay longer on a day the child is already scheduled. Charges for extra services can be found on the back of Hudson's current tuition schedule.**

**Parents who wish to reduce their child's schedule (less hours per week), must dis-enroll their child in order to do so. Students who are dis-enrolled at any time during the school year must reapply and will be treated the same as any new, prospective student with regards to admissions and tuition. Priority is given to students who wish to enroll full time.**

**Students enrolled in three (3) or four (4) day programs must maintain the same schedule every week, and must include a Monday or a Friday. There is no public school calendar option for children enrolled fewer than five (5) days. There will be no substitution of days due to holidays, family vacation, snow closings, other family situation or medical conditions that may cause a child to be absent from any of the School's programs.**

**The billing date is the end of the month and all families will be billed for the following month (i.e.) billing Date August 30<sup>th</sup> will be for September 1<sup>st</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>**

**You are allowed 1 change to your child's schedule. After that any changes will be charged as such:**

**2<sup>nd</sup> change: \$25.00      3<sup>rd</sup> change: \$50.00      4<sup>th</sup> change: \$75.00**

**Charges will increase by \$25.00 increments for all extra changes after the 4<sup>th</sup> change.**

**If you are delinquent 1 month on your bill, you will accrue finance charges. These charges will keep accruing until the balance is paid in full. If you are delinquent for more than one month, your child(ren) may not return to school until Tuition is paid in full.**

**Note: Tuition is calculated and due on an annual basis for the school program. The monthly payment schedules are installment plans established for the convenience of the Parents. (They are not payments for a specific month.) Regular monthly installments must be made even if your child does not attend school. Changes in your schedule are subject to an extra fee. See tuition schedule for more details.**

#### **SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM:**

**Hot school lunch is available for an extra charge. Although the school has a restaurant license, school lunch is currently catered from a local restaurant. The meals are essentially balanced and nutritious and submitted to a nutritionist hired by the caterer. Our goal is to serve reasonably healthy food that most children will eat. All chicken/fish tenders and potatoes are baked not deep fried. All vegetables are either fresh or frozen, never canned. Most of the fruit is fresh but some (especially during the winter) is canned. At no time will peanut butter or pork products be served.**

## Preparing for School

### CLASS PARENT:

Each classroom has a “Class Parent” who has agreed to help new parents. Perhaps you have already called this parent for a reference; perhaps you will never feel the need to call him/her. In any case, if you have a question, “Class Parents” are prepared to assist you. If you do not have the name and telephone number of your class parent, ask one of your child’s teachers.

### PRIMARY/ELEMENTARY ORIENTATION EVENING:

During the first Buffer Week of school, a late morning / afternoon is set aside for a general parent orientation. The Head of School begins with a brief discussion on the purpose of a Montessori program and a summary of the school’s goals for the year. The Director will go over simple rules that are expected through out the year, i.e. dress code, when the day begins, parent participation, etc. Following these comments, parents are invited to go to their children’s rooms to visit the Head Teacher and the other parents. Each Head Teacher will address the parents as a group to review the room layout, identify key pieces of equipment the children are using and to present his/her personal class goals for the year. Teachers will also give you the Montessori vocabulary so that you can have meaningful conversations about school with your children. If you have two children, it is strongly suggested that each parent visit a different classroom and that you share notes later that evening.

### SEPARATION:

There is no formula for easy parting. Some children do it better than others. Some children do it earlier than others. For a very few, it is very hard, and for them it usually takes a little longer. If parting is difficult for you or your child, please let us help you. There are many tried and true strategies, and, together, we can select one that feels most comfortable to you.

### PREPARATION FOR SCHOOL:

1. Have a positive attitude. Your child will quickly pick up on any negative feelings you may have.
2. Prepare yourself to leave your child. Trust the person your child will be with.
3. Inform your child of where you are going, what you will be doing, and most importantly, that you will return to pick him/her up at dismissal time.

4. A reassurance such as, “I will be back”, that can be practiced ahead of time with a sitter or a friend, can help your child better understand.
5. Upon returning, a comment such as, “I am back. I am so happy to see you.” – indicates that your child has been missed by you, as much as you have been missed by your child. “I want to hear all about your day and how wonderful it was,” tells your child your thoughts have been of him/her.

#### ONCE AT SCHOOL:

1. Greet your child’s teacher, then say goodbye cheerfully and depart.
2. It is best to let your child watch for a while and assess the group situation. Our teachers will allow each child time and space to settle in.
3. Our teachers give your children a chance to initiate action before offering direction. Remember, some children need longer to adjust than others.
4. If the tears flow and your child is unhappy, a teacher will comfort your child with reassurances that you will return. Distraction, with a piece of classroom material or activity, may be attempted.
5. It will be the teacher’s initial goal to help your child understand that one of the most important factors in coming to school is to be happy.

#### SAYING GOODBYE:

1. Be positive! Show your child your confidence with a warm smile, kiss and hug. Just saying “I love you! Have a great day!” tells your child that you want him/her to be happy.
2. Remember: our teachers will not compete with the parents for a child’s affection. They will support you, as the most important person in your child’s life.
3. Feelings of guilt or sadness about leaving your child will result in similar feelings in your child. Your expressions of happiness and excitement for him/her will insure your child’s enjoyment of every minute at school. Remember: the process of education will only begin when your child feels happy and secure.
4. All lingering trepidation will quickly vanish when, upon your return, your child jumps into your arms, eager to share his/her happy experience.
5. Remember, you are always welcome to come and see what is going on in the classroom through our many windows. Stop by the office first; someone there can help you see without being seen and without causing a disruption in your child’s day.

#### SCHOOL PICTURES:

School pictures are taken in the fall and are expected to be ready in time for the Holidays. Siblings can be photographed separately and/or together.

## ENROLLMENT FORMS:

**No child can be admitted to school unless all the required forms are filled out and on file with the office. Sometimes the Health Form from your doctor gets stuck in a pile in his/her office and we never receive it. If we are missing a form, we will contact you.**

## CALENDAR:

**The school calendar is included in your “back to school package.” Please keep it handy and refer to it for holidays and special school events. This calendar is also available on the school’s website. Please check your email and the white board in the front lobby for last-minute reminders / changes about the calendar.**

## School Policies

### PUNCTUALITY:

**It is essential that you drop off and pick up your child according to the school day schedule. Early pick up and tardiness disrupts the classroom and affects all members of the class.**

### ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL:

**Upon entering and exiting the parking areas, please drive slowly (5 mph) and follow the yellow arrows. Park your car in a marked parking space. Please do not park in the fire lane along the front of the building or in the handicapped spots unless you have a permit. Please go in the same direction, following the arrows, when you depart from the school parking lot.**

**You will escort your child to and from the building. Children in the elementary program, or who take the school bus, may walk into the school by themselves, but must put in their code in the keypad so the school recognizes their attendance.**

### VISITATION:

**You are welcome to drop-in to see your child whenever you wish. However, it is natural for a young child to want to go home once they see their parent. Therefore, if you do not plan to take your child home after your visit, please come by the office and someone will help you see your child without being seen. That will eliminate unnecessary tears.**

**Parents are invited to *observe* their child in their classroom any time by scheduling an appointment. There is a specific protocol for observations that will minimize your “presence” so that you can get the best understanding of daily life in the Montessori classroom. Please remember that an observation does not include engagement with other students or a teacher conference. You can specifically schedule a conference in conjunction with the observation; contact your child’s teacher if you would like a conference.**

### TRANSPORTATION:

**Parents wishing to arrange carpools may request a student list identifying parent’s names and zip codes from the office to determine if other students live in their neighborhood. The school does not distribute phone numbers or addresses. If there is a change in your child’s pick-up routine, we recommend that you remind**

**your child where he/she is going after school and/or who is driving the carpool on that particular day.**

- **In June of the end of the school year, an email will go out to all parents asking if their child will be taking the bus for the upcoming school year.**
- **A list will be generated by the Bus Coordinator of all interested families.**
- **Once a list of bussing students are sent by the Board of Education to the Hudson Bus Coordinator, the Coordinator will cross reference the list with the list generated in June.**
- **All families will be called and confirmed that their child will or will not be taking the bus for the upcoming school year.**
- **All families will be asked to send a confirmation email / letter specifying their child's bus schedule.**
- **All classroom teachers as well as before/ after school staff will be informed of each child's schedule. All schedules will be placed on the classroom refrigerator, for reference.**
- **All changes in the bus schedule from the parents must be made in writing.**
- **It is the responsibility of the parent to request bus changes with the Danbury Board of Education as well as the Hudson Bus Coordinator.**
- **If the Hudson Bus Coordinator is absent for any reason, an alternate will be assigned to the position.**
- **The Hudson Bus Coordinator will be responsible for the morning bussing children and make sure they get to their classroom or designated room/ area.**
- **The Hudson Bus Coordinator will be responsible for the retrieval of all 3pm bus children as well as putting them on the correct bus.**
- **If a bussing student is absent, it is the responsibility of the parent to inform the Hudson Bus Coordinator that they will not be taking the bus, either to or from school on that day. This must be made in writing as well a verbally communicated.**

#### **SNOW DAYS/EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS:**

**It is a school policy to continue operations despite inclement weather conditions. The school, however, may open late or close early. It is our intention to open for at least six hours per day so that working parents can accomplish their most essential tasks. In the event of severe weather conditions, please follow the procedure in the Snow Days/Emergency Closings on page 11.**

**Although Hudson's "Public School" calendar follows the Danbury Public school holiday and snow day schedule relatively closely, it does not follow the Public School calendar exactly. Hudson Country Montessori School typically starts the school year a few days earlier than the public school and it does not make-up days missed for inclement weather unless the total number of emergency closings exceeds five full days. Hudson also does not recognize the Public School half days.**

#### **FORCE MAJOR:**

**In the event that the School, for any length of time as a result of a casualty or other force major event, shall postpone classes for the academic year or disrupt instruction during the academic year there will be no refunds of tuition for the time. By signing the tuition and enrollment agreement, parents acknowledge the policy and, regardless of any such postponement, cancellation or disruption, agree to pay tuition according to their Tuition and Enrollment Agreement(s).**

#### **DISCRIMINATION:**

**In keeping with Montessori philosophy, Hudson Country Montessori School encourages diversity among the students and staff. We celebrate each person's unique individuality in many ways. The School does not discriminate in employment or admissions on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability (when reasonable accommodation for the disability can be made).**

#### **PICK-UP AUTHORIZATION:**

**The individuals you identified on the Release Authorization Form are the only individuals authorized to take your child home from school each day.**

**If anyone other than an authorized individual is to pick up your child, it is mandatory that the parents provide prior notice in writing to the office. We must have written and dated notes for any changes in authorization. Children will not be released to an unauthorized person. Any authorized pick-up person must present a photo ID / License upon arrival before a child will be allowed to leave with him/her.**

**The School opens at 7:00am and closes at 5:55pm (Monday through Friday except holidays). If a child is not picked up by 6:15pm and we are unable to reach the parents or the release contacts, the emergency medical contacts may be called. The child will be held at the School until contact is made. If contact is not made by 7:00pm (or within two (2) hours of an earlier closing), the police will be notified. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be imposed after 6:00pm.**

#### **EARLY ARRIVAL/LATE PICK-UP:**

**There is a 15-minute grace period for early arrivals and a 5-minute grace period for late pick-ups up until 6pm based on your child's schedule. If you arrive earlier or pick-up later, you will be charged for the additional service at a rate of \$1 per minute unless you have made prior arrangements with the office at least 48 hours in advance. Pick-up time is the time the child is picked-up from his/her classroom not the time the parent entered the building.**

**If you arrive before 8:00am you should proceed to the front office or look for a staff person and ask for instructions. If you arrive between 8:00am and 9:00am, you should drop your child off at his/her classroom.**

**If a child is enrolled in a session that ends before 5:55pm and the child is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of that session, the child will join the subsequent**

session (afternoon or late session), and the parents will be billed at the rate of \$1 per minute until the child is picked up.

At 5:55pm, all children remaining at school will be taken to the late pick-up person in the front lobby area where they will read or play quietly. Late pick-up fees for pick-ups after 6:00pm are given entirely to the person on duty for late pick-ups.

A fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged for unscheduled early arrivals and late pick-ups. If you can provide the school with 48 hours advanced notice of an early arrival or late pick-up, it *may* be possible to accommodate your request at a lower rate.

#### LATE DROP-OFF/EARLY PICK-UP:

The academic portion of the school program runs *Kindergarten and Lower Elementary classes from 9:00am to 3:00pm and 8:30am to 3:00pm for Upper and Middle School*. If you drop-off or pick-up your child during those hours, you will cause a disruption in the classroom. Please plan to drop-off and pick-up on time. If there is an emergency and you need to pick-up/drop-off your child during class, kindly call the office so arrangements can be made. Primary children who arrive after 9:10am may stay in the front office and wait until 9:45am to enter the classroom, following the end of circle time. Office staff will be happy to make arrangements to work with children during this time if parents cannot wait with their child.

The State regulates attendance of students in grades Kindergarten and up. If your child is late for school (after 9:00am), it will be reported as a “tardy” and your child will need to obtain a tardy slip at the front office prior to entering the classroom. A student who is tardy five times will receive a warning slip. Continued late attendance will prompt a meeting with the Head of School or Director. The school is required to report to the State when a student is tardy more than 25 times in a school year.

#### ATTENDANCE:

There are approximately 180 school days in the academic year. For school age children, attendance is taken daily and becomes part of the child’s official school record. The State of Connecticut classifies a child with 20 absences as “chronically truant”. Any student who has 4 unexcused absences from school in any one month or 10 unexcused absences from school in any school year is “Truant”. Children will be excused from school when the parent provides a written note describing the following reasons for absence: personal injury or illness, death in the family, religious observance, family emergency, and school sponsored field trips, court appearances, suspension. If your child misses an excessive number of school days because of circumstances beyond your control, the State of Connecticut requires that you make arrangements to maintain the same level of academic achievement as if he/she had attended school. If your Kindergarten or Elementary/Middle School student will be absent from school you must inform the office. If your younger child will be absent from school, we encourage you to call the office so we can inform your child’s teacher.

For more truancy information from the State of Connecticut education Department see:

[http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/publications/guidelines\\_excused\\_and\\_unexcused\\_absences.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/publications/guidelines_excused_and_unexcused_absences.pdf)

**Kindergarten is mandatory in Connecticut for children who turn 5 on or before January 1st.** *The parent or person having control of a child 5 years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is 6 years of age. . .by personally appearing at the school district office and signing an option form" (CT ST § 10-184).*

### DRESS CODE for ALL STUDENTS:

In the Montessori tradition, our children are encouraged to be independent; including making decisions about the clothing they wear. If our children want to wear one blue sock and one red sock that is fine with us. However, it is important to the development of self-respect/self-esteem that indoor and outdoor clothing be clean, neat and suitable to the season.

Clothing should be practical so children can move freely and sit comfortably on the floor. Tight body suits and leggings must be covered by other clothing. Mini-skirts, ripped / distressed fabric, holes, tears, bleach spots, logos, etc and sheer or revealing clothing is not permitted.

- **Outer clothing such as jackets, nylon windbreakers, hooded sweatshirts, coats and hats may not be worn in the building.**
- **Footwear must be worn at all times on school grounds and must allow the wearer to move quickly without losing the shoe or injuring him/herself. Footwear of any type (including sneakers) cannot have heels or soles greater than 1 inch.**
- **Clothing is expected to cover the torso, the midriff, and all undergarments.**
- **Shorts, skirts and dresses must be long enough so that they reach the fingertips when the wearer's arms are extended straight down. This includes slits in skirts and dresses.**
- **The following items are not allowed to be worn in the building:**
  1. **Torn, tattered, wrinkled, or dirty clothing**
  2. **Hats of any type**
  3. **Sandals that do not have a back strap**
  4. **Sunglasses**
  5. **Pants touching the floor**
  6. **Inappropriate pictures, symbols, or language, including messages about drugs, alcohol, smoking or of a derogatory sexual or racial nature**
  7. **It is recommended that boys wear shirts with collars and that girls wear shirts/blouses (no t-shirts). All branding must be of a size that it can be completely covered by the students closed fist.**

### **We recommend:**

- All clothing on inside tag is labeled with your child's name.
- During winter months, each child will need boots, snow pants, a hat, mittens/gloves and a warm coat. If your child wears shoe boots that fit directly over socks, they will need shoes/slippers that are kept at school. (Note: for safety, all hood and waist cords should be removed from coats and jackets.)
- Replacement clothing should be sent to school on the day after soiled/wet clothes are sent home.

### **The Elementary level:**

In addition to the dress code for all children (see above), there are additional requirements for students in Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary and Middle School. Examples of appropriate clothing can be found at [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com), Target or JC Penney's online under "School Uniforms". (Clothing with the Hudson logo may be ordered from Lands End. Shirts must have a collar and be white or solid colored in polo, turtleneck or oxford styles.

- Pants/skirts/shorts/collared dresses are to be navy colored in traditional chino, twill or corduroy styles.
- Gym attire is mandatory for all Lower through Middle School students. Clothing will **SHOULD** have the schools logo and **MUST** follow the same color of navy. The school will have available for purchase; sweat pants, jersey style shirts, shorts, and tee-shirts for purchase. See the store / website for purchase list and order form.
- Visible body piercings are restricted to ears (unless culturally significant). Earrings should not dangle or cause risk of being pulled or caught during daily activity including physical education.
- Visible tattoos are not permitted.
- Hair must be a natural hair color. No Dyes (permanent or temporary)
- No Mohawks, spiked, hair insignia or any hair style that distracts the learning process for the student or fellow students.
- Visible cosmetics (face powder, eye make-up, lipstick etc.) are not permitted. Plain colored nail polish is the only exception and only for girls.
- Cell phone use is not allowed in school. If a phone call home is needed by a student they may use school phones. Students who travel to and from school by bus may bring cell phones to school but they are not to be used for any purpose during school hours. All phones are the responsibility of the student. The school is not responsible for any misplaced, stolen phones or electronics.

- If an Elementary child comes to school more than twice in clothes that do not fit into the above description, they will be asked to leave school and change. The third time a child comes to school who is out of compliance with the dress code, the parents will be asked to meet with the Head of school or child will be suspended from school until compliance with the code can be achieved.

Children on the Hudson Calendar do not have to follow dress code on vacation days, and days that the PSC do not attend school, unless otherwise noted.

### **Toddler Behavior:**

In the toddler program it is developmentally appropriate for behaviors such as biting, pushing, hitting, etc., however, the school does not take these behaviors lightly. These unwanted behaviors can become habitual and wide spread very quickly if they are not addressed immediately.

The teachers address unwanted behavior(s) with the children immediately and an incident report is sent home to the parents of both students and the Infant/Toddler Coordinator at the end of the day. If there are multiple incidents in a short period of time the teachers and/or the Coordinator will meet with the family of the child to devise strategies to eliminate the unwanted behavior(s). If the behavior(s) do not stop, the Coordinator may recommend professional counseling or suspension from school until the behavior(s) stop.

### **DISCIPLINE:**

Montessori introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social discipline goes hand in hand. At Hudson, our long term goal for the children is to attain a discipline that comes from within the child; from their own understanding of a situation; their own growing ability to express their feelings – not from the authority of the adult. This is achieved in an environment of respect for all children. In this environment, the child will respect the rights of others and develop control from within. Clear limits and classroom rules set at the beginning of the year will be reinforced consistently.

Children usually experience school as a safe place where they can be themselves and express their feelings. Therefore, our approach is based on empowerment, mutual respect and trust. Neither corporal punishment nor physical or emotional intimidation is allowed at Hudson. Although we may ask a child to take some time to compose him/her or to reflect on an incident he/she was involved in, we don't believe in "time out" in the classic punitive sense. If it is necessary to ask a child to remove him/herself from an activity, most times the child will be allowed to decide when they are ready to rejoin the group.

If a student has developmentally inappropriate behavioral issues, the teacher will consult with the Level Coordinator, Director and / or the Head of School. If the

behavioral issues can not be resolved internally, the parent(s) will be asked to come to school for a conference to discuss strategies to change/eliminate the behavior(s). In some cases, the school may request the assistance of a psychologist. If the school chooses to involve a psychologist, and the child's family is not able to acquire one, the school will contact the schools psychologist and the family will be charged for the psychologist services.

While the parents and school are waiting for an evaluation/counseling from a psychologist, the school may request or recommend that a "shadow" be hired to support the student or that the student is kept home. If the psychologist believes the student has the potential to be successful in Hudson's Montessori environment in the long term, the school may require that the child have a full-time or part-time support person(s) to help the student prepare for future success. The child's parents will be charged an additional fee to cover the cost of that/those individual(s) hired based on the time required and the credentials they must have. Notwithstanding the school's desire to help students who struggle with behavioral issues, the following policy with regard to unacceptable behaviors will be observed.

The following chart defines the school's response to unacceptable behaviors.

**Discipline for Specific Incidents**

<b>Behavior</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Intervention</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Intervention</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Intervention</b>
Insubordination	Parent notification	Professional Intervention	Expulsion
Racial or other Discriminatory Slurs	Parent Notification	Immediate 24 hours suspension or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)	Expulsion
Obscene, Vulgar, Abusive, Inflammatory & Threatening Language/Gestures toward oneself or other students	Parent Notification	Professional Intervention or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)	Expulsion or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)
Obscene, Vulgar Abusive, Inflammatory & Threatening Language/Gestures toward teachers	Parent notification	Immediate 24 hour suspension / or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)	Expulsion or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)
Intentionally striking/hurting oneself, other students or teacher	Parent Meeting with teacher and follow-up with student. Recommend professional counseling (Student may be asked to	Immediate 24 hours suspension followed by professional counseling process and a mandatory meeting between parents and school	Expulsion or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)

	leave school property.)	or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)	
Theft or Possession of Stolen Goods	Parent notification	Expulsion	
Vandalism	Parent notification And Professional Counseling	Expulsion	
Intentional Bullying or Harassing	Parent notification	Expulsion	
Criminal Mischief	Parent notification	Expulsion	
Disruption of Educational Process	Parent notification	Parent Pick-up for day	Expulsion
Unsuitable Attire	Parent notification	Immediate 24 hour suspension	Expulsion
Leaving school without permission	Expulsion		
Fighting / verbally or physically	Parent notification	Immediate 24 hour suspension	Expulsion
Weapons/Facsimile Or Fireworks possession	Expulsion		
False Fire Alarm- Elementary age and older	Parent notification Immediate 24 hour suspension	Expulsion	
Bomb Threat	Expulsion		
Using, Selling, Possession of Controlled Substances, Alcohol, Tobacco and Paraphernalia	Parent notification and Immediate 24 hour suspension or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)	Expulsion	
Assault	Immediate 24 hours suspension or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)	Expulsion	
Preschool Biting, Hitting, Intentional Hurting, Spitting Teachers	Parent notification or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)	Professional Intervention	Expulsion
Preschool Biting, Hitting, Intentional Hurting, Spitting on students	Parent notification or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)	Professional Intervention (typically after 3-5 incidents depending on severity/ intent and time frame)	Removal from School until behavior ceases (after 3-5 additional incidents depending on severity / intent and time frame) or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)
Sexual Harassment	Parent Notification or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)	Professional Intervention or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)	Removal from School

## **EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS**

Parents are expected to act with grace and courtesy when in the school environment. Understand and accept the values and mission statement upon which the school operates. Questions and conversations are welcome always, but with common courtesy. The school will never stray from its mission statement or core values.

## **DISENROLLMENT FROM SCHOOL**

The student and parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to accept the rules, policies, procedures, mission and other requirements of the School as noted in the Parent/Student Handbook and other school notices. The School reserves the right to dismiss any student who does not meet the academic and/or behavioral standards of the School or whose family chooses not to meet the academic and/or behavioral standards of the School. In the event the Student and/or Parent(s)/Guardian(s) does not meet the academic and/or behavioral standards of the School, the Head of School, Director or Education Director in his/her sole discretion, may discipline the Student or require the Student's withdrawal. The Parent(s)/Guardian(s) agree that any decision with regard to student discipline for violation of school rules, policies, mission and procedures shall be final and that any such decision does not relieve the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of his/her/their tuition obligations.

Both the parents and the school have the right to terminate the Enrollment and Tuition agreement for any reason according to the procedures described in the Enrollment and Tuition agreement.

### **Parent Barred From Entering School**

Parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to accept the rules, policies, procedures, mission and other requirements of the School as noted in the Parent/Student Handbook, other school notices, the law, and the rules of common courtesy. The school reserves the right to exclude from school activities and premises family members who do not meet the behavioral standards of the school.

**SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN:** Special Needs is a very broad term that includes students with exceptional abilities as well as disabilities. Hudson is able to serve a broad spectrum of student with special needs because of the individualized method of education. The school has students with special needs because most students enter school at the preschool level before it is possible to identify many special needs.

Dr. Montessori developed her method of education first by working with disabled children and then later adapting the method for children without special needs. Therefore, Montessori can be a better fit than traditional education for many

students. While Hudson has enjoyed success working with children that struggle with school work, most (not all) Special Needs students at Hudson are “gifted” and would be bored in a traditional education setting where class work is paced to the “average” student.

The school does not diagnose or identify any special needs. However, if in the professional opinion of our teachers/administrators a child has a developmental issue that they think should be addressed, a meeting is scheduled with the parents to describe the situation, and to determine whether professional evaluation is warranted.

## **LEARNING ISSUES AMONG YOUNGER CHILDREN**

Dr. Montessori observed that all children learn things in a very similar sequence but they do it at their own pace and in their own time. When a teacher at Hudson observes a child who is developing more slowly in one or more areas enough to be of concern, the school will contact the parents to discuss the issue. It is the school’s policy to be pro-active in identifying potential learning issues among young children because many learning issues that are remediated right away can be eliminated forever – before they become a problem. Some would argue that our school is overly pro-active because students “outgrow” many issues by age ten. While it is true that many children will outgrow their learning issues, we prefer to remediate the issue early so the child can focus on learning instead of struggling with their issue.

(The school does not receive fees for referrals. The school typically works through resources provided by the public schools which are often free to Hudson students or through professionals selected by parents. The school makes referrals upon request.)

Pro-actively attending to a young student’s learning issues will at the very worst waste time/money on treatment of something that will resolve itself in the course of normal child development. At best, attending to a perceived learning issue can many times resolve the issue before a student realizes they are different than other students and before the student develops coping strategies and habits that need to be untaught later.

With the direction of the Danbury Public School Special Education Department, Hudson has developed a formal “Child Study Team” program to identify and address learning issues and special needs. Using the system, Hudson works closely with Danbury Public Schools to provide services to our students. If we think your child needs professional support we will invite you to initiate the Child Study Team process for your child and you will be actively involved in the process. If you suspect your child may have needs that we have not identified and please discuss your concerns with your teacher or Ms. Megin.

## PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS:

School personnel do not recommend that a child use psychotropic drugs (e.g. Ritalin). They may recommend that a child be evaluated privately or through the public school system and they may, with parental consent, consult with medical practitioners who have evaluated the child. Questions about this policy should be directed to the Head of School.

## FIRE DRILLS:

The school is visited each year by the Danbury Fire Department for lessons on fire safety.

Emergency building evacuations are conducted once per month as required by the Fire Code. In the winter, we are required to evacuate the building without our coats to reinforce the lesson that no fire alarm should ever be treated as a “drill” and that life is more important than comfort. Although we try to pick the best weather day each month, it gets difficult in January and February. However, by the time really cold weather comes, the children are quite proficient at evacuating and fire drills are relatively short.

## COMMUNICATIONS:

Our goal is to support the whole child – academically, socially, physically and emotionally. The most significant part of evaluating a child’s progress is personal communication between the parents and the school. If at any time, you have a question or concern that needs to be voiced, please contact your child’s teacher or the Level Coordinator/Head of School/Director.

Although many of our Assistant Teachers are Montessori trained and or ECE, our Head / Co Teachers are responsible for the developmental timetable for each child. Please try to communicate directly with your child’s Head /Co Teacher whenever possible.

Each Primary and Elementary classroom has a file holder/box on the door or near the classroom entrance. Inside the box is a pad of Post-it notes and a pen for leaving messages to the teacher. Place your note on the door so the teacher will see it. Teachers will respond to the messages daily.

*If you have an emergency and need to speak to someone over the weekend or at night you can call Mark or Megin Meyer at (203) 512-1536 or (203)-512-3508.*

## HUDSON DOES REPORT SUSPECTED CHILD

### ABUSE/NEGLECT:

The School, as an organization, and each school employee, individually, is trained in the prevention and detection of child abuse/neglect and is required by the State

of CT to report suspected abuse/neglect. Staff is responsible to report if they “witness, or become aware of, abuse or neglect of a child enrolled in the facility”. Failure to report suspected child abuse/neglect within 12 hours is punishable by revocation of the school’s license, accreditation, severe monetary fines and prison sentences to those individuals who knew, but did not report. Staff who report abuse/neglect are protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting. School policy on reporting abuse/neglect complies with guidelines prepared by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). [www.ct.gov/dcf/site/default.asp](http://www.ct.gov/dcf/site/default.asp). The DCF hotline to report abuse is 800-842-2288.

**Definition of Abuse:** A child may be considered abused who has been (A) inflicted with physical injury or injuries other than by accidental means, (B) has injuries that are at variance with the history given of them, or (C) is in a condition that is the result of maltreatment, including, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual molestation or exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment”.

**Definition of Neglect:** A child is considered ‘neglected’ who, (A) has been abandoned, (B) is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally or morally, or (C) is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to the well-being of the child.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS:

All information regarding your child is considered privileged and confidential. Except as otherwise required by law, information will not be released without parental consent.

#### CHANGES IN POLICY OR PROCEDURES:

All policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are subject to change without notice though 30 days notice is provided if practical. When the school makes a change in policy or procedure, a notice will be posted on the white board by the front door.

## DAILY LIVING AT HUDSON:

### CELEBRATIONS:

**Celebrations are an important focus of all classes during the course of the school year. In keeping with the Montessori philosophy, we focus on what can be learned rather than the celebratory aspects of holidays. Parents are invited to attend some of these celebrations:**

- **Harvest Festival:** This is our traditional Fall Celebration. This is a wonderful time to meet the other children and parents in your child's class. We continue the tradition of celebrating the harvest with food, games and joyful activities.
- **International Week:** Middle and Upper Elementary students prepare presentations on various countries that are presented to Lower Elementary and Primary students. Presentations are factual rather than ideological. We invite children, parents and staff to come to school in clothing representative of their native countries. We also ask families to bring in different types of breads from their native countries to share with classmates.
- **Thanksgiving Feast:** In commemorating this holiday, which celebrates the Pilgrims' harvest of 1621, all children join together in the gymnasium for this special feast. Each child wears something made in the classroom that identifies him/her as either a Pilgrim or Native American, and each class prepares and brings one ingredient for our friendship salad – a multi-fruit dessert salad.
- **Celebrations of Lights:** Dr. Montessori was a passionate advocate for world peace. This passion permeated her vision and her method of education which she liked to call, "Cosmic Education." The process of Cosmic Education is to provide each child a firm foundation in science, history, geography and sociology to provide context for them as they explore and discover who they are and for what reason they have been brought into existence. Celebrations of Light teaches children that although the "basic needs of man" are universal, different cultures and religions have different way of expressing those needs. By learning about and experiencing different cultural/religious celebrations, we promote understanding and respect for differences and defeat cultural/religious divisiveness.

Most religions and cultures have an important holiday that involves light as a symbol. Rather than focus only on Christmas, Hanukah and Kwanzaa, each classroom learns about and sings songs from different cultures. Embracing the joyful aspects of multicultural events serves to minimize our differences as we discover common themes as it provides perspective and respect for different points of view.

- **African American History Month/Black History Month:** Hudson has attracted a culturally/racially/religiously diverse population of families for whom diversity is important. Rather than focus on a particular race or culture during a particular month, we focus on the important accomplishments of role models from all races/cultures/religions/genders on an on-going basis. As a result, African American History “Month” is not on our calendar.
- **Valentine’s Day:** This is a chance to share themes of love with family and friends through giving and receiving Valentines.
- **Passover, Easter & Ramadan:** The retelling of the stories of these holidays can be done with cultural activities, food and other child centered projects. While the history and the essential beliefs behind the celebration are necessary to understand the holiday, proselytizing is not permitted. Please help us celebrate these and other celebrations/holidays that are important to your family by asking your teacher how you can contribute to our multicultural lessons.
- **Earth Day / Earth Week and Arbor Day:** This celebration of the coming of spring is intended to encourage awareness of each individual’s responsibility to the earth, nature and future generations.
- **“End of the Year” Program:** This program is designed to encourage creative and dramatic self-expression. Classes will present a performance/concert for the parents at the end of the school year.
- **Birthdays:** In the Montessori classroom we celebrate many things in an educational context; birthdays are no exception. Birthday celebrations vary considerably by grade so it is best to ask your teacher how to prepare for your child’s birthday.

Sometimes parents want to do something extra for a birthday during school hours. If you are so inclined, please discuss your ideas with your child’s teacher. Whatever you bring to school should be educational in nature, and it should be something that your child will be enthused about and that he/she wants to share with friends. Examples of things that parents have brought in the past are small exotic zoo animals, musicians and farm animals.

**The school does not allow entertainment type activities such as magicians, clowns and characters during school hours. And, the school does not allow**

**party hats, napkins, balloons, favors, tablecloths and other party paraphernalia at celebrations.**

**The school does not accept deliveries (gifts, flowers, balloons, singing telegrams, food, candy etc.) for children enrolled at Hudson.**

**Birthday Parties during Non-School Hours** If you would like to have an entertainment-type birthday party at school with your child's classmates and/or children from outside the school community, you can arrange a traditional party on Saturday or Sunday with Ms. Tita.

Children with summer birthdays may make arrangements with the child's teacher to celebrate their birthday during the last few weeks of school.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS:

Hudson Country Montessori School plans many events and activities for its families. These events are listed on the calendar, which all parents receive at the beginning of the school year. In addition, parents can find information about specific events and activities in the newsletters, on the internet pages for each level, through email blasts, on the whiteboards in the front lobby, and the individual notes sent home with the children.

### CLASS PARENT:

Each classroom has one or more "Class Parent(s)" who serve multiple important functions in our school community. First, class parents are a resource to prospective families and families that are new to our community or to the classroom. The name, phone number and email address are available from your classroom teacher or the office. Second, the Class Parents are a resource to their classroom teachers and support the teachers in a variety of ways. Third, the Class Parent Team collectively coordinates a number of "special events" in the school. Finally, the Class Parent Team is a resource to the school when it acts as a "Parent Board". In this capacity the Class Parent Team advises administration in the development, modification or removal of policies and procedures. If you would like to join the class parent team, please advise your classroom teacher.

**GRANDPARENT / FRIEND VISITING DAY:** This family event invites grandparents (or special friends) to share a morning in the classroom with the students.

**Family Visiting Day:** This family event invites one parent on one day and the other parent another day. It is a day of great pride for the children who can't wait to show you all the wonderful things they can do.

**The Journey:** This is a special program designed to give parents a mini Montessori experience. The program derives its name from the journey participants take from the simplicity of sensory experiences in the infant room to the complexity of advanced mathematics in the upper elementary classroom. The event culminates with a discussion and luncheon. The program is widely regarded as a very moving experience that helps parents understand why Montessori children are passionate and joyful scholars. Enrollment in the program is limited. **This program is not presented every year.**

**Eye to the Future / The Next Level:** Although all parents are welcome to attend this program, it is specifically designed for parents of children who are graduating from one level to the next (e.g. Toddler to Primary; Primary to Lower Elementary; Lower to Upper Elementary and Upper Elementary to Middle School). The program begins with a brief overview slide presentation of Hudson children demonstrating the progression of learning through all grades. Presentations specific to each level follow in the classrooms and deal with developmentally related issues as well as a presentation of Montessori materials/lessons as they apply to your child. When possible, a panel of Hudson Elementary parents will also on hand to answer questions about their experience at Hudson.

**Coffee with the Head of School / Director:** In the fall we schedule a chat with the Director and the Level Coordinators to discuss issues of importance to parents. We open the meeting with a brief state of the school message and then open the discussion to topics of interest to the group. We welcome you to come with your ideas, your concerns or just to listen.

**Parent Education Nights:** Throughout the school year a variety of opportunities are offered to parents to learn about Child development, growth, and concerns. These nights are organized with “professionals” in the fields of discussion. The agenda is decided beforehand by the participants; therefore the issues that are discussed are matters of importance to the members of the group. We encourage all parents to attend these nights to strengthen the parent/school/child relationship/ partnership.

**Toddler-Primary & Elementary “Literacy Night”** is an opportunity for the families of all children to gather as a community. Younger children enjoy story time and simple related crafts.

**Library Cards** ~ Please note that we have applications for library cards in the front office. In addition, we want to remind you that the Danbury Library often hosts reading programs and child- friendly events.

## AN EXTRA CHANGE OF CLOTHES TO KEEP AT SCHOOL:

All students (regardless of age) should keep an extra change of clothing at school. Please include underwear, socks, pants/shorts, shirt, skirt and blouse or a dress. Please send these items in a small plastic bag with the child's name printed on the outside. Even if your child no longer has "accidents", he/she might get wet as a result of rain, snow, a spill during lunch/snack or during a science experiment. Children feel better if they can change out of wet or soiled clothing.

## INFANT ROOM SHOE REMOVAL:

Infants are on the floor daily, on their bellies, knees and feet. To keep the room as clean as possible for them, please remove your shoes before entering the environment. You can place them outside of the classroom.

## CHILDREN'S POSSESSIONS:

All materials in the classroom are intended for the use of all the children. In addition, the children are encouraged to bring special items from home to share with their friends. This special sharing time allows for meaningful conversation. It is our experience that children are most excited to share an item from nature, something they have made, a souvenir from a trip, or a family hobby.

Toys, Phones, iPods, iPads, Tablets, Trading cards, etc..., are to remain at home with the following exceptions:

- Primary students may bring a love-y to school if it helps them transition to school. The love-y must wait for them in their locker.
- Elementary students may bring a toy to play with only if they are enrolled in the late session program. The toys must be delivered to the office in the morning and they will not be accessible until 3:15pm. (eg. they will not be accessible for school recess.)

## SCHOOL POSSESSIONS:

Please check the contents of your child's pockets after school for unfamiliar objects. Objects unfamiliar to you may be the missing part to a game, puzzle or Montessori activity. Small pieces of Montessori activities are not only expensive to replace, but while a piece is being re-ordered, the actual lesson must be removed from the shelf until the replacement piece arrives. The loss of use of a particular activity because of a missing piece affects the learning that occurs in the classroom.

## LOST AND FOUND:

The children and teachers try to keep children's belongings from becoming lost. However, sometimes items get mixed up with other children's belongings and teachers can not identify the owners. Items that are labeled with the child's name rarely get lost. If you have lost an item that you would like to have back, please check our lost and found. The lost and found items are given to a "child friendly"

organization at the end of each season. Please leave valuable items at home as the school is not responsible for lost or misplaced items.

#### DIETARY & FOOD PROGRAM:

We emphasize the importance of balanced nutrition as the primary step to lifelong wellness. Therefore, all children from 18 months of age are eligible for our food program. Breakfast, lunch and snacks are planned to ensure your child has a variety of foods, which are both wholesome and attractive.

While microwaves are in each of the classrooms, these are used only to warm food for lunch not to cook it. Please send your child into school with a microwave safe dish with food to be heated for no more than 10 seconds. Frozen lunches are not accepted for any age level.

Several of our students have severe, anaphylactic reactions to peanuts. As a result, we are a peanut free school. Please do not include products with these allergens in your child's lunch box/bag.

While breakfast and snacks are included in your child's program, lunch must be purchased separately.

School "hot" lunch can be purchased as a five day per week option which includes Pizza Friday or you can elect to purchase Pizza Friday only. School Lunch is only available on an on-going basis; not by the day or by the week. The lunch menu is on a three-week rotation so it is similar from month to month. A lunch menu is available on the school website and in the mail slots in the front lobby.

If your child will not participate in the school's lunch program, you must pack a bag lunch for your child. This bag lunch should contain foods from the nutritionally balanced US Department of Agriculture (USDA) food plate; legumes, vegetable, fruit, and grain. Please do not send your child with treats such as candy, donuts, soft drinks or chocolate milk, these sugared snacks will be sent home with the child, (healthy "treats" include plain / fruit (not sprinkled) yogurt, popcorn, pretzels). Bag lunch beverages must be; 100% fruit juice, water or un-flavored milk (100% fruit juice and milk both count toward the USDA Food Plate requirement). The Health Department requires that you place an ice pack in the lunch bag even if it is a hot lunch (Yes, really!). In addition, the Health Department requires that we send home all leftover food from bag lunches.

**For the Toddler children who bring lunch from home, please cut all food (hotdog, hamburgers, pizza) no larger than ¼ inch, in order to avoid choking.**

## **Acceptable *food Ideas* for the Lunch Box**

### **Drinks:**

- Spring water**
- Milk**
- 100% all-natural juice**
- Soy or rice milk**

### **Main Course:**

- Sandwich or “Wrap” sandwich**
- Bagel sandwich**
- Hummus or baba ganouj with pita bread cut in triangles**
- Pasta**
- Omelet**
- Quiche**
- Leftovers from dinner**
- Yogurt**

### **Side “dish”:**

- Cut vegetables**
- Olives**
- Dried fruit**
- Mini rice cakes**
- Applesauce**

### **Dessert:**

- Cut/whole fruit**
- Mini corn muffin**
- Small “healthy” cookie like oatmeal/raisin, natural fig newton**
- Popcorn**
- Pretzels**
- Banana bread**

## **ELEMENTARY LATE SESSION PROGRAM:**

**Our late session activities combine fun, fitness and learning; incorporating activities such as: cooking, homework and teambuilding/games. All programs encourage the development of close friendships, self-discipline and good sportsmanship.**

## HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

### HEALTH:

**Children are given a routine visual health check each day upon arrival. Any child who shows symptoms of being ill or infectious will not be admitted to School.**

### Animals:

**Due to health reasons as well as exposure of a new animal, parents and children are *not allowed* to bring in any family pets during drop-off/ pick up times. Pictures and videos can be shown if the child would like to show off their family pet. All animal presentations, (petting zoo, little critters) must be approved through the Director of the school.**

### Napping:

**Napping is offered in the Infant through Kindergarten classes. Napping cots are provided by the school and are disinfected daily with bleach water. Children nap in their classroom with the lights turned down. Children who normally nap at home and whose parents prefer them to nap at school will be asked to close their eyes and try to sleep. No child is ever made to stay on his or her cot if they cannot fall asleep after 20 minutes of quiet time. Naptime for children who do sleep is approximately 2 ½ hours for toddler ages and as much as 2 hours for the primary age children. Infant sleeping times follow the infant's schedule. Parents are responsible for the bedding for their child's school cots and need to bring home bedding weekly to wash and returned to school. Soiled bedding will be bagged and sent home on the day it is soiled.**

### School Nurse:

**Hudson has two nurses that visit weekly; one nurse is for preschool students and another nurse is for the school age students. These nurses keep nursing logs, check medications and paperwork, check medical forms/immunizations, conduct eye and hearing screenings, and occasionally conduct faculty health education workshops.**

### Assistance for families to secure medical insurance:

**Families who are without health or dental insurance should ask the office for help to attain them. CT State provides the Husky program which offers health**

and dental insurance for families who meet financial qualifications. If you need help accessing these resources, the office will help you fill out the necessary forms and initiate contact with medical providers. For information on the Connecticut Husky Plan, please contact: 1-877-CT-HUSKY (1-877-284-8759) or <http://www.huskyhealth.com>.

## ILLNESS/EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL:

The school nurse has worked out the following policy in conjunction with the school Doctor (Dr. Vincente Garcia) to minimize your child's exposure to preventable contagious disease.

One of the key elements in improving overall health is to ensure that the children who attend the program every day are healthy. The tricky issue, of course, is trying to define "Healthy". Dr. Garcia feels that we need to be practical in defining "healthy" and that we consider the needs of working parents. However, if children come to school with preventable contagious diseases, then collectively all the parents will lose more work time. So, as always, we are looking for balance.

The following criteria will be used to define "un-healthy". If a child has any two of the symptoms listed below, they are considered unable to attend school for 24 hours medication free, and/or will be sent home unless they have a doctor's note confirming that their symptoms are caused by non-contagious factors such as allergies.

- 1) Persistent cough
- 2) Vomited in past 24 hours
- 3) Temperature of 101°F or greater
- 4) Rashes of uncertain etiology
- 5) Watery stool
- 6) Uncharacteristic irritability or lethargy
- 7) Persistent crying
- 8) Difficult breathing
- 9) Illness that prevents the child from being comfortable in the program

In addition to this school policy, the State of Connecticut requires that children be absent from school for 24 hours medication free, if any one of the following occurs:

1. Two episodes of diarrhea (watery stool) in a one-hour period
2. Temperature of 102°F.
3. Undiagnosed rashes
4. Purulent conjunctivitis, tuberculosis, impetigo, coxsackie, strep throat, scabies, head lice, pertussis, mumps, measles, hepatitis and other contagious diseases.
5. Illness that results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.

## **EPIDEMICS:**

**Epidemics are more common in schools than other types of organizations because children are in frequent physical contact with one another. Nevertheless, the rapid spread of a highly contagious health problem can be prevented or reduced by early detection and treatment. In the event that a highly contagious health problem is identified in school (e.g. pink eye, Head Lice, Chicken Pox, etc.) All parents will be notified immediately.**

**Once a highly contagious health problem is identified at school, the administration will immediately contact the Center for Disease Control at Danbury Hospital and the Danbury Health Department for instructions on how to deal with the problem. This information will be passed along to you. In the past we have been successful in preventing epidemics through a cooperative effort by the parents and staff.**

**When and if needed staff protect children and adults from exposure to high levels of air pollution from smog or heavy traffic by limiting outdoor and physical activity as a precaution during smog or other air pollution alerts.**

## **FIRST AID:**

**All parents are required to sign an Emergency Release form before their child is allowed to enter School. Only first-aid treatment of a minor nature will be administered by the teachers who are certified in First Aid. Parents will be notified of such minor accidents by means of an Incident Report.**

**In case of a more serious accident at School, parents will be notified immediately after or while first aid is given. If you cannot be reached, the emergency number you indicated will be called. If that person is unavailable, we will arrange for your child to be taken to the emergency room at Danbury Hospital via ambulance.**

## **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION:**

**The School is not permitted to administer medication of any kind unless a copy of the Connecticut State Form entitled "Authorization for the Administration of Medication by Day Care Personnel" is completed. It is required that the medication is in its original container with the prescription label attached and at least one dose of the medication must have been administered at home. Please note the following regulations must be followed if the school is to administer medications.**

- 1. We will only dispense medications if the Medication Administration form is filled out completely. Each line must have something written on it. The top portion must be filled out by the doctor, signed and stamped. The bottom portion of the form must be filled out by the parent.**
- 2. We are not allowed to accept faxed medication forms. All forms must be originals and they must have two sides. Please be sure to keep a blank copy of**

the Medication Administration form, or have your child's pediatrician keep a copy of it in the event that you have to use one.

3. All over-the-counter medications require the same Medication Administration form as prescription medications. The Medication Administration forms need to be renewed every 6 months if the child is to continue to receive medication. It is the responsibility of the parents to assure that the forms are current.
4. All medications must be given to the designated person so that we can check the medication and paperwork.

This will prevent us from having to call you to tell you the medication will not be given due to an error in paper work or labeling. We should receive all medication between 7am – 9am, so medication administration can be scheduled.

5. Any child who needs to receive medication on a regular basis during the school day will need a parent to sign them in on a daily medication log. The parent must write the child's name, name of medication, dose to be given, and the times of administration. The parent must also assure that we have a medication administration form on file that is signed by both a parent and a doctor. The Medication and the form must not be expired. The medication must be labeled clearly with the child's name and name of the medication.
6. If a child needs "as needed" medication such as Tylenol during the day, the staff member who administers the medication to your child will document on the daily sheet that the child received the medication and why. (eg. Johnny received Tylenol for temperature of 101.8.)
7. If a child is to receive medication and is not signed up by the parent to do so, the medication will not be given. Exception: only medications that are administered "as needed" will be given without the parent's specific instructions.
8. We do not administer antibiotic medication at school unless it is medically necessary to administer it between the hours of 9am–3pm per the doctor's orders. Antibiotics that are ordered once a day should be given at home. Twice a day should be given before and after school. And, if ordered three times a day, the medication can be given at home before/after school and at bedtime.
9. All medications will only be administered during the hours of 9am-3pm. The only exception is in the case of an emergency.
10. Nebulizer treatments will be administered in emergencies and by physician's order when arrangements are made through the office.
11. There is a Nonprescription Medication form that is used for sunscreens, diaper rash ointment/creams (Desitin, A&D ointment, Vaseline) and/or teething gels. The Nonprescription Medication form must be filled out completely with information written on every line. This form only requires the signature of the

parents/guardian. The Nonprescription Medication form is valid for six months. Again, it is the parent's responsibility to assure that we have current forms.

12. If your child refuses to take a medication or will not take it correctly, you will be contacted. The school will not administer medication to an uncooperative child. The school will contact the child's parents/guardians (or alternately the "Medical Emergency Contacts") to advise them that the child refused to take the medication. The school will follow the instructions of the parents/guardians. If the parents and the medical emergency contacts are not available, the school will contact the school nurse, the school doctor or other available medical personnel to determine if it is necessary to take the child to Danbury Hospital to have the medication administered.

The above statement of Health Care/Medication Policy protects and benefits the entire school community. The school has been granted authorization by the Health Department to administer medications and our records are regularly reviewed by the State. If we do not follow their procedures exactly, they may revoke our authorization. Although we understand that complying with the regulations is inconvenient, it would be more inconvenient if the school lost the authorization to administer medications. Please understand that we cannot and do not make any exceptions to these regulations.

**SUNSCREEN FOR SUMMER PROGRAM – Children who can use sunscreen and who are enrolled in the summer program must use sunscreen with a minimum SPF (sun protection factor) rating of 30. If your child comes to camp without sunscreen, a new bottle of hypoallergenic sunscreen will be provided to your child and you will be charged for it. Your child's sunscreen must have the complete set of manufacturer labels and your child's name must be written on it with permanent marker. Although the Montessori program stresses independence and care for oneself, the school staff will carefully supervise and help younger children apply sunscreen as needed. Children 9 years old and older will be reminded to apply sunscreen to themselves or a "buddy". School staff are instructed not to apply sunscreen to children 9 years old and older (exceptions may be made for unusual circumstances or children with certain disabilities).**

If your child is unable to use sunscreen, we require a note from a licensed physician stating that the child may not use sunscreen as well as the specific precautions that must be taken to ensure that your child is not burned while participating in outdoor activities. In addition, the school will require a note from the parent giving the child permission to participate in outdoor activities.

**HOME PLAN OF ACTION – Illness:** Although the probability that your child will be sent home from school due to illness is not very high, Murphy’s Law would suggest that your child will become ill and need to be taken home at the worst possible time. It is very important that you make some sort of back-up plans for someone to take your child home if you are unable to do so. In addition, the morning staff is very vigilant in sending home children who should not be in school due to illness. If your child becomes sick on the way to school, you will be asked to take your child home or to your back-up sick-care provider.

#### **MEDICAL FORM:**

Your child’s medical form must be returned by the first day of school. Physicals and immunizations must be up to date. This form will be placed in your child’s school file in the front office.

#### **MEDICAL TREATMENT:**

In the event of an emergency resulting from illness or accident when the parent/guardian cannot be reached, we will seek guidance from the child’s pediatrician, the school nurse, paramedics or the school doctor: Dr. Vincente Garcia, (203) 790-0822, Center for Pediatric Medicine at 107 Newtown Road, Danbury, CT 06810. Or, in the event of a dental emergency, Dr. Daniel Tseng will be contacted at (203)-792-3316.

When a child is severely hurt and Emergency Room treatment is necessary, staff members will call 911 to request ambulance transportation to Danbury Hospital. The staff person most familiar with your child will stay with him/her until you arrive.

#### **INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTING:**

Incident reports will be prepared for all significant incidents/accidents on the day of the incident. Significant incidents/accidents would include any events that involve blood, bumps (any bump on the head is an immediately call to the parents) , bruises or non-visible incidents involving breathing (asthma), unconsciousness, bones and twisted, sprained or strained joints (including the neck or back). A copy of the report will be provided for the parent. Teachers will inform parents immediately after any significant incident.

#### **STRINGS ON COATS & JEWELRY ON CHILDREN:**

Strings on children’s coats are responsible for many injuries and deaths from strangulation of children (strings get stuck in climbers, trees, school busses and even family pets have strangled children by pulling on coat/hood strings). Please do not buy clothing with loose strings for your children and remove strings from any clothing with strings. If you forget to remove the strings and we see them, we will cut them off.

Children are not permitted to wear jewelry, other than pierced earring studs, at school. Necklaces, bracelets, rings, earrings and other jewelry can get caught during your child’s busy day. For young children, jewelry can be a distraction to their real purpose for being at school, their learning activities! Children who wear

jewelry to school will be asked to remove it. The school is not responsible for jewelry that is lost either before or after it is removed.

#### CHOKING HAZARDS:

**Toddler/Preschool:** As a rule of thumb, objects that can fit through a paper towel tube represent a potential choking hazard. Please make sure that your child does not bring small objects to school that might find their way into their mouth or the mouth of a friend. Favorite small objects that children bring from home are coins and miscellaneous toy pieces.

**Elementary:** Although elementary students generally do not put small objects in their mouths, they are more likely to sneak hard candy and chewing gum into school. Please remind your child(ren) that these treats are not allowed in school.

#### INFANT FEEDING:

In order to reduce the spread of germs from baby bottles/nipples, all formula must be brought from home already bottled. Bottles must be clearly marked with your child's name.

Food borne illnesses and food allergies can cause severe risks to infants. To minimize any ill effects from food related illnesses, infants up to 15 months will only be fed food brought from home. Shelf stable foods (e.g. baby foods in unopened jars, uncut fruit, breads and crackers) may be brought to school at room temperature. All other foods must be delivered to the school in a thermal cooler with a frozen ice pack. Hot or warm foods that are not shelf stable will not be accepted.

Infants should be fed their first meal of the day at home. Home feeding is especially important during the first 12 – 15 months because infant bodies need nutrients upon waking up. Additionally, research indicates that mother/child bonding during the first 12 months of life contributes to success in school years later. Spending quality time supporting your child with love and nutrition first thing in the morning will help your infant transition into his/her day with a sense of peace, safety and security. Feeding times are not scheduled by the teachers; they take place in response to the infants' signals. In addition, breast feeding is encouraged, and nursing mothers are welcome throughout the day.

## INFANT SLEEPING:

In light of the research associating Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) with infants who sleep on their stomachs, the School only allows infants in cribs to be placed on their back.

Diapers: Hudson does not allow cloth diapers. Only disposable diapers are accepted.

Blankets and any sleeping cover must be made of breathable fabric.

## ASBESTOS POLICY:

In accordance with 40 C.F.R. section 763, "Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools", and section 19a-333-1 through 13 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, "Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools", we are required to inform you that an asbestos inspection has been completed and there is no asbestos containing materials in the school building. An asbestos management plan has been drafted that states that no asbestos materials will be used in any future building renovations.

## PESTICIDE APPLICATION AT SCHOOL

Hudson has a contract with a licensed exterminator who inspects the grounds quarterly and who responds to specific requests to remove unwanted pests. Regulations for pesticides on school property are very strict and the exterminator will endeavor to control pests without the use of pesticides whenever possible. However, Hudson does permit pesticide application by a "certified pesticide professional" in emergency and non-emergency situations. Hudson also allows a person other than a certified pesticide professional to apply pesticides to eliminate immediate threats to public health, which threats include those posed by mosquitoes, ticks, or stinging insects when no other practical solution exists. In such situations, the school must determine that (1) an emergency application is necessary; (2) it would be impractical/untimely to obtain the services of a certified pesticide professional; and (3) the emergency application does not involve a restricted pesticide.

If a pesticide application is made, the school will notify the parents/guardians of each child enrolled in the facility no later than 24 hours before the pesticide application occurs. Notice of emergency applications will be provided as soon as practicable. Notice will be provided by email and by posting on the white board at the entrance of the school building and will include the following information:

- the name of the pesticide's active ingredient
- the target pest
- the location of the application within the day
- the date of the application

The school will maintain a copy of the record of each pesticide application for a period of five years.

## Dust Mites and Furniture Allergies

**School areas used by children who have allergies to dust mites, or to components of furnishings or supplies, are maintained by the program according to the recommendations of the child's health professional.**

## TUITION

Hudson Country Montessori School is a not for profit organization. Your prompt tuition payment is essential for the smooth operation of the school.

The key points from the Enrollment and Tuition Agreement that you signed before your child was admitted to School are presented here for your reference:

1. The Parent(s) agree to pay tuition and fees in accordance with the most current applicable Tuition Schedule(s) and other fee schedules published by the School. There will be no tuition reduction/refund for any holiday, family vacation, other family situation or medical condition that may cause a student to be absent from any of the School's programs.
2. Tuition is calculated and due on an annual basis. The monthly payment schedules are installment payment plans established for the convenience of the Parent(s). Monthly payments are not payments for a specific month. Late payments made toward a monthly payment plan will be assessed a \$50 late fee for accounts that are past due. If tuition becomes 15 days delinquent, continued service will be denied and the Student will be disenrolled without advanced notice. Two-week advanced written notice is required to withdraw a student. Parents are liable for tuition until two weeks after written notice is received by the School office.
3. The school will refund the \$250.00 tuition prepayment until August 1<sup>st</sup> prior to the term on the application. Changes to a student's schedule will be made subject to a \$50 administrative fee for each change after the first change. The tuition schedule is subject to change with 30 days notice.
4. The Parent(s) agree to pay all costs, expenses and attorneys' fees incurred by the School in any proceeding for the collection of the debt evidenced hereby or in any litigation or controversy arising from or connected with this Agreement.
5. The School will refund one-half of the tuition prepayment prior to May 1<sup>st</sup> only if one of the following conditions occur: 1. The School receives a relocation letter from one Parent's current employer indicating that relocation with that Parent's employer is mandatory; 2. The School receives a termination of employment letter from a Parent's employer indicating that the employer terminated the Parent's

employment; or 3. The School receives a disability letter from a Parent's physician indicating that the Parent can no longer continue employment. The School will refund the \$500 prepayment less a \$250 processing fee. No other circumstances are acceptable for a refund of prepayment.

6. All new students enrolled in the School will be given up to a 3-month PROVISIONAL/adjustment period. If the School feels that the new student has not made a satisfactory adjustment to the School and must disenroll, a refund will be given only for the unused portion of any tuition prepayments.
7. It is understood that in signing this Agreement, the Parent(s) agree(s), on behalf of him/her/themselves and the Student, to accept the rules, policies, procedures, mission and requirements of the School as noted in the Parent/Student Handbook and other school notices. In the event the Student and/or a member of his/her family does not meet the academic or behavioral standards of the school, the Head of School, Education Director or Director at his/her sole discretion, may discipline the Student, exclude a family member from participating in school events, or require the Student's withdrawal. The Parent(s) agree, on behalf of him/her/themselves and the Student, that in signing this Agreement, the decision of the Head of School in this regard shall be final; any such decision shall not relieve the Parent(s) of his/her/their tuition obligations, as detailed above.
8. Students enrolled in two-day, three-day or four-day programs must maintain the same schedule every week and this schedule must include a Monday or Friday. There will be no substitution of days due to holidays, unexpected snow closing days, family vacation, other family situations or medical conditions that may cause a student to be absent from any of the School's programs. Children enrolled less than five days per week are not eligible for the Public School Calendar (PSC) discount. An exception will be made for families with an elementary age student enrolled concurrently who is on the PSC calendar (this is to make the schedules for both students the same).
9. In order to achieve our high expectations and to prepare the Student for elementary school, only a 5 full-day program is offered for children 5 years old and older.
10. Only the elementary classes make-up snow days. Such days will be made-up only if the number of snow days in one school year exceeds 5 days.
11. The School does not discriminate against any person in admission, employment or otherwise because of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, or physical or mental disability in violation of existing state or federal laws or regulations.

## SECURITY SYSTEMS

### KEYPAD SYSTEM:

There is black keypad at the front door. When you enter your personal identification number, the door lock will release to allow you to enter the building.

#### Function:

The school keypad is a time clock, a door security system and a message delivery system. When you enter your code, the computer notes the time for billing purposes, releases the door lock mechanism and displays any special messages or important reminders.

#### PIN Code Assignments:

Every parent has his/her own PIN code. This system will keep a digital record of who picked-up and who dropped-off each child(ren).

If you would like to have additional codes for your other pick-up/drop-off people, please contact the office.

#### Families with More than One Child at Hudson:

If you are dropping-off or picking-up all your children:

1. Enter your code.
2. Press Enter
3. Enter your code again.
4. Press Enter
5. Choose the child and hit finish

The computer records all your children at the same time.

If you are not dropping-off or picking-up all your children:

**The computer records only those children you have specified.**

**If you have any questions please visit us in the office.**

**Billing Function:**

**In the morning, the computer compares the time you drop-off with your child's scheduled arrival time; in the afternoon, the computer compares your pick-up time with your child's scheduled pick-up time. If your pick-up or drop-off times are not within the scheduled times, you will be billed automatically for the additional time. Please note that drop-off times are calculated from when you enter the building. (If you pick-up after 6:00pm or later than the close of school for early dismissals due to holidays or inclement weather, we will use a separate time clock to compute your overtime charges.) If you do not clock-in or clock-out, the computer will assume you arrived at 6:45am and/or left with the last employee and you will be billed accordingly. The school reserves the right to bill parents based on records kept by the child's supervisor for late pick-ups when those records provide a better reflection of when a child was actually picked-up from the classroom.**

**The system clock is set to the US Naval Observatory clock (<http://tycho.usno.navy.mil/>).**

**UNSCHEDULED ACCESS:**

**Let's say you dropped off your child and then realized he left his homework in the car. When you re-enter the building to drop-off the homework, you will clock-out your child.**

**To keep our count right, you must enter the child's code twice; once to clock him out, and once again to clock him back in. (There is no need to wait for the keypad to reset, just enter the code and press "Enter", and then do it again.)**

**SECURITY:**

**In order for the keypad security system to work, we need your help! Please do not let anyone into the building without clocking-in or clocking-out, even if you know them. In order to keep the billing correct, everyone must clock-in and clock-out. Therefore, if you see someone enter without clocking-in, report it immediately – they may not belong here!**

**SURVEILLANCE:**

**The school has installed surveillance systems in a variety of locations throughout the school. These systems serve one or more purposes depending on their location. The purpose of these systems is: security (to monitor and record who enters and leaves the building and at what time); supervision of classrooms by administrators; for faculty training purposes; and for student education (elementary classrooms in New Rochelle and Danbury will collaborate in technology and other educational projects). The images from these systems may include sound and/or sound recording and will primarily be used on the premises**

but they may be viewed by Hudson employees or students over the internet through a secure connection at a remote location (for example, at our sister school in New Rochelle or Mr. & Mrs. Meyer's home). These images may also be recorded and archived in the school's confidential files for no more than 30 days unless the school has a specific need to keep specific recordings for a longer period. These images will not be available to the public nor will they be made available to parents, except, parents may observe classrooms on the monitors located in an administrators office (in the presence of an administrator/teacher) and parents may be shown selected recordings of the classroom by an administrator in an effort to resolve developmental concerns of their own child(ren). Under no circumstance will recordings be distributed to anyone except as required by law.

## ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

If you are reading this, you probably already have a child enrolled at Hudson. Nevertheless, this section may help you guide a friend to enrollment in our school.

### ADMISSIONS:

Applications for admission for the upcoming academic year are generally considered between October and May. Applications received later in the year are considered as openings become available, and a waiting list is developed.

The School's fundamental objective in admissions is to find the right fit between child, family, and school. Preference is normally given to families with children already attending Hudson and applicants with previous Montessori experience.

During your first visit to Hudson, prospective parents are given a tour of the school and the program is discussed. During the school year, prospective parents are encouraged to schedule a classroom observation to see how different the Montessori environment is from a traditional education environment. When a family selects a Montessori education at Hudson Country Montessori School based on discussion and observation, the next step is to fill out the application and submit it to the school with the application fee. At that time, a parent/child interview visit is scheduled. The school asks that both parents meet with the Head of School or Director during the interview visit.

During the interview visit, the prospective child will visit with the Director or one or more teachers who will observe the child in the classroom environment. The Coordinators or teachers will assess the child's readiness for the program. While the child is meeting with a classroom teacher, the parents are meeting with the Head of School or Director. Sometimes, a child may have a bad day and will be asked to return on another day for a second observation/interview.

Children entering at the primary level are required to have a thirty minute visit in a classroom. This is an opportunity for the child to interact with the materials, other children, teachers and primary coordinator. The primary classrooms are not licensed to provide diaper changing services. Children must be toilet trained in order to enroll in the primary program. Exceptions and accommodations are made only for those students with identified disabilities or those who may require extra time. In most cases Kindergarten students will be asked to take an entrance test.

Children entering at the elementary level are required to spend at least two consecutive days in a classroom for observation. The school will request a copy of the student's file from the candidate's present school before the candidate will be interviewed for enrollment. In most cases the student will be asked to take an entrance test.

Following the parent/child interview, the admissions committee will meet to discuss the interview. Parents will be notified in a timely fashion by letter with the committee's recommendation. Priority in admissions is given to families with a history of commitment to the school for the long term education of their children.

With this procedure, both the school and parents are able to evaluate if the school is a good fit for the student and visa-versa.

Following admissions to the school, all new children will be given up to a three (3) month PROVISIONAL adjustment period. If the School feels that the child has not made a satisfactory adjustment, a refund will be given only for the unused portion of any tuition prepayments.

Section  
10

## SCHOOL READINESS GRANT

This section provides information specific to students enrolled at Hudson through the School Readiness Grant Program.

### **Admissions:**

Any child who is 3 or 4 years old and whose primary residence is Danbury, CT may be eligible to enroll in the School Readiness Grant program.

Children receiving tuition subsidy through the School Readiness Grant are enrolled on a first-come, first served basis as required by the Grant. All school policies and procedures noted in this handbook, other than the enrollment criteria apply to children enrolled under the School Readiness Grant. In addition, the School Readiness Grant school calendar varies slightly from the regular Hudson calendar.

Fee determination and re-determination:

The school is required to collect the following paperwork for the Grant every six months:

1. Current Proof of Danbury Residence
2. Proof of Income for all Parents/Guardians
3. School Readiness State Report Form
4. Letter of Agreement
5. School Assurances Form
6. CCAP (Care4Kids) application or letter stating reason for denial or ineligibility.

For families whose income are greater than 75% of the state's median income (SMI) guideline, SR sub-grantee's shall determine fees based on the families gross annual income, using the fee scale determination form. No family, regardless of income, shall be charged more than the sub-grantee's established cost of care per child. There is a flat fee per month if any family is over the guideline.

***All children enrolled at HCMS with more than 10 unexcused absentees with automatically be withdrawn from the SR program.***

## **School Readiness Income Guidelines Full Day Preschool**

Please go to : <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?A=2678&Q=320808> for information on the School Readiness Guidelines. If you are unable to download or understand the website information, please see the front office for assistance.

### **Calendar:**

Hudson Country Montessori School only offers full-day, full-time School Readiness slots. These slots require children to attend on a regular basis, five days per week, minimally 35 hours per week. School Readiness students follow the “Hudson” calendar. In addition, any days indicated with an **S.R.** on the published school calendar are also open for our School Readiness Families.

### **Kindergarten Age Children:**

To prepare the child for the next level of education, kindergarten, the SR teachers invite all upcoming kindergarten age children to attend the Hudson “Moving up Night”, as well as the public school informational nights. Flyers and other Handouts are distributed to each family. The teachers as well as administrators will help parents identify their geographic school district and will support the transfer of information to the district school.

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