

HERMOSA MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

Kindergarten Handbook

2026 – 2027 School Year

“The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six.”

— Dr. Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind

Hermosa Montessori School, Inc.
12051 E Fort Lowell Rd · Tucson, AZ 85749 · (520) 749-5518
www.hermosaschool.org

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Welcome to Hermosa Montessori

At Hermosa Montessori we believe that a child's development during the early years of life is very important. We are also convinced that the family is of utmost importance in providing the love and guidance necessary for a child's natural development. We realize that you, as parents, are especially sensitive to your child's needs, and that you are trusting us to provide a positive school experience. Our goal at Hermosa Montessori is to enhance your relationship with your child by providing an experience that will respect them as a whole person: emotionally, physically, intellectually, socially, and spiritually.

You can play an important role in this Montessori experience. We hope that the following information and suggestions will help us provide a responsive and supportive environment for your children. Please read this thoroughly and keep it for further reference.

Kindergarten Hours

- Morning session: Monday – Friday, 8:30 – 11:30
- Full Day session: Monday – Friday, 8:30 – 3:00

Understanding the Montessori Classroom

Hermosa is a Montessori School. The following excerpts from A Parents' Guide to the Montessori Classroom by Aline D. Wolf may enrich your understanding of our Montessori classroom.

"The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six. For that is the time when man's intelligence itself, his greatest implement, is being formed. But not only his intelligence, the full totality of his psychic powers... At no other age has the child greater need of an intelligent help, and an obstacle that impedes his creative work will lessen the chance he has of achieving perfection."

— Dr. Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that no human being is educated by another person. Each of us must educate ourselves, or it will never truly happen. A truly educated individual continues learning long after the hours and years spent in the classroom, motivated from within by a natural curiosity and love for knowledge. Dr. Montessori felt, therefore, that the goal of early childhood education should not be to fill the child with facts from a pre-selected course of studies, but rather to cultivate the child's own natural desire to learn.

In the Montessori classroom this objective is approached in two ways: first, by allowing each child to experience the excitement of learning by their own choice rather than by being forced; and second, by helping them perfect all their natural tools for learning, so that their ability will be at a maximum in future learning situations.

Another observation of Dr. Montessori, which has been reinforced by modern research, is the importance of the sensitive periods for early learning. These are periods of intense fascination for learning a particular characteristic or skill, such as going up and down steps, putting things in order, counting, or reading. It's easier for the child to learn a particular skill during the corresponding sensitive periods than at any other time in life. The Montessori classroom takes advantage of this fact by allowing the child freedom to select individual activities which correspond to their own periods of interest.

Parents should understand that a Montessori school is neither a baby-sitting service nor a play-school that prepares a child for traditional education. Rather, it is a unique cycle of learning designed to take advantage of the child's sensitive years between three and six, when they can absorb information from an enriched environment. A child who acquires the basic skills of reading and arithmetic in this natural way has the advantage of beginning their education without drudgery, boredom, or discouragement. By pursuing their individual interests in a Montessori classroom, the child gains an early enthusiasm for learning, which is the key to becoming a truly educated person.

Because the children work individually with the materials, there is no competition in the Montessori classroom. Each child relates only to their own previous work, and their progress is not compared to the achievements of other youngsters. Dr. Montessori believed that competition in education should be introduced only after the child has gained confidence in the use of the basic skills. "Never let a child risk failure," she wrote, "until they have a reasonable chance of success."

"It is true we cannot make a genius, we can only give each individual the chance to fulfill their potential possibilities to become an independent, secure, and balanced human being."

General Information

Admission

Hermosa Montessori School provides equal employment opportunity and equal participation opportunity to all its employees and or students without regard to ethnicity, national origin, creed, gender, income level, physical ability or disability, age, proficiency in the English language, or athletic ability, who submit a timely application based on space or position available.

Children must be 5 years old by September 1 of the school year to be admitted into Kindergarten.

Enrollment Procedures

A signed and dated enrollment contract must be submitted for enrollment.

Hermosa Montessori Family-School Commitment

Parent Responsibilities

- Read the entire Parent Handbook
- Familiarize themselves with the basic Montessori philosophy
- Support their child's progress
- Keep abreast of current activities by reading the Hermosa Newsletters and the notices sent home
- Observe the School Calendar
- Be familiar with and abide by all school policies
- Provide effective and continuing cooperation and communication between school and home

Student Responsibilities

- Contribute to the classroom and school community
- Participate in school activities with a positive attitude
- Act with kindness, respect, and responsibility
- Do their best on classroom work
- Contribute toward building a peaceful community

Teacher's Responsibilities

- Create a positive learning environment
- Facilitate student learning
- Provide opportunities for challenging and meaningful work
- Monitor student progress
- Participate in family conferences

Head of School

The Head of School handles personnel matters, admissions, financial aspects, dismissal, observations, classroom needs, and curriculum development. Parents should feel free to discuss any questions they might have. Call for an appointment.

Clothing

We suggest that you send your child in clothing that is comfortable and easily cleaned. In the case of an accident, the soiled clothes will be sent home that day. All clothing worn to school must meet Hermosa Montessori's dress code guidelines.

Food

Full day children should bring a lunch with their names marked on their bag or box. Please include "blue ice" to keep food cool. To make lunch time enjoyable, each child's lunch should be manageable for them and should be nutritionally balanced. Please do not send a lunch box filled with sweets. Uneaten food will be returned home as an indication of the child's appetite.

Snacks

We ask that you help by providing a simple snack for your child's class. A snack calendar will be provided each month. All foods served at school must comply with Arizona Health Department regulations. A detailed snack guide is available on Hermosa's web site or in the office.

Health

The health of all children is of prime importance to us. Please safeguard your child and others by keeping them home if signs of illness are present. Children with the following symptoms must remain at home: cough, sore throat, sneezing, green nasal discharge, above normal temperature, discharge from eyes, rash, or vomiting the day before or in the morning before school.

Should a child become ill at school, they will be taken to the health office, and a parent will be notified and is expected to make arrangements to pick up the child promptly. A child should be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning to school.

Strep throat, pinworms, conjunctivitis, impetigo, head lice, measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever, etc. are among those conditions categorized as “highly contagious.” Notifications will be made should any of these conditions arise. Contagious diseases must be reported to the office immediately so that notice of exposure can be sent home to the parents of the child’s classmates.

Please notify the school whenever your child is on medication of any kind.

Medication

Never send medication with your child to be kept in their lunch box or cubby. There is serious danger that another child might take the medicine, or that the child themselves will take too much. Many antibiotics and other medications can be prescribed to be taken in two doses daily, rather than three, thus eliminating the need for the school dose. Please request this from your pediatrician. Otherwise, a physician’s explanation of why the school dose is necessary will be required.

If it is necessary for a child to take medication, a medication administration form must be completed. Prescriptions must be in their original containers.

Accidents — Emergency Care

In case of a life threatening situation, the school will call 911. It is imperative that parents keep the school up to date on phone numbers where parents or other contacts can be reached. If a bump on the head occurs, parents will be called and informed. If an injury occurs, and a parent cannot be reached, we will call the names listed on your emergency form in the order of your preference.

An accident report will be sent home with any child involved in even a minor accident. A duplicate report will be on file in the office.

Arrival

Children may arrive from 8:15–8:30. Arrive at school on time! Children who come late may miss the opening lesson and feel awkward about their tardiness. The concentration of other classmates is interrupted when

someone arrives late. Enter the driveway at the farthest east entry. Pull forward as much as possible, have doors unlocked and student belongings ready and easily accessible. A staff member will meet your vehicle and assist your child getting out of the car, and accompany them into the classroom. After your child is safely out of your vehicle, proceed through the parking lot to the western exit.

Dismissal

Half Day Dismissal

Half day dismissal is from 11:15–11:30. At this time, park in a designated spot. Sign out on the clipboard.

Afternoon Dismissal

All vehicles will park. Parents will walk to the front gates, and then accompany their child to their parked vehicles. Your child has an assigned time for dismissal. Plan to arrive within this dismissal time. Since parking is limited, we ask for your cooperation by closely adhering to your assigned time. Please refer to the detailed dismissal handout to determine your student's dismissal time.

Leaving School Early

If you need to take your child earlier than your designated time, plan an extra ten minutes to sign out in the office then go to the classroom.

Release Authorization

Children will not be released to any person other than a parent, legal guardian, or someone duly authorized to pick up the children. If it becomes necessary to have someone not so listed pick up a child, a written release must be provided. We are not able to accept a phone call permitting someone not listed on the blue emergency card to pick up your child. When an authorized person not recognized by school personnel arrives, they must go to the office with identification (driver's license or other picture ID) to receive authorization before the child will be released.

Official Custody

If one parent has official custody of the child, the legal documents to this effect must be on file in the office. Without the legal documentation, the school cannot refuse to release a child to either parent. Please work out clear visitation arrangements between parents and/or grandparents without putting the school or the child in a difficult position.

Lost and Found

A lost and found container is located on the school grounds. Please check with a staff member for the current location of the lost and found container. Items not recovered at year's end will be donated to charity.

Transportation

The student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) assume full responsibility for the manner, safety, and protection of the student in traveling to and from school. Car pools are recommended. Parents must provide written notification if someone with whom we are not familiar will pick up their child.

Field Trips

Kindergarten classrooms do not attend off campus field trips during school hours.

Toys

We ask that toys, candy, gum, perfume, money, and nail polish stay at home. Special items such as flowers, seeds, insects, rocks, shells, books, and tapes are encouraged. Please mark your child's possessions with their name.

Special Days

Birthdays

Each child's birthday will be celebrated simply during group time. Further celebration will take place at snack time and parents often send a special treat for the occasion. (Please refer to the special section on snacks.)

If you would like to commemorate the day in a special way, we would recommend the donation of a children's book for the classroom with the child's name and occasion inscribed on the inside for children and teachers to recall for years to come.

Celebrations

There will be a celebration of some holidays. Parents with special ethnic traditions are encouraged to share their culture with the children. Please speak to the classroom teachers if you would like to help cook a special dish, or share any cultural items.

Freedom and Discipline

Freedom, as it is defined by Dr. Montessori, does not mean license to do just anything, or to be disorderly, or to interfere with others. In the classroom, freedom takes a variety of aspects: the choice of work, the liberty to talk, the liberty of time, and the freedom of movement. We do not allow children to hurt one another, to damage materials in the environment or to act in a manner that is abusive or disrespectful to one's teachers or peers. Serious offenses (aggressive behavior) are not tolerated. The child will be informed of the seriousness of the action and that a repeat of the mistake may mean calling their family.

Hermosa Montessori staff does not use corporal punishment. The staff does use natural and logical consequences to support the children in maintaining the classroom ground rules.

Discipline Policy

For optimal learning to occur, the classroom atmosphere must be physically and psychologically safe. To ensure this safety, a set of baseline ground rules and their consequences have been established.

Logical Consequences by Behavior

As part of our commitment to promoting a safe and inclusive learning environment, we use logical consequences to address unexpected behaviors. Logical consequences help students understand the connection between their actions and the outcomes that follow, fostering responsibility, positive behavior, and personal growth.

The table below summarizes our consequences for each unexpected behavior. Each consequence is proportional to the behavior and escalates with repeated offenses. In general, a first offense begins with a reminder or brief separation from the group; later offenses add family notification and conferences; and the most serious or repeated offenses may result in suspension (subject to the Kindergarten suspension limits noted above) or referral to the Governing Board for consideration of expulsion.

Behavior	Consequences by Offense
Disruptive Behavior	1st: Verbal reminder. 2nd: Removed to a quiet space away from the group. 3rd: Same, plus a phone call and written notice home. 4th: Same, plus a parent/teacher conference.
Noncompliance	1st: Verbal reminder. 2nd: Administration notified; removed to quiet space; phone call and written notice home. 3rd: Same, plus a parent/teacher/student conference. 4th–5th: Continued noncompliance may result in a suspension (limited to two school days for Kindergarten students) and, for repeated serious concerns, referral to the Governing Board for consideration of expulsion.
Aggression	1st: Administration notified; separated from others; phone call and notice home; meeting with the recipient of the aggression. 2nd: Same, with removal to a quiet space away from the community. 3rd: Same, plus a parent/teacher/possible SRO/student conference. 4th–5th: May result in a suspension (limited to two school days for Kindergarten students); repeated or serious concerns may be referred to the Governing Board for consideration of expulsion.
Disrespectful Language	1st: Verbal reminder. 2nd: Administration notified; phone call and notice home; meeting with the recipient of the language. 3rd: Same, with possible removal from class/peers at teacher's discretion. 4th–5th: Parent/teacher/student conference; may result in a suspension (limited to two school days for Kindergarten students) for repeated or serious concerns.

Inappropriate Language or Gestures	1st: Verbal reminder. 2nd: Administration notified; phone call and notice home. 3rd: Possible removal from peers/class at teacher's discretion; same notifications. 4th–5th: Parent/teacher/student conference; may result in a suspension (limited to two school days for Kindergarten students) for repeated concerns.
Elopement	1st: Verbal reminder; administration notified. 2nd: Same, plus notice and phone call home; loss of privileges at teacher's discretion. 3rd: Parent/teacher conference; repeated elopement may result in a suspension (limited to two school days for Kindergarten students).
Violence or Threat of Violence	1st: Administration and SRO notified; immediate removal from class for the remainder of the day; phone call and notice home; apology meeting; loss of privileges for one week. 2nd: Same, plus a parent/teacher/student conference; suspension (limited to two school days for Kindergarten students). 3rd or serious incident: Referred to the Governing Board for consideration of expulsion.
Causing Bodily Harm	1st: Administration and SRO notified; removed from class; phone call and notice home; apology meeting. 2nd: Same, plus a parent/teacher/student conference; suspension (limited to two school days for Kindergarten students). 3rd or serious incident: Referred to the Governing Board for consideration of expulsion.
Property Damage or Theft	1st: Administration notified; restriction of freedom at teacher's discretion; phone call/notice home; community service or restitution equal to the loss. 2nd: Same, plus a parent/teacher/student conference. 3rd or serious incident: May result in a suspension (limited to two school days for Kindergarten students).
Zero Tolerance: Weapons and Drugs	Any offense: Immediately reported to local law enforcement; immediate removal from class; phone call and notice home; parent/student/teacher conference; referred to the Governing Board for consideration of expulsion. (Note: the two-day Kindergarten suspension limit does not apply if a firearm was brought to school, per A.R.S. § 15-843(L).)

This table summarizes our behavior consequences for quick reference. The complete Discipline and Behavior Handbook — including our full purpose and philosophy, expected and unexpected behaviors, procedures, appeal process, and support resources — is available on our website at www.hermosaschool.org.

Important note for Kindergarten students: Under Arizona law (A.R.S. § 15-843(L)), unless a student in kindergarten through fourth grade has brought a firearm to school, a single suspension may not exceed two school days, and total suspensions for the school year may not exceed ten days without a Governing Board hearing. Where a consequence listed below would otherwise result in a longer suspension, the suspension will be limited to two school days per incident, and the remaining response (parent notification, conferences, loss of privileges, etc.) will still apply.

Professional Assistance Outside of School

When a child's behavior indicates the need for outside professional help, the parents will be called for a conference. Professional resources and suggestions may be given. If a therapist is assisting the child, the therapist must consult with the school within the first two weeks of therapy.

Rock and Sand Throwing Policy

Hermosa Montessori values a safe and conducive learning environment for all students. We encourage constructive play and exploration with sand and rocks, but the throwing of rocks or sand — regardless of direction or intent — is strictly prohibited at all times.

Observations

One of the best ways to learn about a Montessori classroom is to see one in action. Your child will most likely be very excited about your presence in their classroom. Try not to be disappointed if your child's behavior is unusual. This sometimes happens on a first visit. With further visits you will find a more normal reaction. In order to see a normal, working environment, we ask your cooperation in these ways:

- Avoid distracting the children, and observe passively. You can respond to a child's interest in you by explaining you are here to see how they work.
- Please do not interrupt the teachers during the class sessions. The teacher's first responsibility is to the children.
- If you have any questions, save them until after your observation time or set up a time with the teacher or director to discuss your observations.

Parent Involvement

Hermosa Montessori encourages active parent participation. Participation shows your child that you are interested in their school and that it has an important place in your lives.

Parent Nights

There will be meetings throughout the year to acquaint parents with our program. These meetings are also designed to answer your specific questions. Unless otherwise stated, plan to have your children stay home since these meetings are adult-oriented. If child care is a problem, please let us know and we will try to help you.

Communication

We cannot over-emphasize the importance of open communication between parents and staff. Changes in your child's life-style (house-guest, new baby, parent(s) on vacation, separation of parents, death in family, etc.) are unsettling. If we are aware of this situation, we can be more responsive and more understanding of their behavior at school.

Sometimes your child may voice a concern over something that happened at school, for example, a broken friendship. Try not to over-react. Let a staff member know what is happening so it can be handled at school. Sometimes trivial things can build up, so don't hesitate to talk it over with us if something is becoming a problem. We welcome your suggestions.

The most effective communication is directly to your child's teacher and to the Head of School. Parent "grapevines" tend to distort your original message beyond recognition, so please voice your concerns to the appropriate staff member.

You can visit Hermosa on the web to view items of interest about Montessori philosophy, upcoming school events, various class programs, and links to other Montessori sites. Periodically your child's teacher or the school will send a notice home for an upcoming field trip or classroom announcement. Most notices are sent via Hermosa Headlines.

Conferences

Formal parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. These formal conferences will describe activities and social associations your child has been involved in. Hopefully, conferences will give you further insights into Montessori education.

If you wish to speak to the teachers at any time, please make an appointment. Teachers appreciate at least 24 hours notice so they can schedule their time appropriately. To schedule an appointment please call the office during regular office hours or email the teacher directly. Tell the office person or teacher your area of concern and time that you would be available to speak with the classroom teacher. This will help the teachers be prepared to address your concerns. If you need to discuss a situation you feel needs immediate attention, please call during office hours to discuss the situation with administration.

Office

Messages regarding illness, a change in schedule, appointments etc. should be communicated by telephone before 10:00 a.m.. Also, notify us if your child needs to be picked up from school either early or late. Please notify us immediately of change of address, phone number, or transportation arrangements.

Suggested Reading

Maria Montessori

- The Absorbent Mind*
- A Child in the Family*
- Discovery of the Child*
- Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook
- Education For A New World
- To Educate the Human Potential
- From Childhood to Adolescence
- The Montessori Method
- Peace and Education*
- Reconstruction in Education
- The Secret of Childhood*

- Spontaneous Activity in Education
- The Montessori Elementary Material

** suggested books to read first*

Other Authors

- Mario Montessori — Education For Human Development
- Dorothy Canfield Fisher — Montessori For Parents
- Alfie Kahn — Punished by Rewards
- Paula Lillard — Montessori: A Modern Approach; Montessori Today
- Terry Malloy — Montessori And Your Child
- Wendy Mogel, Ph.D — The Blessing of a Skinned Knee
- E.M. Standing — Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work; The Montessori Method: A Revolution in Education
- David Walsh, Ph.D — No: Why Kids of All Ages Need to Hear It and Ways Parents Can Say It
- Aline D. Wolf — Peaceful Children, Peaceful World

Non Promotion

Promotion is a team-based assessment including the following:

- Portfolio assessment
- Teacher observation of classroom behavior by current and prospective teacher
- Social-emotional maturity
- Standardized test scores, where applicable
- Recommendation of current teacher, prospective teacher, principal, and parent

The team's decision will be made by a majority vote. The complete non promotion policy as adopted by the governing board is available in the office.

Excessive Absence

HMCS requires regular attendance. Attendance is the primary responsibility of the parents. Each student is expected to attend classes every day except when illness, injury, or conditions beyond the student's control prevent attending classes. Frequent absences for any reason are certain to have a negative effect on a student's performance in school. Specific presentations are ongoing and some cannot be repeated due to the nature of the program.

Excessive absence is defined as when the number of absent days exceeds ten percent of the required days, or five percent by January 1st, or more than 6 consecutive days. The complete absence policy as adopted by the governing board is available in the school office.

Child Find

Hermosa Montessori ensures that all students, school age, attending its school who have a disability, and who are in need of special education and related services will be identified, located and evaluated. All newly enrolled students and those transferring in without sufficient records will be screened for consideration of academic, cognitive, vision, hearing, communication, emotional, and psychomotor domains within 45 days of enrollment.

FERPA Public Notice

(Confidentiality Notice)

Under the provisions of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (F.E.R.P.A.), parents or legal guardians having custody of students shall be informed of their rights regarding student records and shall be permitted to inspect and review education records as appropriate under the law. Personally identifiable information shall not be disclosed without written consent. A record of disclosures shall be maintained. Parents, legal guardians, and eligible students shall be provided an opportunity to seek the correction of education records where appropriate.

The Head of School shall develop and maintain such procedures as are necessary to assure compliance with the provisions of the statute as well as to ensure that school staff receive periodic instruction and training regarding the privacy rights of students and parents and the confidential handling of student records.

Copies of the school's policy and procedures concerning the inspection and review of student records shall be on file in the Head of School's office. Complaints regarding alleged failures to comply with FERPA requirements may be filed with the Head of School.

Insurance

Hermosa Montessori carries an insurance policy that complies with the requirements of the State of Arizona.