

# **Parent/Student Handbook**

## **School Year 2019/2020**



### **HUDSON COUNTRY MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

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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. At the same time they are 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 stage 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 supports each child with stimulating and challenging materials according to their greatest interests and capabilities.

### **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 a stream of developmentally appropriate experiences that unlock the greatest potential in every child. 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, driven by their innate curiosity .

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 enjoy learning and as a result, 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 integrate components of the traditional curriculums such as *CT Early Learning and Development Standards*, *Common Core Standards* and the *New Rochelle New York Curriculum Outline K-12* to best meet the needs of all our children. Program quality is based on reflection and information gathered by staff, family, surveys, and accreditation sources.

Literature, the arts, history, social issues, political science, economics, science and the study of technology all complement one another. 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.

Our mathematics curriculum follows a European model of unified mathematics through which students are introduced to concepts in algebra, geometry, mathematical logic, and statistics .

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 lifelong learners. Each teacher has their own professional growth plan to help track their professional development.

### **TYPICAL CLASS SIZE:**

Our school-age classrooms (Elementary and Middle School) typically have twenty to twenty-four students with two professionally trained teachers.

Our Primary classrooms (three years old to Kindergarten) typically have twenty to twenty-four students with two professionally trained teachers.

Our Toddler classrooms typically have eighteen to twenty one students with two professionally trained Montessori teachers and one assistant teacher. Both classrooms are unusually large by normal standards. We use larger environments to provide a greater variety of engaging materials, including an indoor climber that research has identified as essential for optimal brain development in young children.

Our infant suite consists of three rooms that typically serve the needs of 16 infants. One room is for sleeping and the other two rooms are used to separate the more mobile “waddlers” from the less mobile infants. The infant suite is staffed with two professionally trained Montessori teachers and five other support staff.

*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. This includes infants learning from waddlers. 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, 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.

In the Montessori community, we believe there are benefits to being the youngest, oldest and middle child. In our multi-age classrooms every child will experience what it is like to have different roles in the classroom structure. The benefit to younger children in a class comes from mentoring and care they receive from the older children and the drive to emulate their older, more competent child role models. The benefit of being an older child comes from the responsibility of mentoring and leading the younger children as they are assigned various rotating leadership roles. Much research has been done on the impact of birth order and numerous studies demonstrate that leaders tend to be oldest children. (It is worth noting that seventy percent of US Presidents were oldest children.)

The multi-age classroom also benefits from a stronger sense of community where all students feel safe and where they have a sense of purpose. Since most of the children in each class are returning students from the prior year, the teacher knows most of the children and their parents on the first day of school. In addition, the returning children know the teacher, the classroom rules and classroom culture and they help the teacher onboard the new students. By virtually eliminating the learning curve at the start of the school 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 Montessori materials promote a deep *understanding* of concepts that traditional education typically teaches by rote memorization.

## ADMINISTRATION 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 financial business office hours are from 8:30am – 2:00pm, Monday through Friday. However, there will also be an administrative person in the building from 8:00-6:00am 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 with the office (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:

Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, Hudson no longer follows the "Public School Calendar" (also referred to as the PSC calendar). Instead we have instituted a "School Calendar" that includes up to 180 days of school that *loosely* follow the vacation schedule of the Danbury Public School District. As a key part of this change, Hudson will no longer follow Danbury Public School emergency closings. All decisions about emergency closings will be made by the school and we will typically close *less often* than the Public School District.

The Internet is usually the best source of information about school closings, delays and early dismissal. If you have added your name to the school's email list you will receive an email as soon as the emergency closing decision has been made. You can also access this information online at:

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

[www.ctweather.com](http://www.ctweather.com) Click on the "School Cancellations" tab and 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 school's website. We rarely close for the day, but we may delay opening and/or closing 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.

Television Stations:

Channel 3

Channel 6

Channel 8

Fox Channel

Note: While it may be safe for some of our families and staff to come to school during inclement weather it will not be safe for every family or staff member to come to school. Therefore, when weather is bad, you will need to make your own decision about whether it is safe for your family to come to school. If you do not think it is safe for you to bring your child to school for any reason, you should not come to school.

- School-age students who do not report to school on a school day according to the Hudson School Calendar will be marked absent for attendance. However, if Danbury Public Schools are closed on that day, the absence will be considered an "excused absence".

### PROFESSIONAL DAYS:

Professional development is the strategy Hudson uses to ensure that our educators continue to strengthen their practice throughout their career. The most effective professional development engages teams of teachers to focus on the needs of their students. They learn and problem solve together in order to ensure all students achieve success.

In order to evolve our curriculum and educational programs, our teachers will spend several days each year in professional workshops and seminars. Although this professional development is expensive for the school and may be inconvenient for you when closed, it is an essential investment in the teacher's continuing education and of great benefit to your child.

### FAMILY INVOLVEMENT:

The School is founded on a partnership of 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/councils. Families are also welcomed and encouraged to visit the classrooms.

If joining a warm and welcoming community is not reason enough for you to get involved in school events, please consider the research that correlates student success in school with parental involvement. 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. Additional conferences can be scheduled at any time during the year. Progress reports are prepared three times during the school year.

Please let us know of any changes in your home situation that might affect your child in school. A visiting grandparent or sick pet in the home can affect your child's behavior and mood. It will help the teacher work with your child if he/she understands the circumstances.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING:**

Working closely with your children on individualized learning plans is normal in the Montessori classroom. We do not need a test or assessment to tell us how your child is progressing. However, assessments/tests help us ensure that our own evolving curriculum remains richer than the traditional school curriculum and it gives us the opportunity to expose your child to test taking and test taking strategies.

The School administers both the MAP assessment tool for younger students and the ERB for older students.

- MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) is a widely used computer based adaptive assessment tool developed by the non-profit Northwest Evaluation Association. The assessment is administered three times per year. The curriculum test questions were designed by Professors at Columbia Teachers College and the software was designed at MIT. The test is "adaptive" in the sense that 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 cannot 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.
- ERB (Educational Records Bureau) is one of the more popular tests administered by elite private school in our area. It is a classic standardized test that is taken on the computer. Experience with the ERB prepares students for other tests they will be taking like the SSAT, ISEE, PSAT, SAT etc.

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.

Some parents object to any form of standardized testing. Therefore, you may opt-out your child from assessment/testing by submitting a request in writing that will be included in your child's academic file to explain why there are not test results. If the parent/guardian does not want a child to be assessed/tested but the child is sent to school on a test day, the child will be invited to participate in some other activity.

### **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.

### **CLASSROOM COMMUNICATIONS AND NOTICES:**

All teachers communicate with parents are through email, notes, Shutterfly, brief talks before class begins when necessary, as well as scheduled conferences.

Important information, reminders, as well as a monthly Newsletter are sent via Email Blast. Please make sure the office has your correct email so you can be included in the communication. Each classroom also has a physical mail box on or near the door with paper and pencil inside. You can use the mailbox to write a quick note at drop-off.

### **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 School vacation calendar. Information on the School Calendar is available on the school's website.

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 payment due date for billing is the last day of the month prior to the billing month (i.e.) billing Due Date of August 30<sup>th</sup> is for the September payment.

You are allowed 1 change to your child's schedule free of charge. After that any changes will be subject to a \$50.00 administrative fee.

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:**

Catered school lunch is available for an additional charge through a local restaurant. The meals are balanced and nutritious as determined by the school's nutritionist. 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. All of the fruit is fresh. At no time will peanut butter or pork products be intentionally served.

## PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

### 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.

### PRIMARY/ELEMENTARY ORIENTATION EVENING:

The week before school starts, 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 reviews basic protocols such as dress code, arrival procedures and parent involvement. After the general comments, parents follow their child's teacher to the classrooms for a specific classroom orientation. 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 single separation strategy that works for every child. Some children have an easy time of it and that makes the parents cry. Some children struggle with separation and that is when the school and the parents need to work together to make the transition as easy as possible for your child and for you.

### PREPARATION FOR SCHOOL:

There are a few things that will help with your child's transition to school for the first time.

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." – tells your child that he/she was missed by you, as much as you have been missed by him/her. "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. If your child is apprehensive about separation, it might be best to let your child watch for a while. Our teachers will allow each child time and space to settle in.
3. 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 concerns will quickly disappear 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.

### **SCHOOL PICTURES:**

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

### **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 school website for last-minute reminders / changes about the calendar.

### **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. Class Parents also are committed to planning and implementing events and fundraisers throughout the year. If you do not have the name and telephone number of your class parent, ask one of your child's teachers OR INQUIRE ABOUT BEING ONE YOURSELF.

## SCHOOL POLICIES

### **PUNCTUALITY:**

It might seem odd to you that we would make an issue of being punctual because we don't think of small children as having "important" things to do that require punctuality. However, small children crave routine. A consistent and familiar routine will cause your child to be noticeably happier and generally more compliant. School is fun for your child and they don't want miss anything. Being late to school is similar to you arriving at a movie theater 15 minutes after the movie started. It doesn't feel good to miss out. Apart from that, tardiness disrupts the classroom. The formal academic part of our program begins at 9:00am for all ages except Upper Elementary and Middle School which start at 8:30am.

### **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. Always follow the arrows, when driving in the 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.

### **IDLING VECHICALS:**

Do not leave your vehicle running/ idling while dropping off your students, unless the vehicle needs to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperature.

### **VISITATION:**

You are welcome to drop-in to see your child whenever you wish. But, remember, it is natural for a young child to want to go home once they see you. 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.

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 an observation or 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.

Bussing is available from the Danbury Public School District for school age children (Kindergarten to Eighth Grade) that live in Danbury. Please contact the office if you would like your child to travel to and from school by bus.

### **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 "School" calendar approximates the Danbury Public school holiday schedule, it does not follow Danbury Public School emergency closings. Hudson Country Montessori School does not make-up days missed for inclement weather unless the total number of emergency closings exceeds five full 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, gender, national origin, age or disability.

### **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, you must 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 be prepared to 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 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:**

Plan to drop-off and pick-up your child before the academic portion of the day begins and after it ends. If you have an emergency and you need to pick-up/drop-off your child during school hours, kindly call the office so arrangements can be made to assist you. Primary children who arrive after 9:10am and disrupt the classroom with a drop-off may stay in the front office until 9:45am when circle time is over.

The State regulates attendance of students in grades Kindergarten and up. If your child is late for school (after 9:00am), it will be recorded 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.

### **Kindergarten -8<sup>th</sup> Grade Attendance:**

There are approximately 180 school days in the academic year. For school age children (children who turn 5 on or before January 1 of any school year CGS Sec.10-15c), attendance is taken daily and becomes part of the child's official school record. The State of Connecticut classifies a child with 10 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: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Chronic-Absence/Chronic-Absence>

### **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.

### **Dress Recommendations for all children:**

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.

- 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, 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.
- Label all clothing 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.)
- Every child should have an extra set of clothes to change into in case they spill something on themselves.
- 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 student's closed fist.

### **ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL DRESS CODE:**

In addition to the dress recommendations for all children (see above), there is a more formal dress code 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 or our school store.)

- Shirts must have a collar and be 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 conform to the dress code, 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 SCHOOL CALENDAR students 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 a plan to eliminate the unwanted behavior(s).

### **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. The first step to maintaining order in the classroom is to establish and teach simple rules that are easy to understand and discuss with children. Our approach to discipline is preventive rather than reactive. We maintain rules with consistency, redirect when necessary and use “the look” when we know children understand they are not living up to behavioral expectations. Sometimes we need to have discussions about behavior and mediate conflicts. Our goal is to instill in the child a healthy respect for themselves, others and their classroom environment. Please keep in mind that learning to be social is a large part of the work of a young child. As with all things, some children are very good at being social, others need more help developing those skills. One thing that is certain in any social

environment involving human beings is there will be conflict. Learning to be good citizens of our classroom community is the foundation for all other learning.

Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES do we use spanking, physical abuse, verbal abuse, name calling or restriction of food or sleep as a means of disciplining children. At no time will a child be isolated in a hallway or out of sight/sound of an adult as a means of discipline. Staff members, who use insulting, humiliating or frightening means to respond to children, will be disciplined and if warranted, the incident(s) will be reported to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Public Health. If DCF or DPH determines that the incident will be investigated, the employee may be sent home pending the outcome of the investigation. If DCF “substantiates” abuse or neglect, the staff person will be terminated immediately. If DCF determines that abuse or neglect is “unsubstantiated”, the incident may nevertheless reflect poor judgment or inappropriate conduct on the part of the staff person, and the individual may be disciplined up to and including termination of employment.

If a student has consistent behavior issues that are developmentally inappropriate, the teacher may consult with the Level Coordinator, Director and / or the Head of School to see if we can identify a strategy to eliminate the unwanted behaviors. If the issues cannot

be resolved internally, the parent(s) will be asked to come to school for a conference to discuss strategies to change/eliminate the unwanted behavior(s). If the school is not having any success with internally derived strategies, the school may request that the parents engage a psychologist to help the school identify additional strategies.

While the parents and school are waiting for an evaluation/counseling from a psychologist, the school may request that a “shadow” be hired to support the student or that the student be 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 any individuals hired to support the child. Notwithstanding the school’s desire to help students who struggle with behavioral issues, the following policy with regard to unwanted behaviors will be observed. **The following chart defines the school’s response to unwanted 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 leave school property.)	Immediate 24 hours suspension followed by professional counseling process and a mandatory meeting between parents and school or disenrollment (Head of School Discretion)	Expulsion 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 model civility, grace, compassion and respect for others when they enter the school environment. They are to understand and accept the school’s values and mission statement. Questions, comments, debates, and the expression of different points of view are welcome on campus so long as they are presented with courtesy. HCMS is willing to assist families in finding alternative placement for their child.

These policies comply with federal and state civil rights laws.

**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.

**CONFLICT RESOLUTION / SCHOOL/ FAMILIES:**

Hudson supports voluntary resolution of conflicts, problems, and concerns between two parties regardless of their positions or roles (i.e., parent, teacher) in the school. Hudson firmly believes most issues can be handled quickly and appropriately to everyone’s satisfaction.

Parents and teachers may disagree about classwork, curriculum, teaching style, assignments or how peer relationships are managed. In these situations, it is important for all parties to keep in mind that the teacher and the parent are both committed to the student’s welfare (although they may have different approaches and end goals for the same student).

When conflicts arise, please follow the policy below.

- 1) Communication: talk to your child’s teacher about the situation or concern. Going to the class teacher before assuming what you heard was true or from a credible source may clarify the situation before it gets out of hand.
- 2) If you are not satisfied with the response from the teacher, make an appointment with the level coordinator. If you are unsure of who your level coordinator is, the front office can help you.
- 3) If a satisfactory resolution is not found with the coordinator then you can make an appointment with the Director of School.

- 4) The below would be the next steps if there is no resolution from either party. Ultimately, the school must run without interruption
  - a) If a resolution is not established within a reasonable amount of time, the parties shall raise the concern with the Head of School unless the concern involves the Head of School (see below).
  - b) The two conflicting parties shall define “reasonable amount of time”.
  - c) At no time shall the timeframe be extended without mutual consent of both parties.
  - d) If the parties cannot agree on a timeframe, they are required to bring the conflict to the Head of School for the purpose of establishing the timeframe for resolution.
  - e) In doing so, the Head of School, or his/her designated representative, shall then mediate the conflict, ensure timelines are followed, and ensure the conflict is resolved.
- 5) If the concern is with the Head of School and no resolution has been established from bringing the concern to the Head of School, the person in conflict with the Head of School may take the concern to the board member. The board, in regular or executive session, shall review any conflict(s) brought before it as requested and as permitted by law. The board shall do one or all of the following:
  - a. Remand the conflict back to the Head of School, with a directive to find a reasonable and quick resolution.
  - b. Remand the conflict back to the two parties, with the Head of School mediating the conflict.
  - c. Mediate the conflict and render a decision to resolve the conflict.
  - d. If any conflict involves individual safety, a threat to the preservation or security of the school facilities, or a direct or blatant violation of school policies or procedures, the board shall be notified immediately by the school Head of School, school personnel, or member.

### **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. However, in order for two teachers to individualize the education for twenty or more students, students from age three must begin to demonstrate self-discipline, self-reliance, self-control and be able to work independently, with peers and in small groups. Children who are unable to learn with increasing levels of independence as they get older will not benefit from the Montessori learning environment.

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 tend to be “gifted”.

Most Hudson students enter the school at an age where a special needs diagnosis is premature. And, because every child's learning path is individualized and includes multi-sensory learning, many special needs are not noticeable until the teacher notices something uncharacteristic about the child's development.

Under the direction of the Danbury Public School Special Education Department, Hudson has a formal "Child Study Team" program to identify and address developmental/learning issues and special needs. Using the program, 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 yet identified please discuss your concerns with your teacher or Ms. Megin.

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. It could be argued that our school is overly pro-active because students "outgrow" many issues, especially by age ten. While that is true, we prefer to remediate early so the child can focus on learning instead of struggling. At worst, being proactive is a waste of time/money on treatment of something that will resolve itself. At best, a developmental issue can be eliminated before a student realizes they are different than other students and before they develop coping strategies that will need to be untaught later.

(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.)

### **PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS:**

School personnel are not qualified or allowed by law to recommend that a child use psychotropic drugs (e.g. Ritalin, Concerta). They may recommend that a child be evaluated privately or through a 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 / LOCK DOWN DRILLS:**

The school is usually visited once per year by the Danbury Fire Department for a lesson on fire safety.

Emergency building evacuations are conducted eight times per year 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. Fire drill dates and lockdown dates and times are logged in the front office and are available to parents to view if desired.

Lockdown Drills are performed four times per year as required by code. For more information on Lockdown drills, please contact the Director of School.

**Whenever we conduct a Lockdown drill, parents will be notified by school email.**

## **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 have a degree in Early Childhood Education, our Head/Co Teachers are best able to answer your questions about your child’s development and progress. Each Primary and Elementary classroom has a file or mailbox on or near the classroom entrance. Teachers will respond to the messages on a daily basis.

*If you have an emergency and need to speak to someone over the weekend or at night please 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 it. 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. The HCMS policy for 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.

## **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.

All enrolled students have a secure file with all information on health, registration information, as well as confidential materials and documents. These files are confidential but are available immediately to the parent or legal guardian, administrator and teaching staff of each child and the regulatory authorities.

## **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.

## 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 commercial 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:** All school families are invited share food and stories from their culture so that children of all cultures can celebrate the diverse nature of our school community. All presentations are factual rather than ideological and focus on the joyful aspects of different cultures. 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 foods from their native countries to share with classmates.
- **Thanksgiving Feast:** Celebrating the Pilgrims' harvest of 1621, all children three years old 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:** Though Dr. Montessori is best known as an educator, she was a fierce advocate for world peace, women's rights and child rights. She believed world peace was achievable in the next generation if we could teach children to celebrate (not just tolerate) cultural and religious differences of their friends. The purpose of the Celebrations of Light performance is to demonstrate to children that nearly all cultures and religions have some aspect of light as a center piece of their primary celebration. And, once we understand what the celebrations are all about we discover that we have nothing to fear from each other. All mankind shares universal "basic needs" and peace with our neighbors is the foundation for all our other needs. By embracing the joyful aspects of multicultural events, we hope to minimize our perceived differences as we discover common themes. We also provide perspective and respect for different points of view and beliefs. This celebration is planned and orchestrated by the Middle School students.
- **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, Diwali & 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 and International Day of Peace:** This celebration of the coming of spring is intended to encourage awareness of each individual's responsibility to the earth, nature and future generations. In addition to lessons taught in the classroom, each year we gather as a school community and plant a new tree on our campus.
- **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.

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:**

There are many special Hudson events and activities for school families. These events are listed on the calendar that is on the school website. In addition, parents can find information about specific events and activities in the newsletters, through email blasts, on the whiteboards in the front lobby, and the notes sent home with the children.

**CLASS PARENT:**

Each classroom has one or more “Class Parent(s)” who serve multiple important functions at HCMS. First, class parents are a resource to prospective families and families that are new to our community or to the classroom. Second, the Class Parents are a resource to their classroom teachers and support them in a variety of ways. Third, the Class Parent Team collectively coordinates a number of “special events”. Finally, the Class Parent Team is a resource to the school when it acts as a “Parent Advisory 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:**

Grandparents (or special friends) are invited to share a morning in the classroom with the students.

**FAMILY VISITING DAY:**

We offer two days of visits for parents to share a morning in the classroom with the students. It is a day of great pride for the children who can't wait to show you all the wonderful things they can do. Typically, one parents comes one day and someone else comes the other day.

**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 light snacks. 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 presented every other year.

**EYE TO THE FUTURE / The Next Level:**

All parents are welcome to attend this program, however, 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 an overview slide presentation that demonstrates how Montessori education is sequential and cumulative and why Montessori students are intellectually competent, self-starting, learners. Presentations specific to each level follow in the classrooms provide parents with a sense for how the broader Montessori concept lead to advanced learning at each level.

**COFFEE WITH THE HEAD OF SCHOOL / DIRECTOR:**

Coffee with the Head of School and the Director is scheduled in the fall to provide parents an informal forum to meet the Head of School. 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:**

We offer a number of Parent Education nights to give you the most current information on education and brain research. These nights are designed to give you the information you need, when you need it so that you can use the latest parenting and educational advice at home with your child. The meeting always ends with a discussion forum so that parents can ask questions and share their ideas. We encourage all parents to attend these nights to strengthen the parent/school/child relationship/ partnership.

## **LITERACY NIGHT:**

Literacy night is fun filled evening of literacy, learning and crafts. Pizza is available for children and parents. It is a great time to meet the other parents in your child's classroom. We also offer applications for Danbury Library cards that evening and encourage all participants to get one so that you can participate in other literacy events at Danbury Public Library.

## **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:**

Our youngest students spend part of their day on their bellies with their face quite close to the floor. And, even when they graduate to their hands and knees, they have a lot more contact with the floor than we do. To keep the floor as clean as possible, please remove your shoes before entering the infant environment. The bench outside the classroom is for adults to remove their shoes.

## **CHILDREN'S POSSESSIONS:**

Children like to bring their favorite possessions from home to show their friends at school. To make show and tell more special each classroom has a process for bringing special things from home. Your teacher will tell you how this process works at orientation. 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 or help them sleep at nap time. Please make sure you take the love-y home at the end of the day!
- Elementary/Middle School 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 teacher in the morning and they will not be accessible until 3:15pm. (e.g. they will not be accessible for school recess.)

## **SCHOOL POSSESSIONS:**

It is likely that at some point in your child's Montessori experience they will come home with one or more odd looking special objects. These odd-looking objects are probably parts of very expensive Montessori materials. Montessori materials that are incomplete are removed from the shelves because they are incomplete. Presumably your child has taken the piece because he/she likes that material for some reason. But if he/she has a piece, the material will be off the shelf, so your child will not be able to enjoy it anymore. So, if your child comes home with an odd-looking object, please return it the next day so that your child and the other children can continue to enjoy the material.

## **LOST AND FOUND:**

Items that are labeled with the child's name do not get lost because your teacher can identify the owner and ask your child to take responsibility for the item. If you have lost an item that is not labeled, and you would like to have back, please check our lost and found that is located in the front lobby. Unclaimed 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:**

Breakfast and snacks are included in your child’s program, catered lunch may be purchased separately. Children that are 18 months of age and older are welcome to participate in our catered lunch program. All meals are planned to provide your child with a variety of foods, which are wholesome and attractive.

Catered lunch can be purchased five days per week and includes Pizza Friday. You can also elect to purchase Pizza Friday only. School Lunch is only available on a regular basis. The weekly 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 the front lobby.

If your child will not participate in the catered lunch program, you must pack a bag lunch for your child. The bag lunch should contain foods from the nutritionally balanced US Department of Agriculture (USDA) food plate. 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 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.

There is one microwave in each classroom that is available to quickly warm-up foods. We do not have time to cook foods or to warm frozen foods. Please send your with a microwave safe dish with food to be heated for no more than 10-20 seconds

Several of our students have severe, anaphylactic reactions to peanuts. Consequently, we are a peanut free school. Please do not include products that contain peanuts in your child’s lunch box/bag. All fruits and raw vegetables are washed by staff, even if bag or container say it has been already washed. At no time will any student’s food be microwaved in a plastic or Styrofoam container, plates, bags or wraps.

Toddler children who bring lunch from home must have food cut into pieces no longer than ¼ inch to avoid choking.

### **Great Food Ideas for the Lunch Box**

#### **Drinks:**

Spring water

Milk (pasteurized animal milk 1%, soy/rice/cashew/almond milk)

100% all-natural juice

#### **Main Course:**

Sandwich or “Wrap”

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

**LATE SESSION PROGRAM:**

Our late session activities combine fun, fitness and learning; activities include: 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. No Child is allowed in the school program without a Connecticut Health Assessment form with listed immunizations, signed by the child's pediatrician.*

### SCREEN TIME:

Because we care about the health and wellbeing of the children in our care, we follow the American Academy of Pediatrics' Recommendations on Screen Time: • *Children under 2 should have no screen time* • *Children age 2 and over should watch less than 30 minutes per week at child care, and less than 2 hours per day total.* We understand that TV and other electronic media can get in the way of exploring, playing, and interacting with others, which encourages learning and healthy physical and social development.

Therefore, we will restrict screen time by:

Allowing no more than 15 minutes of educational computer time per day.

Not allowing any screen time during meals and snacks.

Having zero screen time (TV, video, and computer) for children under the age of two.

*We encourage families to restrain from using cellphones/electronic devices in our building while dropping off or picking up their child.*

### ANIMALS:

Due to health reasons, family pets are not allowed in school. 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.

### NAPPING:

Napping is offered in the early childhood classrooms. 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 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 to 2 ½ hours. Infant sleeping times follow the infant's schedule and infants are always placed in a crib. Parents are responsible for the weekly laundering of bedding used at 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 procure medical insurance through the CT State Husky program. 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:**

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”. The school’s pediatric physician; 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.

Dr. Garcia has developed the following list of symptoms 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 Dr. Garcia’s protocol, 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, administration will contact the Center for Disease Control at Danbury Hospital and the Danbury Health Department for instructions on how to deal with the situation. The information they give us will be passed along to you. In the past we have been very successful at preventing epidemics through a cooperative effort by the parents and staff.

**UNVACCINATED STUDENTS:** (only "religious or medical exemption" is accepted) During a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak at Hudson, all susceptible children, including the student will be excluded from school if a public health official determines that the school is a significant site for disease exposure, transmission and spread into the community. In such case, such children, including the student shall be excluded from school until: (1) the public health official determines that the outbreak danger has ended; (2) the child becomes ill with the disease and completely recovers from it; (3) the child is vaccinated according to public health protocol; or (4) the child has proof of immunity to the disease.

## **FIRST AID:**

All parents are required to sign an Emergency Release form as part of the admissions paperwork. This form gives the school permission to allow teachers who are certified in First Aid to treat minor injuries. Parents will be notified of the occurrence of minor injuries by an "Incident Report."

In case of a more serious accident at School, parents will be notified immediately during or after first aid is being administered. If you cannot be reached, the emergency contact on your form will be contacted. If that person is unavailable, we will arrange for your child to be taken to the emergency room at Danbury Hospital via ambulance. If it is deemed necessary to get your child to the hospital immediately, the child's teacher or someone familiar to your child will accompany him/her in the ambulance and stay with him/her at the hospital until you arrive.

## **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 take a blank copy of the Medication Administration form to the doctor when you have your annual school physical.
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 brought to school must be delivered to the office so that we can check the medication and paperwork to ensure it complies with State regulations. Do not give the medication to your child's teacher or leave it in your child's locker.
  5. The Medication and the form must not be expired. The medication must be labeled clearly with the child's name and the 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 when the date, time and amount of medication administered.
  7. 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. Medications will only be administered during the hours of 9am-3pm unless there is 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 or your medical release contacts will be contacted to advise you/them of the circumstances. The school will not administer medication to an uncooperative child. The school will follow the instructions of the parents/guardians/medical contact. 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.
13. Emergency medications are stored in the children's individual classrooms in backpacks that only teachers can reach. They are stored in their original containers with expiration dates and proper paperwork. Non-emergency medication must be in the original box and also require proper paperwork and are kept in a locked cabinet in the nurse's office. The nurse reviews and checks in all the medications.

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

## **SUNSCREEN FOR SUMMER PROGRAM**

Children who 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 FOR 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 to the head, larger bruises or non-visible incidents involving breathing (asthma), unconsciousness, bones and twisted, sprained or strained joints (including the neck or back). Teachers will inform parents immediately after any significant incident. A copy of the incident report for all incidents will be provided to the parent.

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

Strings on children's coats are responsible for many injuries and strangulation deaths (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 for your children with loose strings 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. 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 18 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, especially during the first 12 months enhances the child's emotional well-being and 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.

Infant 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 to nurse at school. All food/ bottles that are given to any enrolled infant will be documented for parents / guardians. All left over formula or breast milk is discarded after the infant has finished eating or an hour after feeding.

### **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. If children arrive to school and are asleep in a car seat or anything other a crib, they will be transferred to a crib immediately once the staff member accepts the child in the class.

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

The CT State Office of Early Childhood does not allow the use of any items, sleep coverings, soft pillows or toys to be placed in infant cribs in a childcare setting. However, infants may be placed in a crib wearing a "Sleep Sack".

### **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**

We use non-toxic techniques inside and outside of the facility to prevent and control pests (both insects and weeds). If a serious threat remains and pesticide application is the only viable option, parents and staff are notified in advance. Hudson has a contract with a licensed exterminator who inspects the grounds quarterly and who responds to specific requests to remove unwanted pests. They apply the least toxic, effective product at a time when children will have the least exposure to the application area for at least 12 hours

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 may permit pesticide application by a “certified pesticide professional” in emergency and non-emergency situations. Hudson will also allow 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 non-emergency 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 FIRNITURE 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 are presented here for easy 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 School Calendar (SC) discount. An exception will be made for families with an elementary age student enrolled concurrently who is on the SC 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. Days will be made-up only if the number of emergency closings exceeds 5 days during the school year.
11. The School does not discriminate against any person in admission or employment because of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, or physical or mental disability in violation of existing state or federal laws or regulations.

## SECURITY SYSTEMS

### KEYPAD SYSTEM:

*There is blue 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 records the time of entry, 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 additional codes to track other people on your release form, please contact the office.

#### Timeclock Door Entry Function:

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

1. Enter "0" and your code.
2. Press Enter
3. Enter your code again (without "0")
4. Press Enter
5. Choose the child(ren) you will be drop-off/pick-up and select "finish"

If you are not dropping-off or picking-up children please ring the bell. 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 the time 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 may use an additional 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.

### **SECURITY:**

Hudson has a security person who monitors the front door during drop-off time. This ensures that only those enrolled at Hudson are able to enter the building. If you cannot open the door with your code, the security person will ask you to go to the front office to address the problem. In order for the keypad security system to work, we need your help! Please do not let anyone into the building without clocking-in even if you know them. If you see anyone enter the building without clocking-in, report it immediately – they may not belong in school!

### **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 term. 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 by an administrator in an effort to resolve concerns regarding their own child(ren). Under no circumstance will recordings be distributed to anyone except as required by law.

### **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN:**

Hudson's response to different emergency situations can be found in the red Crisis Response Binder on the shelf in front of the Administrative Assistant's desk in the front office.

## 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:**

The School's fundamental objective in admissions is to determine how likely a student is to be successful in our Montessori environment and to ensure that the families vision for their child is consistent with our Mission and vision for our 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. After the tour, 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 invited for 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 equipped 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. Kindergarten students will be asked to take an entrance test.

Children entering at the elementary level are requested to spend at least two consecutive days in a classroom for assessment and 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. Elementary students from outside the school 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 are 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 payments. Hudson is willing to assist families with alternative placement.

## SCHOOL READINESS GRANT

*Hudson is has been selected by the State of Connecticut to participate in special Early Childhood Education pilot programs that includes educational subsidies to families through the School Readiness Grant Program.*

### **ADMISSIONS:**

Three and four-year-old Danbury residents are eligible to enroll in the School Readiness program regardless of family income. Tuition fees for families are determined by the State based on a sliding scale. A fee determination form is prepared for each family based on family income, and after it is signed, families are provided with a copy.

Children receiving the 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 calendar varies slightly from the regular Hudson calendar. All children must be potty trained to be in a primary classroom.

### **Subsidy Amount Determination/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. We will assist families in accessing the application and filling it out.

***Children enrolled in the School Readiness Program with more than 10 unexcused absences will be withdrawn from the program.***

### **ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT:**

The School Readiness program requires children to attend school on a regular basis, five days per week, at least 7 hours per day. School Readiness students follow the “Hudson” calendar. There are a few days in the year when Hudson is closed for all students except School Readiness students. Those days are indicated with an **S.R.** on the published school calendar.

## **KINDERGARTEN AGE CHILDREN:**

To prepare children for Kindergarten, School Readiness families are invited to attend the “Moving up Night” at Hudson to determine if they want to continue their child’s education at Hudson. We also provide School Readiness parents with information about enrolling in public school Kindergarten. Flyers and other Handouts are distributed to each family. The office can help families determine which of the district schools each child will attend and how to contact them for enrollment.

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