



*A love of learning for life...*  
8 WEEKS THROUGH 12 YEARS  
FOUNDED 1993

Old Peachtree Montessori School  
33 Hills Shop Rd.  
Auburn, GA 30011  
770-963-3052 phone  
770-963-5523 fax  
[www.opmontessori.com](http://www.opmontessori.com)

## ***PARENT HANDBOOK***

## **ADMINISTRATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

Gus Garcia	Director	gusgarciaopm@gmail.com
Todd Garcia	Owner	toddgarcia@hotmail.com
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School Phone: 770-963-3052

School Fax: 770-963-4034

School Website: [www.opmontessori.com](http://www.opmontessori.com)

Our campus is made up of the Office Building and three separate classroom buildings.

Building 1 is the yellow brick house which houses Elementary classes.

Building 2 is the middle building which houses two Primary classes.

Building 3 is the far back building next to the garden and houses Infant/Pre-Primary classes as well as Breakfast Club and Aftercare.

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

#### Infant/Pre-Primary:

Half day 8:30-11:45

Full day 8:30-2:45

Extended day 7:00-6:00

#### Primary:

Half day 8:15-12:00

Full day 8:15-3:00

Extended day 7:00-6:00

#### Elementary

Full day 8:00-3:15

Extended day 7:00-6:00

#### Office:

8:00-3:00

## **ADMISSION**

Old Peachtree Montessori School strives to accommodate all students wishing to become part of our school community. We admit students without regard to race, national or ethnic origin, religious affiliation, or sexual orientation and make available all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We do not discriminate based on race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of our educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and/or loan programs, athletic, or other sanctioned programs.

### **ENROLLMENT:**

Re-enrollment is offered to current enrolled students beginning in February of each year. Invitation for re-enrollment is normally automatic, but not guaranteed. Decisions are made by the administration and faculty based on an annual review of each student's academic progress, social and emotional development, and any special needs (if applicable), along with the attitudes and values expressed by the child and the parents. As always, our goal is to help each child and family find the perfect match between the student, home, and school. Re-enrollment contracts are due by an announced date. Consideration of your child's application and sibling applications are given priority.

Following the re-enrollment period, enrollment is open to the public. We cannot guarantee your child a position if you have not re-enrolled by the announced date.

### **GROUND FOR DISMISSAL:**

The following circumstances constitute grounds for dismissal from our program:

1. Inability to function in the Montessori classroom. Occasionally, a child needs more support than we are equipped to provide. Parents will be informed if the teacher feels a problem exists. The Directors will meet with the parents to address the problem(s). Parents are expected to support the school, teachers, and staff with regards to any strategies discussed to address the problem(s). Students may be placed on a thirty-day probation via written notice before dismissal.
2. Overdue tuition. The school is constantly striving to control its tuition costs and provide the best education possible for your child. We operate solely on tuition and need your cooperation in making timely payments. As outlined in the section TUITION, you are invited to make arrangements for payments if you are having difficulties. In absence of that, and with more than two months in arrears, your child will not be permitted to attend class and we will not release records until the account is paid in full.
3. Parent/Teacher Conferences. Formal conferences are scheduled twice a year and published in advance. Conferences are a valuable tool to assess your child's progress and to set goals and expectations. It is important to attend. Continued failure to attend is grounds for dismissal.
4. Continued lack of parental involvement, assistance, support of the classroom and school. Each family is required to give two hours per month of their time. There are many forms of volunteerism and ways in which you can support the school. At the back of this handbook is a list of volunteer initiatives that allows each parent to identify their area of interest. We do recognize that many parents work, so we have tailored volunteer opportunities that can be done at home or on the weekends. Your involvement makes a difference!
5. Habitual tardiness at arrival and/or dismissal. Late arrival interrupts the class and takes away from the arrival experience for your child. Late pick up stresses the child and interferes with contractual and staffing obligations the school has. Continued failure to be on time is grounds for dismissal. You will receive two written notices prior to dismissal. Late pick up fees apply. See FINANCIAL POLICIES, FEES.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **ARRIVAL TIMES:**

Infant/Pre-Primary: Arrival begins at 8:30. Doors are locked at 8:45.

Primary: Arrival begins at 8:15. Doors are locked at 8:30.

Elementary: Arrival begins at 8:00. Doors are locked at 8:15.

Breakfast Club: Arrival begins at 7:00.

Extended day: Students may arrive anytime between 7:00-8:00.

Students are not permitted on campus before 7:00 am unless arrangements have been made in advance.

**LATE ARRIVAL:**

If you arrive any time after the 15-minute window, **DO NOT GO TO YOUR CLASS**. You must stop in the office for a late arrival slip and then park in the lot nearest to your child's class and walk them to the door. Please wait respectfully for a teacher to let your child in.

**INFANT/PRE-PRIMARY ARRIVAL PROCEDURE:**

Follow the driveway around the back of the office and at Building 1 bear to the right. Follow the signs to Building 3. Wait for the attendant to open the door and assist your child out of the car. Exit **SLOWLY** through the employee parking lot, taking care to watch for pedestrians or other cars.

**PRIMARY ARRIVAL PROCEDURE:**

Follow the driveway around the back of the office and at Building 1 bear to the right. Follow the signs to Building 2. **WAIT** for the attendant to open the door and assist your child out of the car. **DO NOT ALLOW** your child to open the door and get out. Do not pull away until your child has been escorted into their class. **YIELD** to traffic entering and departing from Building 3 as you **SLOWLY** exit.

**ELEMENTARY ARRIVAL PROCEDURE:**

Follow the driveway around the back of the office and at Building 1 bear to the left, **BEHIND** the pecan tree. Follow the signs to Building 1. **CAREFULLY** pull through the portico as it is narrow. An attendant will greet your child and assist them out of the car. Do not pull away until your child is safely on the porch. **YIELD** to traffic exiting from behind you and **SLOWLY** exit.

**SAFE ARRIVAL PROTOCOLS:**

*For security purposes, the doors to the classrooms will be locked at the expiration of their respective 15-minute arrival period and the entire campus is locked at 9:00 am.*

**DO NOT** park in the carpool line or traffic lanes at **ANY** time!

For the safety of all children, when you are walking your child across or through campus, always keep them by your side. **NEVER** allow them to run ahead – especially in the parking lot. Please do not walk your child through the carpool lines.

Arrival and/or dismissal carpool times are not appropriate to hold lengthy conversation with any carpool staff, especially the teachers. Please keep conversation brief. If you have questions, concerns, or information to share, you can either put it in writing, arrange for the teacher to call you after dismissal, or stop by the office so we can help you.

**TIPS FOR SAYING GOODBYE TO YOUR YOUNG CHILD:**

Initially, it can be difficult for parents and young children to separate at the beginning of the school year. We have found that a short and positive good-bye is easiest for the child. We ask parents **NOT** to enter the classroom and strongly suggest setting a routine from the first day. A prolonged good-bye often makes the separation more difficult. For the first few weeks of school, there may be anxiety and crying. When the parent has trouble letting go, it sabotages the separation. Most of the time, your child will stop crying as soon as you are out of sight. You will be contacted in the event of prolonged, persistent crying. You are also welcome to call the school for reassurance that your child has settled in and is adjusting well.

**HALF DAY DISMISSAL TIMES:**

Infant/Pre-Primary: Dismissal begins at 11:45. You are considered late after 12:00. Fees apply. \*

Primary: Dismissal is at 12:00 sharp. You are considered late after 12:10. Fees apply. \*

Please do not be late, as this distresses your child!

**FULL DAY DISMISSAL TIMES:**

Infant/Pre-Primary: Dismissal begins at 2:45. You are considered late after 3:00. Fees apply. \*

Primary: Dismissal begins at 3:00. You are considered late after 3:15. Fees apply. \*

Elementary: Dismissal begins at 3:15. You are considered late after 3:30. Fees apply. \*

Please do not be late, as this distresses your child!

**EXTENDED DAY DISMISSAL TIME:**

Students in the extended day (Aftercare) program, are released when a parent/guardian signs them out. You are considered late after 6:00. Fees apply. \*

**DISMISSAL PROCEDURE:**

For half day and full day dismissal times, please follow the carpool procedures outlined for arrival. If your child is in the Aftercare program, park your car (ignition OFF for safety), and walk to the Aftercare room. You must contact the supervising staff member by signing your child out before you can remove your child from school. Please remember to collect all their belongings including lunch boxes, coats, mittens, courier packs, folders, etc.

Per state law, "custodial parents of enrolled students, shall at any time the child is in attendance, be permitted access to all child care areas, and shall make his/her presence known prior to removing the child from the center."

**LATE PICKUP AND FEES:**

If you are late to pick up your child from a half day program, your child will remain with their class until your arrival.

If you are late to pick up your child from a full day program, your child will be escorted to the Aftercare program. You will need to sign them out from the Aftercare teacher.

\* If you are within fifteen minutes late, a \$10 fee is due within 2 days.

If you are more than fifteen minutes late, there is a flat fee of \$20 plus \$1 for every minute after the first fifteen due within 2 days.

**AUTHORIZED PERSONS TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD:**

Children are ONLY released to parents/guardians. If someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up, INCLUDING someone on the authorized release list, you MUST submit written notice (or text message from your phone). We will require a photo ID for anyone picking up your child. We understand this may seem inconvenient, especially when there's a crisis you are attending to, but we are liable for the safety of your child/ren and we take that responsibility seriously. Please make sure all the potential authorized drivers are on the authorized release form. It is your responsibility to keep this list current.

## **ATTENDANCE**

All students, even our youngest, are expected to attend school daily, at the start of the school day. Consistent attendance and prompt arrival is important. Attendance is documented and recorded on each student's transcript. Students should be in class within the fifteen-minute arrival period. Excessive absences will interfere with your child's academic success and may prevent completion of the program.

PLEASE BE ON TIME! Late arrival is disruptive and inconsiderate to the rest of the class and nothing can be more disruptive to a child's education than irregular attendance. Consistency and routine are important to every child's development, but they are especially important to the 0-6-year-old. When a child is engaged and excited about a lesson, it is important to have consistent attendance to allow them the opportunity to complete/repeat the work while the excitement/interest level is high.

If your child will be absent for an extended period for any reason, please let the office and teacher know.

If you are arriving late due to an appointment, etc., follow the procedures outlined above for late arrival protocols. Please do not knock loudly or frequently to keep interruption to a minimum.

If your child needs to be excused early from school, please send a note or email indicating the nature of the absence and the time you need to pick your child up. Every effort will be made to have your child ready. Please stop into the office so we can notify your teacher of your arrival.

## **STARTING SCHOOL**

Many young children and their parents feel a bit nervous when they leave one another in an unfamiliar situation. A few tears (both ways!) may be expected. If this is your child's first year at OPMS, we encourage both parents to visit the campus frequently before your child starts school to allow them to become familiar with the new setting. Come picnic with us on Family Day, enroll in a summer camp session, walk the grounds, take a picture of the school and hang it on the refrigerator. Just be reassuring as you talk with your child about their new school.

At the start of each new school year, parents and new students will have orientation the week before school starts. Then, the new families can visit the classroom and meet their teacher(s).

On the first day of school, remind your young child where you will be during the day and when you will be picking them up. Some children may be sad the first few days, but kind words and reassurance almost always alleviates their fears. Our teachers are sensitive and supportive of separation anxiety. They will help your child transition comfortably.

## **DRESS CODE**

Students should dress in clothing appropriate for school. While we understand children's fascination with imaginary characters and super heroes, we do not allow clothing with characters or super heroes on them as Montessori lessons are based in reality and we want the children focused on their environment, not the character on their friend's t-shirt (or lunch box, etc.). Additionally, in Montessori, we learn by doing. Your child's clothes WILL get dirty. Please do not dress them in something you want kept clean. Comfortable clothes are encouraged to allow for free movement. Younger children should dress in clothing they can put on and fasten themselves like pullover shirts, elastic waist bottoms, Velcro sneakers, etc. We encourage INDEPENDENCE at school and it is very frustrating for

young children to manage things like overall straps, belts, laces, and things that fasten in the back when they are in a hurry to get to the bathroom!

Children must have closed toe shoes. Flip flops, cleats, and heels are NOT allowed and closed toe sandals are discouraged. For safety, children should not wear any type of jewelry (the school is not responsible for lost items) or costume.

**IMPORTANT:** Children in the infant, pre-primary, and primary classes are required to have two full sets of clothing at the school at all times. This includes a top, bottom, underwear, socks, and shoes (one pair). Elementary students should consider keeping extra clothes at school as well because all kinds of accidents happen! All clothing items should fit into a zip top bag CLEARLY labeled with your child's name. The bags will be stored in a canvas bag for easy accessibility (see section on Things your Child Needs at School). If you don't want the clothes to get lost, LABEL EVERYTHING! The school is not responsible for lost items that are not labeled but we will have a lost and found in the office.

## **HOMEWORK**

Montessori education and theory provides a daily environment for learning. Maria Montessori believed that children interacting at home or in the community in the evenings provides rich experiences. This could be meal planning, cooking, reading, chores. These experiences offer a sense of belonging and responsibility.

Elementary students will be assigned homework assignments that are geared towards their individual level and help reinforce an idea or skill introduced in the classroom. Researching a certain topic would be a good example.

Homework doesn't have to be boring and should not be a battleground between children and parents. Rather, it should challenge the children to think, explore, and pursue tangible projects. They will learn how to organize, budget their time, and follow through until an assignment is complete. Parents should be available to guide students when needed.

## **TESTING**

Studies have shown that standardized testing can be inaccurate, misleading, and stressful to children. In a Montessori environment where a teacher spends three years with a child, the teacher is far more knowledgeable about a student's abilities than a standardized test. So, while we don't place a great deal of emphasis on these tests as a reliable measure of a student's progress, we do feel the students should become acclimated with the focus and discipline it requires to complete such a test. Elementary students in their 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> year participate in standardized testing. These tests are private and remain in the student's academic file.

Throughout the year, elementary students do participate in quizzes and tests, both verbally and written. Montessori provides the platform for embracing differences and this includes learning levels and abilities. Competition, academically or otherwise, is strongly discouraged. We ask you, as parents, to reinforce this at home. Support your child's efforts and worry less about the outcomes as all outcomes, positive or negative, provide learning opportunities!

## **ADVANCEMENT TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

Montessori theory dictates that each child learns at his or her own pace. As a result, the concept that a child is in a certain grade, doesn't have the same meaning as in a traditional school. Nor is age a single measure of which level a child should be placed in.

Advancement to the next level (for example from primary to lower elementary) is based on an evaluation of the child's total academic, social, emotional, and physical/motor development. Because classes are equipped with many ranges of materials that overlap between levels, no child is allowed to stagnate. The most important criteria for advancement is often the student's social adjustment, level of independence, work habits, and maturity.

## **STUDENT PRIVACY**

Student files are confidential records and are kept secure from unauthorized access. Parents/guardians may have access to their child's file, but it may not be removed from the office. A copy of the student's file may be sent to an outside professional if requested in writing by the parent/guardian.

## **TRANSCRIPTS**

By written request, a student's transcript will be issued to another school. Copies are sent directly to the requesting institution. Please allow the office at least two weeks to complete this request. Transcripts will not be issued if a student has an outstanding balance on their account. However, they will be forwarded as soon as the account has a zero balance.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR POLICY**

Each student attending OPMS is expected to follow the rules and guidelines of the Student Behavior Policy. These rules and guidelines are in place to insure a safe and peaceful learning environment.

Please review the rules and guidelines with your child and explain the importance of following them.

1. Follow Directions
2. Be Honest with Teachers and Peers
3. Show Teachers and Peers Respect
4. Follow Classroom Rules
  - a. No running in classroom
  - b. Use materials carefully and properly
  - c. Clean up after oneself
  - d. Be respectful - hitting, kicking, grabbing, pushing, biting, saying unkind things, or other aggressive behaviors are not acceptable
5. Talk to One Another to Resolve Conflict

A Conference with teachers, parents, and/or administrators may be used to set goals for students. Parents are expected to support the school's behavior policy and work closely with teachers/administrators to resolve issues promptly. Repeated issues may result in dismissal from school.

We encourage parents to read/study the principles of Conscious Discipline by Becky Bailey. It empowers you with the self-awareness, brain information, developmental knowledge and useable skills necessary to create safe, connected, problem-solving homes.

## **WHAT YOUR CHILD NEEDS AT SCHOOL**

- **PRE-PRIMARY STUDENTS:**  
Two complete sets of labeled clothing  
A labeled bag of diapers (not more than 24)  
A labeled box of wipes  
A labeled canvas bag (about 8"x12") to remain at school to hold change of clothes  
School supplies (a list will be available before school starts)
- **PRIMARY STUDENTS:**  
Two complete sets of labeled clothing  
A labeled canvas bag (about 8"x12") to remain at school to hold change of clothes  
School supplies (a list will be available before school starts)
- **ELEMENTARY STUDENTS:**  
School supplies (list will be posted on the website or available from the office)  
A change of clothing is suggested but not required

What your child doesn't need at school are toys! There are so many ways to stimulate their minds and bodies at school. Besides, if toys are lost or broken, tears usually follow. You help avoid separating from a toy during arrival time by leaving the toys at home.

### **SHOW AND TELL:**

Each teacher will determine when/how their class will conduct show and tell. We ask you to encourage your child to bring in materials that are educational, related to nature, a favorite book, a souvenir from a trip, or something pertaining to a subject they are interested in. Help them practice what they will "tell" about their item. **NO TOYS** will be shown.

### **LUNCH:**

#### **ABSOLUTELY NO NUT PRODUCTS**

Students should bring their lunch to school every day in a clearly labeled lunch box. We place great emphasis on the importance of good nutrition. Good nutrition is the first step to a lifelong routine of wellness. Lunch is a very important part of your child's school day. It provides an opportunity for socializing, demonstrating grace and courtesy, being independent, and enjoying something well prepared. We encourage you to prepare lunches with your child and discuss balanced meals. We should work together to teach our children about health and nutrition. Obviously, we want to pack a lunch our children will eat. The challenge is to help them discover that wholesome, sugar-free foods can taste even better than junk food and they don't have negative effects on our bodies.

With younger children, please pack food in small, easy to handle servings (quartered sandwiches, sliced fruits/veggies, cubed cheese, etc.). Use easy to open containers to help develop independence.

**ALWAYS** Choose fresh, natural foods. **NEVER** send candy, sugary desserts, foods high in artificial coloring, or soda. We discourage packing desserts at all as children will always eat their dessert, but not always their lunch.

For drink, please send water, milk, or 100% fruit juice to drink. Pouch drinks are strongly discouraged as they are difficult to open, even for adults!

An ice pack or cool pack will help keep perishables fresh and cold. By law, we are not allowed to heat food for **PRIMARY OR PRE-PRIMARY STUDENTS**.

## **SNACK:**

### **ABSOLUTELY NO NUT PRODUCTS**

- **INFANT CLASS:**

Please provide a snack for your child. Label the item as snack.

- **PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY CLASS:**

Each family will provide a week's worth of snack on a rotating basis. You will be contacted by the teacher or room parent when it is your turn. They will let you know what to bring. This can be a fun and interesting experience with your child as you shop and prepare. The children this age take great pride in making snack for their classmates.

- **ELEMENTARY CLASS:**

The elementary students have the unique opportunity to plan their own menus. They will shop for their items and balance a check book to track their spending. Families pay a fee toward the program.

IT IS IMPORTANT to notify the school and your child's teacher **IN WRITING** as to any special dietary restrictions and/or allergies your child may have. The snack menu is available in the office.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

The Elementary students periodically take field trips to local points of interest during the year. There is usually a nominal fee charged by the venue. Field trip permission slips will be sent home with your child in advance. Parents may be invited to volunteer to drive and chaperone. Field trip drivers must provide a copy of a valid driver's license and automobile insurance information. The school's insurance policy does not cover field trip volunteer drivers and vehicles. All students are required to have an operational seat belt and may **not** ride in the front passenger seat.

If you volunteer to drive, please plan to stay with the group during the field trip unless the teachers confirm that you are not needed to chaperone as well.

We ask that you not bring younger siblings along when you drive on a field trip.

The teachers will have a handout with directions, cell phone numbers, a list of students for which you are responsible, and general rules.

## **GOING OUT**

During the Elementary years, Montessori believes that children have a need to explore the world beyond their home and school surroundings. The purpose of these "going out" trips is to gather information, to share their experiences/information with the rest of their classmates and to develop independence and belonging in the world. These trips are different from a teacher-led field trip. Examples of "going out" trips include: trips to the local library to do research on a project, having an interest in a certain trade and traveling to a place of business to learn more about it or planning a grocery list for a camping trip, budgeting and then shopping for these items. Children are escorted on their journeys for security and supervision but there is limited adult interaction.

\*Please note that Elementary will hold their own special fundraising events throughout the year to raise money for their trips. Please support our hardworking students!!

## **CAMPING TRIPS**

The elementary classes may plan camping trips each year. There is usually a nominal fee associated with these events, and we usually try to plan some fundraising events to defray costs of the trip. The outdoor classroom is a vital part of the elementary curriculum and participation in these events is mandatory. Educational opportunities during these camping trips include, but are not limited to environmental education, independence, community/team building, and survival skills. All elementary students look forward to these trips as a special privilege, or “rite of passage”. All students are expected to attend.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS AT SCHOOL**

Each year we also sponsor programs that come to the school. This enables some of our younger students to have the benefit of additional educational opportunities without having to leave the school campus. If you have a special job or talent that you would like to share with the students, we strongly encourage you to come and share it with our students.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Children love to celebrate birthdays with their friends. Each teacher has their own way of recognizing birthdays for their students. Ask how the class celebrates birthdays (sending in past birthday photos, baby pictures, etc). You may send a poster of photos of your child from birth to current age.

We invite you to send in a special snack for your child on this day. However, we ask that you do not send in cake or ice cream. Parents have been very creative, preparing sliced fruit, muffins, or similar birthday treats. Please advise your child’s teacher in advance to let her know so that snack preparations may be considered. **ABSOLUTELY NO NUTS.**

Please do not send birthday invitations to school to be passed out, mailed, or emailed. We ask that you send all birthday invitations through the mail. For a copy of a current roster, please contact the office.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **IMMUNIZATIONS:**

The State of Georgia requires us to have on file in the office, a copy of your child’s immunization record, OR a notarized copy of the exemption form. Both forms are generated by the state. By law, children are not allowed to attend school without one of the forms on file.

### **ILLNESS:**

If your child is feeling ill and will not be coming to school, please call the office and let us know.

Students should remain at home if any of the following symptoms are evidenced: fever, eye infection, vomiting, diarrhea, head lice, constant runny nose, undiagnosed skin rash. If your child comes to school presenting any of these symptoms they will be sent home unless you have a doctor’s note stating it is okay for them to be at school that day.

A child with fever must stay home until they are fever free (without medication) for 24 hours. While medication will bring a fever down temporarily, it does not cure the illness.

Certain infectious diseases such as chicken pox or strep throat are highly contagious and students must stay home until the contagious stage has passed. For the sake of other’s health, it is vital, and required by the Department of Health, to inform the office of an infectious diagnosis. By law, parents will be notified when a communicable illness has been contracted by a student or staff member at OPMS. The identity of infected person(s) is always anonymous.

If your child gets ill during the school day, they will be removed from the classroom to provide comfort, privacy, and keep others well. While we sympathize with working parents, it is important you are able to care for them should an illness appear. You may want to make arrangements for emergency care with a friend or relative in advance if you feel you would be unable to suddenly leave work.

As part of practical life and grace and courtesy lessons, children learn to be mindful of germ transmission by washing hands often, not eating or drinking after others, how to blow their nose, and coughing/sneezing into the crook of their arm.

Weather permitting, students go outside every day. Please dress them appropriately. If you feel they are too sick to go outside, they need to stay home as we do not have the personnel/space to take care of sick children.

If your child falls behind at school due to an extended illness, please contact the teacher to develop a strategy to catch up.

### **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES:**

We provide training to our staff in first aid and CPR.

In the event of any emergency medical situation, we need to be able to get in touch with you immediately. It is your responsibility to make sure all contact information is up to date.

If your child needs immediate medical attention, and you cannot be reached, your medical treatment consent agreement authorizes us to seek medical care in your name. Your child will be transported to Gwinnett Medical Center, or the nearest emergency facility where the illness/injury occurs (in case of offsite event). If you designated an alternate plan of care in an emergency on the medical treatment consent form, that is what we will follow.

In the event of an illness, the parents or other emergency contact person is notified. The office is notified. The child is made comfortable, and sent home if discomfort is elevated.

In the event of an accident, the child is checked for cuts, scrapes, bruises, bumps, blood. The wound is cleaned and TLC is provided. Parents are called on as needed basis. A report is filled out and given to parents. If the accident is severe, the child will not be moved and 911 will be called, followed by the parents or emergency contact person. The Medical Treatment Consent form outlines procedures to be followed.

In the unlikely event of a death, 911 will be called, followed by Bright from the Start, medical personnel, and county officials. Parents will be contacted to come to the school as soon as possible and we will also contact a grief counselor to be onsite. The school will provide full cooperation and support.

### **MEDICATIONS:**

The state licensing agency, Bright From the Start, does not authorize us to give over the counter medication to children. This includes Tylenol, teething medications, etc.

If your child is under a physician's care and is on prescribed medication while attending school, you must notify your child's teacher in writing, giving permission to dispense medications. This must include specific dosage times and exact dosage. Please include a copy of the prescription in case of emergency.

Antibiotics and other medications should be scheduled so that dosages are during hours when your child is at home.

The school will notify parents if an adverse reaction to medication is noticed.

The medical treatment consent form also outlined certain non-prescription medications we would offer your child under certain circumstances.

**CAR SEATS:**

By GA state law,

- Children under 8 years old must ride in an approved safety seat or booster that is suited for their height and weight.
- Children 8 years old and under must ride in the back seat. If the back seat is occupied by other passengers your child may ride in the front seat, provided he or she is secured in a booster or child safety seat.
- Children over 8 years old must wear a seat belt.
- Any child over 4 ft 9 in may use a seat belt in lieu of a booster seat.
- Kids not requiring child seats may ride in front, provided he or she is older than 8 years old.

**FIRE DRILLS:**

Monthly classroom fire drills are conducted by the teachers. These are documented in roll books. The procedure is as follows:

- Bell rings
- Students line up with teacher at nearest exit
- Teachers lead students to designated safe area outside of the building
- Assistant checks the classroom and bathrooms to be sure no students are left behind
- Roll is called to make sure every student is accounted for
- Teacher discusses with children fire procedures, home safety, 'stop, drop, roll'
- Directors check all buildings
- Teacher leads children to class when all clear is given

**TORNADO/SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURES:**

We practice this drill monthly during severe weather seasons. When a warning is issued, the teacher leads students to a designated indoor area where students sit with their hands covering their head. The assistant checks classroom and bathroom. Roll is called to make sure all students are accounted for.

**PHYSICAL PLANT PROBLEMS:**

In the event of disruption of public commodities or other utilities, a decision is made to ensure the safety and comfort of all students. If a power outage exceeds 90 minutes, parents will be notified to pick up their children. If a water outage exceeds 6 hours, parents will be notified to pick up their children. In the event of a water outage, the school will provide clean drinking water and water for flushing toilets. If the gas supply is out for more than 90 minutes, parents will be notified to pick up their children.

In the event of other plant problems, the impact of each will be assessed. The safety and comfort of each student remains paramount and appropriate action will be taken.

**HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL EVACUATION:**

Students will be evacuated similar to fire drill procedure but in the opposite direction of the hazard up to ¼ mile away. Assistant checks the classroom/bathrooms and closes the doors. Roll is called once the class has arrived at the off-site location. Directors and office staff check buildings and grounds for complete evacuation before leaving premises. Parents and authorities are notified as necessary.

**INCLEMENT WEATHER SCHOOL CLOSING:**

We follow the Gwinnett County and Barrow County School closing schedule. When either county is closed, we will be closed as well. Be mindful that Gwinnett may be open, but Barrow may be closed. In that situation, or vice versa, we will be closed. We will also make announcements on TV and WSB radio. Whenever possible, we will also have an announcement on our telephone system.

**SUSPICIOUS PERSON/INTRUDER:**

If a person at or near our school or any place where our children are is making the staff or children uncomfortable, the situation will be shared with another staff member and closely monitored. Preparations are put into place. If a person becomes aggressive or is intrusive, all staff will immediately be made aware of the person/situation. Lockdown procedures are initiated (lock outside doors/windows, close/secure interior doors, close curtains/blinds, turn off lights). 911 is called. Children are isolated from person/situation as best as possible. If children are outside, they are immediately brought inside if safe to do so. Otherwise they are evacuated to designated site. Roll will be called once children are secured and upon safely returning to the classroom.

**MISSING CHILD:**

Whether in class, or on field trips, the teacher is required to count the students every morning, before and after recess, before and after lunch, and at the end of the day. Adequate supervision of exits and additional chaperones on field trips are maintained. If a child becomes missing at school, the campus goes into lockdown mode. The grounds, which are enclosed, will be thoroughly searched. In the event the child cannot be located, 911 is called and then the parents are notified.

**FINANCIAL POLICIES****TUITION:**

Old Peachtree Montessori School is a private school that is dependent upon tuition as its principal source of income. You are responsible for prompt payment of all tuition and fees. Payments are required to be made on time. The school will be forced to withhold any and all services to students whose accounts have fallen behind unless prior arrangements have been made for deferred payment. If no arrangements have been made and your account is two or more months behind, your child is not allowed to attend school until all debt has been paid. Transcripts will not be issued if a student has an outstanding balance on his or her account.

Your cooperation helps pay the teachers and the bills.

The first payment of the annual tuition is a deposit and is due on June 1<sup>st</sup>. This is not transferable or refundable except if the enrolled student moves from the Atlanta area and the office is given written notice by July 1<sup>st</sup>, one-half of this payment will be refunded. The deposit cannot be used to satisfy the one-month withdrawal fee outlined below. See: FEES (item 7).

**MATERIAL FEE:**

This is due on an annual basis for all students. It is not transferable or refundable except if the enrolled student moves from the Atlanta area and the office is given written notice by July 1<sup>st</sup>, one-half of the fee will be refunded.

**FEES:**

1. Late payment: Payment is due on the first of each month. There is a five-calendar day grace period for payment after which it is considered late. The first time a payment is late, a \$50 late fee is applied to your account. Each additional thirty-day late payment is an additional \$50 fee (i.e. 60 days late = \$100, 90 days = \$150, etc.). Any payment due to OPMS collected more than thirty days after the due date shall bear interest from the due date at the rate of 6.5% per annum in addition to applicable late fees.
2. Insufficient Funds: a \$50 fee is applied to your account for checks returned.
3. Late Pick Up: If you are within fifteen minutes late, a \$10 fee is due within 2 days.  
If you are more than fifteen minutes late, there is a flat fee of \$20 plus \$1 for every minute after the first fifteen due within 2 days.
4. Emergency Lunch: If your child does not have a lunch by the time their class eats, one will be provided by the school. A \$5 lunch fee is applied.

5. Unplanned Before or After School Care: If something comes up and your child needs to come for Breakfast Club, a \$10 fee is applied. For After Care, a \$15 fee is applied. Please understand we provide staff based on enrollment, and at times, there may not be space to allow drop ins. Please give 24 hour notice when possible.
6. Replacement Clothing/Shoes: In the event your child needs a replacement set of clothing and there are none of their own in class, a replacement set will be offered. When available, we first offer gently used clothing. If no gently used clothing is available new clothing will be provided. Both new and gently used clothing must be washed and returned within two days to avoid a \$10 replacement fee. For shoes, a \$5 fee is applied.
7. If for any reason a student withdraws from the school during the school year, a thirty-day written notice must be given to the office prior to withdrawal. In the absence of such notice, a fee equal to one month's tuition is due and payable, in addition to tuition due and payable until the effective date of withdrawal. Tuition will not be prorated for periods of less than half of a month.

**\*\*As stated in the enrollment contract, should any indebtedness evidenced by the contract be collected through or by an attorney at law, you agreed that OPMS is entitled to collect all costs of collection, including reasonable attorney fees.\*\***

#### **FINANCIAL AID:**

The school offers the opportunity of financial aid for families needing financial assistance. Please speak with the office regarding our work/scholarship program that is offered to offset tuition costs.

**Pay It Forward Tax Credit Program:** Our school is approved and participates in the State of GA Tax Credit Program. Pay It Forward is a third party, non-profit organization, also approved by the state, that coordinates the program. This is the primary source of scholarship funds for our students. Information is available in the office. Details of the program and application can be found online at [PayItForwardScholarships.com](http://PayItForwardScholarships.com).

#### **WITHDRAWAL:**

If for any reason you choose to withdraw your child, a thirty-day written notice must be given to the office. There is a fee, outlined in sub-section FEES of FINANCIAL POLICIES, if notice is not given. The effective date must be either the 15<sup>th</sup> or the last day of the month.

## **FUNDRAISING/PHILANTHROPY/VOLUNTEERISM**

### **FUNDRAISING**

We hold a limited number of fundraisers each year. However, being a tuition funded school with no state/outside support, we do have a need to raise funds over and above tuition. Fundraisers help us control increases in our tuition schedule while providing adequate funding to continuously enhance school programs, equipment, and materials. Extra funds raised for the school help enhance the program you have selected for your child by enabling us to attract high quality teachers and expand our programs.

Our goal is to conduct two or three major fundraising activities each year that will involve all our families. A fundraising calendar will be established before the commencement of the academic year. We will attempt to schedule these fundraisers to capitalize on proper timing and avoid fundraiser burnout! We will attempt to develop fundraising events that reach beyond our family base and out into the community for greater impact and visibility.

All families are expected to support our fundraising programs for the benefit of our community. This not only includes financial support according to ability, but involvement on committees and planning/execution of the events.

We are not able to be successful without our most valuable resource: YOU!

## **PHILANTHROPY**

What is behind the spirit of philanthropy? People contribute money to worthwhile organizations for reasons that are as much selfish as they are altruistic. Voluntary support gives one a stake in the entity, cause, or organization; a claim to some degree of influence over a place or issue we feel deeply about. It gives us humans a sense of having pride and ownership. Some give because they are part of the larger community and feel strongly connected to it. Perhaps one also gives to fulfill a very personal need to see ourselves as patrons of something we feel is worthwhile. Perhaps, in helping to build something worthwhile, we gain a little place in the book of good deeds.

Some of us make contributions to worthy causes for reasons of conscience. We believe in Dr. Montessori's vision of a global community and her campaign for world peace and human dignity. We are supporting something in which we believe. When you choose to support Old Peachtree Montessori with your dollars, you aren't simply giving your resources away. We know all too well they are not unlimited, and we give careful thought to how the resources are used to accomplish the most good.

Most of us at Old Peachtree Montessori, especially the teachers and staff, are people who hold strong values and deep beliefs. We believe in people, especially the promise inherent within the child. We have a deep respect for what great schools can, and do, contribute to their lives. We want to give our children, and the children who follow them, an extraordinary opportunity that wasn't available to most of us when we were young. We want to contribute back to life.

By lending your support, we hope to improve the quality of life and help develop solutions for some of our most deeply nagging social concerns for children. Every time you contribute to Old Peachtree Montessori with your time, talent, and money, you are making an investment in your children's future and in the larger community in which we live.

## **VOLUNTEERISM**

This school is a community of parents and educators. Many of the educators here are also parents. Parents play a crucial role here. Together, parent ideas and input literally help to shape the school. Few schools are so open and responsive to suggestions and concerns. The most valuable contribution you can make to the school is your gift of time and talent. Parents, grandparents, and friends of the school are found helping in the office, the classroom, on field trips, or on the grounds. The school depends on the combined talents of the whole community.

We strongly encourage families to feel at home to participate in the broader life of the school through social and educational activities offered by the school. Although most parents fulfill their required volunteer commitment, there are many who volunteer considerably more of their time. Volunteerism is an action your child can relate to. Actions speak louder than words. Volunteerism's impact on their development is remarkable.

\*\*At the back of this handbook, there are forms designed to facilitate matching your interest in fundraising and volunteering with the needs of the school/classroom. Please print them, fill them out, and return them to the office. We'd hate to ask you to help garden if you are really a numbers person who'd rather help budget a fundraiser.\*\*

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL:**

As in any relationship, communication is key and we have several ways to facilitate that as we advocate an open-door policy. Any time you need to speak with your child's teacher, or anyone in administration, please feel free to call to set up an appointment. We welcome your comments and observations and are happy to answer any questions.

At the beginning of the year, you will receive a calendar of events. We reserve the right to reschedule or cancel any event on the calendar. You will be notified of any changes. Please be sure the office has your current, correct email address as this is our primary tool of delivering school news and updates. If you aren't receiving emails unrelated to tuition, we likely don't have the correct email for you.

Parent/teacher conferences offer a twice a year opportunity to review the progress of your child. In the case of separated or divorced parents, please make every effort to avoid separate conferences. It is vital to be able to communicate the same information to each parent for the benefit of the child. School is closed on conference days (refer the school calendar). Childcare is available, RSVP through the office. Children do not attend conference meeting. Please understand that if you work, you will likely need to take time out of your day to attend as we cannot schedule all conferences before or after work hours.

If parents are separated or divorced, and reside at different residences, we want to keep both parents informed and up to date. Given permission, we will communicate correspondence to the parent with whom the child does not live. Please notify the office of special arrangements.

In general, it is best to keep car line conversation to a minimum. There are many things going through a teacher's mind, especially the safety of your child. If you have important information to share or a concern, please do so in writing so everyone has a record of it.

At school, we model and expect respect. We follow the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." We respect ourselves, others, and the environment (classroom, materials, nature, etc.). There is no exception. We ask you, as members of this Montessori community, to display a respectful and tolerant attitude as well.

It is not appropriate to impose personal concerns and conflicts on other members of the community. To communicate a concern, it is respectful to address the member with whom you have conflict, privately and directly. This includes other parents, students, and staff. If a conflict or concern cannot be resolved, we ask that you address the situation with the Director of the school, again, with respect and privacy as the situation is being resolved. As parents, and as human beings, it is our responsibility to role model to our children and others. Resolving conflicts in a calm, respectful manner is a very important way to teach your children how to handle themselves as they mature.

#### **BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR CHILD:**

When you ask, 'how was school today?' or 'what did you do at school today?' and the answer you get is 'fine' or 'nothing,' don't be alarmed. First, these questions are too abstract for most children. Second, children, even at the elementary age, but especially the primary or younger children, spend so much of their school day absorbing EVERYTHING that is happening. That's a lot of stuff! And now you're asking for them to process it and recall something to regurgitate to you?! They lack the vocabulary to tell you 'I had a new lesson on the geometric solids.' But take heart! They might tell you in casual conversation 'hey, the paper towel roll looks like a cylinder.' Because children are, in fact, telling you all kinds of things about their day. You just have to know how to listen to it. There is no magic decoder ring, but if you are familiar enough with a Montessori classroom, the keys are all there. The school provides parent education opportunities and we strongly encourage you to attend. You will learn the names of lessons and materials and can then ask a question more like 'did you do any counting today?' or 'who did you sit with for snack?' or 'did you and Ms. Teacher work with the sandpaper letters?' to which your child can provide a more concrete answer.

In addition to the frustration you may experience from the unanswered questions you ask, you may also have noted there's not much paper work coming home. In Montessori, THIS DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING! Your child could be doing complex math, word building, geography, or science with the manipulative materials that have no paperwork to evidence their work. It's all about the process!! Children learn first in the concrete (manipulatives) and move towards the abstract (writing their work). Be patient, you will see evidence in due time. We assure you we are busy educating your child!

You can also teach your child effective communication skills by the way you talk to them. Tell them about your day. Start sequentially. For example: 'Today I went to the art museum with Aunt Lisa. She and I saw some interesting art by an artist named Andy Warhol. He's a painter and one of his paintings was all soup cans! After the exhibit, we had lunch at Ruby Tuesday's. I had a yummy lunch. I ordered a grilled chicken sandwich. On my way home, I noticed the new park was open and the tire swings look pretty fun!' Use your hands and facial expressions to accentuate your conversation and maintain good eye contact. Give space to let them interject as you've probably sparked a memory they want to share! Remember, they are watching and listening to you always! They learn what they see. Model effective and respectful communication and that's what they will learn.

It is important to set aside time daily to communicate with your child without distractions (electronics, TV, siblings, etc.). Devote your attention to them and be an avid, animated listener.

## **PARENT EDUCATION**

We FREQUENTLY get questions about the Montessori philosophy and materials. For good reason! This type of education, although simplistic and logical, is unlike anything most of us have been exposed to before. The very idea that we 'follow the child,' seems preposterous in modern day America. After all, what do the children know about their educational needs? Well, if you read enough about Dr. Montessori's research, you will learn that we are all born with an absorbent mind. So, we ask, what do you want to pour into that mind? And how do you want it to get there? Not only is Montessori a holistic approach to whole child education meeting their academic, physical, and spiritual needs, but the educational methods are simultaneously peaceful and empowering. When Montessori refers to spiritual growth, PLEASE understand this does not mean any type of religious education. But it is moral in nature. We embrace all life with respect. We strive to develop a peaceful character.

You are STRONGLY encouraged to educate yourself so that you can have a better understanding of the Montessori philosophy. To this end, we offer several parent education events aimed at giving insights into the different aspects of Montessori education. The more you know, the more aligned you will be with your Montessori child!

Other ways to acquire information:

Attend conferences

Observe a classroom in action

Communicate questions with your child's teacher

Address concerns (before they become problems)

Research Montessori on the internet

Read Montessori books (The Absorbent Mind, Montessori – A Modern Approach, To Educate the Human Potential, The Formation of Man, Dr. Montessori's own Handbook)

## **FORMS**

- **\*\*Handbook Acknowledgement Form is MANDATORY BY GEORGIA STATE LAW\*\***

Print as many as you need for other households that also care for your child and will be responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures of Old Peachtree Montessori School.

- Volunteer Form

# PARENTS IN ACTION

The strength of our community is a direct result of the enormous contribution that parent volunteers make in time, energy, and talent. Your volunteer efforts also help keep tuition affordable and comparable to other schools in the area.

So that we may call on you appropriately, please fill this out for both parents and return.

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent 1** – please print clearly

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone 2 \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent 2** – please print clearly

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone 2 \_\_\_\_\_

## ROOM PARENT

A room parent volunteers in the classroom to help teachers with special projects, arts/crafts, compiling portfolios, etc. Would you be willing to be a room parent? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, what class? \_\_\_\_\_

## FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE MEMBER

A committee member volunteers to work with OPMS staff and other parent volunteers on committee and/or sub-committee positions for fundraising events.

I am willing to serve on a committee or sub-committee: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

# VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to help in the:           MORNING                   AFTERNOON                   EVENING                   WEEKEND

I prefer to work:           at home \_\_\_\_\_                   on campus \_\_\_\_\_

Please don't ask me to: \_\_\_\_\_

To align your interests/talents with the school/classroom needs, please indicate your preferences by placing 'M' for mother and 'F' for father next to the activity.

<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>VISUAL ARTS</b>
Finance	Material Making
Planning	Calligraphy
Public Relations/Marketing	Drawing/Painting
Personnel	Pottery
Computer Skills	Decorations for Events
Other:	Other:
<b>CLERICAL</b>	<b>PERFORMING ARTS</b>
Answering Telephone	Music
Mailing/Making Copies	Dance
Delivering Flyers	Storytelling
Typing/Word Processing	Set Design/Costume Design
Other:	Producing/Directing
<b>SUBSTITUTE TEACHER</b>	Other:
Pre-Primary 8-3	<b>DOMESTIC ARTS</b>
Primary 8-3	Cooking/Refreshments
Elementary 8-3:15	Food Prep for Special Events
Aftercare 3-6	Sewing/Quilting/Knitting/Crocheting
Breakfast Club 7-8:15	Gardening
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	Classroom Dusting
I Have a Truck	Other:
Can do Moving/Lifting	<b>REPAIRS AND MAINTENACNE</b>
Can Run Errands	Electrical Work
Can Drive for Field Trip/Shopping # of seat belts in my vehicle:	Plumbing Playground Maintenance
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>	Carpentry
Writing/Editing/Flyers	Painting
Newsletter Production/Editing	Roofing
Computer Photo Scanning	Classroom Maintenance
Photography	General Carpentry
Graphic Design Layout	Other:
Advertising/Signs/Etc.	<b>GROUNDS</b>
Web Page Design/Maintenance	Gardening/Yard Work
Other:	Animal Care
	Other:

# MANDATORY

## PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**THIS FORM MUST BE SIGNED AND RETURNED EVERY YEAR**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling 4: \_\_\_\_\_

(For multiple siblings, we will make copies of this page for their separate files)

If your child(ren) spend time in more than one household, or is being cared for by additional adults, it is your responsibility to ensure that these caregivers read, understand, and abide by the guidelines and policies outlined in the handbook.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read, understood, and agree to abide by the guidelines and policies outlined in the Old Peachtree Montessori School Parent Handbook. It is your responsibility to be familiar with the contents on an ongoing basis and to refer to the handbook frequently with questions.

This form is required to be signed every year.

Parent/Guardian 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Other Caregivers \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Other Caregivers \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_