



PARENT HANDBOOK

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OUR SCHOOL

History

The Petoskey Montessori Children's House (PMCH) was founded in November 1973 by a small group of dedicated parents. The first classroom of four children met in a rented space. Since that time, the school has purchased its own property and has expanded its programs to include services for children two months to 12 years of age. Such growth bears witness to the commitment and the generosity of parents and the dedication of staff.

Petoskey Montessori Elementary School

In the spring of 1997, the Public Schools of Petoskey accepted a proposal and signed an agreement with the Petoskey Montessori Children's House Elementary class stating that children from first level (grade) through sixth level are to become part of the Public School System. Thus, the Petoskey Montessori Elementary School (PMES) was created. Extended Day/KD is now included in this agreement. This change, from a tuition-based private school to a state-funded public education alternative, does not change the methodology, philosophy or pedagogy of the Montessori program. The public school contracted with PMCH to provide a pure and viable Montessori elementary program with very few interruptions or deviations from our original program. The facilities, materials, equipment and grounds continue to be owned and maintained by the parent corporation known as the Petoskey Montessori Children's House (a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation).

The PMES scholastic calendar coincides with the Public Schools of Petoskey calendar, with minor changes. This similarity will allow students to utilize the public school buses and give continuity of breaks for siblings. PMES must adhere to the number of state mandated hours of instruction. This is achieved through the number of days and length of each day during the school year. The school day will start at 8:20 a.m. and go until 3:05 p.m.

Mission

The Petoskey Montessori Children's House (PMCH) is a non-profit corporation founded to promote the development of the whole child, facilitate the growth of inner discipline and cultivate the child's own natural joy of learning. We are dedicated to the Montessori philosophy and method of education. This philosophy respects and embraces the natural world and the panorama of cultures, knowledge and arts. It respects both the individual and the community while providing a well-rounded education emphasizing; intellectual, social, cultural, physical, creative and moral development.

Philosophy

The Montessori education method was developed in the early part of the 20th century by Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator. From observations made while working with young children, she developed a method that revolutionized teaching concepts and brought to the classroom a sense of joy and accomplishment. The aim is to enable the child to function in the environment independently; the underlying principle is one of freedom within established limits, which permits the child to gain self-esteem and self-reliance.

Montessori takes advantage of each child's unique sensitivities and offers exercises in language, development, sensorimotor development, reading, mathematics, physical and natural sciences, geography and cultural studies, music, art, drama and body movement. Children develop at their own pace in a trusting atmosphere with the aid of the guides. In this environment, education comes through spontaneous exercise of the child's own faculties. Education, according to Maria Montessori, integrates the application of life skills with academics and is not merely a search for intellectual skills.

Affiliation

PMCH has been affiliated with the [Association Montessori Internationale](#) (AMI) since its inception. AMI is an international organization founded by Dr. Maria Montessori in 1929 to maintain the integrity of her life's work and to ensure that it would be perpetuated after her death. To be accredited, the school must have for each class:

- A set of Montessori materials for the appropriate age group.
- A guide with an AMI diploma for the appropriate age group.

PMCH annually applies for AMI recognition and is evaluated for recertification. In addition, periodic visits by a national consultant provide an important exchange of ideas and ensure the continued quality of Montessori education at PMCH. Regional workshops sponsored by the national branch, AMI-USA and the [North American Montessori Teachers Association](#) (NAMTA), provide educational resources for professionals and parents.

Enrollment

Through observation, Dr. Montessori saw that, at certain times in a child's early years, he/she shows heightened interest or unusual ability in acquiring particular skills or knowledge. Montessori called these "sensitive periods" and noted that they manifest at the same time in the life of all children, regardless of their cultural heritage. If the child's environment is expanded and prepared so as to "feed" these sensitivities at the proper time, the child can develop these areas in a natural and joyful manner, satisfying his/her own inner urges. Otherwise, it requires more conscious effort to master the same concepts or abilities at a later age.

For this reason, we encourage parents to enroll their children in the primary level between 2 ½ to 3 ½ so that they will be able to take maximum advantage of the sensitive periods in an environment designed to recognize and support them. Children may be enrolled at various times during the school year to ensure that they begin the moment they are ready.

Children with a Montessori primary background are given priority for enrollment in the elementary program. Other children are accepted for enrollment according to available spaces.

Admission

PMCH administers its programs and admits students of any race, color, national origin, religion and disability to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school.

Procedure for Admission of Students

- (1) Tour and/or observation by parents with the Administrator. The application and/or other forms are provided at this time.
- (2) The application form and the registration deposit of \$50 are returned to the school office.
- (3) If there is an opening for the child, the parents are notified and the child is placed in a classroom. The guide in that classroom will contact the family to meet with the child and parents in order to answer any questions prior to enrollment. All forms must be completed and returned to the office before the child can begin class (i.e. tuition agreement with the non-refundable deposit, health appraisal, questionnaire and child information card).

Orientation

Prior to the start of each school year, there is a special orientation for parents of children who will be new students. All new students are then scheduled for an individual visit to PMCH before the actual classes begin. The purpose of this visit is to introduce the children to the guide and the environment, thereby helping them to feel more secure on their first day of school.

Following individual visits, the new children attend several days of special orientation sessions. These are usually shorter days, allowing the guide to give much individual attention to these new children. It is usual for new children to experience separation anxiety; the major thrust of these orientation days is to help them adapt to a new situation, to demonstrate basic procedures, and generally make them feel more comfortable.

If a child enters the primary class during the school year, the orientation procedure is very similar to the fall schedule. The child first has an individual visit with the guide. He/she then attends class

for only part of the morning, gradually lengthening the time in the class over several days until, by the end of the week he/she is attending the full morning session.

Children who enter the elementary class from the primary class have opportunities to make a gradual transition. They begin by making periodic visits to the elementary class, gradually lengthening the time they spend there working on specific projects. By the time a child is ready to enter the elementary classroom on a full-time basis, he/she has established bonds with the other class members and has forged a relationship with the elementary class guide.

OUR CLASSROOMS

The Montessori program seeks to parallel the developmental cycle of the child at each stage of growth. The curriculum and classroom time vary according to the development level. There are, however, three components in all Montessori classes, from infant to elementary levels:

- (1) A prepared environment designed to take advantage of the child's own tendencies and to build upon his/her interests, encouraging self-motivation
- (2) A trained guide who observes the child and links them to activities and materials according to his/her needs and interests
- (3) Freedom of choice, which increases as the child's responsibility expands (always balanced by an understanding of personal responsibility within the classroom)

Each classroom has children of mixed ages within the developmental plane. This allows the children to work at their own pace and level, interacting with each other and the adults in a spontaneous and caring atmosphere. From the earliest age, each child experiences him/herself as a respected and contributing member of a group.

Infant Community / Nido (2 months to 3 years old)

Montessori child development is designed to maximize the development of young children. The specially trained adult conducts carefully planned activities which lead the child to build sensory-motor skills, socialization skills, high self-esteem, inner security, and abiding habits of concentration.

PMCH features two child environments: The Nido or "nest" is for infants 2 to (approximately) 14 months old. The children enter the Infant Community between 14 and 18 months old, when they are walking well, until (approximately) 3 years of age. The children are active as community members within multi-age groups, being guided toward the exercise of freedom and independence

The program has been created to give the child a rich, stimulating and inviting environment which allows for the natural development of the child. The carefully chosen materials of the prepared environment will provide the child with control of its mental and physical stimulation. Independence and determination, assets of a strong personality, are developed through work carried out with full concentration. This happens through an activity which completely absorbs each child and fulfills his/her urge to explore the world.

Primary (ages 3 to 6 years old)

The young child learns in a special way, having what Montessori termed an “absorbent mind”. Impressions and information about the world are taken in as a whole, providing the indirect preparation for later analysis and classification.

The primary class is designed to respond to the special characteristics of the young child who explores and learns primarily through the senses. Movement is an integral component of all learning at this age, especially the use of the hand for manipulation. As the child uses the rich environment to meet his/her needs or interests, there are several noticeable results: increased power of concentration, love of work, growing independence balanced by self-discipline, more interest in cooperative work with others, and a general “*joie de vivre*”, which manifests in a fascination with all life and the surrounding world.

All primary students attend five days per week. PMCH offers a unique cycle of learning and growth designed to respond to the “absorbent mind” and the sensorial nature of a young child during the first 6 years of life. Each successive development is made possible by the direct and indirect preparation which has preceded it.

Elementary (ages 6 to 12 years old)

The child between 6 and 12 years old no longer has an absorbent mind; they have a reasoning mind, which seeks the “how and why” of the universe. No longer interested only in what can be explored through the senses, the older child uses imagination as the tool of exploration, seeking the relationship among things seen and unseen.

The Montessori curriculum for the elementary child is termed “cosmic education”- presenting grand overviews to spark the imagination and then encouraging the child to explore the ways in which all the particulars of life and culture are interrelated. The various subjects are presented in an integrated fashion to encourage creative synthesis and allow each child to reach his/her own understanding.

The influence of peers is keen during these years. The child reaches out socially beyond his/her family and close friends to explore the way in which the larger society functions. Changing alliances, questions of justice and fairness, and decisions about group responsibilities characterize this age. The elementary classroom, therefore, presents lessons and projects which

appeal to this social tendency, encouraging cooperative work, group projects and community extensions.

Morning Care and After Care

For the care and convenience of its families, PMCH offers the following latch-key options for the Elementary students:

- Early morning care: starting at 7:30 am, 5 days per week
- After care: from 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm, 5 days per week
- Non-contracted latch-key (hourly fee)

Classroom Placement

Children are accepted into each level for the duration of the full development cycle, beginning at the age 2 months in the Nido, approximately 14 months in the infant community, and age 2 ½ to 3 ½ in the primary and continuing into the kindergarten year.

Children are placed according to available space in the classrooms. We seek to maintain a balance of age and sex in each room. Children are placed into the elementary level at various times during the year, depending upon their readiness (generally between ages 6 ½ to 7). The timing is determined by the primary class guide in consultation with the administrator, elementary class guide and the parents.

Daily Schedule, Drop-Off and Pick-Up

The daily schedule will have slight variations for each program level. Each program has an uninterrupted morning work cycle, lunch, snack, recess and afternoon quiet/nap time, in accordance with Child Day Licensing requirements. The morning work cycle period is two to three hours, depending on the child's age. The work cycle is composed of a few key concepts, child-initiated work, and an opportunity for a prolonged period of work without adult interruptions. Work that is chosen by the child's enthusiasm and desire to learn tends to be more meaningful and fulfilling.

Arrival

Montessori students bid farewell to their parents at the gate and walk to their classes; younger students are assisted by staff.

- IC/Nido and Primary drop-off car line is between 08:00 and 8:30 am.
- Elementary drop-off car line is between 8:00 and 8:15 am.

IC/Nido and Primary students arriving before 8:00 am should be walked to the classroom door by their parents. IC/Nido and Primary students arriving after 8:30 am should be walked to the Administrator office, not the classroom. Elementary students arriving after 8:15 am should be walked to their classroom door.

It is important that children arrive on time to ensure the 3-hour work period in the morning.

Dismissal

At dismissal, children will wait at the gate and will be walked to their car by a member of the staff.

- IC/Nido and Primary pick-up car line is between 3:00 and 3:15 pm. After 3:15 pm, parents should pick up their children in the classroom or in latchkey.
- Elementary pick-up car line is between 3:15 and 3:30 pm. After 3:30 pm, parents should pick up their children in latchkey.

All cars should enter the driveway on the west side and exit on the east side. Do not allow your child to get out of the car and walk up the driveway past waiting vehicles. If you wish to talk with the guide or another parent at arrival or dismissal, please park your car in the staff/visitors lot so as not to block the driveway.

Please be on time. Children are very sensitive about being picked up late. If you are unavoidably detained, please call us right away. When a child is picked up after 5:30 p.m., you are billed an overtime fee of \$10 for the first five minutes, then \$1 per minute thereafter until pickup.

Children are permitted to leave school only with parents, except when another person has been designated, in writing, on the child information card.

If for any reason you are unable to pick up your child at the end of the day, please notify the office of the name and driver's license number of the person authorized to pick up your child.

Children will not be released to anyone other than the parent without authorization. Please follow this procedure even if the person you are authorizing to pick up your child has been named on your emergency card. In this case the office only needs the person's name.

If your child will be going home to visit with another child on a given day, please send a written note to the guide clearly stating the plan for the day.

If your child is in a carpool, be sure the drivers are listed on your child's emergency care, and give us a note describing your arrangements, to keep in your child's file.

Remember that all children under the age of 4 belong in a car seat in the back seat; booster seats are required until the age of 8 or a child reaches 57 inches in height. A child will not be released to a vehicle not properly equipped.

If your child will regularly walk home or ride the bus, please inform the child's guide, in writing, at the beginning of the year. Also, please send written notes concerning any changes in dismissal plans.

Snacks, Lunch, and Food Allergies/Special Diets

Snacks

A snack is available for the children in the Infant Community and Nido classes, as well as the Primary classes. Having a snack is a popular activity which offers the children many opportunities to practice skills and grow in independence. The children set the table, arrange or prepare servings, clean the dishes and table, and finally sweep the floor. It is quite a complex series of activities; the process itself is as enticing to the children as the food.

The following are some of the guidelines that the staff uses to plan snacks for the students:

- Parents provide snacks on a rotating basis. We suggest items that have not been over-prepared, as the children enjoy slicing cheese, peeling fruits, chopping vegetables, sprinkling raisins, etc. Ethnic specialties are always welcome.
- We try not to serve items which contain sugar or artificial coloring as some children are highly sensitive to such ingredients. This includes granola bars or fruit roll-ups, which have high sugar content. Here are some examples of suggested snack items:

Raw vegetables with a dip
Celery and peanut butter
Cheese with whole grain crackers
Whole grain muffins
Rice cakes
Whole grain breads w/butter, fruit spread, peanut butter
Cherry tomatoes or mushrooms to stuff w/cottage cheese
Fresh fruits
Celery and cream cheese
Hard boiled eggs
Sesame sticks with hummus or tahini
String cheese
Yogurt with fruit or toppings

Lunch

Lunch time is an enjoyable social and educational experience as well as a time to refuel the body. The children help to set the tables, arrange their own food and clean up after the meal. During lunch they enjoy conversation with their friends and practice courteous table manners.

Good nutrition directly affects a child's health, concentration and behavior. In their classes, the children discuss the components of a balanced meal and learn how to construct a meal having at least one item from each of the four major food groups.

Friday, the Primary and Elementary classes have pizza. All other days, students need to bring lunch from home. All lunches for IC/Nido will be brought from home.

Food Allergies/Special Diets

If your child is allergic to specific foods, please talk with his/her guide. If special foods need to be substituted for the regular snacks, the guide will be glad to work out a procedure which will still allow the child some independence in preparing his/her own snack. The need for special diets, such as lactose free, meat/poultry free, etc. are respected at PMCH. Please discuss the specifics with your child's guide.

The food program for the Nido class students differs dramatically due to age/developmentally appropriate foods for each child. We rely on input from parents for specific needs and concerns. A written policy on the Nido class food program can be obtained from the Nido class guide.

Naps

The younger IC/Nido and Primary students who stay for the afternoon have a rest period each day after lunch; this nap time is in accordance with the Child Day Care Licensing Bureau requirements.

Each napping child should have his/her own blanket or quilt. Some also like to have a small pillow, which remains at the school for nap time. These items will be stored in a plastic, zippered pillowcase and will be sent home periodically to be laundered.

Toileting

In the Infant Community, we follow a process that we find is most beneficial to the child; we use training pants or pull-ups rather than diapers. Because the pants are less bulky, we find that the children have more freedom of movement and as they begin to stand and walk, they are able to stand straighter, with better balance and grace.

Formal toileting is initiated by the child, but we find that it happens rather easily, because in training pants the child is more aware of urinating or having a bowel movement. The theory behind our approach is that it is the normal human condition to be clean and dry. Therefore, it is very important that we help the child change into clean, dry pants promptly (though we are

careful never to say “dirty” or “yucky” about a perfectly natural act). Training pants also give children the possibility of helping to dress themselves at an early age, adding to their self-confidence and independence. In both the Nido and the Infant Community, a diaper or training pant and a T-shirt are sufficient in warm weather, making it as easy as possible for children to succeed in personal care.

Please understand that this is an approach that we use successfully to help the child acquire useful information and skills that will make toileting come easily and naturally when the child is ready. This is not early or pressured toilet training.

Parents provide training pants or pull-ups for all children not yet toilet trained. Guides will notify parents when their child’s supply is running low. If possible, contributions of baby wipes are always appreciated.

Children will be allowed to enter the Primary class after toilet learning is complete and entirely in use.

Clothing and Personal Items

There is no formal dress code at PMCH. Children should wear comfortable clothing which permits them to be active indoors and outdoors. In the course of a day, clothing may become dirty, paint splattered, or wet. Do not send children in clothing which would prevent them from entering freely into activities for fear of getting their clothes dirty.

The Montessori philosophy encourages independent self-care. For this reason, children should come to school wearing simple, comfortable clothing and shoes that are easy to put on and take off by themselves. For example, elasticized pants, Velcro or large buttons, boots which pull on easily, and hats without ties. For indoor wear, a pair of easy to slip on shoes, hard sole slippers, or rubber water clogs will be required. These shoes will be kept at school and used only indoors.

For toddler and primary students, we request that you keep seasonally appropriate changes of clothing at the school for your child. Please bring a new set in the late fall and in the spring as weather changes. All clothing, shoes, lunch supplies and nap supplies should be clearly marked with your child’s name. Wet or soiled clothing will be sent home, and a fresh supply should be sent back with the child the following day. Each child is provided with his/her own bin at school in which to store the slippers and change of clothes.

Outdoor activity is a part of the daily routine. Children need to arrive at school dressed for the weather. Appropriate outdoor clothing, including snow pants or snowsuits, hats, mittens, and closed toed shoes that are safe for running and climbing are recommended. Children learning to walk, or to perfect the way they move and walk, can succeed best in simple, flexible, non-skid shoes.

Objects Brought to and From School

Children should carry a tote bag or backpack which they bring and take home each day. Inside the bag should be extra clothes as necessary, and any notes or other papers for the staff. Wet clothes, children's artwork, newsletters and notices will be put in these bags to go home with the children.

Parents should provide children with sunscreen and insect repellent to be applied as needed. Please label with your child's first and last name.

Children enjoy bringing items which relate to the work of the class and we encourage such occasional contributions. Natural objects, artifacts, handcrafts related to a certain country – even the occasional animal visitor – all contribute to the children's experience. Children often bring a book to place on the library shelf for a few days. Please limit these to quality books dealing with the real world or classic fiction (no comic books or books featuring TV characters). Make certain that your child's name is written inside the book.

Please do not send any toys, gum, candy, blankets or stuffed animals; it is best to leave these at home. Children who stay for the afternoon may bring a blanket or cuddly toy in their tote bag for use at nap time if they desire.

Written Work

The children's daily written work is kept at school. Periodically, the children bring their collection of work home; we hope that you will take time to review the work with your child.

During the early years of the child's development, there is little written evidence of the work the children are accomplishing. Even artwork may consist of page after page of repetitious circles as the child repeats to perfect a skill. We want to do all we can to encourage the child to choose work from his/her own inner motivation – and to lengthen the periods of concentration. The process and activity itself are of greatest importance – not the product. The young child works to satisfy his/her own needs and to perfect the self; the motivation and choice of work should not be to please the adult.

As a child grows older and enters the extended session, the volume of written work increases. Beginning in the extended session and continuing through the Elementary program, each child keeps all of his/her work in individual files. Before work is sent home, the guide reviews the work with the child, using that occasion to assess with the child his/her accomplishments and to structure follow-up review when necessary. The ultimate purpose of this individual tutorial is to help the child become increasingly responsible for his/her own education, formulating personal disciplines.

School's Lost or Damaged Materials

Each pupil or their parent or guardian shall be responsible to the guide for all books or materials damaged or not returned by the pupil. The cost of the materials will be added to the tuition due the school.

Birthday Celebrations

The birth of each new being is indeed something to celebrate! Children eagerly anticipate their own birthday and receive affirmation of their uniqueness and special worth through celebrating the event with others.

Each guide incorporates birthday celebrations within the life of the class. Talk with your child's guide ahead of time to plan which day your child will celebrate the birthday at school. You will also learn of any special rituals or materials used to celebrate birthdays in your child's class.

Many children like to bring a special birthday treat to share with their friends. You will want to check with the guide so as to accommodate any special food allergies of children in that class. There are many creative ways to make foods appear "special" – beautiful garnishes, fancy serving trays, colorful napkins or plates, etc.

On your child's birthday he/she is often showered with gifts. This attention can turn many children inward. One way for your child to turn outward to express love and thankfulness on this special day is to offer a gift for the class. Something as simple as a lovely flower can be joyously presented as a gift of self. Small items given over the years (books, vases, wooden boxes, trays, pitchers) provide each room with reminders of many different children who contribute to its life.

Holidays and Other Celebrations

An important attribute of the human spirit is the sharing of joyful moments or commemoration of significant events. In our hurried modern world, we frequently substitute the trappings for the real experience of shared ritual and communal celebration.

In the PMCH, holidays and other events are celebrated as an outgrowth of the children's own culture or within the context of cross-cultural study. As a non-sectarian school, the PMCH does not promote any particular religion or denomination. Rather, holidays and traditions are explored in a non-judgmental manner as manifestations of specific cultures or historical experience.

In the Elementary class, the emphasis is placed upon the meaning of a celebration and the children are then encouraged to create their own expressions and rituals. A simple celebration planned and executed by the children is more meaningful than a party planned only by adults for the children's entertainment. We encourage you to discuss any questions or ideas regarding holidays and special events with your child's guide.

Field Trips and Excursions

From time to time a class may decide to venture out on a field trip (requiring parent volunteer drivers) or an excursion (walking to a place close by). You will receive detailed advance information (date, time span, drivers, destination), and an itinerary will be left in the school office. Field trips require an authorization signature from you. If your child requires a car seat, remember to leave it behind on that day; we will make sure children are properly belted when cars are running.

If you volunteer to drive, we will need to see your driver's license, registration and proof of insurance. You may also volunteer to help shepherd children under the guide's guidance. We travel in caravan for mutual protection and stick together throughout a trip. Extended Day/Kd will follow the Public School of Petoskey field trip guidelines.

If a child arrives late for a field trip departure, you may choose to drive to the destination yourself, to check with the office to see if the child may visit another class, or return home. Be on time!

OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PMCH is a tobacco free environment.

A licensing notebook is kept in the office.

Health Policy

Health Forms

The State of Michigan requires a health form for all children enrolled in PMCH. This form includes a record of immunizations. Parents need to update this form yearly for IC/Nido students, every two years for Primary students, or when a new health condition occurs. Immunizations are required unless there is a medical waiver signed by a doctor or immunizations have started with a plan in place signed by the doctor.

Illness

The Petoskey Montessori Children's House must report absences due to illness to the local Department of Public Health. When a child is unable to attend school due to an illness, or for any other reason, please contact the school administrator by 8:30 am.

In case of communicable disease other than a cold or flu, please notify the school promptly so that a notice can be posted to alert all parents.

Do not send your child to school on days when any of the following symptoms are present:

- Child has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or above;
- Child has three or more cases of diarrhea in one day;
- Child is vomiting;
- Child has signs of infection or contagious disease (i.e. yellow mucus with cold symptoms, chicken pox/measles blisters, etc.);
- Injury or incident is more serious than staff is trained to handle (i.e. bloody nose over 15 minutes in length, loss of consciousness, seriously injured extremities).

Should your child become ill or exhibit any of the symptoms listed above, you will be called to pick-up your child. A child will be asked to leave for health or medical reasons that present risks to the child or other children in the program.

When your child returns, we strongly recommend full participation in the day – including playing outdoors. Fresh air is wonderful!

Documentation Requirements

From Parents

- Doctor's note stating non-contagious status, if symptoms appear suspicious
- Signed and dated note from parents to PMCH, with specific instructions for administering doctor requested medication, if needed, during child care hours
- Verbal or written message to PMCH staff verifying child has been fever or vomit free for no less than 24 hours, without any type of analgesic or medicine
- Any contagious disease or sickness must be reported to PMCH as soon as possible per Public Health Department policy

From PMCH Staff

- Any medication given will have time recorded and initials of the person administering the medication as well as a witness on class medication chart (child's individual chart in IC/Nido as well). All medication must be in original packaging and labeled with the child's first and last name.
- Potty Charts for IC/Nido classes will be posted, recorded and checked often. Proper hygiene adhered to at all times to prevent further transmittal of sickness
- Incident Reports will be used for any mishap or injury incurred during school hours, a copy will be sent home with your child

The Public Health Department and Licensing Office will be notified when any of the following illnesses occur and have been diagnosed by a licensed physician:

- Bacterial Meningitis

- Chicken Pox
- Diarrhea Diseases
- Diphtheria
- Hepatitis A
- Measles
- Mumps
- Pertussis
- Pneumonia
- Rubella

Medication Administration Policy

The Montessori Children's House will only be responsible for administering medication to a child after receiving written instructions from a physician. Medication may be given by a staff member in accordance with instructions and in the presence of another adult. All medication must be in original packaging and labeled with the child's first and last name.

Do not send any medicine to school with your child or in your child's backpack. This includes non-prescription items such as vitamins, cough medicine and aspirin. If you have any questions regarding medication, please talk with your child's guide.

First Aid/Accident Policy

In case of minor accidents on the school grounds, staff members are trained and equipped to respond with first aid, if needed. In the case of something more serious, paramedics are called and parents are immediately notified. A staff member will accompany your child. Your child's medical statement and emergency card go along as well. Time may be saved by meeting parents at the hospital. Please check with your insurance company to be sure your coverage includes 911 emergency procedures.

Emergency Policy

We have special, practiced procedures for events such as tornado warnings and fire, posted in each classroom.

School Closing Policy

The Petoskey Montessori Children's House classes will be closed for snow days whenever the Petoskey Public Schools are closed. Teachers will not be in attendance on snow days. Such closings will be announced before 7:30 a.m. on local TV and radio stations. Child care will be in session between 8:30 and 5:30 for those children signed up for care, unless we call concerning closing. In case of an emergency closing, parents will be notified at the earliest possible time.

Financial Policies

Tuition

PMCH is a non-profit school, operated completely upon tuition and donations. The school contracts, in advance, with its faculty and incurs expenses for the year based upon enrollment. PMCH enrolls students for the full academic year and parents are responsible for the tuition. Parents sign a tuition contract each year that outlines the terms of payment. We offer a sibling discount for families that have more than one tuition-based student at the school. Delinquent accounts will be handled at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

The tuition is determined by the Board of Trustees in the spring for the following school year. Tuition for any student enrolled during the course of the school year is pro-rated for the remaining academic year.

Children are enrolled for an annual session. This agreement is in effect from the date of enrollment. Tuition is due on or before the first of the month and will be considered late after the 10th of the month. An administrative late fee of \$25 will be assessed for tuition received after the 10th of the month in which classroom services are provided, including latchkey services. Children will be suspended from tuition or fee-based programs if their account is over 40 days late. A finance charge of 1½ percent per month may be charged on all balances more than 30 days past due. A returned check fee of \$35 will be assessed.

Tuition is calculated for the school year and split into equal monthly payments. There are no tuition reductions for holidays, absences due to illness, vacations, or weather-related closures.

If paying by credit card there will be a processing fee equal to charges incurred to PMCH from the credit card company.

Donations

Many parents and grandparents choose to support the school's program through additional donations. Over the years generous donations have helped build a fence, establish a fund for professional education, purchase a copier and set of encyclopedias, along with other projects that add to the total quality of the school's program and operation. PMCH also participates in the Annual Giving Drive each December, which helps to offset the cost of operations throughout the year.

All donations to PMCH are tax deductible. We encourage you to consider making a special contribution to our program and to recommend the school to relatives and friends who give donations to chosen organizations.

Other ways to contribute to PMCH are:

- Box tops for Education: Box Tops for Education are easy to cut out and send to school, and PMCH receives cash or products from the points earned.
- McLean & Eakin Booksellers: Mclean & Eakin will donate 10% of your purchase to PMCH for the guides to purchase classroom books.
- AmazonSmile: Sign up for [AmazonSmile](#) and designate Petoskey Montessori Children's House as your charity of choice, Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchases to the school, at no extra cost to you.
- Oleson's Receipts: If you shop at Oleson's, please turn in your receipts to the school office, the school receives a percentage back.
- PGI School Gear: you can support the school by purchasing PMCH gear at: https://www.storessimple.com/pgispiritshop/groupproducts.php?prodgroup_id=14625&prodgroupbypass=true

Behavior Management Policy

A major goal of the Montessori experience is to provide an atmosphere which encourages the development of self-discipline. From their earliest days in the class, children are encouraged to make choices based upon their knowledge of the activities available. They are also given clear guidelines for acceptable behavior which are positively and consistently reinforced.

As a Montessori guide, her/his interventions are expected to be formulated based on 1) respect for the child, 2) knowledge and understanding of the developmental needs and characteristics of the child, as well as the needs of the group and 3) the understanding that appropriate behavior must be carefully taught and modeled. The goal of each intervention is to assist the children to develop self-control and self-discipline. The manner in which each intervention is made is expected to reflect a patient attitude and to consist only of verbal, and when appropriate with a younger child, gentle physical assistance. This translates into several basic rules:

- Each person takes responsibility for care of the environment and may not damage or misuse it
- A child may not disturb the work of another child
- No child or adult may strike or verbally abuse another person
- Restraint will not be used with the children unless to keep them from harm to themselves or to others around them

All other procedures and guidelines relate to these basic ground rules and are clearly demonstrated and discussed with the children. As a child's responsibility increases, so do his/her opportunities for choice. Therefore, a child's freedom of activity in the class continues to expand, tempered by the willingness to be responsible for his/her own actions.

To internalize control and grow in self-discipline, a child must experience the natural or logical consequences of his/her behavior within the practical limitations of a given situation. A natural consequence follows immediately upon a chosen action. For example, a child who runs across the room with a full bucket of water finds him/herself in a puddle of water with wet clothing. The logical consequence of that scenario is for the child to mop the floor and change his/her clothing.

A logical consequence is frequently applied by an adult, following the behavior as immediately as possible and as a direct and expected result of the child’s action rather than an arbitrary “punishment”. For example, if a child is hitting others nearby, a logical consequence would be to immediately intervene and have the child stay with the teacher or work in an area isolated from the others. The message is clear – “Since you are choosing to hurt the other children, you do not have the freedom to be with them right now.” An illogical consequence in the form of an arbitrary punishment would be to tell the child that because he/she is hitting, he/she cannot have a snack that afternoon.

When children are allowed to directly experience the consequences of their choices and are encouraged to continue choosing, they grow in their willingness to take responsibility for themselves. The resulting individual is secure, creative and “disciplined.”

If either parent or guide has concerns about a child’s behavior, it is important that they work together to outline an approach which will be consistent for the child. Agreement and cooperation among the important adults in a child’s life encourage the child to more confidently choose what is appropriate and positive.

Communication Channels

In order to promote and enhance effective communication, it is important to speak to the right person. Second hand information is never as reliable as first hand, so we encourage you to direct your various concerns or questions according to the following channels:

Matter Related To	First Contact	If Not Satisfactory	Final Authority
Guide Classroom Aide Child's Progress Classroom Activity Classroom Procedures	Guide	Joint Conference with Guide and Administrator	Administrator
Business Matters	Administrator	Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees

Billing/Accounts Facilities School Finances		Treasurer	Finance Committee
Curriculum Policy Academic Policy	Guide	Guide or Administrator	Administrator
Public Relations Fundraising Parent Functions	Board Member	Social Committee Fundraising Committee	Board of Trustees

Concerns

If there has been some significant change in your child's home life, please let your child's guide know right away. Oftentimes we can help with a little added attention, understanding, and loving care. Open communication between parents and guides is truly vital, and we will respect your confidentiality.

If you have a question, concern or suggestion about your child's relationship to the classroom, the guide or other children, please talk to the guide directly and promptly. Questions relating to the Montessori community in general may be directed to the school administrator.

Written Communication

The Newsletter is sent home electronically bi-monthly to bring parents information about their children's classes, board decisions, school functions, and Montessori principles. Please make it a daily habit to check with your child about written communications from the school. Notices and reminders are posted at the entry gate and classroom entrance. The school calendar and other important information can be found on the school website www.petoskeymontessori.org.

We are frequently asked to distribute or post information from various community groups. We are glad to cooperate with these groups; however, this does not indicate that PMCH endorses or recommends such events, information or services. Any announcement or service specifically endorsed by the Children's House will be accompanied by a communication using the school's letterhead or the signature of a staff member.

Withdrawal from School

If a parent chooses to withdraw their child before the end of the school year, tuition will be prorated to the date of withdrawal, with the exception of the non-refundable tuition deposit.

The Montessori Children's House reserves the right to dismiss any child for (1) failure to pay fees when due; (2) conduct of the child/children or parent/parents which disturb the peace and order

of the school or staff; (3) health or medical reasons that present a risk to the child or others in the school in accordance with state and federal law; (4) a determination by the Montessori Children's House that the child is not benefiting from the program.

Support for Families and Staff

PMCH is dedicated to supporting the families of its children and staff. The following policies relate to this support:

- Using staff members as personal babysitters is allowed only during hours PMCH is closed.
- School will be closed two to three days near Labor Day weekend each year. Staff use this time to refurbish their environment, plan for the implementation of annual goals, attend the staff retreat to coordinate efforts and positive attitudes, and to complete annual staff training requirements, such as First Aid, CPR, etc.

Reporting to Children's Protective Services

Any person who works with a child, in a home, in the doctors' office, in a daycare, in a school etc. is required by law to report any signs or suspicion that a child is in danger or has been hurt (abuse & neglect). Employees who work with children can go to jail for not reporting their suspicions.

A report is not an accusation; it is a request for an investigation. If Children's Protective Service is called, cooperate. Their priority is to keep children safe and the family together in a healthy environment for all. If parents/caregivers are under stress or need help, they can provide services.

OUR PARENTS

The opportunities for your child's growth are maximized when the school and the home share common goals and attitudes. This is accomplished through active parent involvement and open, frequent communication.

Parent Meetings

The staff of PMCH offers two or three special meetings a year for parents. These meetings focus upon an aspect of child development, Montessori philosophy or curriculum. This is an important way for parents to broaden their understanding of their child's Montessori experience.

Observations and Conferences

Two periods for parent observations and conferences are scheduled each year, in late fall and spring. Parents have an opportunity to observe their child's class, followed by a conference appointment with the guide. The guide discusses each child's progress, makes available records or other information as applicable, offers recommendations, and solicits parents' insights and ideas.

Parents are welcome to visit their child's class at other times during the year. We do ask that they respect the tone and the work of the class and refrain from interacting with the children in any way that may interrupt classroom activities. Parents may observe the IC/Nido classroom through a one-way mirror, so that they do not interrupt the class or distract younger children. Parents observing the extended session or the Elementary class are given a special seat in the classroom.

It is best to talk with the guide on the occasion of the first visit to learn his/her specific guidelines for visitors. Any parent or visitor who does not have a scheduled observation appointment must check in at the office before proceeding to the classroom.

Often parents have questions or concerns about their child during the year. Each guide wants to be available to confer whenever the need arises. You can plan for a conference through a note to the guide or a phone call. We ask you to respect the teacher's personal time by scheduling appointments, and keeping calls and/or text messages brief and within school hours. Likewise, it is important to show respect for the child by not discussing concerns in his/her presence such as during arrival and departure times. Above all, do not think that your question or idea is unimportant or not worth bothering the guide. Quick and clear communication creates the most positive situation for your child- and that is important!

Volunteer Opportunities

An interested parent becomes an active parent and PMCH relies on parents to sustain and support its program and development. Active participation also creates a sense of Montessori community which enriches each family's experience.

Early in the year you will be given a list of various ways to become involved with the school; the options are varied and elicit a wide array of skills and talents. Families are asked to work a minimum of 20 hours per school year. Work can be accomplished in a myriad of ways:

- Room Parents: help guides to set up car pools; help out with field trips; provide refreshments for special events; coordinate help for guides.
- Equipment and Supplies: Work with staff on purchasing, making and maintaining equipment; find resources for throw-away materials we can use (flowers, lumber scraps, fabrics, etc.); organize work groups for construction, refinishing, sewing or gardening projects.

- **Publicity:** Help us maintain an up-to-date press list. Make the community aware of our school through newsletters, church bulletins, etc. Help put up posters for special events; maintain a school scrapbook; take pictures; host open houses.
- **Community Spirit:** Plan gatherings for families so we can get to know one another better; host parents' meetings or provide refreshments; greet new families and show them the rope; pair new families with old; help with any emergency that arises.
- **Library:** Pick up and return library books chosen by teachers; handle book club orders; inventory and repair classroom books; maintain and promote parent library.
- **Fundraising Committee Chair or Member:** Help plan and execute our annual fundraising activities.
- **Maintenance and Repair of Facilities:** Be on call for emergency repairs. Plan and coordinate repair/work days when needed. Help with yard work and/or landscaping.
- **Board of Trustees and/or Committee Members**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PMCH is a non-profit educational corporation guided by a Board of Trustees who serve without compensation. Nominations for membership on the board are solicited from parents of students at the school, alumni and citizens in the community. The board is responsible for the business and financial affairs of the school, its maintenance, and its continued operation. The board also seeks to promote and expand the understanding of the PMCH program among parents of the larger community.

Board of Trustees 2022 - 2023

Name	Position	Contact Information
Nicky Byron	President	M: (231) 622-1569 E: nicolegreen1@gmail.com
Zorymar Monshor	Vice President	M: (907) 360-1270 E: zmonshor@gmail.com
Amber Neils	Secretary	M: (585) 943-7283 E: amberneils@gmail.com

Jessi Kuhlman	Treasurer	M: (906) 458-4150 E: jrsagner@mtu.edu
Sarah Campbell	Trustee	M: (248) 505-9044 E: sarahdcampbell@gmail.com
Rebecca Roth	Trustee	M: (586) 321-5110 E: rebeccacroth@gmail.com
Natalie Walts	Trustee (March 2022)	M: (734) 564-3537 E: n2shettl@gmail.com

PMCH FACULTY AND STAFF

Administration

The administrator is responsible for the total program of the school, overseeing curriculum implementation and establishing procedures and guidelines. The administrator’s primary goal is to keep the needs of the child the focus of the PMCH program.

The administrator seeks to coordinate the energies of staff, parents and board members to best aid the development of each child. The administrator is responsible for the selection and supervision of all staff and contracted employees, parent education programs, preparation of an annual budget with long-range program goals for the board, and facilities management.

Teaching Faculty

Our teachers are called “guides”, an indication of their role in relation to the child. They seek to guide the energies and tendencies of the child, serving as facilitators rather than disseminators of information. All of the Montessori guides possess either AMI or AMS certification and are active in continuing education.

Each guide is responsible for the arrangement and conduct of their class in accordance with the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, the guidelines of AMI and the general policies of the administration. They establish their long-term goals and daily plans for each child and the class as a whole based upon continued observation of the children. They also train and supervise any aides or assistants in the classroom.

Communication with parents is an essential aspect of the guides’ work. They are available for questions and comments about Montessori philosophy, the class or your child. They also conduct several scheduled observations and conferences for parents each year.

Support staff

Classroom aides assist individual teachers and are responsible for various activities as directed by the guide. The assistants do not do specific “teaching”, yet their interactions with the child, whether it be at the door, over the lunch table, or in the yard, reflect the Montessori principles of respect for each child and the nurturing of independence and self-confidence.

Comprehensive Background Check

Any PMCH employee or unsupervised volunteer must pass a comprehensive background check before being in a classroom with children.



I, _____, acknowledge that I have received the Parent Handbook from Petoskey Montessori Children's House and Elementary school. I agree to adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in the Parent Handbook.

Parent signature

Date