



RED OAK
MONTESSORI SCHOOL

*“Enriching lives through guidance, observation
and self-directed discovery.”*

Parent Handbook

Revised July 2020



241 Sanborn Street, Franklin NH 03235
(603) 943-1002

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INTRODUCTION and WELCOME

Changes/additions to meet COVID-19 guidance are in RED font throughout.

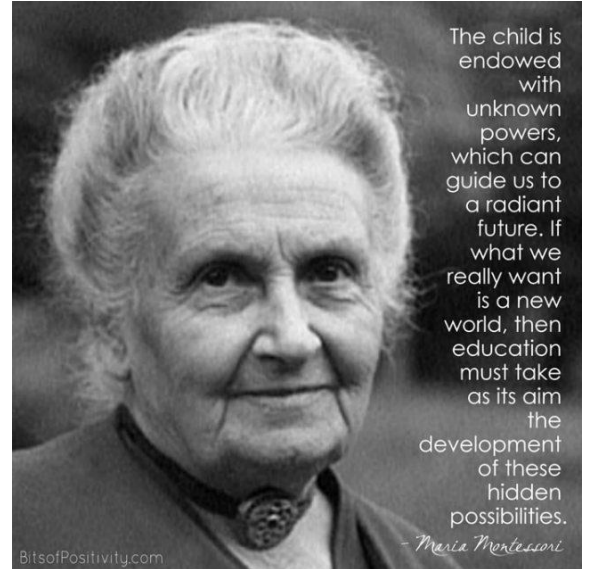
History of Red Oak Montessori School

The Red Oak Montessori School was founded in 1998 by the Miller family, run out of their 1800s farmhouse in Sanbornton. In 2001, to accommodate growing needs, the school moved to its current home, 241 Sanborn Street in Franklin. Here, the student population has ranged from 12 to 25 students, and hours were added to support the schedules of working families.

Our Vision and Mission

Our goal, through keeping true to Dr. Maria Montessori's philosophy, is to foster thoughtful, self-directed learners and problem-solvers, caring stewards of the natural environment, and peace-loving, kind, confident humans who nurture loving, respectful relationships.

Red Oak Montessori School's mission is driven by Dr. Maria Montessori's belief that no human being is educated by another person; that the child must do their work for themselves or it will never be done. We believe that the goal of early childhood education is to cultivate a natural curiosity for learning that nurtures the child's independence and self-confidence for a lifelong love of learning.



We strive, with love and respect, to give young children the precious commodity of time. They have the freedom of time to explore, to investigate, to smell, and to touch. They are given time to choose, to be guided, to listen, to be thoughtful, to speak, to write, to climb, to make noise or to be quiet. We seek to balance academic and social development and to foster responsibility and cooperation within a supportive learning environment.

Montessori Education

Maria Montessori's view of the nature of the child is that they go through a series of "sensitive periods" with "creative moments", when the child shows a spur-of-the-moment interest in learning about something, has the greatest ability to learn, and truly "absorbs". Montessori felt children should not be held back by forced, rigid curricula (plans of study). The child's natural interest in the world is supported and flourishes. Work is its own reward to the child. Self-discipline (controlling oneself) emerges out of the freedom of the learning environment.

Our learning space is warm and inviting, appealing to the child's innate attraction to beauty and to the natural world. Our prepared environment, with manipulative materials allowing concrete learning, encourages children to explore, create and take pride in all that they do. Children are free to work independently, cooperatively or with a teacher. They delight in making discoveries and developing skills as they freely explore the classroom, engaging in "practical life", art, movement, music, sensorial, science, geography, cultures, numeracy and literacy.

Our Teachers

The Montessori teacher is a keen observer of children, with four primary goals:

- to awaken the child's spirit and imagination,
- to encourage his or her normal desire for independence and high sense of self-esteem,
- to help her or him develop kindness and self-discipline
- to help him or her learn how to observe, question, and explore ideas independently.

Red Oak's dedicated and qualified teachers follow the individual development stages of each child, encouraging each to advance at his/her own pace. Our teachers are experienced, Montessori-trained and are parents whose own children benefited from a Montessori education.

"...what really makes a teacher is love for the human child; for it is love that transforms the social duty of the educator into the higher consciousness of a mission."
- Maria Montessori

Substitute Teachers – we anticipate a greater need this year, due to COVID-19. Adults entering the building are, at the same time, greatly constrained. Our first choice of "substitutes" will be from among Red Oak families, so as to minimize disease transmission.

Peace, Social Skills and the Multi-Age Classroom

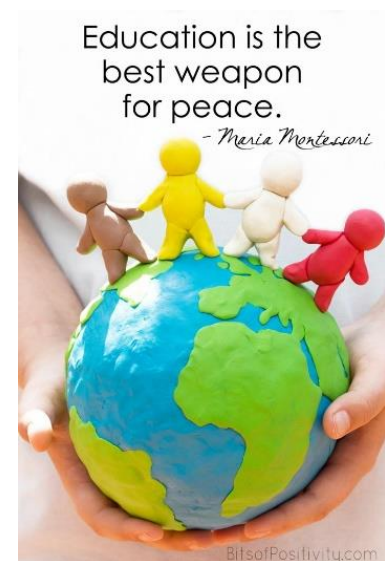
"Grace and courtesy" and "peace" are areas of Montessori curriculum consciously interwoven throughout our day. Maria Montessori was twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for her contributions toward building a peaceful world through her work with children.

At Red Oak Montessori School the children develop kindness, respect, patience, cooperation, empathy and a sense of justice. Positive behaviors are encouraged and practiced, for instance, as they serve food to one another and share materials, books and toys, in the language and attitudes modeled by the teachers, and in the books we read and songs we sing together each day.

A thoughtfully planned day and attractive, developmentally-appropriate classroom and playground, which address children's individual needs, help foster a positive emotional climate. Emotions, positive or negative, can sometimes be overwhelming. Children utilize the "peace corner" as a space in which an individual or pair can seek calm or resolve conflict.

Whether it is a need to use the same material or a disagreement with a classmate, the expression of frustration and anger is age-appropriate and allowed in our school. Each child is encouraged and guided by the teachers to do this in an appropriate and safe way. We guide them to express feelings through words, using the "peace rose" and "peace corner" rather than acting out in an inappropriate manner. Giving a positive alternative, reinforcing the positive behavior in a situation, identifying feelings and learning from their choices, are essential lessons for the child to understand acceptable social skills.

Montessori schools feature multi-age learning, which helps set the emotional tone. At Red Oak, one classroom and playground is shared by 3-year-olds to kindergarteners. **Our spacious**



classroom and playground are divided this year, so as to create smaller groups (a maximum of 10 students and teacher(s) together) who stay together throughout the day, with minimal, distanced mixing with the other group.

Children and their teacher are assigned to either the Yellow or Blue “color group”. Each “color group” will have access to one half of the classroom (and thus one half of the materials and curriculum), and one half of the playground and its amenities, each week. Sides are switched each week; all children have an equal opportunity to engage with each!

(Easy-to-follow colored placards will help children and families see which side of the classroom and playground they are assigned each week. Children’s cubbies and families’ parking lot assignments will remain the same all year.)

Older and returning students mentor and set an example for younger and new students, helping create a holistic, mutually supportive learning environment. Young children often learn by observing others. Kindergarteners have their own dedicated afternoon lesson time while younger ones rest after lunch recess.

ADMISSION, REGISTRATION and TUITION

Admissions Guidelines and Procedure

Red Oak Montessori School has a mixed-age class of three to six year-olds. Children must be two-years-nine-months or older when entering school and toilet-trained (no diapers or pull-ups).

- Parents and child visit Red Oak Montessori School and consult with the Director
- Parents complete and submit the Registration Form and Fee
- If there is a Waiting List, the child's name is placed next on the list
- New students are enrolled on a four-week trial basis. If the child is not ready for the program or the program does not meet the child's needs, the school reserves the right to end the child's enrollment.

Red Oak Montessori School is an equal opportunity organization and all admission decisions are made regardless of gender, race, religion, national heritage, physical or mental disabilities, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic. However, Red Oak Montessori School reserves the right to cancel a child's enrollment based on problems such as irresolvable classroom issues or failure to pay.

Registration Fee

- Annual, non-refundable registration fee is due at time of registration.
- Registrations for returning students for the upcoming school year, received before the last day of the current school year, will receive a \$25 discount.

Annual Tuition:

- Annual Tuition is based on the full school year, September – June.
- Each family's Tuition is computed according to the schedule chosen (see page 9):
 - 3, 4 or 5 days per week
 - Full-Day (8:00am-3:30pm) or Half-Day (8:00am-12:00pm)
 - After-School Program (3:30pm-5:15pm) if available -- pre-registered, not drop-in
- Each family's Tuition Contract (see page 9) is prepared accordingly.
- A family may request changes to their child's schedule during the school year; if space allows for the change; their Tuition Contract will be revised accordingly.
- Tuition for a student entering Red Oak during the school year will be prorated.
- Families with multiple children enrolled at the same time will receive a 10% discount on the lowest tuition rate.
- Families receive a 3% discount on the annual tuition if the full tuition amount is paid by the first day of your child's school year.

- There are no additional fees for supplies and materials. There may be additional costs for activities during the school year.

Monthly Payments:

- Annual Tuition may be paid in convenient, non-refundable monthly instalments.
- **Due on the first day of each month** for which your child is enrolled.
- The preferred payment option is by secure, online ACH (debit bank account) tuition payments via QuickBooks; set-up instructions are sent with the first invoice. A payment link is provided on each **monthly tuition invoice, sent automatically by e-mail** a few days before payment is due. This is for your convenience; you are responsible for the monthly payments of your annual tuition regardless of receiving a reminder invoice. (There are *no charges* for families or for Red Oak for this service.)
 - If paying by check, make payable to “Red Oak.” Checks may be placed ~~in the cloth mail holder outside the Office, or~~ in the metal “mailbox” on the exterior, to right of front door. (Please let a staff member know, so it does not go unnoticed.)
 - If paying by cash, place cash in a sealed envelope with the amount and the student’s name written on the outside; personally hand the envelope to a staff member and wait to receive a hand-written receipt at the time of payment.
- A **late fee of \$25.00** will be added to your balance for payments that are received *after the 10th day of the month*.
- ***On the 15th day of the month***, if payment of tuition and late fee has not been received by our office, ***your child will not be allowed to attend school until your account has been paid up to date***. Make-up days due to non-payment are not offered.
- There is no tuition credit for holidays, vacations, or inclement weather closings.



2020-21 Tuition Rates

3 Day	Annual Tuition	Monthly Payment
8:00am-12:00pm	\$ 4,250.00	\$ 425.00
8:00am-3:30pm	\$ 5,450.00	\$ 545.00
4 Day		
8:00am-12:00pm	\$ 4,750.00	\$ 475.00
8:00am-3:30pm	\$ 5,850.00	\$ 585.00
5 Day		
8:00am-12:00pm	\$ 5,250.00	\$ 525.00
8:00am-3:30pm	\$ 6250.00	\$ 625.00
After School 3:30-5:15pm (if available)	\$12/day (registered)	

Tuition Contract

The contract is to be completed and signed before the student attends school, and includes:

- Child's name
- Annual Tuition
- Hours and Days of attendance
- Payment schedule and amount
- Parent/Guardian signature and Director's signature
- Agreement to Parent Handbook
- Agreement to New Hampshire Child Care Licensing Unit (NHCCLU) Annual Statement (see page 25)

NH Child Care Assistance Scholarship

Red Oak Montessori School is happy to participate in the NH Child Care Assistance program, which assists qualifying households with the cost of child care (i.e. tuition). Parents must be working, looking for work or in a training program. For program description, please see: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcyf/cdb/eligibility.htm>

To apply (and to determine your family's eligibility) for assistance with Child Care, go to NH EASY at: <https://nheasy.nh.gov/#/>

If your family is approved and enrolled by the State for this program, please consult Red Oak Montessori School regarding tuition and payment schedule; the State will determine your weekly "cost share".

Referrals

Currently enrolled families can receive a referral credit of \$50 when:

- Referral is to a new family.
- The referred family pays their registration fee and paperwork is turned in.

Disenrollment

New students are enrolled on a four-week trial basis. If a child is not ready for the program or the program does not meet the child's needs, the school reserves the right to end his/her enrollment. (Full disenrollment policy and procedure is available upon request.)

Leaving for any reason causes disruption in a child's routine. A two-week notice is helpful in allowing your child and their classmates to properly say goodbye.

Working Towards a Positive Solution

Within Maria Montessori's philosophy we seek to balance academic and social-emotional development, and to foster responsibility and cooperation within a supportive learning environment for each child. Our school shows respect for each individual child's opportunity to learn, investigate and socialize in a physically, emotionally and socially safe atmosphere.

Red Oak seeks a solid partnership with our families as a basis for their children's success within our program. It is only on rare occasions that a child's/family's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting, either short term or permanently. Given the diversity of the families and communities that we serve, we recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child and family brings to our program. In all cases, our goal is to act quickly, thoughtfully and thoroughly to communicate, address and resolve concerns relating to the children in our care. School personnel will attempt to work with a family to take constructive steps to find a solution that resolves a problem as early as possible.



GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

Daily Schedule

Part of the Montessori philosophy is providing the child with a long block of uninterrupted time in which he or she may explore, learn, and make discoveries, often independently, i.e. “morning work time”. Other periods, some of which are “group” oriented, include early-morning outdoor play, snack, morning meeting, late-morning circle, lunch, outdoor play, rest time, afternoon in- or outdoor time, plus after-school program (when available). “Transition” times between each activity are planned for bathroom visits, changing shoes/clothing, etc.

Expect your child to be outside part of every day! (See below for suggested clothing).

Our general daily schedule (times approximate – “color groups” will be staggered by about 20 minutes, to avoid mixing and crowding in restroom and cubby areas):

8:00 – 9:00am	Arrive for regular school day
8:00am	Outdoor play (weather permitting)
9:00am	<i>Snack</i>
9:40am	Morning meeting (welcome, song, presentation, etc.)
9:40am – 11:20am	Morning work
11:20am	Circle (group song, movement, book, etc.)
11:45am-12:00pm	Half-Day pick-up
11:30 or 12:00pm	<i>Lunch</i>
12:30pm	Outdoor play (weather permitting)
1:30 – 2:30pm	Peace time (rest/quiet)
2:00-2:45pm	Kindergarten group lesson (after 30 min rest)
2:30pm	Classroom and/or Outdoors
3:00 -3:30pm	Full Day pick-up
3:30 – 5:15pm	After-School program, if available (for those registered)

Clothing

To reduce distraction and imitative play, we encourage families, when purchasing hats, shirts, backpacks, lunchboxes and so on for school, to consider choosing items without commercial or cartoon characters, such as princesses or super heroes, or with rude (sarcastic), negative phrases.

Please LABEL all items with your child’s name! (This aids in returning items to the owner.) Each child has ample cubby space and hooks for shoes, outerwear and extra clothing.

Every child needs a pair of “**indoor shoes**” to be kept at school, and worn only in the classroom. Examples include slip-on shoes, crocs or hard-rubber-soled slip-on slippers. Please choose indoor shoes/slippers that are noncommercial and simple, rather than animal shapes or those that make sounds, light up or represent commercial characters.

Children engage in many types of activities each day, and should have comfortable clothing and footwear for inside and out. Tight clothes, fancy dresses, jewelry, costumes may get in the way. For independence in toileting, children need clothing that is easy to take off and on.

During each day children may become soiled or wet (water, paint, mud, food, etc.) -- sometimes more than once a day. Your child will need **extra clothing** including underwear, socks, pants and shirts, **to be kept at school in his or her “bathroom cubby.”** These may be kept in his/her **backpack, to use if and when needed.** Please include a reusable bag to transport soiled clothes home; re-stock with clean clothes/shoes. Extra clothes should be changed each season, and as your child grows. (Red Oak can lend “school extras” of most items of clothing, if needed. Please wash and return any borrowed items promptly!)

Importance of Outdoor Play and Seasonal Outerwear

“There is no such thing as bad weather, only inadequate clothing.” Time spent outside is an important part of every child’s day. It provides fresh air needed for good health and aids in developing social and large-motor skills. Children investigate nature, weather and the seasons. Weather permitting, we will go outside every day, including during light rain, snow, wind and sun. Children should arrive at school each day with appropriate, sturdy outdoor shoes and/or boots for running, jumping, and climbing. *As a general rule, if air temps are below 10F, there is active lightning, or a weather alert issued, we will have “indoor recess,” shorten our time outdoors, or make other adaptations.* Children’s safety is our first concern. **The chance of transmission of the coronavirus is GREATLY reduced outdoors! Schools have been encouraged to increase children’s time outdoors as a result.**

Layering clothing is very helpful as children can take off articles of clothing if needed. During the Fall, Winter and Spring mittens and socks can get wet very quickly. To help keep little hands and feet warm please send thick, waterproof mittens and socks and/or lots of extras.

Outdoor clothing needs for each season include:

SUMMER: Sandals with closed toes and heel straps are acceptable for warm weather – not flip flops. Sun hat/cap is optional. Sunglasses tend to hamper vision and are often misplaced.

FALL/SPRING: Sweatshirt/windbreaker/fleece (with hood, or hat/cap); rain coat (with hood, or rain hat); rain pants (or additional extra pants); rain boots; extra socks; waterproof gloves/mittens. Umbrellas are not recommended on the playground.



WINTER: Snow pants; winter coat; warm cap (with ear flaps are best); thick, insulated, **water-resistant** gloves/mittens; warm socks (wool/fleece); insulated snow boots; scarf (optional).

Nutrition – Snack and Lunch

To encourage healthy eating, children must have healthy choices in their lunch box. Children choose two items (not main course/sandwich) from their lunchbox to eat at morning snack. **Healthy lunchbox choices include:**

- Whole-grain or gluten-free breads for sandwiches
- Lean meats, cheese, tofu, hardboiled egg
- Peanut/sunflower/almond butter (unsweetened best)
- Fresh cut veggies (carrots, cucumber, sweet peppers, tomatoes, pea pods, broccoli, cauliflower, etc.)
- Fresh fruit (apples, bananas, berries, oranges, melons, pineapple, kiwi, halved grapes, etc.)
- Dinner leftovers, soup, cooked rice/pasta



Highly sugared and processed foods and drink such as candy, cookies, cake, pudding, soda, juice drinks, etc. should not be sent to school, as these may interfere with a child’s learning and health and tend to be stimulants. Become a “label reader” (if not already!) Even seemingly-nutritious food may be high in sugar and/or preservatives. Also, please ensure your child has a nutritious breakfast – a banana and granola bar in the car are better than a donut!

Your child needs **WATER** throughout the day and at snack and lunch. Each child needs their own **reusable water bottle** and can refill it at school as needed. We prefer water to “juice boxes/pouches,” as these produce excess waste and contain unnecessary sugar.

During snack and lunch times, children sit while they eat and have pleasant mealtime conversations ~~with their tablemate(s)~~. Due to possible food allergies and intolerance, we have a strict **no-food-sharing** policy. Teachers are present to model manners, grace and courtesy, to assist children as needed, and also to be aware of choking or an allergic reaction.

If there are children with known food allergies we will communicate food/drink restrictions. Food prep/serving – usually, fresh veggies or fruit – is a favorite classroom activity, part of our “grace and courtesy” curriculum. Although a child may always reply “No, thank you” when another child offers, we encourage children to at least “try” something, if new.

The school’s mini-fridge and microwave oven are not for use by the children. Keep items cool with a reusable “freezer” pack in the lunchbox. Keep hot food warm by sending in a Thermos.

Care of the Environment is part of Montessori curriculum. Children learn about recycling, composting and how to decrease trash, especially single-use plastic. Steps your family can take:

- send water in a **refillable, reusable water bottle**
- send food in **reusable containers** (also enables children to bring home their leftovers)
- consider washing/re-using zip-loc baggies
- consider buying larger-size containers of foods such as yogurt and applesauce; spoon a serving into your child’s reusable smaller container (less expensive and less waste)
- include **non-plastic, reusable utensils** if your child needs them for snack and/or lunch

2020-2021 CALENDAR

August	22, Sat 29, Sat	Meet & Greet, Children & Families @ 4-6 pm Back-to-School Volunteer Clean-Up @ 9am-12pm
September	3, Th 8, T 21, M	Back-to-School Parent Info Zoom @ 6:30-8 pm First Day of School International Peace Day Celebration (<i>Families welcome</i>)
October	12, M 30, F	Columbus/Indigenous Peoples Day and Parent-Teacher Intro Zoom Conferences: No School Fall/Halloween Celebration (<i>Families welcome</i>)
November	3, T 11, W 24, T 25-27, W-F	Voting/Teacher Prof. Development: No School Veterans Day: No School Thanksgiving Feast (students only) School closes at Noon Thanksgiving Holiday Break: No School
December	21-31/Jan 1	Holiday Break/New Year's Day: No School
January	4, M 15, F 18, M	School resumes! Parent-Teacher Zoom Conf (mid-year): No School Martin Luther King Jr Day: No School
February	19, F 22-26	Teacher Prof. Development: No School Winter Break: No School
March	19, F	Teacher Prof. Development: No School
April	26-30, M-F	Spring Break: No School
May	8, Sat 14, F 15, Sat 31, M	Franklin "Community Day" (<i>Parade TBD</i>) Parent-Teacher End of Year Zoom Conf: No School Spring Volunteer Clean-Up (<i>Families welcome</i>) Memorial Day: No School
June	10, Th 11, F	Field Day (<i>Families welcome</i>) Last Day of School and Closing Ceremony (<i>Families welcome</i>)

Weather-Related School Closings

Red Oak Montessori School *generally* follows the local (Franklin) school district concerning weather-related delays and closures. We close when driving conditions are considered unsafe. However, families are asked to use their own judgment when considering whether or not to bring their child to school, even if open. Weather-related school closings and delays will be announced on WMUR, Channel 9; online WMUR; by e-mail to all Red Oak families, and on Facebook. You are encouraged to **install the WMUR school closings app on your phone**. We post/announce closures/delays no later than 6:00am that day. Whenever possible, announcements will be made the evening before, so that you can better prepare. “Snow days” will not be made up.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are a special part of your child’s year. The birthday child’s “walk around the sun” is a tradition at many Montessori schools, including Red Oak. ~~A family member is welcome to join!~~ Families are invited to **send** a picture from each year of the birthday child’s life to share as part of the “walk”. ~~The birthday child may also provide a healthy snack to share with the class that day, such as muffins or cut fruit, keeping any allergies in mind.~~

Invitations to a birthday party elsewhere may be distributed at school, ~~by asking staff to send them home with children, placing them on top of each child’s cubby, where only parents can reach~~, but only if ALL children are being invited. If your list is selective please send invitations outside of school. (A list of children’s first names is posted ~~in the lobby~~; a family contact list with addresses and phone numbers is sent by e-mail at the beginning of the school year.)

Holidays

Red Oak Montessori School *generally* follows the calendar for the local (Franklin) public school district for school vacations. We are closed for all federal and state holidays: Columbus/Indigenous Peoples’ Day, Veterans’ Day, Thanksgiving break, Christmas/Holiday break, MLK Jr. Day, February and April breaks, and Memorial Day, as well as parent-teacher conference and staff development days. (See page 14 for the 2020-21 school year calendar.)

Learning about and appreciating world cultures is part of the Montessori curriculum. Holidays are one way to learn about people in other lands, are part of each child’s cultural heritage, and help mark the seasons of the year. We strive to respect each family’s traditions; this may include learning about lesser-known special days. We encourage families to share their cultural traditions through food, clothing, games, stories, etc.



Please see the school year calendar for holiday-related special events at Red Oak. The teachers will determine how these and other holidays will be incorporated, with an eye towards simplicity, avoiding commercialization and over-stimulation or duplicating experiences the children will enjoy more when in elementary school.

HEALTH and SAFETY

Be assured that Red Oak Montessori School stays current with guidelines, requirements and recommendations from both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the NH Dept. of Health and Human Services' Child Care Licensing, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. These guidelines may fluctuate in response to evolving situations; we are committed to communicating needs with families quickly. We strive to balance disease prevention with young children's social and emotional needs.

Parents are invited to express concerns or questions with staff and/or Board of Directors, and are encouraged to stay up-to-date themselves through NH Child Care Aware:

<http://nh.childcareaware.org/covid-19-resources-for-children-and-families/>

Child Health Requirements (guidelines from NH State Child Care Licensing, 2017-27):

- Documentation of immunizations shall be on file for each child on the first day the child is in attendance at the program.
- Notarized Religious Exemptions forms are accepted.
- Children younger than 6 years of age must have physical examinations updated annually.
- The form must have the date of the child's last examination and the physician's signature.

Illness Policy

Please *do not* send your child to school if they are sick and unable to participate in daily activities, including outdoor playtime. Your child will recover more quickly at home and the other children and adults will be protected from continued exposure to the illness. (**This applies to all illnesses, not only COVID-19.**)

COVID-19 screening questions which we'll ask you to respond to every morning on arrival to Red Oak. These will be posted with the statement that by signing your child in, you attest that none of these conditions apply that day. If ANY of these do apply, your child must stay home:

1. Any symptoms of COVID-19?

- a. **Fever** of 100.4 degrees F or higher (parents are asked to check before leaving home)
- b. **Respiratory symptoms** such as runny nose, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath
- c. **Flu-like symptoms** such as muscle aches, chills, and severe fatigue
- d. Changes in a person's sense of taste or smell

Symptomatic persons should contact their health care provider to be tested for COVID-19 and self-isolate at home following these instructions: must stay out of child care until: a. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND b. At least 24 hours have passed since recovery (recovery is defined as resolution of fever off any fever-reducing medications, plus improvement in other symptoms).

2. Close contact with someone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 in past 14 days?

3. Traveled in the past 14 days? Either: i. Internationally (outside the U.S.), ii. By cruise ship, or iii. Domestically (within the U.S.) outside of NH, VT, or ME on public transportation (e.g., bus, train, plane, etc.).

Asymptomatic persons reporting either condition 2) or 3) above should self-quarantine for 14 days from their last exposure, or from their return from travel.

Please let us know by 8:30 am if your child is going to be absent. If absence is due to illness let us know symptoms as well. Call (603) 934-1002 or email director@redoakmontessori.org.

If a child becomes ill at school they will be made comfortable while parents are called to arrange for their child to be picked up. **Our Isolation Area is the comfy recliner in the Office. Anyone exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms at school will be isolated and sent home immediately. Your quick response to a phone call from school is important. Include Red Oak in your Contacts, so that you recognize the number immediately: (603) 934-1002.**

If there is a Confirmed Case of COVID-19 at Red Oak:

Staff will notify the State Bureaus of Infection Disease Control, Child Development, and Child Care Licensing and follow their instructions. Parents will be notified, and if COVID-19 is confirmed at school, Red Oak will be closed for 5 school days (one week including weekends).

All Red Oak staff are certified in First Aid and CPR; in case of serious injury we call 9-1-1.

Red Oak Montessori School adheres strictly to these State Licensing standards:

He-C 4002.17 Communicable Diseases:

When it is determined that your child is too sick to remain in school immediate arrangements must be made for your child to be picked up. Your child will be sent home for any of the following:

- A fever of 100 degrees
- Vomiting (more than one incident in one day)
- Diarrhea (more than one incident in one day)
- Uncontrolled coughing or wheezing
- Rash
- Ear ache, sore throat
- Suspected contagious disease; conjunctivitis, chicken pox...etc.
- Head lice or nits are present.
- Unusual or extreme fatigue or lethargy; inability to participate in daily activities in conjunction with or without the above symptoms.

Your child may return to school when they are:

- Fevers: fever free (without medication) for 24 hours
- Vomiting: free of vomiting for 24 hours
- Diarrhea: free of diarrhea for 24 hours
- Rash: A note from clinic or physician that rash is not communicable.
- Conjunctivitis: All discharge has ceased and note from clinic or physician stating that the child is not communicable and/or on antibiotic for at least 24 hours.
- Head Lice: After treatment and free of lice and nits.
- Able to participate in daily activities, inside and outside.

Children's physical, social, mental and emotional health and safety is our priority. Red Oak staff are legally mandated to report known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

Medication Policy

When children need medication administered to them at school, parents will be given an “Authorization to Administer Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication” form to sign for their child. Medications will only be given with this signed parental authorization and in accordance with the following State of NH guidelines:

He-C 4002.18 Administration and Storage of Medication:

- Authorized staff shall administer only those prescription medications for which there is a prescription label or written directions provided by a licensed healthcare practitioner, and written permission from the parent.
- Medication orders shall be valid for no more than one year.
- Each medication order shall legibly display the following information:
 - (a) The child’s name;
 - (b) The medication name, strength, the prescribed dose and method of administration;
 - (c) The frequency of administration;
 - (d) The indications for usage of all medications to be used PRN; and
 - (e) The dated signature of the parent or licensed health care practitioner for orders other than the prescription label.
- A medication authorization form is mandatory to dispense any medicine **prescribed by a doctor or over-the-counter** medicine. Medicine must be handed directly to the teachers for safe keeping.

Insect Repellent and Sunscreen Protection

If you wish your child to receive sunscreen and/or insect repellent at school, these must be supplied by the family and applied to the child at least once at home first to test for allergic reaction. Signed permission for staff to apply is required. Sunscreen and insect repellent must be:

- pump dispenser only -- no aerosol sprays
- provided in the original container
- clearly labeled with the child’s full name
- within the expiration date

Rest/Quiet Time

After an active morning, children need to recharge their bodies and minds. NH Licensing rule He-C 4002.23 requires: “... children who are in attendance for more than 5 hours [are provided] with an opportunity for at least one hour of rest, relaxation, or sleep, depending on the needs of each child. Programs shall provide children who do not fall asleep after 30 minutes with an opportunity to do a quiet activity.”

~~Red Oak provides each child with a rest mat to lay on; these are washed regularly.~~ This year, families are asked to provide a **beach towel** for their child to spread out on the carpet for rest. Please provide a towel *without* characters, as this is a time we discourage socializing. Children may also bring their own blanket or sleeping bag, small pillow and/or small stuffed animal. **Beach towels and other bedding are to be taken home and laundered at the end of each week.** TOYS FROM HOME ARE NOT ALLOWED as this is a time for rest and mental relaxation.

Drop-Off and Pick-up

Children must be accompanied by an adult when entering or leaving the school; only an adult can sign the child in and out. ~~If parking lot is full you are welcome to use the staff/overflow lot.~~

Each family is assigned “drop-off” and “pick-up” times, which are staggered so as to minimize crowding, and especially to reduce inter-mixing of families of different “color groups”.

Each family is also assigned one of our parking lots, depending on your child’s “color group”.

This year, we will already be on the playground starting at 8:00am. Each child should be let into the appropriate playground gate (colored placards will be on each gate to assist you). Ensure that the teacher acknowledges your child’s arrival, verbally or with a hand signal.

Please sign your child in, in the appropriate sign-in book by the front door, either with him/her, or after you’ve dropped him or her off in the playground. Yellow and blue sign-in books are on top of the appropriate (yellow or blue group’s) “outdoor cubbies” by the front door. Parents are NOT to share pens – please use your own. (If you do *not* have a pen that day, please use one of the clean pens provided, and place it in the “to be disinfected” container after use.)

Please place your child’s belongings (lunchbox, backpack, etc.) in his/her labeled “outdoor cubby”. This area is *mostly* protected from the weather. Children will collect their belongings when their group comes in from the playground, and move them to their indoor cubby then. (If your child’s “outdoor cubby” is full, such as when you’re bringing in clean bedding, please ensure that all items are in a labeled useable bag, backpack or other container which can be set temporarily on the ground by the front door. It will also be brought inside when your child’s group comes in from the playground. Children’s “indoor cubbies” provide much more space.)

Ideally, the same parent or designated person should drop off and pick up the child every day. If possible, older people such as grandparents or those with serious underlying medical conditions should not pick up children, because they are more at risk for serious COVID-19 complications.

When weather is too inclement for outdoor morning recess, adults are asked to follow the same drop-off procedures, bringing your child through the appropriate playground gate. Children in one “color group” will **enter the school via the back door**; those in the other “color group” **via the side door** – each accessible straight from the corresponding playground. These doors will be unlocked during scheduled arrival time, on days that we have indoor morning recess. Colored placards will indicate the appropriate entrance. After your child enters the building, parents should then follow the same procedures as above, and sign-in and drop off your child’s belongings by the *front* door.

At drop-off, your responsibility is to sign your child in...and say goodbyes! (This is also the time to convey a brief message to a teacher.) ~~replenish your child’s “extra” clothes in the bathroom, etc., as needed.~~ Drop-offs should be kept short and consistent. If your child has separation issues please discuss this; the teachers will work with you and your child to help make the transition easier. Please say goodbyes ~~in the lobby area, or~~ at the playground gate, **arrive during your assigned time, and help ensure distancing.** Your child gains independence by putting away belongings, changing shoes or putting on a jacket, all on his or her own. (Teachers and other children are available and offer help if your child needs assistance.)

At **pick-up** each day, please initial and enter the time -- *sign* your name at the end of your child's week here (i.e. if your child's last day each week is Thursday, we need your signature on Thursday.) **Only persons listed on your child's emergency form will be allowed to pick up your child unless there is notification in writing or phone call.**

Pick up times are also assigned, and staggered to allow distancing. Please arrive a few minutes before your pick-up time so as to collect your child's belongings **from her/his "outdoor cubby"** and depart BY your scheduled dismissal time: 12:00pm, or between 3:00 and 3:30pm. On-time pick-ups provides your child a sense of stability and allows our teachers to complete closing procedures in a timely manner. If you will be late, a phone call is expected. **We now charge \$5-per-15-minutes (or portion thereof) if your child is picked up after 3:35pm.**

Communication between parents and teachers is essential to the safety and best care of your child. However, arrival and dismissal times are quite busy for all. Conversations regarding how your child's night was, their overall disposition, medicines or a change in pick-up are welcome, but in-depth conversations deserve more time; parents are invited to schedule a time, as needed.

Siblings are asked to stay ~~in the lobby or~~ by the playground gate during drop-off and pick-up, so as ~~not to distract those who are already engaged in activities~~ **to limit potential spread of virus.**

Red Oak's doors are locked during the day for safety reasons. ~~The front door is unlocked for 20 minutes at morning drop-off, and for 20 minutes at each afternoon pick-up time.~~ If the door is locked and we are inside when you arrive, please ring the doorbell (or call 603-934-1002). If we are all outside, please enter the playground gate. ~~and a teacher will open the back door so you can sign in and deposit belongings.~~

Emergency Plan and Procedures

Beginning in 2017 the State of NH required the creation of an individualized Emergency Operations Plan by every school and childcare facility. Red Oak's Plan, prepared in conjunction with the Franklin Police and Fire Departments and a team of parents with specialized expertise, is available for perusal; please ask the Director to see it. This is a living document, expected to change and develop in response to need. As part of the process of developing our Plan we made a number of physical security improvements to our site, practiced as a staff for a range of possible emergency situations, developed evacuation plans, and more. A summary pamphlet **is included in each family's packet of permission forms.** ~~is available and is distributed~~ Emergency Preparedness is one topic of discussion at the before-school Parent Info Night. Questions and concerns are always welcome.

Red emergency backpacks, each with First Aid kits, additional emergency medical equipment, duplicates of children's Emergency Forms and more, are by the back and side doors. One backpack is taken outside, along with a phone, at all times that we are on the playground.

Safety Drills

A monthly fire safety drill is required by NH Child Care Licensing Unit for all child care facilities. Two "alarmed" fire drills are required by the Franklin Fire department within the school year. Other monthly drills will be conducted and documented by Red Oak staff. At least two of the following will also be practiced each year: evacuation, reverse evacuation, secure campus, drop-cover-hold, lockdown, and shelter-in-place. We take individual children's

emotional needs and potential reactions in mind, ensuring calm and support during drills.

Our school has three main exits -- front, back and side doors, each of which we utilize in drills with the children. Each of the nine windows are also potential exits in case of a real emergency.

Evacuation Preparation and “Go Bags”

One step of preparing our Emergency Operations Plan was to identify and confirm possible evacuation sites, both within walking distance and further. These are identified at the Parent Info Night, in the summary pamphlet and in Red Oak’s Emergency Operations Plan.

Each child should have an emergency “Go Bag” stored at school. Each student’s items should fit in a large, see-through, zip-loc bag with the child’s name. We will remind families to refresh supplies when seasons change. Each “Go Bag” is to include:

- Complete change of clothes
- Small throw-blanket/fleece
- Small favorite doll, stuffed animal, book or other toy
- Two non-perishable, wrapped snacks, such as granola bar, jerky, fruit leather
- Travel toothbrush
- Extra prescription medication (talk to your doctor)

Red Oak provides bottled water and other emergency items such as flashlights with batteries, whistle, etc. in the classroom emergency bin in which students’ own “Go Bags” are stored.



COMMUNICATION, SERVICE and the RED OAK COMMUNITY

Parent-Teacher Conferences

We look forward to formally sitting down with you three times during the school year, to talk about your child! **This year, these will be “virtual meetings” using Zoom.** The first conference, a few weeks after the school year starts, is primarily for getting to know your child. Your child’s teacher will share observations thus far and parents/guardians share their insights and questions; together we’ll set goals. Mid-Year and End of Year conferences will include the teacher’s written report. Please see the current school year calendar for specific dates. A reminder, sign-up sheet **and Zoom link** will go out in advance of each.

You, or your child’s teacher, may request informal, brief conferences in person, **by Zoom** or by phone as needed any time. Communication between parents and teachers benefits the child greatly. Parents should notify teachers about significant events and changes in their child’s life, so that we can understand any changes in behavior and best support your child.

Observing and Volunteering in the Classroom

Parents/guardians are **normally** welcome to visit and observe the classroom. **This year, to reduce the chances of spreading the coronavirus, we will limit the adults entering the building whenever possible.** Virtual or phone conferences with the teacher and social-media photos (those children whose parents give permission) are two ways to “observe” your child’s day. Visitors will mostly be limited to substitute teachers, ~~adult learners,~~ and licensing staff. ~~and others may also visit. Red Oak is happy to provide a Guide to Observation. Please talk to the director to schedule a visit/observation.~~

Parents are also welcome ~~in the classroom~~ to help with special projects or share special talents and experiences. Please talk to the teachers to see how and if your offer can be incorporated.

Volunteer “Service Teams”

It truly “takes a village to raise a child”! We welcome and value the skills, insights and contributions of our families! Red Oak is a small school with few staff – we NEED you! Our hope is that you will also feel a sense of “community” as you engage with your child’s school.

This year, each family **is required** to join one (or more) “Service Teams”, depending on each parent/guardian’s skills and interests, and sign-ups. Most tasks can happen at your convenience, such as weekends or evenings. Each entails thoughtful consultation with the teachers, who are appreciative of your efforts! **When you sign up for a “Team” – at the Meet & Greet, Parent Info Night or other times, all members will be put in touch with one another, so activities and projects can be coordinated (and perhaps some done together, truly as a “team”).** This year’s teams:

- **Red Oak Board of Directors** – our School is a small non-profit, overseen by dedicated, volunteer Board members, most of whom are parents of current Red Oak students. Monthly meetings have moved to Zoom, which likely makes them easier to attend! Red Oak Montessori School *depends* on the oversight, guidance and energy of the Board. If you are interested in participating as a member, please let us know! Interested parties are encouraged to attend a portion of the next open meeting. (See below for more details.)
- **Fix-It Team** – maintenance and repair jobs, small and large, planned and spontaneous arise all year! If you have skill or experience in areas such as engineering, mechanics, electronics, tech, plumbing, carpentry, etc., this is likely the team for you!
- **Special Events Team** – some holidays and other special days throughout the year include

events such as the Harvest Celebration or Thanksgiving Feast. If you enjoy planning and carrying out crafts, meals, decorating, this may be the team for you!

- **Landscape/Gardens Team** – our outdoor environment, both playground and frontage areas, are ideally places of both beauty and learning for the children. If you have a green thumb and/or love nature and the outdoors, consider serving on this team!
- ~~Spick-n-Span Team – the children here at Red Oak clean up after themselves; care of self and the environment are part of the curriculum. But, there are jobs beyond the scope of 3- and 4-year-olds. Some of us truly enjoy cleaning – if that’s you, please sign up for this team!~~
- **Reading Team** – we all help develop a love of books in our children. Ways to do this include choosing and bringing public library books to our classroom, and encouraging reading through the Scholastic Book Club. ~~and coming in person to read to the children~~
- **Fundraising Team** – do you enjoy planning and organizing events? Whether one of the many programs we receive notices for (i.e. Original Works or Three Rivers Wreaths) or one you create (Auction/Dinner or Mini-Golf Tournament?) there are plenty of opportunities!

Family “Clean-Up” Days

There will also be opportunities throughout the year for families to support Red Oak by participating in at least one family work day. This allows us to get better acquainted as a community and helps keep costs down. Watch for Fall and Spring clean-ups.

Parent Information Nights (Mandatory) and Montessori Nights

One or two **mandatory** “Parent Info Nights” will be scheduled each school year to share school policies, emergency response plans or other vital topics. Each family is asked to send at least one adult family member, if at all possible. ~~These will be “virtual” this year, using Zoom.~~

In addition, there will be several Montessori Nights offered for parents/guardians or other adult family members to join teachers ~~via Zoom in the classroom~~ to learn firsthand about the Montessori Method. Work is presented, explained and questions are answered. This is an excellent time for adults to see the classroom as the children do. Dates will be posted in newsletters and emails.

Code of Ethical Conduct

Red Oak staff strive to use the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)’s Code of Ethical Conduct to guide our actions, and encourage parents and guardians to consider it as well. The Code looks at the responsibility of teachers with children, families, colleagues, and the wider community. The over-riding principle is that, above all, we shall not harm children. The Code of Ethical Conduct guides communication and confidentiality. Details will be shared at the Parent Info Night; a copy of this Code is available for perusal.

Lobby: Bulletin Board, Wish List, Lending and Resource Library

One way to contribute and stay informed, is to peruse ~~the boards and flyers posted by the front door the lobby~~ regularly! The bulletin board has notices, the newsletter (see below), class birthday list and more.

One such resource is a “Wish List Tree” created by a parent. Our teachers stick Post-it “leaves” of everyday and special items. You are invited to take the Post-it with an item you plan to buy/scrounge and donate. If you have questions about what is needed, and how soon, please ask.

Several Montessori and Child Development books, pamphlets and articles are available ~~in the lobby~~ for families to borrow or keep. This a great way to become acquainted with the Montessori philosophy and the work that your child is involved with here at school, as well as on a wide range of child-development, health and safety topics, and family resources. **Please ask about our “lending library” and other resources!**

Social Media, E-Mail and Website

Communication between home and school is essential for ensuring your child’s social, emotional, physical and cognitive well-being. Although nothing is better than face-to-face interaction, we encourage this also by communicating electronically. Respectful of each family’s wishes and consent, this may include almost-daily posts, including photos and video, on Red Oak’s Facebook page, group e-mails to current Red Oak families, and updates to our website.

Newsletter

Our Newsletter is sent by email at the beginning of each month, and is posted **by the front door in the lobby**. Activities, dates, celebrations, classroom work and announcements are included.

We encourage parents to share information and ideas with the Red Oak Community. You are invited to contribute to the monthly newsletter with recipes, articles, poems or a great children’s book you just discovered. All entries are due by the 25th of each month for the upcoming month.

Children’s Community Service

Children learn by doing. Teachers will choose “act of kindness” projects appropriate for young children. The projects/donations will be announced in the newsletter and by email.

Red Oak Board of Directors

Red Oak Montessori School is a nonprofit organization and, as required by law, is run by a Board of Directors. The Board meets regularly; meeting minutes are available for parents upon request. The Board works closely with the director to develop policies and to ensure the fiscal solvency of the school. New board members are invited to join after a majority vote of the entire board. Any member of Red Oak or the community at large can express interest in a seat on the Board. Open meetings are held regularly, usually in November and May. Board members’ contact information is **available on request ~~posted in the lobby~~**.

NH Department of Health and Human Services - Child Development Bureau

Fully licensed by the State of New Hampshire, our non-profit preschool/kindergarten offers 3-, 4-, and 5-day options for a morning or full-day Montessori program for children ages 2-years-and-9-months (toilet-trained) through 6 years old. We offer before- and after-school programs to help support families’ schedule needs.

Please see <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcyf/cdb/index.htm> for more information on services and resources for families provided by the State of New Hampshire. **Also, Child Care Aware-New Hampshire provides a one-stop resource for all your needs and questions, with a user-friendly website: <http://nh.childcareaware.org/>**

NH Child Care Licensing Unit (NHCCLU) ANNUAL STATEMENT

"The licensing authority for this program is the bureau of licensing and certification, child care licensing unit. Child care programs are required to post a copy of the statement of findings and corrective action plan for the most recent visit in a location which is accessible to parents, and must maintain copies of the statement of findings and corrective action plan for the preceding visit and make them available for parents to review upon request. Statements of findings and corrective action plans are also available on-line at <http://childcaresearch.dhhs.nh.gov> or by calling the bureau at 603-271-9025. During licensing, monitoring, and complaint investigation visits to licensed programs the department shall speak with children regarding the care they receive at the program if in the judgment of the licensing specialist the children's response would be valuable in determining compliance with licensing rules. Licensing staff are experienced in working with children and trained to interview in a manner that is respectful and non-leading. However, if you do not want your child interviewed, or if you wish to be informed prior to your child being interviewed you must give the family child care provider, center director, site director or designee, and update annually, a signed dated statement indicating your preference."

Red Oak Montessori School admits students of any race, color, gender, religion, and national origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, national origin or disability in administration of its educational policies, employment practices, financial assistance programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

Thank you for choosing Red Oak Montessori School!

