



Gloria Dei
Montessori
School

LEARNING FOR LIFE

School Handbook
2020-2021

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ABOUT GLORIA DEI

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Vision and Mission Statement

Gloria Dei strives to provide the highest-quality authentic Montessori education to children in the Dayton area.

Gloria Dei is a holistic, educational community that fosters successful, respectful learners.

Credentials

Licensing by the State of Ohio

Gloria Dei Montessori School is licensed by the Ohio Department of Education and the Division of Early Childhood Education. Our current licenses are posted in the school office. Every staff member has a permit or credential from the State of Ohio in addition to Montessori training on the part of our lead classroom teachers. Gloria Dei Montessori has received a 3-star rating by the State of Ohio's Step Up to Quality Program.

Upon request to the Ohio Department of Education and the Division of Early Childhood Education you may receive information about our school's preschool licensing records and or state charter for K-8th grade (compliance reports, health, building, and fire inspection forms). The laws and rules governing childcare are available in the office. Anyone wishing to report any concerns, complaints, and/or violations may call (614) 466-0224.

Montessori Credentials

Gloria Dei Montessori School is proud to announce our status as an Associate Member of the American Montessori Society, a member of the North American Montessori Teacher's Association (NAMTA), and The Montessori Foundation & the International Montessori Council.

For further information regarding the Montessori Method, please visit the American Montessori Society (www.amshq.org), North American Montessori Teacher's Association (www.montessori-namta.org) and The Montessori Foundation/The International Montessori Council (www.montessori.org).

The following information has been prepared in accordance with state law and our school policies. It is provided for your information, and we urge you to carefully read each section.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Gloria Dei Montessori School will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted.

Admission of exceptional students will be determined on an individual basis dependent on Gloria Dei's determination that it is able to meet the needs of the student applicant.

History

The Gloria Dei Montessori School is Dayton's oldest Montessori school, serving children through the Montessori Method since 1962 when the school was founded by Donald and Virginia "Ginny" Varga. Laurie Kemp, a certified Montessori teacher, became Head of School in 2013. The school continues to foster independence, a love of learning, intrinsic motivation, and respect for all things.

Beliefs/Goals

"The young child has one intuitive aim - his self-development. He wants to do and see for himself, through his own senses and not through the eyes of an adult. He becomes a full person. He is an educator."

– Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*

Times and cultures change, but children's insatiable love of learning is universal. The Montessori Method is based on the belief that children are born with an intrinsic desire to learn and to improve themselves, and that the responsibility of the adults who care for them is to protect and propel that desire. Our responsibility is to help the child build within himself the foundations for a lifetime of creative learning.

The activities and environments provided at Gloria Dei Montessori School support the children's thirst for learning, engage their abiding curiosity about their surroundings, and develop their ability to learn and live independently.

Our goal for each child is the development of his or her ability to solve problems using an organized approach, to use freedom wisely, to respect himself or herself, to respect others, and to take joy in learning.

Maria Montessori believed that education is a preparation for life, and not simply mastering of intellectual skills. In Montessori schools, children's development is supported through carefully prepared environments that are stimulating to mental, physical and spiritual growth. Our classrooms give the child sensorial and didactic materials that complement the children's inherent nature and that develop a foundation for future learning. Each child is offered practical life, sensorial, language, mathematics, art, music, and cultural studies with individual encouragement in each area. With the children's interest setting the pace for our classrooms,

limitless learning occurs in a child-centered, child-directed and nurturing environment.

Some key beliefs of a Gloria Dei Montessori education are the need for and importance of:

- A dedication to nurturing the child's inherent love of learning and desire for independence.
- A partnership with the parent(s) in a diverse community within which children, families, and staff strive to reach their full potential.
- Fostering human understanding and acceptance.
- Respecting children as different from adults, and as individuals who are different from one another.
- Recognizing that the child possesses unusual sensitivities for absorbing and learning from his environment; they are unlike those of the adult both in quality and capacity. ○ The most important years of growth are the first six years of life when unconscious learning is gradually brought to the conscious level.
- The child's deep love of and need for purposeful work. S/He works, however, not as an adult does, for profit and completion of a job, but for the sake of the activity itself. It is this activity that leads to the child's most important goal: the development of himself –one's mental, physical, and psychological powers.
- Education should be based on a careful observation of the child as s/he demonstrates his needs and interests.
- Through a study of the natural and physical sciences, the child will come to understand the cosmic plan of evolution, that is, that the development of life on earth is purposeful and meaningful.

Faculty and Staff

The faculty and staff at Gloria Dei Montessori School have been chosen with care for his or her education, experience and love for children. Together we comprise an outstanding care-giving and educational community. We share a common vision for children's care and education and seek to provide continuity and predictability throughout our program. Our faculty values collaboration with each other, with administration, and with parents, in order to provide the best care and education for our children.

We value ongoing professional development throughout the year to assist in our teacher's ability to plan and prepare for the children and for school-wide learning. Teachers' In-Service days are scheduled throughout the school year to support faculty professional development.

ENROLLMENT

Gloria Dei Montessori School accepts any child whose family is interested in Montessori education as an approach to life whenever space and classroom ratios permit. We give enrollment priority to siblings of children already enrolled at the School. We accept applications throughout the year, and enroll based on 1) the ratio of girls to boys, 2) the balance of ages in each classroom, 3) the child's position in his or her family, 4) the specific needs of each child, 5) the earliest date of applications received, 6) and the philosophical fit between family and school.

Elementary children and kindergarten children attend full day (5 days).

Children 3 – 5 years of age may attend full day (8:30-3:30) or half day (8:30-12:00) for 3, 4, or 5 days a week; however, we strongly encourage 5 day attendance.

Children 18 mos. – 3 yrs. may attend full day (8:30-3:30) or half day (8:30-12:00) for 3, 4, or 5 days a week; however, we strongly encourage 5 day attendance.

Enrollment for a secured placement in the Extended Day Program (7:15 – 8:30 and 3:30 – 6:00) is a separate Agreement and offered when space is available.

We do not discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of color, race, religion, sex, or national origin.

Application Procedures

Upon receiving a packet of information by mail and/or expressing interest in our program:

1. The parent(s) will visit the school and the classroom for an observation. 2. The child will visit the school, spending the day or part of the day in the appropriate environment.
3. The parent(s) will then return a completed application form.
4. The School will then review the completed application form and, if necessary, contact the parents for additional information about the child.
5. The School will then contact the parent(s) to let them know if there will be a place for their child based upon age and gender and other factors such as the child's ability to achieve success in the particular Montessori classroom environment to which he/she would be assigned.
6. If an opening is available, a start date will be determined (with an appropriate transition phase for toddlers).
7. If an opening is not available, the child can be placed on a waiting list.
8. Prior to the start date, the parent will receive all necessary forms for enrollment. 9. Upon enrollment the required paperwork will be turned in to the School along with a \$75.00 enrollment fee.
10. Follow up information (orientation, further paperwork and information) will be through the child's teacher and the main office.

Required forms for Enrollment

(Your child(ren) may not attend school until these forms are in the office.)

- **School Application**

One-time requirement for all new students.

- **Student Information Form**

This form needs to be updated each year and provides the school with information about emergency contacts & transportation, consent to release (who is authorized to pick up your student), allergy/food restrictions and other contact information. If you need to change any of the information on this form throughout the year, please contact the office.

- **Physician Medical Statement**

This form is required for all new enrollments. It is also required annually for children 6 and under and/or if the child is participating in Before School Care or After School care. For children 5 and younger, these forms are valid for one calendar year. For children 6 and older, these forms must be updated when additional vaccinations are given. For children new to the school a current medical statement must be furnished at the time of enrollment. These can be obtained from a previous school or a doctor.

- **Permission Slip**

Enclosed in the enrollment packet is a permission slip form. Please carefully read each item and provide permission to those items with which you are comfortable. If you have any questions, please contact the office. A new form must be signed for each school year.

- **Enrollment Agreement**

This is a contract between the school and the parent(s)/guardian(s) and details tuition and other requirements.

Exceptional Students

We have one or more staff members who are both Montessori trained and certified intervention specialists. Our Montessori curriculum and philosophy and our concrete, hands-on learning materials enable us to meet the individual needs of each child including exceptional students through a variety of instructional styles and a long-standing respect for learning differences combined with an appreciation and celebration of the strengths of each child.

Small group lessons are an integral part of all Montessori programs. In addition, extra individual attention is afforded to exceptional children by a combination of small class sizes and extremely low student to teacher ratios. In addition, peer tutoring is taught at an early age and encouraged throughout the Gloria Dei program.

IEPs are written in-house by our intervention specialist whenever permitted by local school districts. As a result, IEP objectives are closely tailored to match Gloria Dei's Montessori curriculum. As much as possible, actual experiences are used to meet IEP objectives. The servicing of IEP objectives is tracked by classroom teachers and monitored by an intervention

specialist. IEP progress reports are written three times per year by an intervention specialist and updated for the summer quarter when students attend summer school at Gloria Dei.

WITHDRAWAL/TRANSFER POLICY

Withdrawal/Transfer Policy

If a parent wishes to withdraw a student from Gloria Dei, a request in writing should be made to the Head of School stating the date of withdrawal and, if the student is school age, the name of the school to which the student will be transferring. If the new school does not contact Gloria Dei within 10 school days requesting a transcript, then a referral will be made to the local public school department and Montgomery County Children's Services.

Transcripts & Student Records

Records are released within 30 days of request by parents or new school as long as the account is not in arrears. Student records, including ETRs and IEPs are secured and are released only to intervention team members unless written permission has been obtained from parents.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 20 U.S.C. §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students." Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies, and State local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, “directory” information such as student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Enrollment Fee

A \$75.00 non-refundable enrollment fee per family is due prior to the first day of school each new school year to secure a place in the classroom for your child.

Tuition Payments

- Gloria Dei Montessori School has contracted with SMART Tuition Management Services to handle all tuition payments. Upon completion of a SMART Tuition Management enrollment form, your account will be set up providing several payment options.
- Schedule of Payments:
 - *Annual: 3% discount for full tuition – check made payable to Gloria Dei Montessori School*
 - *Semi- Annual: September 10th and January 10th through SMART Tuition Management Services.*
 - *Monthly Installments (10): August 10th – May 10th through SMART Tuition Management Services.*

Late Fees

A \$60.00 late fee may be assessed for each month’s tuition in arrears.

Refunds/Make-up Days

- **Refunds** will be made if a child withdraws due to moving out of town or because of an extended illness. Refunds will not be made for vacations, short absences, or early withdrawals.
- Gloria Dei Montessori School does not offer a tuition refund or make-up days due to absence.

Before School Care/After School Care

Should you have a need for your child to attend extended care on any day other than what is outlined in your extended day contract, you must first receive permission through the office, as we are required to maintain staff/children ratios, and you will be billed at the hourly rate.

Scholarships/Financial Aid

Gloria Dei accepts EdChoice Scholarships, EdChoice Expansion Scholarships, Jon Petersen Scholarships and we are an Autism provider. We also receive Early Childhood Education Grants, and funds from Preschool Promise. More information about these programs is available on the

Ohio Department of Education website and the Preschool Promise website. Appropriate forms and information are available through the GDMS office.

Preschool Promise New Applicant Instructions

Preschool Promise benefits all families, even those who are not typically eligible for financial help so all four year olds should apply.

To participate:

- You must live in Montgomery County.
- Your child must turn 4 by Sept. 30.
- How to apply:
 - Fill out the application at preschoolpromise.org. Applications will be available mid-March.
 - Have these required documents ready when you begin the application. Your application is not complete until you provide the following:
 - Proof of child's birth date (birth certificate, passport, or visa)
 - Proof of residency (lease agreement, mortgage statement, or utility bill)
 - Proof of income (tax return or three current and consecutive pay stubs).

You will receive a letter from Preschool Promise indicating how much your child has been awarded. Awarded money will automatically be sent to Gloria Dei. Preschool promise also will send you a gift card, a birthday gift for your child, and a free book every month.

First-Time EdChoice Application Instructions for Incoming Kindergarteners You are eligible to apply for an EdChoice Scholarship if:

- your child turns 5 years old by January 1 and
- your child's assigned school is on the list of Eligible Schools (City of Dayton, Trotwood, and others. A complete list can be found on the EdChoice website).

Visit edchoiceohio.org to apply and learn more.

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

Class Size

- Our adult/child ratio for 18 month – 3 year classes is 1 to 7 or less
- Our adult/child ratio for 3 – 6 year classes is 1 to 12 or less
- The maximum group size maintained for toddlers is 10; the maximum group size for children in the 3-6 group is 24. For the 6-12 year classes, the adult/child ratio is 1 to 15 or less. During Extended Day sessions the adult/child ratio is 1 to 12 or less.

Classes are generally composed of twenty-four children and two adults, one Montessori Directress/Director and an assistant. A third adult may be present to help those students who require more one-on-one assistance. Dr. Montessori recommended large groupings of children because she observed that children learn better from one another than they do from adults. She therefore developed didactic materials and a planned environment that freed children to develop individually through spontaneous interaction with their environment and their peers. This method is now backed by brain research and other educational pedagogy.

In contrast, traditional classrooms with teacher-directed education are dependent on small classes and homogenous groupings for maximum efficiency for the teacher.

Parent Orientation

Prior to the start of each school year, GDMS will hold a parent orientation for new parents and for parents whose children are transitioning into a new classroom.

The elementary classes will begin to orient new students in the spring prior to the start of the next school year. New parents or parents of children who are transitioning to a new classroom will also be encouraged to observe in the classroom into which their child will be transitioning.

Incoming new students and parents can meet with the classroom teacher after school hours to facilitate the transition and during an open house in the fall.

Educational/Developmental Screenings

GDMS does provide a screening for speech and language difficulties for all kindergarten and new students. If the speech therapist determines that a child has a speech or language difficulty, the parent(s) will be notified and called for a conference. Speech therapy and language tutoring are offered to those students that have been identified in the kindergarten year, or later, at no cost.

In addition, all preschool children will be assessed annually using ASQ-3 or similar screening material.

Typical Day

Actual schedule may vary.

Toddlers, Primary & Elementary Students

7:30 – 8:30 Before School Care

8:15 – 8:30 Arrival of Students

8:30 – 9:00 Greeting and Morning Circle
9:00 – 11:00 Morning Work Time
1:00 – 11:30 Recess
11:30 – 12:00 Lunch
12:00 Dismissal of Half Day Students
12:30 – Nap Time (children 4 and under)
12:30 – 3:00 Work Time
3:30 Dismissal
3:30 – 6:00 After School Care (3 & 4 yr. olds)
(4:00 Afternoon Snack)

Middle School Students

7:30 – 8:45 Before School Care
8:45 – 9:15 Arrival of Students, Greeting and Morning Circle
9:15 – 11:30/12 Morning Work Time
11:30/12:00 – 12:00/1:00 Lunch/Outside Time
1:00 – 3:45 Afternoon Work Time
3:45 Dismissal
3:45 - 6:00 After School Care (4:30 Afternoon Snack)

Morning Tardy Policy

Dr. Montessori stated that work has a beginning, middle, and an end. Because the morning routine is the most crucial part of the Montessori child's day, it is not an overstatement to say that a child deprived of a proper beginning, by arriving late, is deprived of the most important part of his or her school day. It tends to make him/her feel like an outsider because the morning social period had passed and the work time has already begun without him/her.

For the students who arrive on time into the classroom environment, the social segment of the day is an important period in which they greet the teacher and each other, sharing events and activities from the previous weekend or evening. However, a child who arrives late is thrown into an existing work cycle and, because their social need has not yet been met, interrupts children who are engaged in work. The teacher has already begun giving lessons to the children who have arrived on schedule. Because it would be unfair to expect her to walk away from these children, she is unable to greet the tardy child.

Punctuality, like manners, is a learned behavior that shows respect and courtesy toward others. Children who are always on time will probably develop into adults who are always prompt. Children who are always late will, more than likely, grow to believe that punctuality is inconsequential.

Please understand that we recognize an occasional or unavoidable delay does occur; however, please make every effort to get your child to school by 8:15-8:30 am. Should an unavoidable delay occur, in order to minimize the disruption to the class and to preserve the concentration of the students, please have the student check in at the office before going to their classroom.

If you need to take your child out of class, please notify the office and we will have your child

ready when you come to pick him/her up. If you return during school hours, please accompany your child back to the office and leave him/her with a staff person.

Farewell

- Toddlers

Your child's teacher will contact you to set up a separation period in which you will come to school with your child. At these times, you may read a book, balance your checkbook, bring your laptop ... anything that you feel comfortable doing so that your child will see you at work as well. At the end of an hour, you will leave the school with your child. Over a period of days, established between yourself and your child's teacher, your child will begin remaining at school without you. Your trust in the teachers and the school are important at this time as your child takes his/her cue from your emotional reactions to the separation process.

- Children 3 years and older

It can sometimes be difficult for children (and parents!) to say goodbye, particularly at the beginning of a new school year or term. Your trust in the teachers and the school are important at this time as your child takes his/her cue from your emotional reactions to the separation process. Leaving their parents at the car, even if they are upset, helps to decrease the overall stress for children and allows them a sense of independence and comfort. Please follow our car line procedure.

If your child is not acclimating to the environment your child's teacher will let you know and suggest an alternative similar to the separation process we use in the toddler program. At these times, you may choose, with your child's teachers' collaboration, to accompany your child, bringing some work of your own – reading a book, balancing your checkbook, working on your laptop ... anything that you feel comfortable doing so that your child will see you at work as well.

We welcome your input in providing a comfortable separation for you and your child.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

The purpose of our arrival and dismissal procedures is:

1. To ensure the safety of all children.
2. To move traffic as quickly as possible.
 - From 8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. an adult will be available to help children out of cars in front of the school. Please do not park in the traffic line.
 - Notes, small packages, and the snack basket can be given to the adult on duty if necessary.
 - **Parents of toddlers:** Please park and be aware of the flow of traffic at arrival and dismissal. Please do not park in the traffic line. In the spring, please do not park in the entrance to the rugby grounds.

Adult assisted dismissal is from 3:30 to 3:45 p.m. We want to lead the children to the first three cars in line, so if you are first please pull forward as indicated by the teacher.

Car Line

For safety and efficiency, it is very important that parents and caregivers follow the car line procedures outlined below:

1. Parents should pull their car as far forward as possible before stopping the vehicle and putting the car in park.
2. Parents should remain in their vehicle while our carline staff help children exit or enter the vehicle.
3. If your child needs assistance unbuckling or buckling and you need to help them, please be sure you are pulled as far forward as you can be towards the office before exiting your vehicle.
4. Children should not exit or enter a vehicle until the vehicle is on the actual driveway in front of the school.
5. When possible, only parents of toddlers should park their vehicle to walk with their child to or from school.

Absences

If your child must be absent from school, please inform the office by email or by phone at your earliest convenience.

Clothing

The atmosphere in a Montessori classroom is quiet, happy and productive. Many factors contribute to the maintenance of the atmosphere, including the children's clothing. Children's dress should be logo-free, peaceful and non-distracting.

Children take great pride in being able to dress and undress themselves. At home parents can foster independence by letting their children dress themselves. Help your child choose clothes that are easy to manage without the help of an adult. Help your child to choose something simple. Clothes with elastic waists are best. Many accidents at school can be prevented if the child is dressed appropriately.

Children in the Primary (3-6) program should be able to dress and undress themselves, so please encourage them by practicing this at home. Children in the Toddler program will be assisted as needed while still encouraging the child to be independent.

Send your child to school in clothing that is easy to clean. In Montessori programs, we take advantage of the child's need for concrete experiences, including experiences within which they get very messy. Children spend lots of time outdoors, time playing with water, sand and dirt, and time with art activities that may include paint, markers, dye, glue, or any variety of materials that your child wishes to use. **PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IN HIS OR HER BEST CLOTHES. In fact, please send them in clothes that you don't mind getting dirty or blemished.** At Gloria Dei Montessori School, we will never deny a child a tangible experience because we are afraid his or her clothes may get soiled.

Rainy days, fall, winter, and early spring provide unique clothing challenges. The children need to go outside each and every day to run and play. To this end, on rainy days please make sure your child comes to school with a waterproof jacket or coat, waterproof boots (for rain or snow), and a hood or hat (if the weather is cold). If the children are dressed properly for the inclement weather, they will enjoy their outdoor time tremendously in addition to continuing the critical development of their gross motor skills. The children are always excited to be outside, as you can imagine! And stomping in puddles is best while wearing rain boots.

Because our classroom ratios do not allow for a teacher to stay inside with children who are not properly dressed, please expect that your child will spend time with his or her friends on the playground each and every day.

It is important that each child's clothing is labeled. **Please put the child's name on all coats, sweaters, gloves, scarves, hats, and boots.** Encourage the child to be responsible for his or her own clothing.

Boots are essential for rainy and snowy days. Individual teachers may have a specific policy on boots. Individual teachers also have specific policies on extra clothing for when a child has an accident and needs to change.

There is a "lost and found" trunk located at the school. Parents are advised to check the trunk periodically for missing items. This is located in the multi-purpose room near the office in the main building.

Food in the Classroom

- Lunch

Lunch is an important time of the day, and we pay special attention to how it is conducted. Many state regulations now cover lunchtime and what the children should have, even though the lunches are brought from home. Please take time to read the following and if you have any questions, please call the office.

All children's lunches must consist of adequate nutritional requirements that make up one-third of the Daily Recommended Dietary Allowances from each of the basic food groups. Information describing in detail the provisions of the law covering school lunches will be sent home upon the request of a parent or of the child's teacher.

If the food brought from home does not meet the one-third dietary allowance from the basic food groups we are required by law to provide supplemental food. We maintain a supply of peanut butter, cheese and soup (meat/protein), carrots, apples, oranges, bananas (fruit/vegetables), and crackers (grain). A chart with nutritional information will be posted in the lunchrooms so that the staff will be able to properly supplement lunches.

Please consider omitting sweets, junk food and high sugar drinks.

At lunch, the children are provided with a plate or napkin on which to place their food. The children remove their lunch contents from their wrappers themselves. Because we encourage the children to be as independent as they are developmentally able, please send their food in a container or wrap that is manageable for them. Waxed paper and zip-lock bags and containers are suitable for this purpose. Let the children help you make their lunches and have some say about the contents of their lunch. This is also a good chance to converse on the subject of nutrition.

- Snacks

In the toddler and primary (3-6) classes, families take turns providing food for simple, nutritious morning snacks. Snacks must consist of at least two of the four basic food groups. **Food that is wholesome, low in sugar, and non-processed is appropriate.** Because the children participate in the preparation of the food, the snack items should be whole. Your child's teacher will communicate with you throughout the year regarding what to bring and when it is your turn to provide snack for the class. We strongly recommend that parents avoid bringing sweet, non-nutritious snacks at all times.

Snack requests may include:

Whole vegetables and fruits
Dips
Cheeses
A variety of crackers
Natural Fruit Juice
Water

These suggestions are also appropriate for Elementary students.

Afternoon snacks for the after school children are provided by the school and will consist of two of the four basic food groups. This will be served around 4:30.

Nap Time

A reclining rest period is required by state regulations for children under the age of five. Cots, sheets, and a blanket are provided for the children in the nap room.

Outside Time

Children play outside every day, even if it is raining. Please dress your child appropriately for all possible weather conditions.

The children need to go outside each and every day to run and play. To this end, on rainy days please make sure your child comes to school with a waterproof jacket or coat, waterproof boots (for rain or snow), and a hood or hat (if the weather is cold). If the children are dressed properly for the inclement weather, they will enjoy their outdoor time tremendously in addition to continuing the critical development of their gross motor skills. The children are always excited to be outside, as you can imagine! And stomping in puddles is best while wearing rain boots.

Children are required to go outside for recess each day, weather permitting. If a child is too ill to go outside, that child should not be in school.

Birthdays

We celebrate birthdays with a small ceremony. Parents are asked to write down and send to school a few sentences describing their child at the age of 1, 2, 3, et cetera. Suggestions: what the child learned to do at that age (walk, talk, tie shoes, et cetera) or a fun event that occurred at that age (a trip, a new sibling, a move, et cetera). We will celebrate your child's birthday by telling his or her birthday story. In some classrooms, he or she will walk around the sun (a lit candle) holding a model of the earth.

Over the years it has become a custom, though not a necessity, for a child to bring treats for the class on his or her birthday. Parents who wish to send in a treat are asked to make it something nutritious, such as fruit, nuts, or a "healthy" cake.

If your child is celebrating with a birthday party at home, we ask that any invitations be sent by mail, not in the classroom, thereby eliminating any sadness that may occur if all the children are unable to be invited.

Holidays

Gloria Dei is fortunate to have children of diversified racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds. The rituals and special foods associated with each group's celebration of the holidays provide valuable learning experiences for the children. Parents are welcome to arrange a holiday celebration with their child's Director/Directress. We make an effort to discuss the various religious and cultural celebrations throughout the year.

SCHOOL SAFETY PROCEDURES, REGULATIONS & ROUTINES

Safety Policies

All staff members are responsible for the children's safety. No child will be left alone or unsupervised. At all times staff members have access to a working telephone within the building and a cell phone for outdoor communication.

In the event of a **medical emergency or accident** to a child, these procedures will be followed:

1. First aid will be administered.
2. The child's parent(s) or emergency contact person will be notified.
3. The responsible staff member will complete an incident report. The copies will be signed, with one copy to remain in the child's file and one copy to be given to the parent.

It is also important to keep the school informed of any changes to telephone numbers and emergency contact information. If your child is hurt, sick, or needs your attention, we need to be able to reach you.

Fire Drills & Safety Plans

Monthly drills are conducted and recorded on the drill chart that is maintained in the office file. Annual fire inspections are conducted on all fire safety equipment. A fire emergency and a weather alert plan, which includes evacuation routes, are posted in each classroom. Evacuation and Safety Drills are conducted on a regular basis.

Fire and Health Inspection certificates are available on our website.

Parent Access

Parents have unlimited access to the school but we discourage more than one adult at a time from visiting a classroom so our students are able to focus.

School Closings

Closings will first be sent out via email and then aired on your local television (WDTN only) and radio stations with some delay. Please do not call the school.

Please use your judgment on days when school is open for your own child's attendance.

General Transportation Policy

Parents or guardians are responsible for transporting the children to and from school. If someone other than the parent or guardian of a child is picking him up, a note indicating who will be responsible for picking up the child is required. Children are only released to those parent(s) or guardian(s) designated to pick them up on the Consent to Release Form. If a change is needed, then a written note signed by the parent/guardian indicating an addition or removal of a designated person(s) is required.

Field Trips and Field Trip Safety

Students in first grade and up will participate in weekly field trips and physical education outings. Each child will be seat-belted in a car. For children requiring car seats, please provide the car seat to the child's teacher. This will be used for transportation.

Each driver and child will be given precise directions before leaving the building as to procedures to be followed during the field trip. The children will be instructed as to how to sit in the car with the seat belt in place and remain so until the car has come to a complete stop. The adult in charge will instruct and guide the children to their destination.

Additionally, a person trained in first aid will be available on each field trip or special outing and the teacher will carry the Children's Information forms with them.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Gloria Dei Montessori School believes in meeting children's psychological as well as academic needs. The administration, staff, and parents work together to support the healthy, natural development of children.

When a child becomes disruptive we will stop the child, speak to him/her and give information as to appropriate behavioral expectations. We believe in prevention. If necessary we will temporarily limit a child's freedom by asking him/her to stay close to an adult or provide a table at which to work. In the event a child has difficulty adjusting to our program or the school cannot meet a child's needs, the parent(s) will be contacted and referrals made.

We do not believe in using rewards and punishment or adult threats as healthy techniques for developing disciplined children. We will use constructive, developmentally appropriate child guidance and management technique and shall include such measures as redirection, separation from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation

Based on the state guidelines, the school's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:

1. There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishment such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
2. No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, or derogatory remarks about himself or his family or other verbal abuse.
6. Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.
7. Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate shame or frighten a child.
8. Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest or toilet use.
9. 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 staff in a safe, lighted and well-ventilated space.
10. Staff shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

Discipline Policy for Repeated Difficult Behaviors

While it is a long-standing Montessori tradition to work in a preventative, proactive manner with behavior issues in the classroom, there are times when the best efforts of our well-trained staff to remediate difficult behaviors in the school environment are not enough and further steps seem advisable for the safety and peacefulness of the community *and* the well-being of the misbehaving child. The assumption at Gloria Dei Montessori is that a child who misbehaves

repeatedly is asking for help and therefore the school's goal will be to try to find help for that child. Since parents are recognized as experts on their child, parents will be asked to help as outlined below.

STEP 1. INFORM PARENTS/SHARE STRATEGIES: Staff will inform the Head of School and parents about the offending behavior at school. Staff will inform parents about how they have been working with the child and ask the parents for any insights or suggestions they might have. Parent(s) and staff will be asked to sign off on a written summary of discussions.

FOLLOW-UP: If the issue seems to have been resolved, the parents will be informed of the progress no later than one month after the last parent/staff discussion about the issue.

STEP 2. MEET WITH PARENTS AS NEEDED: In Step 2, parents will be asked to participate actively in a parent/school approach to the problem at school. Frequent contact between school and parents will probably be part of the intervention. Parents will be asked to meet as often as needed to modify or fine tune the school/parent intervention. Parent(s) and staff will be asked to sign off on a written summary of discussions.

FOLLOW-UP: If the issue seems to have been resolved, the parents will be informed of the progress no later than one month after the last parent/staff discussion.

STEP 3. SUSPENSION(S): If the misbehavior continues, parents will be asked to pick their child up anytime the disruptive or physically or verbally negative behavior occurs. In other words, the child will be suspended for the rest of the day (or the next day if an incident happens at the end of the school day). This procedure provides for the safety and peacefulness of the school community and safeguards the teacher's ability to teach all the students in the classroom effectively. Parent(s) and staff will be asked to sign off on a written summary of discussions.

FOLLOW-UP: If the issue seems to have been resolved, the parents will be informed of the progress no later than one month after the last parent/staff discussion or suspension.

STEP 4. CONSIDER TERMINATING THE CHILD'S ENROLLMENT: Gloria Dei Montessori School reserves the right to terminate any child's enrollment at any time. Parent(s) and staff will be asked to sign off on a written summary of discussions.

CHILD ABUSE

The administrator and each employee of our school are required by law to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect directly to the local Children's Protective Service Agency. We are not required to inform parents if a report has been filed with our local Child Protective Service Agency. Employees are requested to report their suspicions of child abuse and/or neglect to the administrator in addition to reporting it directly to the local Child Protective Service Agency.

SICKNESS/MEDICATION POLICIES

Administering Medications

Ohio state laws require and it is the policy of GDMS that a “Request for the Administration of Medication by Child Day Care Personnel” form be completed and returned to be kept on file if we are asked to administer ANY kind of medication, vitamin, or special diet to your child. You must fill out one form per medication.

You will notice that this form has two sections.

If you want us to give your child a prescription medicine, you must:

1. Fill out Section 1 of the form.
2. Have your doctor sign it.
3. All medication is to be labeled, preferably by a prescription label and in the original container. However, a parent may affix a label to the container with the following information: child’s name, current date, name of the medication, exact dosage, specific number of dosage(s), times to be given, and routes of administration.
4. This form shall be on file in the office and shall remain active as long as the child is receiving medication. The parent shall inform the school when the medication is no longer needed and remove any left over medication.
5. The staff member responsible for administering the medication shall verify such by completing the prescribed form.
6. Storage of medication will be the responsibility of the classroom teacher. It is to be kept out of the reach of children and refrigerated if needed.

We will not administer the medicine beyond the expiration date verified by the physician or three months.

If you want us to give your child a medicine that is NOT a prescription, but one that you purchased ‘over the counter’, you must:

1. Fill out section 2 of the form.
2. Sign and date the form.

This form must be kept in our file as long as your child is receiving ANY medication.

You will find a copy of the “Request for Administration of Medication” form in the appendix of the Parent Handbook. Additional forms may be obtained in the office at any time. In cases of extreme emergency we are permitted to administer Syrup of Ipecac to a child without written instructions from a physician when following verbal instructions of the poison control center or a licensed physician. A written report of this administration will be on file.

Communicable Disease Management Policy

All staff members are given in-service training to recognize the common signs of communicable diseases and will greet and observe the children upon arrival for common signs of communicable disease. Ohio Child Day Care Center communicable diseases charts are posted in the teacher's bathroom. This chart is our reference for the management of communicable disease. The staff is instructed in hand washing procedures and in procedures of disinfection.

The following precautions shall be taken for children suspected of having a communicable disease:

1. When a child has been observed with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness, the administrator or teacher shall immediately isolate the child, notify a parent or guardian of the child's condition, and discharge the child to his/her parent or guardian:
 - a. Temperature of one hundred degrees Fahrenheit,
 - b. Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24-hour period)
 - c. severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make whooping sound
 - d. Difficult or rapid breathing
 - e. Yellowish skin or eyes,
 - f. Conjunctivitis,
 - g. Untreated infected skin patches,
 - h. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool,
 - i. Stiff neck.
 - j. sore throat or difficulty swallowing
 - k. vomiting
 - l. evidence of lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation

When a child has been observed with any of the above signs or symptoms of illness, the administrator or teacher will immediately isolate the child, notify the parent or guardian, and make a determination with the parent or guardian whether the child should be discharged immediately or at some time during the day. If the parent or guardian is unable to pick up the child or take charge of an ill child, the child will remain isolated from the rest of the children until dismissed to the parent or guardian.

A mildly ill child, that is, a child who is experiencing minor cold symptoms and may not feel well enough to actively participate in activities but who are not exhibiting any of the symptoms above, may remain with his/her group. If a child's illness worsens, the child will be isolated until dismissal to parent or guardian.

On the readmittance of a child after a communicable disease, the child will be checked to make sure he/she has no signs of a rash, temperature, diarrhea or vomiting in the last 24 hours and does not show any signs of illness.

Isolating a Sick Child:

An isolated child will be made comfortable and provided with a cot in a room or portion of a

room not being used for other types of child care, within sight or hearing of an adult at all times, and observed carefully for worsening condition. The cot shall be cleaned and disinfected with germicidal agent and all bedding will be washed before being used by another child.

Notification of Exposure:

A teacher or the administrator will notify parents when children have been exposed to a communicable disease.

Staff Illness:

If a staff member becomes ill and needs to go home, the administrator or other qualified person will work as a substitute.

COMMUNICATION & PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Gloria Dei Montessori School encourages a good working partnership with parents or guardians that is built on solid two-way communication. Our attempt to facilitate this communication through conferences, newsletters, informal gatherings, and consistent updates through notes, progress reports, and phone calls requires your participation and help. We ask that parents attend at least one community event and parent teacher conference during the school year.

School Visits

By law, any custodial parent, custodian, or guardian of a child enrolled in our school has unlimited access to our school during our hours of operation for the purpose of contacting your child(ren) and for evaluating the care we provide them. Upon entering our school for either purpose you must notify the administrator of your presence. However, we strongly recommend that a parent or guardian call and schedule an observation and follow-up conference.

Behavior of Adults on Campus

We recognize that the children often model their behavior on the actions they have observed in adults, and as such we expect the utmost in grace and courtesy from adults on campus. All community members, all children and all adults, should be treated respectfully and in a way that reflects the peaceful environment of our school. Parents agree to model pleasant, civil, non-disruptive behavior while on campus. This includes on the parking lot and across the street from the school since this is in earshot of the school. Parents understand that inappropriate behaviors (such as shouting, swearing, name calling, threatening, being uncooperative or disruptive) while on campus can result in termination of the child's enrollment at the school.

Communicating with Your Child's Teacher

Changes of pick-up times, absences due to illness, et cetera can all be communicated to the teacher with a short email, or quick call to the office.

If you have specific concerns about your child's welfare, they can be communicated to your child's teacher through notes, email, phone calls after school hours, or a call to the office to make an appointment. Because your child's teacher needs to be with the children from 8:45 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., we ask you to honor this request.

Relevant Information about Home

Should a significant change occur in your home, please inform the school as soon as possible. Common causes of stress include parents being away from home for an extended period of time, a new person living in the home, illness of either parent or sibling, separation or divorce, hospitalization, accident or death in the family, moving, renovating, or death of a pet. In order to continually meet your child's needs, this information is critical for the teacher to know in the event that your child's behavior changes.

Observations

Parents are welcome and encouraged to observe their child's class. Please schedule your visits through the office and be certain to sign in upon your arrival and exit from the classroom. Arrangements should be made in advance with the director or directress. The parent's role while in the classroom should be that of an observer of the children and their activities. The parent is asked not to become involved in what the children are doing (by talking to them, et cetera), but to remain in the background and enjoy watching the children at work.

If you are most interested in seeing your child's experience, you may observe in your child's own classroom. If you are interested in understanding Montessori, you may benefit from observing in another classroom, so that you may watch the children at work without drawing the attention of your own child. Please ask for more information about observations and how they may inform your understanding of our school.

Conferences

Conferences are given twice per school year. Appointments for conferences should be made in advance with the teacher.

Evaluations

Student evaluations are given two or more times during the school year. The teacher discusses the child's progress throughout the school year during conferences and provides two or more written progress reports that are sent home to be signed or discussed at conferences. Test score results, if applicable, are released to parents upon request.

Special Events

We will have several programs throughout the school year that we encourage you to attend. These gatherings promote and nourish the relationships between parents, staff, and the children. Information concerning these events will be communicated to parents through flyers and memos.

Parent Events

Throughout the year we may offer speakers, discussions, magazine/book talks, and informational meetings about the Montessori Method and materials. Research has shown that parent involvement and understanding of the Montessori Method leads to the goal of carrying the goals of a Montessori education into the home. The connection between home and school is so important to the child's development.

Parent Participation

Parents who seek out Gloria Dei Montessori School and enroll their children are obviously concerned with their child's education. We hope this concern is reflected further by their participation and involvement in the daily operation and growth of the school. Each classroom will have different needs (material making, pet care, et cetera) and parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher to determine where one may be of help.

We always need help in these areas:

- Building maintenance
- Grounds maintenance
- Parent chaperones & drivers
- Some office work/organizing

Many more jobs around the school are available for a willing volunteer. If you have an interest, please let us know what your skills are and when you can be here by contacting the office.

COMMUNITY CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

Conflict is an inevitable part of living in a community. The community's health is fundamentally impacted by the way it approaches conflict. Conflict resolution is hard work, but when handled properly it can provide an opportunity for growth and needed change. This policy is intended to outline the process to be implemented in situations where conflict arises between adult members of the community.

1. Direct communication is the first step to conflict resolution and the most important.

- a. When you have a concern with another community member contact them as soon as possible and privately request a face-to-face meeting.
- b. As part of your meeting request give a brief description of your concern.
- c. Be sensitive and respectful of others, refrain from asking for a meeting in front of other community members, children or while the person is otherwise engaged.
- d. Going to another community member with a concern can be a highly sensitive matter. Confidentiality must be maintained. The concern should not be shared with other community members, or discussed in front of children.
- e. During the meeting, remember that the goal is to share your concern and resolve the problem.
- f. - Use the "Healthy Community Communication Practices" found at the end of this policy.

2. If the conflict is not resolved following step 1, then the community members in conflict should take the issue up with the Head of School. If the conflict involves the Head of School, continue on to step 3.

- a. All points in step 1 are still to be followed, with the inclusion of the Head of School at the meeting and in the planning process.
- b. The participants may bring a support person to the meeting. Support persons will not have a voice in the meeting unless all parties attending agree.
- c. Minutes of the meeting should be taken by an uninvolved third person.
- d. Minutes of the meeting should be made available to all participants and approved by them.

3. If the conflict cannot be resolved by a direct face-to-face meeting with the Head of School and all parties involved, or if the conflict involves the Head of School, then the issue should be taken up with the Board of Directors.

- a. All points in steps 1 and 2 are still to be followed with the inclusion of the Board at the meeting, and in the planning process.
- b. All conflicts submitted to the Board, must be done in writing, and include the following:
 - i. State the problem clearly.
 - ii. Provide specific examples of the problem, including dates and names of those involved.

- iii. Outline the actions that have been taken thus far, the outcome of each action, and the reason(s) why resolution hasn't been reached.
- iv. All parties submitting a request for conflict resolution to the Board of Directors, understand that the Board's decisions are final.

Healthy Community Communication Practices

One of the best ways to ensure that the Gloria Dei Community is experienced by its members as a safe and nurturing place to be is to practice positive direct communication.

1. TALK DIRECTLY. Sharing conversations with other community members should always be a safe, positive, and even an edifying experience. A social conversation is never the appropriate forum to discuss unresolved problems within the community. This applies to our own problems, and even more so to the problems of others. It damages the community by making the hearers feel unsafe. ("If they speak like that about others to me, what do they say about me to others?") It's important for the health of the community to remind folks initiating negative conversations that they are obligated to **talk directly to the person with whom they have a problem.**

2. TIME AND SPACE. When sharing a concern with another person plan with them a convenient time to talk, and a quiet space in which you are both comfortable, and where you will be undisturbed for as long as the discussion takes.

3. PREPARE. When requesting a meeting with another community member state clearly the issue/problem that you wish to discuss. Prior to the meeting think about and make notes on the points that you would like to make. Keep an open mind as to the outcome of the meeting, while also being clear about your thoughts and feelings.

4. RESPECT. The tone of any conversation within the community should always be respectful, but even more so when members come together to discuss a problem. Assigning blame, calling names, using profanity or threatening behavior (e.g. pounding the table) are never acceptable behaviors in a conversation to resolve a conflict.

5. STICK TO THE FACTS. Share any and all firsthand information that you have about the situation (never cite hear-say or gossip, e.g.: "Other parents have mentioned to me" or "Ms. So-in-So told me she had the same problem with you."). Use 'I' statements to explain how the situation makes you feel, but don't assign motive or feelings to the other person. (Instead of "You spoke to my child in anger" which is not specific and assigns feelings to the person, use statements like, "I observed you speaking to my child in a loud, harsh tone of voice, and sending her to her seat without giving her a chance to respond. Seeing her treated like that made me angry.")

6. LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN. Relax. Truly listen to what the other person is saying, rather than trying to formulate your response as they speak. Stop and take a moment to digest the other person's words. It may be helpful to repeat the other person's main points back to them to be

sure that you understood them correctly, or to ask questions to help clarify what you heard the other person saying.

7. TALK, TALK, TALK. Share with the other person all of your feelings and concerns that pertain to the situation. Do not hesitate to bring up difficult specifics, or refrain from mentioning things that you judge to be insignificant. Anything held back in a conflict resolution conversation will only resurface to be dealt with another day.

8. NOW WHAT? Once all the information, thoughts and feelings have been presented it's time to work on a resolution. It's important that a joint solution is reached rather than one person insisting the other change. It's important that both people come to this conversation with a willing, and humble spirit that asks, "What can I do to make this situation better?"

9. FOLLOW-UP. Set up regularly scheduled check-ins with one another to assure the agreement is working or to determine if changes are needed. You will also need to discuss what will happen if one person does not follow through with the agreement.

"The strength of the community is the individual. The strength of the individual is the community."

Who Do I Contact with Questions?

If you ever have any questions or concerns about policies or their implementation, or any aspect of your experience at Gloria Dei Montessori School, we ask that you address them with us promptly. Even concerns that are seemingly small can be address quickly and avoid any unnecessary stress for you or your child. We value your input and support to the Gloria Dei Montessori School community, and we welcome your participation in our program.

For answers to your questions and solutions for your concerns, please refer to the following chart for direction:

CHANGES TO THE SCHOOL HANDBOOK

On occasion, school experiences may result in policy changes to this handbook. If our policies are adjusted, we will notify parents in writing of the new policy. We ask that you draw any errors in this handbook to our attention.

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

_____ Name of Parent/Guardian

_____ Name of Parent/Guardian

I agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained in the Gloria Dei Montessori Parent Handbook. I understand that the policies contained in this parent handbook may be added to, deleted, or changed by the school at any time.

I understand that not abiding by the policies and procedures contained in the Parent Handbook could result in my child being asked to leave the school.

The following signature is affixed herein on behalf of the parent(s),

_____.(print both parent name(s)), listed above.

Signature

Printed Name of Parent

Date of Signature