



# **FIRELANDS MONTESSORI ACADEMY HANDBOOK**

## **SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

**The mission of Firelands Montessori Academy is to provide a safe and secure educational environment for children that nurtures self-reliance, respect, creativity and curiosity in order to inspire a passion for lifelong learning.**

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## **WELCOME!**

At Firelands Montessori Academy our families, students and staff form a close-knit community and work together for the greater good of our school community as a whole as well as the larger community we are a part of. Welcome to the Firelands Montessori community of families!

This handbook provides necessary information concerning our school policies, practices, and procedures. Please refer to it during the school year as you have questions. Please contact FMA Director, Katie Hayden, only after you have consulted this handbook and you still need additional information on any topic. We welcome your questions and ideas. It is our goal to make this the best learning environment possible for your child.

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## **VISION**

The vision of Firelands Montessori Academy School is to foster the development of the whole child by providing an intellectually rich and challenging curriculum in a safe, caring, and joyous environment. We strive to create classrooms that cultivate academic excellence, curiosity, confidence, independence, creativity, and inner discipline. We believe that school is a place to teach children about how to be positive, healthy individuals who respect people, animals, and the world around us.

## **MONTESSORI PROGRAM**

FMA follows the philosophy of the famous educator-physician, Dr. Maria Montessori. Maria Montessori developed her method of education more than 100 years ago to serve disadvantaged children in Rome. She was the first woman doctor in Rome, and set herself apart by using scientific inquiry & observation as her base in developing a pedagogical philosophy that is the foundation for the Montessori Method. The Montessori Method is now recognized as an accredited educational technique that has been established in many diverse communities worldwide.

At FMA we remain committed to the notion of scientific observation and experimentation. Our teachers are well-educated with regard to recent child development studies and draw from a variety of sources in developing the classroom environments. At the same time, we adhere to the Montessori philosophy and the ever-important tenet, that each child has unique potential and a unique path of development.

## **MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY**

Montessori philosophy is based on the principle that all children carry within themselves the person they can become. In order to develop their physical, intellectual and spiritual potential to the fullest, the child must have freedom. This freedom can be achieved through self-discipline, order and clearly defined limits. In achieving this freedom (within limits), students will develop independence and in turn a meaningful degree of self-confidence

and self-motivation. Dr. Montessori recognized that the only sustainable foundation upon which to build a life-long love of learning is the self-motivation of the child.

***“Research has shown that the best predictor of future success is a positive sense of self-esteem. Montessori programs, based on self-directed, non-competitive activities, help children develop the confidence to face change with optimism.”***

From this philosophy, Dr. Montessori developed the “Prepared Environment” a classroom that possesses a certain order and encourages children’s natural curiosity to learn according to their own capacity, speed and learning style, and in a relatively non-competitive atmosphere which allows children at various stages of development to flourish in the same classroom.

The teacher prepares the environment, directs the activity, and offers the child stimulation, but it is the child who learns and is motivated through learning itself. With this motivation set in motion, the child will naturally move toward learning independently.

According to Montessori Educators, the work of the child is full of sights and sounds which at first appear confusing and disorganized. From this, and some guidance from the teachers, children gradually create order, learn to distinguish among the impressions that assail their senses, and slowly but surely gain mastery of themselves and their environment.

As the American Montessori Society summarizes:

***“A Montessori program is based on non-competitive and cooperative activities that help a child develop a strong self-image, high levels of academic and social competence, and the confidence to face challenges.”***

***“Never let children risk failure until they have a reasonable chance of success.” (Montessori)***

The Montessori approach is based upon a deep respect for the child as a developing person with an absorbent mind, a self-motivated curiosity and a desire to learn and master skills. Each child is given freedom to choose among constructive alternatives in a carefully prepared and stimulating environment. If Montessori children are free to learn, it is because they have acquired an "inner discipline" from their exposure to both physical and mental order. This is the core of Dr. Montessori's philosophy. The child develops self-discipline through concentration and the example of mutual respect provided in the classroom.

Patterns of concentration, persistence and thoroughness, established in early childhood, produce a confident, competent learner in later years. Montessori teaches children to observe, to think, and to develop an understanding of their world beyond their walls. It introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social discipline go hand-in-hand.

## EDUCATIONAL GOALS

The main objective of the Firelands Montessori Academy (FMA) is to provide a carefully planned, stimulating environment. This environment will help children develop within themselves the foundational habits, attitudes, skills, and ideas which are essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning. The goals of FMA and its educators for the child are to:

- Develop a positive self-image and a sense of high self-esteem.
- Develop a positive attitude toward school and learning.
- Encourage mastery of the tools or skills necessary for the pursuit of knowledge. (i.e. reading, writing, etc.)
- Bring awareness of their feelings and those of others.
- Develop habits of initiative and persistence.
- Foster inner discipline and a sense of order.
- Aid in the mastering and controlling of body movements.
- Develop socially acceptable behavior.
- Help the child become a learner who is able to function without the necessity for constant adult supervision and direction.
- Help the child gain an understanding of the development of life and a feeling of responsibility toward aiding in that development.
- Help the child understand that all people have the same basic needs and to appreciate the variety of ways in which those needs are met.
- Give the child an awareness of the interdependence of man and nature, with a responsible feeling toward an ecological whole.
- Lead the child to an awareness of the interdependence of man and nations, with a desire for cooperation and peace.
- Develop each child's innate, ultimate potential through high self-expectations.

Encouraged to make decisions at an early age, Montessori-educated children are problem-solvers who can make appropriate choices, manage their time, and work well with others. They exchange ideas and discuss work freely. These positive communication skills build the foundation for negotiating new settings. For further information about the Montessori Method, please feel free to consult your child's teacher or other staff members.

We also recommend the following books:

**The Montessori Method**, by Maria Montessori (Schocken Books)

**The Absorbent Mind**, by Maria Montessori (Schocken Books)

**Montessori, A Modern Approach**, by Paula Polk Lillard

**Montessori Today**, by Paula Polk Lillard

## PEACE STATEMENT

Firelands Montessori Academy views peace, not merely as the absence of war, but also as an awareness of and a respect for the dignity and diversity of life. Fundamental to Montessori philosophy is the recognition of the interconnection among all living things and their environments. FMA takes a strong stand for non-violence, for understanding and respecting the natural interrelationships of living things, and for causing as little harm to the environment as possible.

## PEACE EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Montessori teachers create a harmonious environment and arrange the prepared environment to meet the needs of the child by:

- Giving children ample space to move about with freedom and responsibility
- Allowing children to speak with peers as long as they do not disturb their own work or the work of other children
- Meeting physical needs for natural light, and work spaces with snacks and water as needed
- Providing quiet classroom space as well as active spaces
- Encouraging children to go to the bathroom and go to their cubbies at their own initiative
- Faculty and staff model respectful behaviors such as grace and courtesy
- Designing a curriculum which allows for individual differences
- Refraining from judging, testing, and comparing children
- Using positive strategies to help children take responsibility for their behavior

Maria Montessori was committed to the notion that peaceful, self-directed children can create a more peaceful world. We aim to follow in Montessori's footsteps by providing an atmosphere of acceptance, respect, and trust so that creativity and a sense of civic responsibility will flourish. Our Peace Curriculum includes:

1. **Conflict Resolution**: Children are shown how to resolve conflicts with another person through a step by-step process.
2. **Classroom Expectations**: All classrooms have an established set of ground rules that aim to allow all children to be the best that they can be.
3. **Social/Emotional Classroom Expectations**: Continually practicing how to relate to each other and navigate the classroom environment respectfully.

4. **Classroom Management**: Each child helps to take responsibility for the order, and cleanliness of the classroom. The tasks rotate regularly so that everyone gets a chance to participate.

It is our belief that when students are given the tools to deal with minor conflicts and have the support and strategies of the Peace Curriculum they will develop skills to contribute to the peace of the classroom, stewardship on a broader scale and avoid larger issues.

## ORGANIZATION

Founded in 1979, Firelands Montessori Academy is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing quality education to the children in the Firelands area. The school is chartered by the Ohio Department of Education and is associated with the American Montessori Society and adheres to its code of ethics. FMA follows the student-to-teacher ratios set forth by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services.

**The Director and Faculty** are responsible for the education and care of the children at FMA. The teachers and staff encourage the sharing of ideas, and welcome questions and concerns at any time.

**The FMA Board** governs by a set of bylaws. A copy is available from the office upon request. Board meeting dates are posted online, and are typically on the third Tuesday of every month. Board members welcome your ideas and input. The board email is [board@firelandsmontessori.org](mailto:board@firelandsmontessori.org).

**Education is a Partnership**: We welcome and strongly encourage our families to get involved at FMA, because we believe the parent-school partnership is an essential ingredient to your child's success and positive self-image. We work closely with our families through classroom observations, parent-teacher conferences, newsletters, Montessori parent education, and family gatherings. Since we get to know our students so well, we can carefully monitor and evaluate their academic progress within the broader context of their unique talents and personalities. Please feel free to ask questions and freely communicate with the FMA teachers and administration.

FMA depends upon a community of families to work together to support the development of the school in a variety of ways. Volunteer opportunities abound, including (but not limited to), participation in fundraising, helping in the classroom, helping with special events, and chaperoning field trips. Please check in with your child's teacher and the office to determine how you may best share your talents with the school. Please note that any parent who will be part of the teacher/child ratio must submit both BCI & FBI background checks to the office before volunteering.

**Parent involvement is considered crucial** in the Montessori educational program. Developing self-discipline and independence is an essential part of Montessori education and these skills can be practiced at home. Firelands Montessori needs families' support to encourage these skills. Learning is not seen as the mere passing of information from the

teacher/parent to the student. In the early years of child development, everything they see and do isn't just remembered, it becomes a part of their very fabric which makes up who they are and who they will become. According to Maria Montessori, children learn from their environment. Adults promote the learning process by serving as the dynamic link between the environment and the child. We ask parents to allow their children to take responsibility at home, such as helping to prepare their own lunches, setting the table, organizing their space, choosing their own clothes, and helping with family tasks such as unloading the car or weeding the yard. The child gains insight about life from daily experiences, whether at school or elsewhere. Thus, teaching is a joint responsibility of the school and the family. Montessori is about helping children help themselves. We also recognize that you are the most important people in your child's life; we are honored to work with you to support your child during this incredibly crucial period.

## NON-PROFIT FUNDING & FUNDRAISING

As a non-profit organization, Firelands Montessori Academy is privately funded. Your annual, classroom fees, and tuition dollars cover the Firelands Montessori Annual Operating Expenses of the enrolled school year. In order to continue to grow and thrive, Firelands Montessori Academy relies heavily on grants, donations and fundraising to generate funds for continual program development, Montessori materials, and program expansion.

Your involvement is **YOUR LEGACY** that will touch both current & future generations.

**We Need Your Help** Please consider getting involved in one or more of the following areas to support the educational needs of our current students as well as continual program development and the future expansion of Firelands Montessori Academy:

**Grant Writing Needs** If you have experience in grant writing and would like to share your skills in that area to help generate additional funding in support of continual Montessori program development at Firelands Montessori Academy, please contact Director Katie Hayden via email at: [katiehayden@firelandsmontessori.org](mailto:katiehayden@firelandsmontessori.org) or in the office at (419) 433-6181.

**Tax-Deductible Corporate Sponsorship** Please check with your employer about corporate sponsorship opportunities. Organizations that participate will become a Firelands Montessori Academy Sponsor and receive a receipt for tax-deductions. Sponsors are also invited to participate in and advertise at our annual FMA FUN RUN in celebration of each school year, and our biggest fundraising event of the year!

**Tax-Deductible Legacy Giving** If you have family or friends who would like to make a difference and leave a legacy for a tax deduction, or if your family would like to make a monetary tax-deductible donation, please contact the office at (419) 433-6181.

**Donation of Items** Every family is encouraged to donate books, and clothing that your children have outgrown or are no longer using. FMA will also accept donations of new or



gently used Montessori materials. Ask your child's teacher(s) about their classroom Amazon wishlist to see what other items are needed in your child's classroom. FMA is also always looking for incentive prizes to give-away to the children for earning FMA FUN RUN donations.

**Donations:** Monetary donations are always welcome. Occasionally, we may accept other donations, such as classroom or office equipment/furniture, school supplies, books, or playground equipment. All donations are tax deductible. Please see the office if you would like to make a donation.

**Fundraising:** Through-out the year, there will be a variety of short-term fundraising opportunities available for FMA families to participate in. Firelands Montessori Academy also benefits from several ongoing fundraising opportunities that FMA families can participate in all year long or just sign-up for once and help generate passive fundraising dollars for FMA including:

- **Box Tops For Education**  
<https://www.boxtops4education.com/s/get-the-app>
- **Kroger Community Rewards**  
<https://www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards>
- **RaiseRight Scrip Gift Card Fundraising**  
<https://www.raiseright.com/enroll/join-program/create-account>

## ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

Admission of students to Firelands Montessori Academy is selective and on a first-come, first-serve basis, therefore early application is strongly encouraged. The Board of Directors and the administration reserve the right to accept students on a case-by-case basis. To determine a child's classroom placement at Firelands Montessori Academy several factors are taken into consideration. This decision involves balancing classrooms by age, gender and other factors for the good of the entire program. FMA does not guarantee a spot in a specific classroom upon enrollment.

### **Admission eligibility requirements are as follows:**

- **Toddler House Program** A child is eligible for admission into the Toddler House Program, if he/she is 18 months of age on or before September 30th (unless agreed upon by the classroom teacher and administration) the first day of the specific school year and is confidently walking unless otherwise physically disabled.
- **Children's House Program** A child is eligible for admission to the Children's House Program if he/she is three (3) years of age on or before September 30th (unless agreed upon by the classroom teacher and administration), is fully toilet trained and wearing underwear, and based on teacher recommendation.

- **Kindergarten Program (part of the Children’s House Classroom)**  
A child is eligible for admission to the Kindergarten Program if he/she is five (5) years of age on or before September 30th (unless agreed upon by the classroom teacher and administration) and teachers recommendation.
- **Elementary Program** A child is eligible to be admitted to the Elementary Program based on age appropriateness, and prior Montessori experience, prior school referral and records, and after multiple observations.

NO CHILD SHALL BE DENIED ADMISSION TO FIRELANDS MONTESSORI ACADEMY ON THE BASIS OF PHYSICAL HANDICAP, RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, GENDER, NATIONAL AND/ OR ETHNIC ORIGIN. FMA ADMITS STUDENTS OF ANY PHYSICAL DISABILITY, RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, GENDER, NATIONAL AND/OR ETHNIC ORIGIN TO ALL THE RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STUDENTS AT THE SCHOOL. FMA DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF PHYSICAL DISABILITY, RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, GENDER, NATIONAL AND/ OR ETHNIC ORIGIN IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF ITS EDUCATIONAL POLICY, ADMISSION POLICY AND OTHER SCHOOL ADMINISTERED PROGRAMS.

No student will be admitted without completing **BOTH** the FMA application process **AND** the FMA enrollment process:

**FMA Application & Enrollment Process:***(new & returning students)* Application and Enrollment for FMA students is done through FACTS website. It must be completed by all students, in order to be eligible for admission for the upcoming school year. Priority Enrollment for the upcoming school year will be given first to returning students & their siblings in February of the preceding school year. Classroom spots that become available for the upcoming school year will open-up for enrollment in March to selected prospective students.

Students *(new & returning)* who don’t complete the enrollment process will not be admitted.

**Prospective (new students) ONLY Application Process:**

- 1) Contact the office to schedule a tour any time of year.
- 2) Tour Firelands Montessori Academy and meet with the Director or Administration.
- 3) Schedule one classroom observation (although additional observations may be required). Observations are scheduled March through May of the preceding school year.
- 4) Complete FMA online application.
- 5) Pay the non-refundable application fee ASAP, to reserve your child’s position in the waiting pool. Applications are accepted year round. We recommend early application before the spring enrollment rush.

The application process may also include a review of previous school records (*for students that have attended other schools*), and an evaluation by Firelands Montessori Academy faculty.

Once the FMA Application Process has been successfully completed, selected students will be considered for admission as openings become available. Preference is given to students with prior Montessori experience (*where applicable*) and siblings of current FMA students. Classroom spots that become available for the upcoming school year will open-up for enrollment to selected prospective students in March.

### **Returning Students ONLY Enrollment Process:**

- 1) Complete the FMA online enrollment packet in FACTS by February 15th, for the upcoming school year.
- 2) Pay the enrollment fee. All, except an \$11.00 processing fee, will be credited toward the upcoming school year's tuition invoice.

Returning families must also have fulfilled financial obligations by April 30th of the previous school year in order to be considered for re-enrollment for the upcoming school year.

The following items must be submitted annually by all students (*new & returning*) in order to successfully complete the enrollment process and be admitted to the first day of school.

- Copy of birth certificate (*new students only*)
- Signed FMA Family Handbook acknowledgement signature page
- Completed Online FMA Student Enrollment Packet & all applicable associated fees, as seen below
- Ohio Child Medical Statement (updated annually and signed every year, within 365 days before the first day of school by a licensed medical provider)
- Copy of most recently updated vaccination records
- Enrollment in a FACTS payment plan or agreed other payment option (cash, check, venmo @fmamontessori)

**Late Enrollment Policy** While late enrollment is not recommended, FMA occasionally accepts students after the school year has already begun on a case-by-case basis and according to circumstances including previous school enrollment. Students accepted through late enrollment must follow the regular admissions procedure listed above and are required to submit school records from all previously attended schools in order to be considered for admission at FMA. Once the application process has been successfully completed, selected students will be invited to enroll on a first-come, first-serve basis, as openings become available. The Board of Directors and the administration reserve the right to accept students on a case-by-case basis.

## REQUIRED FEES (Application/Enrollment/Class Fees)

**New Students** must successfully complete the application process including at least one classroom observation before they will be considered for admission. Once the application process has been successfully completed, selected students will be invited to enroll as openings become available. Students selected for admission must complete the enrollment process before they will be admitted. Students who don't complete the enrollment process will not be admitted.

**Returning Families** must successfully complete the FMA enrollment process every year for each student that is enrolled, and must have fulfilled their financial obligations to Firelands Montessori Academy no later than April 30th of the previous school year to be eligible for re-enrollment for the upcoming school year.

**All Students** (*both new & returning*) must successfully complete the FMA enrollment process every year, including payment of all required fees (*as seen below*) for the upcoming school year before being admitted to the first day of school.

### **Prospective/New Student Admission Fees:**

- \$150 Application Fee, due at the time of application
- Annual Classroom Fee, due at the time of enrollment

### **Returning Student Fees:**

- \$150 Enrollment Fee, due at the time of Enrollment
- First payment of invoice by July 31st

## PAYMENT OPTIONS & FINANCIAL POLICIES

Invoice payment options can be obtained from the office and are listed below as well as in the enrollment packet. Every family must commit to a payment option at the time of enrollment. Upon signing the FMA Family Handbook Acknowledgement Signature Page and committing to a payment option in the enrollment packet, all parents acknowledge that they understand & know their financial obligations to FMA. Families will be billed per their commitment. Payments may also be made in advance of commitments at any time, if family desires. All payments may be dropped off (cash or checks) in person at the office, paid through Venmo: [@fmamontessori](#), automatic withdrawal through FACTS payment plan, or mailed (checks only) to:

Firelands Montessori Academy  
329 Ohio Street  
Huron, OH 44839

- 1) **3% Discount Off Total Annual Family Invoice** for families that pay the total Annual Family Invoice in full by July 31st via cash, check or Venmo: [@fmamontessori](#).
- 2) **Other Invoice Payment Options:** Other payment plans for invoices need to be agreed upon by July 31st, and can be made via: Cash, Check, Venmo (@fmamontessori) July 1st-April 30th or FACTS Payment Plan.

**First payment needs to be made by July 31st.**

**FACTS, a well-known tuition management institution,** is contracted by FMA as the school’s Accounts Receivable agent. Before you begin the FACTS Payment Plan enrollment process, you need to know the following information. FACTS payments run from July through April 30th:

- Only one account needs to be registered per family (even if you have more than one student attending).
- Credit Card payments will require the 3-digit security code on the back and will incur a 2.95% transaction fee.
- If choosing Debit or Checking Account payments via automatic withdrawal(ACH), you will need your Bank Routing Number and Account Number. **There is no fee for ACH payments.** If you elect to enroll in a FACTS Payment Plan, please follow the link below to enroll (or re-enroll if you have used FACTS for FMA tuition payments for a previous school year).  
[Online.factsmgt.com/signin/3X9HT](http://Online.factsmgt.com/signin/3X9HT) Please remember this site has a 10-minute non-use/self-close security measure. If the program closes mid-way through enrollment, you will have to restart at the beginning. Therefore, have your information listed above ready. If you have any additional questions about FACTS or problems logging in, please call FACTS at (866) 441-4637.

**IMPORTANT ENROLLMENT & PAYMENT DATES**

**New Students**

- As Soon As Possible. . . . .Submit Application
- Due at time of Application . . . . . Application Fee
- Begins March of Preceding School Year . . . . . Annual Enrollment
- Due at time of Enrollment . . . . .Annual Classroom Fee
- July 31st, Preceding Enrolled School Year . . . . .First Invoice Payment Due
- By April 30th of Enrolled School Year. . . . . Total Annual Family Invoice Paid-In-Full

**Returning Students & Siblings**

- February of Preceding School Year. . . . .Annual Enrollment for Upcoming School Year
- Due at time of Enrollment. . . . .Annual Enrollment Fee
- July 31st, Preceding Enrolled School Year . . . . .First Invoice Payment Due
- By April 30th of Enrolled School Year. . . . . Total Annual Family Invoice Paid-In-Full

**To Receive 3% Discount Off Total Annual Family Invoice**

- July 31st, Preceding Enrolled School Year. . . . . Payment of Total Invoice In-Full

## SCHOLARSHIPS & DISCOUNTS

**ODE EdChoice Scholarship (Traditional or Expansion)** Students of kindergarten and elementary age are eligible to apply for a partial or full tuition EdChoice Scholarship through the Ohio Department of Education. Application begins February 1st for the following school year. EdChoice Scholarships are only available for tuition fees and can not be applied towards any other fees.

For more information, please visit the EdChoice Scholarship website below. An application can be downloaded from the website and must be completed and turned in with any required documents (birth certificate and utility bill or other acceptable proof of residency) to the school the student is enrolled in before continuing on in the next step of the scholarship application process on the website.

<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Scholarships/EdChoice-Scholarship>

2024-25 EdChoice Scholarship Application:

<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Other-Resources/Scholarships/EdChoice-Scholarship/EdChoice-Resources/FY25-EDCHOICE-SCHOLARSHIP-PROGRAM-Request-Form.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>

2024-25 EdChoice Scholarship Renewal:

<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Other-Resources/Scholarships/EdChoice-Expansion/EdChoice-Expansion-Resources/FY25-EDCHOICE-SCHOLARSHIP-PROGRAM-Renewal-Form.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>

Students who have applied for, and are not eligible for either the Traditional EdChoice Scholarship (based on residency) or the EdChoice Expansion Scholarship (income based) may inquire in the FMA office about other opportunities. Students receiving a scholarship are not eligible for any other discount regarding tuition and are still responsible for the fees (enrollment/application fees & classroom fees), and any tuition balance not paid by the scholarship program.

**FMA Legacy Discount** FMA offers a Legacy Discount for families who currently have multiple children enrolled, or have had one or more children complete 3 years or more at FMA. Discounts and scholarships can not be used together in any combination.

**3% Discount Off Total Annual Family Tuition Invoice** for families that pay their total Annual Family Invoice in full by July 31st, preceding enrolled School Year via cash, check or Venmo: [@fmamontessori](https://www.facebook.com/fmamontessori). Each student can only use 1 discount or 1 scholarship at any given time.

## BILLING AND COLLECTIONS POLICY

All tuition is billed annually in July before the upcoming school year starts. Payment of annual tuition must begin no later than July 31st before the upcoming school year and is required to be paid in full by April 30<sup>th</sup> of the currently enrolled school year.

Families that are late on a payment using FACTS payment plan will be notified by FACTS and are expected to make the payment within 5 business days of notification. The school may also receive notification of the missed payment and send a notice to the family as well. For all payment options: If two (2) payments in a row are missed, a conversation and plan must be arranged and agreed upon by family and administration. If subsequent payment issues continue then an attorney may be involved. Students may be withdrawn from school and not allowed to return until payments are caught up. A family having financial difficulties may request an appeal to the Board of Directors via a written request.

Past due balances will be submitted to collections after three (3) attempts by the school to collect. Any student and/or family with a past due balance will not be allowed to re-enroll until the past due balance is paid.

## WITHDRAWALS AND REFUNDS

If you find that you must withdraw your child from FMA, please contact the office as soon as possible so that we can assist in a smooth transition for all concerned. All withdrawal requests must be submitted in writing to the office.

### **Refund Policy:**

- **Prospective families in the waiting pool or on the waitlist** that decline to fill an open classroom spot at the time it becomes available once open enrollment is extended to new families (March thru September for the upcoming school year), will not be refunded the \$150 application fee. If open classroom spots do not become available by the first week of school, prospective families still in the waiting pool will be offered the opportunity to either 1) continue to maintain their child's position in line on the waitlist **OR** 2) be removed from the waiting pool and be refunded the \$150 application fee, less a \$20 processing fee. The 2nd option will not continue to reserve a child's position in line.
- **Students withdrawing 60 days or more before the first day** of the enrolled school year are entitled to a full refund of the invoice that has already been paid, minus the \$150 application/enrollment enrollment fee.
- **Students withdrawing less than 60 days before the first day** of the enrolled school year, but by the end of the first week of the school year, are still responsible for first invoice payment and the \$150 application/enrollment fee.
- **Students withdrawing any time after the first week of school in the first semester** of the enrolled school year are required to pay for an entire semester which includes the \$150 application/enrollment fee as well as the total annual classroom fee & half of the annual tuition fee (e.g. a student withdrawing in the first semester must pay for the first semester and all associated fees, but not the second semester). Families

with extenuating circumstances may appeal to the Director and the Board. (First semester cut off is December 15th).

- **Students withdrawing during the second semester** (after Winter Break) will receive no refund whatsoever. Families with extenuating circumstances may appeal to the Director and the Board.

Tuition and unused prepaid childcare payments are nonrefundable unless there is a hardship justification which may require approval of the FMA Board of Directors (i.e. serious illness, etc.). Requests must be submitted in writing to the office with full disclosure of the reason for the request. FMA administration, along with the FMA Board of Directors, will decide appropriate measures.

Unused prepaid childcare payments are rolled over to the following month unless the child is withdrawn from FMA. FMA will not reimburse prepaid childcare payments to families that withdraw.

The use of the FMA Childcare program may be denied if payment commitments are not fulfilled or kept current.

## REQUIRED MEDICAL INFORMATION

**FMA requires all students to be examined by a licensed medical provider before the first day of school and annually thereafter to sign-off that each child is in suitable condition for group care.** Each FMA student is required to submit before the first day of every school year 1) an updated Ohio Child Medical Statement form signed by a licensed medical provider within the last 365 days before the first day of school and 2) a record of immunizations as required by statute for admission to school, or a State of Ohio letter of exemption from immunization signed by the parents. According to state law, these forms must be on file for all students.

Healthchek services are available to children & adults under the age of 21 enrolled in Ohio Medicaid. If you are younger than age 21 and are also enrolled, you can receive Healthchek services. Healthchek is Ohio's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) Program. It is a service package for babies, kids, and young adults younger than age 21 who are enrolled in on Ohio Medicaid. The purpose of Healthchek is to discover and treat health problems early. If a potential health problem is found, further diagnosis and treatments are covered by Medicaid. Healthchek covers ten check-ups in the first two years of life and annual check-ups thereafter and offers a comprehensive physical examination that includes:

- medical history
- complete unclothed exam (with parent approval)
- developmental screening (to assess if child's physical and mental abilities are age appropriate)
- vision screening
- dental screening
- hearing assessment
- immunization assessment (making sure child receives them on time)



- lead screening  
(<https://medicaid.ohio.gov/FOR-OHIOANS/Programs/Lead>)
- other services or screenings as needed

## SCHOOL SCHEDULE INFORMATION

**School calendar:** While FMA makes every effort to coordinate its calendar with the other schools throughout our feeder school districts, there are always minor variances. Copies are available in the school office, sent out via email, and are available on our website [www.firelandsmontessori.org](http://www.firelandsmontessori.org).

**School closing or delay due to weather:** In the event of a school closing or delay, you will receive an automated call/text/email from the One Call Now system. Please make sure you update your contact information in the FMA office. If you remove yourself from the One Call Now system or change any of your contact information without updating the office, you will not receive the school closing/delay notifications. FMA typically follows Huron City School closings. If Huron City Schools are closed or delayed due to bad weather, FMA (including Before Care) will also be closed or delayed. If FMA is on delay, only the start of the day will be delayed. The rest of the day's schedule will not be affected and dismissal/pick-up times will be on schedule as usual.

It is also possible that FMA will close if Huron City Schools does not, as many FMA students commute from other school districts. If one or more of our feeder school districts is closed due to bad weather, resulting in a FMA student attendance of 50% or less, FMA may cancel or delay school for the day. Our feeder school districts vary on a yearly basis due to fluctuations in enrollment.

On some days we experience inclement weather in certain areas but not others. FMA feels that the safety of our students and faculty is of utmost importance. A parent's decision to keep a child at home due to inclement weather is supported by the school, but will be marked absent. **Unfortunately, FMA is not able to reimburse tuition or prepaid childcare for delays or snow days. There are also no refunds for prepaid childcare due to weather.**

**Other sources for closing information:** Radio announcements on 102.7FM (WCPZ), 1510AM (WLKR), and 1450AM (WLEC). Watch FOX 8 Cleveland for the list of closings in Erie County, Ohio as well.

## SCHOOL/CLASS TIME HOURS

All FMA classroom programs begin at 8:15am. Children may enter their classrooms between 8:15am - 8:30am and are expected to be in class no later than 8:30am. Students arriving after 8:30am are considered late. Students will not be admitted to school between 9:00am & 11:15am, unless they have a signed note from a licensed medical or therapy provider excusing the tardy or for another reasonable extenuating circumstance. FMA Toddler House half day and Children's House half day programs (3 - 4 year olds) are in session between

8:15am - 11:15am. FMA Toddler House full day and Children's House full day programs (3 - 4 year olds) are in session between 8:15am - 3:00pm. FMA Children's House Kindergarten and Elementary are in session 5 days a week between 8:15am - 3:00pm. Children who participate in preparing for the day feel that school is their own special place. We recommend letting them select their own wardrobe and set their own wake-up alarm. Allow ample time to dress and to eat. Younger children need security. If you elect to escort your child to the door of the building, we ask that you allow your child to walk to the classroom on their own. Good-byes should be affectionate but brief. Assure your child that you will return, smile, and leave with confidence. Children using car-line at drop-off, tend to transition faster and more smoothly.

**Specific information for each FMA program is given below:**

### TODDLER HOUSE

Firelands Montessori Academy Toddler House offers a three day (Tues, Weds, Thurs) or a five day program. Children may enter the classroom between 8:15am-8:30am, and are required to be in their classroom no later than 8:30am. Students arriving after 8:30am are considered late. Students will not be admitted to school between 9:00am & 11:15am, unless they have a signed note from a licensed medical or therapy provider excusing the tardy or for another reasonable extenuating circumstance.

Families who require additional hours can also enroll their children (for an additional fee) in the full day program (8:15am-3:00pm) or the extended day program (7:00am-4:30pm). In order to utilize the full day and/or extended day programs, your child must be enrolled in them in advance, by July 1st. To be in compliance with teacher - student ratio laws, we cannot offer full day or extended day programs on a drop-in basis.

- Children staying full day - a packed healthy lunch needs to be provided by families.
- Children staying full day - nap everyday. A bag for rest time items is needed and should include: a **SMALL** blanket, a **SMALL** pillow or a **QUIET SMALL** item such as a stuffed animal. All of these items need to be labeled. Please give these items to your child's teacher; they will be stored with the nap cots. They should be easy to manage and easy for your child to carry. **NO TOYS ARE PERMITTED.**
- Children enrolled in half day program that are not picked up by 11:30am, will not participate in any of the extended day Enrichment programs, but will be charged for childcare at a rate of \$20 for each 15 minutes they stay after 11:30am. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes.
- Children enrolled in full day program and are not picked up by 3:15pm, will be charged for childcare at a rate of \$25 for each 15 minutes they stay after 3:15pm. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes.
- Children enrolled in extended day program and are not picked up by 4:30pm, will be charged for childcare at a rate of \$30 for each 15 minutes

they stay after 4:30pm. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes. The police department will be called at 5:00pm.

### **CHILDREN'S HOUSE (3 & 4 yr olds)**

Firelands Montessori Academy Children's House offers a three day (Tues, Weds, Thurs) or a five day program. Children may enter the classroom between 8:15am-8:30am, and are required to be in their classroom no later than 8:30am. Students arriving after 8:30am are considered late. Students will not be admitted to school between 9:00am & 11:15am, unless they have a signed note from a licensed medical or therapy provider excusing the tardy or for another reasonable extenuating circumstance

Families who require additional hours can also enroll their children (for an additional fee) in the full day program (8:15am-3:00pm) or the extended day program (7:00am-4:30pm). In order to utilize the full day and/or extended day programs, your child must be enrolled in them in advance by July 1st. To be in compliance with teacher - student ratio laws, we cannot offer full day or extended day programs on a drop-in basis.

- Children staying full day - a packed healthy lunch needs to be provided by families.
- Children staying full day can nap everyday, but you must notify FMA if your child will be napping or not. A bag for rest time items is needed and should include: a **SMALL** blanket, a **SMALL** pillow or a **QUIET SMALL** item such as a stuffed animal. All of these items need to be labeled. Please give these items to your child's teacher; they will be stored with the nap cots. They should be easy to manage and easy for your child to carry. **NO TOYS ARE PERMITTED.**
- Children enrolled in half day program that are not picked up by 11:30am, will not participate in any of the extended day Enrichment programs, but will be charged for childcare at a rate of \$20 for each 15 minutes they stay after 11:30am. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes.
- Children enrolled in full day program and are not picked up by 3:15pm, will be charged for childcare at a rate of \$25 for each 15 minutes they stay after 3:15pm. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes.
- Children enrolled in extended day program and are not picked up by 4:30pm, will be charged for childcare at a rate of \$30 for each 15 minutes they stay after 4:30pm. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes. The police department will be called at 5:00pm.

### **CHILDREN'S HOUSE KINDERGARTEN**

The FMA Kindergarten program shares the morning with the 3 and 4-year-old Children's House preschoolers, with only the Kindergarten students continuing until the end of the school day (3:00pm). The purpose of the Kindergarten class is to focus on math, language, handwriting, spelling, geography, nature, physical education, emotional education, art,

music and additionally to prepare the child to transition into the Montessori Elementary program.

The Kindergarten Program runs 5 days a week from 8:15am - 3:00pm with pick-up ending at 3:15pm. Children may enter the classroom between 8:15am-8:30am and are expected to be in class no later than **8:30am**. Students arriving after 8:30am are considered late. Students will not be admitted to school between 9:00am & 11:15am, unless they have a signed note from a licensed medical or therapy provider excusing the tardy or for another reasonable extenuating circumstance.

Kindergarten children are dismissed at 3:00 pm. This schedule may vary depending upon the bus schedule your child has; however, all children are to be picked up by **3:15 p.m.** Families who require an additional extended day program can also enroll their children in the extended day which can include either/or both the Before Care (7:00am-8:15am) and extended day program (3:00 pm-4:30pm) for an additional cost. In order to utilize the extended day program, your child must be enrolled in them in advance. To be in compliance with teacher - student ratio laws, we cannot offer extended day programs on a drop-in basis.

- Children not picked up by 3:15pm who are only signed up for the 8:15am-3:00pm program will be charged for childcare at a rate of \$25 for each 15 minutes they stay after 3:15pm. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes.
- Children not picked up by 4:30pm who are signed up for extended day program will be charged for childcare at a rate of \$30 for each 15 minutes they stay after 4:30pm. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes. The police department will be called at 5:00pm.

On October 9, 2012, the State of Ohio Board of Education adopted Ohio's new Birth-Kindergarten Entry Early Learning and Development Standards in all domains of school readiness to reflect the comprehensive development of children beginning at birth through entry into Kindergarten. The standards were expanded as part of a collaborative effort of state agencies serving young children including Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, and the Governor's Office of Health Transformation.

The state agencies worked with national experts and writing teams made up of Ohio-based content experts and stakeholders to revise and expand the standards in the following domains.

These new standards describe key concepts and skills that young children develop during the birth-to-five-year period. Their purpose is to support the development and the wellbeing of young children and to foster their learning. The standards promote the understanding of early learning and development, provide a comprehensive and coherent set of expectations for children's development and learning, and guide the design and implementation of curriculum, assessment and instructional practices with young children.

## ELEMENTARY

The FMA Elementary Program runs 5 days a week from 8:15am - 3:00pm with pick-up ending at 3:15pm. Elementary children may enter the classroom between 8:15am-8:30am and are expected to be in class no later than **8:30am**. Students arriving after 8:30am are considered late. Students will not be admitted to school between 9:00am & 11:15am, unless they have a note signed from a licensed medical or therapy provider excusing the tardy or for another reasonable extenuating circumstance.

Elementary children are dismissed at 3:00 p.m. This schedule may vary depending upon the bus schedule your child has; however, all children are to be picked up by **3:15 p.m.**

Families who require additional extended day program can also enroll their children in the extended day program which can include either/or both the Before Care (7:00am-8:15am) and extended day programs (3:00 pm-4:30pm) for an additional cost. In order to utilize the extended day programs, your child must be enrolled in them in advance. To be in compliance with teacher - student ratio laws, we cannot offer extended day programs on a drop-in basis.

- Children not picked up by 3:15pm who are only signed up for the 8:15am-3:00pm program will be charged at a rate of \$25 for each 15 minutes they stay after 3:15pm. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes.
- Children not picked up by 4:30pm who are signed up for the extended day program will be charged for childcare at a rate of \$30 for each 15 minutes they stay after 4:30pm. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes. The police department will be called at 5:00pm.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students have the right and responsibility to attend school each day. Ohio State law requires that children between 6 and 18 years must attend a public, private, or parochial school for the full time that school is in session.

All students are expected to be in class by **8:30am**. Students arriving after 8:30am are considered late. Students will not be admitted to school between 9:00am & 11:15am, unless they have a signed note from a licensed medical or therapy provider excusing the tardy or for another reasonable extenuating circumstance.

In the event of a necessary absence, the parent or legal guardian is required to email the child(ren)'s teacher(s) as well as call or email the FMA office by 9am and give the reason for the child's absence. Please leave a message if necessary. Absences reported by email or voicemail may not receive a response, but will be noted. Reasons for which absences may be excused include:

- Personal illness/injury of the student (*with a signed note from a licensed medical provider*)

- Illness in the student's family
- Death in the student's family
- Contagious disease quarantine (*with a signed note from a licensed medical provider*)
- Religious reasons
- Family travel/vacation

Ohio law requires that all tardies, early dismissals and absences (excused or unexcused) of each enrolled student be tracked. The state of Ohio Department of Education (ODE) requires unexcused and excused absences to be recorded. A student missing 10% or more of regular school days (2 or more days a month) for any reason is considered chronically absent by ODE. After 15 unexcused absences in one school year, Firelands Montessori Academy will notify local truancy officials and families may receive a visit. After 20 unexcused absences in one school year, students may lose their scholarship for the currently enrolled school year and will not be eligible for re-enrollment at FMA for any future school year. If a student loses their scholarship due to 20+ unexcused absences in one school year, the family will be responsible for paying any unpaid invoice balance.

The school must be informed of a student's absence on the day of an unplanned absence, and on or before the date(s) of a planned absence. An email to the child's teacher and office explaining the reason(s) for the absence must be submitted before or on the date the child returns to school. Absences for other reasons than the above listed will not be considered excused and will be reported to the ODE. Each student must make arrangements with his/her teacher(s) to complete missed work for any absence, excused or otherwise.

## **EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS**

Extended Day programs are optional and designed to be in addition to your child(ren)'s Montessori education. These optional programs may or may not be included in your child(ren)'s regular invoice. They must be signed up for in advance by July 1st and they have additional fees (please see FMA's Annual Schedule of Tuition Fees.) Extended day programs are only available to children enrolled in a regular classroom program at FMA. To be in compliance with teacher - student ratio laws, these programs are not available on a drop-in basis.

Full day students gain additional Montessori educational learning opportunities in the areas of art, music, emotional education, nature and physical education. 7:00a.m.-8:15a.m. and 3:00p.m.-4:30p.m. are strictly for families needing extended care.

**7:00 am - 8:15 am:** The FMA Before Care program is strictly for children that are toilet trained & ages 3 and up (if under 3 years of age, approval must be given through the office). It is designed to offer care for children before the school day begins.

**Enrichment Program: 11:30 am - 3:00 pm** The FMA Enrichment program is an afternoon program dedicated to our preschool age children (toddler based on best fit for child, and toilet trained 3, 4 and 5-year olds) who need a full day of childcare but are not of elementary

school age (Kindergarten and above). The program is Montessori-based in its philosophy. It is an extension of the educational, independence, and social skills that the children work on in their morning classrooms. It explores and provides educational activities through theme-based, hands-on learning in a relaxed atmosphere. This program includes a rich array of special learning opportunities. In addition to Montessori instruction, children attending the Enrichment Program are provided with lessons taught by specialists in art, music, nature, physical education, emotional education and literature from the Huron Public Library children's programming director & librarian.

- Children attending this program will need to pack a healthy lunch to help make the long day be successful. Water is available through-out the day.
- The Enrichment Program requires the children to be toilet trained if they are in the Children's House classrooms. If a child is continually having accidents, then the child will no longer be able to participate in the Enrichment Program.
- We will be having a "rest time " for all children under kindergarten age, lasting approximately 20 minutes. The children can lay quietly and look at books. For the children that nap, we have a napping room available. If you want your child to nap, you will need to inform the staff. A bag for rest time items is needed and should include: a **SMALL** blanket, a **SMALL** pillow or a **QUIET SMALL** item such as a stuffed animal. All of these items need to be labeled. Please give these items to your child's teacher; they will be stored with the nap cots. They should be easy to manage and easy for your child to carry. **NO TOYS ARE PERMITTED.** Rest items are sent home every other week on the last day of the week to be washed and will need to be sent back with the child to school on the first day of the following week.
- Enrichment will be on a four-week trial basis to ensure Enrichment is the best fit for your child. Open conversation between teachers and families will continue to make sure we are doing what is best for the child.
- Children not picked up by 3:15pm who are only signed up for the Enrichment program will be charged for childcare at a rate of \$25 for each 15 minutes they stay after 3:15pm. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes.

**Extended Day Program: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm** The FMA extended day program is strictly childcare for children toilet trained ages 3 and up (if under 3 years of age, approval must be given through the office). It is designed to offer care for children after the school day has ended.

**Items brought from home:** Items brought from home are not permitted in our After-Care Program. This includes items that have been brought in for share in individual classrooms. These items must be kept at the student's cubby or in a bag or backpack.

**Snack:** If you would like your child to eat between 3pm-4:30pm while in extended day program, please pack a healthy snack and send it along to school daily or as needed. Healthy, non-perishable snacks may be stored above your child's cubby.

**Pricing:** All childcare programs are billed monthly or yearly at rates which are discounted for multiple children. Additional discounts are offered to families choosing to pre-pay in advance. All advance payments are non-refundable as discussed in the financial section of this handbook.

**Late Pick-up Policy:** Children not picked up by 4:30pm who are signed up for the extended day program will be charged for childcare at a rate of \$30 for each 15 minutes they stay after 4:30pm. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes.

## **LUNCHES & CLASSROOM SNACK**

FMA provides a healthy snack in the classroom and offered to all children every morning, midway between arrival and the morning programs dismissal at 11:15am. Children who stay at school beyond 11:15am either for class or Enrichment must bring a lunch to school every day. Please note that lunches should be nutritious and well balanced. Many pre-packaged lunch foods are high in sodium and sugar and often are loaded with artificial colors and flavors and chemicals to preserve the food. Please make every effort to support your child's well-being with fresh fruits and vegetables and foods derived "from the Earth." **Food sensitivities and allergies are compiled and may vary in every classroom. Please do not send soft drinks, sugared fruit drinks, candy, gum or junk foods.**

Please consider purchasing eco-friendly reusable containers so that your child's lunch box is not filled with disposables. We recommend the Bentgo lunch boxes. Please send all necessary utensils with your child. Please send foods preferred to be served warm in an insulated container.

## **TARDY POLICY**

**All FMA school day classes begin at 8:15am and all students must arrive no later than 8:30am. Students arriving between 8:30am - 9:00am will be marked late. Late arrivals and early departures will be deducted off the students' school day. Students will not be admitted to school between 9:00am & 11:15am, unless they have a signed note from a licensed medical or therapy provider excusing the late arrival or for another reasonable extenuating circumstance.**

One of the cornerstones of The Montessori philosophy is that children choose independent "work" and that teachers often give individual or small group lessons; every child is valued as having a different learning style. Teachers prepare and demonstrate the materials and make sure each child is progressing and is continually challenged. Having a concentrated, uninterrupted work period is vital to the successful learning of the individual and the peace



and calm of the classroom. **Therefore, it is extremely important that all children arrive on time.**

## TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to and from FMA is the responsibility of the parents/caregivers/guardians. Contact your local school district of residence if you would like to arrange bussing. Unless your child is being bussed, transportation is provided by individual parents/caregivers/guardians and parent-formed carpools. We will be happy to assist you in finding other parents with whom to form a carpool.

## DROP-OFF/PICK-UP

The children's safety is of course, of utmost importance to us during these busy times of day. If you are utilizing the drop-off option, please remember the teachers will take your child out of the car and into school. Please do not get out of your vehicle.

**Please do not attempt to pull behind the school building between 2:40pm-2:50pm M-F. McCormick School dismisses at 2:45pm and the area behind McCormick and FMA becomes a bus loading zone at that time. This area is monitored by Huron City Schools, and often the Huron Police Department. Please always drive with critical care and observe the buses and McCormick students who are present.**

**Toddler House students** may utilize the carline drop-off and pick-up option located at the north (front) entrance to the school.

**Children's House, Kindergarten, and Elementary students** may utilize the carline drop-off and pick-up option located at the south (rear) entrance to the school near Stowe Ct.

**Please approach the drop-off/pick-up line via Ohio Street**, driving around the McCormick building on the north side of Firelands Montessori Academy. Do not enter the parking lot via Stowe Ct. as it blocks traffic.

**Arrival before or after the drop-off and pick-up hours** will require that the student be walked to/from the north door (front) entrance to the building by a parent/caregiver to/from Ohio Street. Morning drop-off times are 8:15am to 8:30 am. Morning pick-up times are 11:15am to 11:30am. Afternoon pick-up is 3:00pm to 3:15pm. Children enrolled in the Extended day program must be picked up no later than 4:30pm.

### **Late Pick-up Policy:**

- Children not picked up by 11:30am who are only signed up for the 8:15-11:15am programs will not participate in any of the extended day enrichment programs, but will be charged for childcare at a rate of \$20 for each 15 minutes they stay after 11:30am. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes.
- Children not picked up by 3:15pm who are only signed up for the 8:15-3:00pm programs will be charged at a rate of \$25 for each 15 minutes

they stay after 3:15pm. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes.

- Children not picked up by 4:30pm who are signed up for the extended day program will be charged at a rate of \$30 for each 15 minutes they stay after 4:30pm. Emergency contacts will be called after the first 15 minutes. The police department will be contacted at 5:00pm.

## PARKING

You may park in any **designated parking space**, in front of the school along Ohio Street. The parking spaces behind FMA and McCormick and along the soccer field fence are for staff parking only. Pick up and Drop off only may park in any **designated parking space**, in front of school along Ohio Street. ; During drop-off and pick-up, there is No Parking behind the FMA or McCormick buildings or between FMA and McCormick at the fences. **DO NOT BLOCK HANDICAP PARKING AREAS. To avoid interference with school buses, do not enter the school parking lot between 2:40 and 2:50pm.** During this time, parking is only available on Ohio Street.

## CLOTHING

FMA prides itself on providing a safe, yet comfortable learning environment. In keeping with this idea, the school has implemented a dress code for all students. The dress code allows for modest clothing that covers both the upper and lower trunk/torso/pelvic area of the body without exposing the midriff area or any areas that would be covered by a bathing suit. **Please make sure your child wears appropriate clothing to school and is dressed for the weather.**

All students must leave a clean pair of inside shoes marked with their name, at school during the school year. Inside shoes must consist of closed-toed sneakers with non-marking soles. Outside shoes need to be appropriate for all outdoor play (closed-toed sneakers for spring and fall, boots for winter). To protect feet and toes from injury, no sandals or open-toed shoes of any kind will be allowed. Please reserve tie shoes for those children who can tie their own shoes (Kindergarten and up).

A hat and mittens/gloves and at least one complete change of clothing appropriate for all seasons should be left at school during the school year in each child's cubby to be used as necessary. Soiled clothes will be sent home with the child. Please send an extra set of clean clothes from home with the child the next day or clean and return any clothes borrowed from FMA. All personal belongings, including your child's "outside" pair of shoes, should be well marked with your child's name.

## OUTDOOR PLAY POLICY

The outdoor environment is a necessary part of our curriculum. Children's bodies grow quickly and need a lot of exercise to help them develop properly. Children's social development is also enhanced through cooperative outdoor play.

Children will be outside at least once every day depending on the temperature, wind chill, and real feel or when the wind, snow, or rain is excessive. **Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately to go outside each day.**

Teachers will determine daily, based on their judgment of outside conditions and class needs, whether or not to bring their students outside.

## HEALTH POLICY

**Before any child will be admitted to the first day of school, , an Ohio Child Medical Statement form, signed by a licensed medical provider must be submitted to the FMA office for each child.** It is also required that all children have a record of immunizations, or a State of Ohio letter of exemption from immunizations signed by the parents.

**PLEASE DO NOT SEND AN ILL CHILD TO SCHOOL** Your child's health is a matter of great importance to all of us, as well as the health of the entire student population and our staff. A staff member will check each child every day for obvious signs of illness. A child may be refused admission for the day or longer if she/he appears to have a contagious condition. If your child appears to not be healthy enough to be at school, we will call you to pick them up. Please notify us immediately if your child has a contagious disease. It is our policy to notify parents in case of exposure to communicable diseases. A communicable disease chart is posted in the main office.

**We cannot care for sick children. A child will be sent home from school or refused admission for the day or longer if they have any of the following symptoms:**

- Skin rash
- Diarrhea or vomiting (Children must be kept home for 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea.)
- Severe or persistent cough
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Sore throat
- Fever - temperature of 100.4 degrees F or above. (Children must be fever-free for 24 hours **WITHOUT** the use of medication before returning to school.)
- Evidence of lice/nits, scabies, or other parasitic infestation
- Discharge or discolored, heavy or profuse amounts of mucus
- Discharge or redness of eye (i.e. symptoms of pink eye)

**Per Ohio Department of Education:** A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated and discharged to his parent or guardian:

- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound;
- Difficult or rapid breathing;

- Yellowish skin or eyes;
- Discharge or redness of eye (i.e. symptoms of pink eye a.k.a: Conjunctivitis);
- Temperature of 100 degrees F or above taken by auxiliary method;
- Untreated infected skin ailment;
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool;
- Stiff neck;
- Evidence of lice/nits, scabies, or other parasitic infestation.

**We cannot stress enough that an ill child should not be sent to school.** If your child has any of these symptoms please keep him/her at home and inform your child's teacher as well as the school office of the reason for your child's absence. An ill child may not attend school, Before Care or After Care. Teachers will be checking students for the above symptoms as they enter the classroom. Additionally, please do not send your child to school if you are giving them laxatives, as it makes it very hard for them to control their bowel movements. Children will be sent home if they present with any of the aforementioned symptoms.

Mildly ill children such as those presenting with symptoms of a cold will be offered a place in the classroom to rest, parents/guardians will be notified and given the option to pick up the child. Should the child continue to feel poorly and not be able to participate in class the child's parents/guardians will be notified and the child will be sent home.

Upon identification of a child suspected of illness, a child may be removed from the classroom. The sick child shall be provided with a cot, if needed, to be used until he/she is discharged to his/her parent. An adult shall be within sight or hearing of a child who is isolated because of illness. No child shall be left alone.

A child who becomes ill during the day shall be discharged to the care of his/her parents as promptly as possible. A child's parents and/or emergency contacts will be called at the listed telephone numbers. If the parent or guardian is not able to come to FMA to pick up the child, FMA may discharge the ill child to the person who has been designated by the parent to take charge of the child.

Staff members have been trained in First Aid, CPR and Children's Communicable Diseases if immediate medical assistance is needed. Superficial cuts and bruises, which can be safely cared for, will be reported with an incident report to the parents of the child at the end of the day's session.

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY**

A child who presents with or we have been notified has a communicable disease such as Ringworm, Lice, Influenza, Pink Eye, Hand, Foot and Mouth, Chicken Pox or others as listed on the communicable disease chart in the main office will be immediately discharged to their parents/guardians. An email will be sent out to all families of the affected classroom informing families of the diagnosed case. If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, please contact the office immediately.

## MEDICATION POLICY

No prescription medication, vitamins, special pills, cough drops, sunscreen or other lotions are administered at FMA without a completed and signed Medication Administration Record (MAR) on file. Sunscreen is considered a medication and we cannot apply it to a child without parental permission. Please see your child's teacher or the main office for Medication Administration Record (MAR).

## SAFETY POLICY

To ensure the safety of each child entrusted to us, FMA has established the following Safety Policy:

- No child shall be left alone or unsupervised while at FMA. Classroom doors may be closed and monitored at all times
- **Parents are responsible for safely bringing and picking up their child to FMA door or to safely utilize our car-line pick up and drop off process**
- A teacher will bring the child to the parent/caregiver/guardian or driver at car-line at dismissal time
- A person trained in First Aid and CPR will be at FMA during operating hours
- In case of emergencies, the teacher has access to a working telephone. Parents must note FMA's phone number for use in emergencies: 419-433-6181, x2802
- A fire drill will be conducted at various times during each month. Tornado drills and lockdowns are scheduled and done twice a year. The Emergency exit routes are posted in each classroom and staff members have been instructed at the beginning of each year for the use of these plans
- During field trips, children will be required to wear identification by wearing Firelands Montessori Academy shirts. When field trips include other schools the children will have a form of identification, which will include the name of our school, its address and telephone number. Children must use seat belts or age-appropriate boosters or car seats when in vehicles. All drivers/vehicles will provide proof of insurance. A person trained in first aid will accompany children on field trips and have an approved First Aid kit.
- Field trip permission slips can only be signed by a child's parent or legal guardian. Relatives, caregivers or friends may not sign a permission slip or any FMA related paperwork.
- A State-Approved Emergency Operations Manual is kept on-hand in the office and is made available to parents at any time. Faculty and staff are informed and practiced in all emergency protocols.

## STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY

A goal of Firelands Montessori Academy is to help the child become a self-disciplined individual. It is understood that each child will attain degrees of self-discipline at different times. If unacceptable behavior happens, then a discussion between the teacher and child will happen to encourage a positive outcome.

In the more serious event that a child is not deemed by the classroom teacher to be making acceptable progress toward self-discipline the following procedures will be followed:

1. **After the initial incident**, the classroom teacher will contact the parents and a conference may be scheduled regarding the incident. The school Administration will be notified and may be a part of the conference. Depending on the situation, the child may or may not be involved in the conference.
2. **After the second incident**, the classroom teacher and/or administration will contact the parents and to schedule a conference regarding the incident. Depending on the situation the child may or may not be involved in the conference.
3. **After a third occurrence**: the incident may be reported to Firelands Montessori Board of Directors. The Board in conjunction with the classroom teachers, parents, and the school director will discuss possible solutions. FMA reserves the right to refer the child to another school, or permanently dismiss the child from attending FMA.

**Firelands Montessori Academy has a zero-tolerance policy as it pertains to ANY physical or malicious verbal abuse or stealing. Should such an incident occur, the parents will be notified and the child will be sent home immediately for a period of up to 3 days.**

**The Ohio Department of Education requires this additional discipline policy:** A staff member in charge of a child or a group of children shall be responsible for their discipline. The center's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on premises and shall be restricted as follows:

- There shall be no cruel, harsh, or corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to: punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, biting, or stealing.
- No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box or a similar cubicle.
- No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse.

- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep or for toileting accidents.
- Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame or frighten a child.
- Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest or toilet use.
- Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a staff member in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space.

Firelands Montessori Academy shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the program.

## DRUG & WEAPONS POLICY

FMA has adopted a policy prohibiting weapons or toys shaped like weapons. This policy is in keeping with the respect towards others taught by Montessori. This will make certain that all our children are safe and comfortable in our environment.

**FIRELANDS MONTESSORI ACADEMY IS A DRUG AND WEAPON FREE SCHOOL ZONE**

## CLASSROOM EVENTS

**Birthdays** are celebrated in the classroom as arranged between the parents and the teachers. The typical celebration includes the parents or guardians supplying one picture of their child from each year (including their birth year). In class, the teacher helps the child create a timeline of their lives using the pictures as illustrations.

It is not necessary to present the class with a birthday gift, but if your child would like to do so in honor of a birthday s/he is welcome to do so. An example might be a book on a topic of great interest to your child. If you need further ideas about birthday gifts or snacks, please see the teachers.

If your child's birthday falls during summer vacation, we celebrate his/her 1/2 birthday here at school. Please let us know if you do not wish your child's birthday to be celebrated in class.

**Only invitations to celebrations that include the entire class may be handed out at school.** Please help your child understand the impact on others feelings when planning your private events. Each child's world is greater than the individual classroom and events outside of school can impact learning, teamwork, and the overall classroom dynamic.

## SHARING

Certain classrooms at certain days or times allow students to share items from home.. Sharing can include something of importance or interest to the child. Toys are discouraged unless they have a special meaning. Please contact your classroom teachers for more details.

## VISITORS

Those wishing to schedule an observation visit during the school year must contact the main office to do so. Observation visits are by appointment only and approved based on availability in any given classroom and are time limited.

**Firelands Montessori Academy is NOT able to offer visits by siblings enrolled in other school districts.**

## OMBUDSMAN POSITION

Any person who has a serious difference with Firelands Montessori Education operation, and who is unable to satisfactorily resolve that difference through direct contact with the responsible parties of said operation, may appeal to the Ombudsman at the State Department of Education for assistance. That person may be reached by telephone at (614) 466-0224 or by writing The Division of Early Childhood Education, 65 Front St., Columbus, Ohio 43266-0308.

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

**Family Information:** Families are encouraged to utilize the FMA website [www.firelandsmontessori.org](http://www.firelandsmontessori.org) for school information. This resource will include all news and information pertinent to FMA Families. Please follow us on Facebook or Instagram.

**E-mail:** We communicate essential information through weekly emails. If you are not receiving emails from the office ( [office@firelandsmontessori.org](mailto:office@firelandsmontessori.org) ), please get in touch as soon as possible.

**Facebook:** We post info and pictures to our Facebook page on a regular basis. Please “like” Firelands Montessori Academy!

**Instagram:** We post info and pictures to our @fmamontessori #firelandsmontessori page on a regular basis. Please “like” Firelands Montessori Academy!

Please do not hesitate to reach out with further questions or concerns to Katie Hayden, Director/Firelands Montessori Academy at 419-433-6181.





# FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT SIGNATURE PAGE

**ALL** parents/legal guardians, either in separate or the same household, who are **legally responsible for/legally appointed** with the care of the below named child(ren) must print and sign their names below, every year before child(ren) can enroll/re-enroll and be admitted to attend the first day of school. One form can be used for multiple children in the same household with the same parents/legal guardians.

I/We, the parents/legal guardians of \_\_\_\_\_,  
hereby acknowledge that I/we have received, read, reviewed, understand, accept and agree to abide by the policies, practices, and procedures set forth in the Firelands Montessori Academy Family Handbook.

~OR~

I/We, the parents/legal guardians of \_\_\_\_\_,  
will not be re-enrolling the above named child(ren) for the 2024-25 school year at Firelands Montessori Academy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date