

Kennebec Montessori School Parent Handbook 2011-12

Kennebec Montessori School
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MISSION STATEMENT

*To provide young children with an educational program rooted in the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, in which **respect for self, others, and the environment** are fundamental. The program is designed to **heighten intellectual and social development** through the process of exploration and discovery with concrete materials, while **nurturing a natural curiosity and a love of learning.***

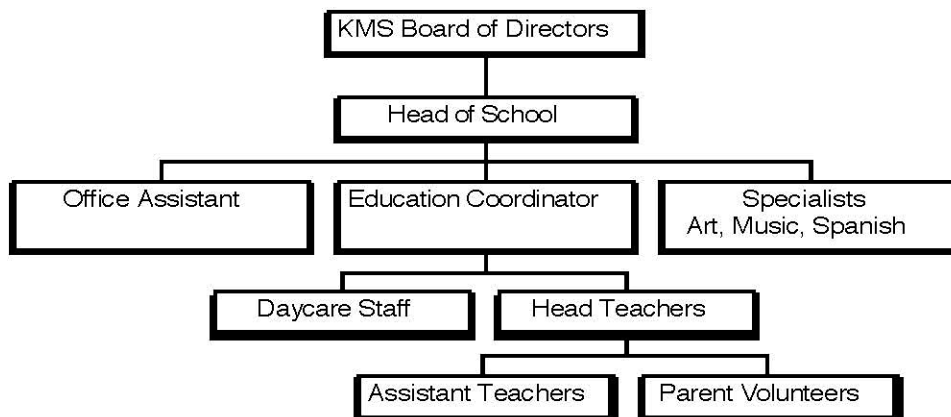
KENNEBEC MONTESSORI SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

The Kennebec Montessori School operates as a non-profit 401c(3) corporation. The school has a Board of Directors, comprised of community members, past parents, current parents, and a non-voting teacher representative. The Board is responsible for the financial stability of the school. The school is a full member of the American Montessori Society and a member of the Maine Montessori Association.

Board of Directors

Mark Tappan, Chair
Rebecca Green, Head of School
Mary-Lou Ogden, Secretary
Christopher Batson, Treasurer
Karen Thompson
Diane Tucker
Elizabeth Ward
Emanuel Pariser

Organizational Chart



TRUTH IN ADVERTISING POLICY

As a full member of the American Montessori Society, we pledge to represent the Kennebec Montessori School truthfully and accurately to our parent community, our staff, and to the general public.

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL

The school is dedicated to the philosophy and principles of Dr. Maria Montessori, who lived from 1870 to 1952. She was the first female physician in Italy. Her work in medicine and anthropology led her to observe young children's behavior. She concluded that the child learns best in a homelike setting, and that the learning environment should be filled with developmentally appropriate materials to provide experiences that contribute to the growth of self-motivated, independent learners. She established these revolutionary premises:

- That children should be respected as different from adults and as individuals who are different from one another.
- That the most important years for learning are from birth to six.
- That each child "creates" herself or himself through purposeful activity.
- That each child possesses unusual sensitivity and mental powers for absorbing and learning from his/her environment, which includes people as well as materials.

In the early 1900's, the "Montessori Method" became very popular in Europe and, to a lesser degree, in the United States. There was a resurgence in the United States in the late 1950's. There are now approximately 2,000 schools in this country and many thousands more around the world.

The Kennebec Montessori School was founded in Fairfield in 1976 by a group of parents and grew by 1978 to two Primary classrooms. An Elementary classroom was added in 1988. In 1995 KMS opened its own building, the first stand-alone Montessori school in the state of Maine, located on 14 acres of land in Fairfield. In 2008, the school was accredited by the American Montessori Society.

The **guiding principles** that the school adheres to in its classroom and educational programs are:

- All children are individual learners;
- The classroom environment and its careful preparation are vital to the child's success in the classroom;
- Mixed age-groupings enhance the child's learning experience by providing the opportunity for role-modeling and mentoring relationships;
- Freedom of choice within clearly defined limits supports the development of the individual to his/her maximum potential;
- Parent involvement enhances the sense of community in the school and supports the staff;
- Professional development is essential to the continued vitality of engaged and inspiring teachers;
- Service learning connects students to the world outside the classroom.

ADMISSIONS

A child must be at least 2 years, 9 months of age upon entering the program.
All children must be toilet trained and have the ability to care for their own personal needs.

Statement of Non-discrimination

The Kennebec Montessori School admits students regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national or ethnic origin, to all rights, privileges, and activities made available to the students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability, or marital status in the administration of its educational policies, admission or hiring policies, and other school programs.

Student Enrollment Contract

No student will be considered enrolled until a signed Enrollment Contract has been returned to the school, accompanied by the security deposit. This deposit, in addition to the signed enrollment contract, assures your child's place in Kennebec Montessori School for the following year. The security deposit is non-refundable under any circumstances, and it is applied to the materials/activities fee. The KMS Enrollment Contract that parents sign and submit is a binding commitment to compensate KMS in a timely fashion for the instruction we provide to your child(ren), according to the terms specified within the contract.

Waiting List

If space is unavailable at the time of application, parents may have their child placed on our waiting list by completing an Enrollment contract and paying the waiting list fee of \$25.00. Children will be offered enrollment on a first come, first served basis as space becomes available. If a child enrolls, the \$25.00 waiting list fee shall be applied to the \$250.00 materials/activities fee. The balance of \$225.00 is required within seven (7) days of notification that space is available. If the family declines the offer of enrollment, the waiting list fee shall be forfeited.

Tuition Payments

KMS offers two tuition payment options:

1. Full tuition payment by August 10.
2. Tuition paid in ten equal installments using SMART Tuition Management Services.

Through this program, parents make payments directly to SMART Tuition Management Services. Payments may be made through automatic withdrawal or by check, paid monthly to SMART. The first of ten monthly payments is made on August 10th and the final payment for the year is due on May 10th. There is a \$50 processing fee for using the SMART Tuition Service.

The school's expenses are not diminished by a child's absence; therefore, KMS does not adjust tuition and/or aftercare fees for illnesses or voluntary absences including family vacations/travel.

Late Payments

A \$15 late fee is charged on tuition payments that are more than 10 days past due. **The school will reconsider the enrollment of any student whose tuition is more than 60 days late.** The school must meet its payroll, pay its bills and try to operate in the black. There are not extra funds in the budget to defray late tuition payments. We cannot re-enroll any student who has a tuition balance due from the previous school year. All balances must be paid by August 31, the end of our fiscal year.

Trial Period

The first thirty (30) calendar days of a child's attendance at KMS will be a trial period. During that time, the teacher will observe the child and notify the parents if s/he is having difficulty adapting to the classroom environment. After attempts have been made to work with the child and parents, the Head of School reserves the right to ask that the child be withdrawn. If during the first thirty days of school child is asked to leave Kennebec Montessori School, the tuition refund, with the exception of the security deposit, is pro-rated based on the number of days in attendance.

Early Withdrawal

Should you decide to withdraw your child during the school year, the official date of withdrawal, for **financial considerations**, will be based upon the school's receipt of written notification **of the last day your child will attend KMS**. You are responsible for tuition and registered daycare payments up to and including the month in which the withdrawal occurs.

Change in Registration

Any changes to program options or registered daycare hours require approval by the Head of School and are subject to availability. If you wish to make a change in program (eg. from 3-day to 5-day) or in the hours of registered daycare, you must fill out a **Change in Registration Form** and leave it with the Office Manager. **Before requesting a program change, please speak with your child's teacher.**

Payment Deposit Box

Parents are requested to deposit all payments made to KMS (for milk, aftercare, etc.) in the payment box located in the foyer of the school. Please do not leave checks or cash in the office.

Returned Check Policy

There is a \$10.00 bank charge for checks returned to Kennebec Montessori School. A check may be redeposited at your request but if it is returned a second time, there will be an additional \$10.00 bank charge, and a bank certified check or cash will be required for future tuition payments.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

School Hours

Early Morning Care	7:15 -- 8:30
3-day and 5-day morning	8:30 -- 11:30
Full Day	8:30 -- 2:30 (Recess, Lunch Break, and Rest: 11:00-1:00)
Extended Day	8:30 -- 2:30 (Lunch Break and Recess: 11:00 -12:30)
Elementary	8:30 -- 3:00 (Lunch Break and Recess: 11:30 -12:30)
After School Care	2:30 -- 5:30*

***Parents will be charged \$5.00 per five minutes when they arrive after 5:30 p.m. to pick up their child(ren).**

Arrival

Please bring your child to school **between 8:20 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.** There will be someone to greet your child at the main entrance. If you bring your child to the classroom, please encourage your child to enter the classroom alone, and to remove his/her own outer garments independently. If assistance is needed, the teacher will be there to do this.

Parents who bring children in for early morning care must ensure that the early morning care teacher has greeted their child. Please do not drop children off at the front door.

Late Arrival

Punctuality is essential for your child's success in the classroom. Materials and lessons are presented at the beginning of the morning. It is often much more difficult for the child to join circle once it has already been formed. Please make it a priority to bring your child to school on time. **If you should arrive after 8:30, please encourage your child to enter the classroom quietly and independently, especially if a lesson is in progress.**

Dismissal

The Primary children who leave at 11:30 a.m. will be dismissed from the playground.

Before leaving, children should always say good-bye to their teacher.

- Extended Day and Full Day children will be dismissed from the front door at 2:30.
- Elementary children are dismissed from the front door at 3:00 p.m.

On those occasions when your child needs to be dismissed early, please send a note to school or leave a message including the date and time of dismissal.

NOTE: Only a child's parents and listed authorized persons may take a child from school. If you know in advance that it is necessary for someone else to take your child home, please bring in a signed note. Otherwise, you must notify the school as soon as possible prior to dismissal. Please understand that if no notice has been received, we will need to check with parents before dismissing the child. Unauthorized persons will not be allowed to take a child from school. Until we are familiar with parents and caregivers, we may ask for ID.

Storm Cancellations

If M.S.A.D. 49 (Fairfield) is closed in the morning, we will be closed. We do not, however, delay the start to our morning, or release students early. **If M.S.A.D. 49 has a morning delay or early release due to weather conditions, we shall follow our normal daily schedule.** Late arrival and early pick-up will be left to the discretion of the parents. Please use caution when traveling in severe weather. In cases of a very serious storm, we may phone the parents of those remaining children and ask them to pick up their children. School cancellations due to inclement weather will be announced on local radio stations; and television channels WLBZ (2), WABI (5), WCSH (6) & WMTW (8).

Attendance

Daily attendance logs are maintained by the teachers in each classroom. **If your child will be absent from school, please notify the office as soon as possible, preferably by 8:30 a.m.** Consistent attendance and timely arrival are very important for your child's progress and social development in the classroom. Please try to plan trips and days off during vacation times. Instances involving consistent tardiness and extended absences (for reasons other than illness) will be brought to the attention of the Head of School. Keeping the child's best interest in mind, the Head of School may contact the parents to discuss the situation. **Three-day children are invited to make up for days missed due to holidays or snow days.**

Parking

If you choose to come into the building for drop off or pick up, or are visiting with other parents, please park in the parking lot. **DO NOT PARK** in the circular driveway as it causes traffic congestion and is against fire regulations. **If you are waiting in the circle, please turn off your engine to reduce exhaust fumes.** Please observe the **10-mph speed limit** when you enter the school grounds.

COMMUNICATION

We encourage you to contact us whenever you have any questions or concerns:

Phone: 453-6055

Office: info@kennebecmontessori.org

Head of School: rebecca@kennebecmontessori.org

Elementary: marysp@kennebecmontessori.org

Primary 1: jshores@kennebecmontessori.org

Primary 2: mary-lou@kennebecmontessori.org

Primary 3: katie@kennebecmontessori.org

Messages and Phone Calls

Calls to teachers can be made at 453-6055 between 8.00 a.m.-8.20 a.m., 11.45 a.m.-12.30 p.m., or after school hours. Appointments may be made during these times to discuss your child's progress. Messages can always be left at the school, and will be delivered to the teacher as soon as possible. Please check with your child's teacher about the best way to share messages and discuss any concerns.

Parent Notices

Parent Notices will be sent out on a regular basis. In order to reduce paper, we will be sending out these notices by email only, unless a paper copy is requested. **If you would like to receive a paper copy, please let the office know as soon as possible.** Notices will also be posted on the bulletin board, available at the front desk, and on the **Today @ KMS** page of our Web site: www.kennebecmontessori.org

Bulletin Board

The school message board is located in the foyer near the front door. Please check the board regularly for school announcements and other important information, including bills for additional daycare and receipts.

Elementary Classroom Notes

The children in the elementary classroom shall prepare their own parent notices to be sent home on a regular basis. These notes will include information pertaining specifically to the elementary class.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences are scheduled twice per year and the dates are included on the school calendar. Sign-up sheets will be posted at least two weeks in advance. There is no school on conference days, but day care will be available for the children while their parents are meeting with the teachers. During the conference, the teachers share information about the child's accomplishments, needs, and goals here at KMS, and answer questions as time allows. In most cases a written report will be provided, with the exception of the initial conference with the parents of our preschool-aged children.

In the case of parents who are divorced or separated, it is our policy to ask both parents to meet with the teacher at the same time, which insures that the information shared is consistent. It is not mandatory for both parents to attend, but two individual conferences will not be scheduled.

Teachers or parents may request a meeting at any time they feel it is in the best interest of the child to do so. If you have concerns about your child's development please speak to your child's teacher.

Parent Workshops

Three times per year, the teachers present a workshop for current and prospective parents. Each workshop will focus on a different area of the Montessori curriculum. The workshops are intended to give you a better understanding of what your child is doing in school and what you might be able to do at home to enrich your child's learning experience.

Open House

In the spring, just prior to the next year's registration period, we have an Open House. The purpose is for prospective parents and children to visit and observe the classrooms, learn about the Montessori curriculum and philosophy, and meet the staff and current parents.

Student Records

Information contained in a child's record shall be considered privileged and confidential. Parents have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. The Kennebec Montessori School will not distribute or release information to anyone not directly related to the child without written consent of the child's parent(s), according to the regulations under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). For additional information on FERPA please visit: www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html

Grievances

It is our mission to do our very best for the children and families at KMS. If a problem does arise, our goal is to address it immediately, satisfactorily, and confidentially. To help us do this, **we ask that all questions or concerns regarding your child be brought directly to his/her Head Teacher.** If the teacher is unable to resolve the issue, or in cases where it seems warranted, please share your concerns with the Head of School. The Head of School will follow up in whatever way s/he deems appropriate, which may include a conference with parents, teachers, and the Head of School.

EMERGENCIES

Fire Drills & Emergency Evacuation

Fire drills will occur once per month during the school year. At the beginning of the year, the fire drills will be announced. Later in the year, the drills may or may not be announced, so as to prepare for an actual emergency. In the case of an actual fire or emergency, each classroom will evacuate the building according to the evacuation diagram posted at the exit of each room. The evacuation diagram in each room includes a designated meeting area outside of the building. At this designated area, roll call will be taken to ensure all students and staff have exited the building safely. The Office Manager shall take the current parent contact list and have a cell phone available during all evacuation procedures and drills.

Medical Emergencies

All teachers and most support staff have been trained in CPR and First Aid. A First Aid kit is kept in the main office, out of reach of children. Parents are notified immediately, by telephone, of emergencies. In the event a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact person(s) will be called. In serious emergency situations, where medical attention is required, the child will be transported to the nearest hospital via ambulance. If a parent is unavailable, a teacher or other staff member will accompany the child in the ambulance. The parent(s) will be responsible for payment of any medical and/or ambulance expenses incurred as a result of the emergency.

Emergency Contact Information

All parents must provide the school with the names and phone numbers of two people who can be contacted in the case of an emergency. Every attempt will be made to reach parents first; then this backup list will be used. It is important that the contact people agree to be listed and be available to come to the school in the event of an emergency, accident, or illness. **Please keep the school updated on any changes to your address, phone numbers, or email.**

HEALTH and SAFETY POLICIES

Immunization

Proof of required immunization must be provided to the school prior to the first day of school. Parents who decline immunization due to medical or religious reasons, or strong personal objection must complete the required **Immunization Exemption Form** available at the school office.

Illness and Infectious Disease

Please DO NOT send your child to school on days when any of these symptoms are present:

1. Fever (temperature above 100.5 degrees) within last 24 hours
2. Persistent cough and/or sore throat
3. Any contagious or infectious disease of the skin, mouth or eyes or unidentified rash
4. Diarrhea
5. Vomiting
6. Inflammation and/or crusting of the eye.

Children who become ill during the day will be allowed to rest in the office until a parent or designated contact person arrives.

If your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness such as **strep throat, conjunctivitis, chicken pox, or impetigo**, please let the school know as soon as possible so that we may make parents aware of their child's potential exposure to the disease.

Medication Release Form

If your child requires any medication (either prescription or non-prescription) to be administered by a member of the KMS staff while in school, you must complete a medication release form located on the office desk. The medication and the release form should be given to the Office Manager. All medication, prescription and non-prescription, must be in its **original container** with the child's name clearly labeled on the outside. **The first dose of a newly prescribed medication must be given at home.** KMS cannot be responsible for administering the initial dose of any medication. Records indicating when medication was administered are kept on file, according to procedures required by Department of Education and DHS.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy

Although Kennebec Montessori School works conscientiously to control insects, rodents, and weeds at our school through proper food storage, cleaning, and maintenance, pesticide use may occasionally be necessary to control a pest problem. When that happens, the school will use the lowest risk products available, applied in accordance with the Maine Pesticides in Schools regulation (CMR 01-026 Chapter 27).

In the event that a pesticide application is deemed necessary, parents, legal guardians, and school staff will be notified in writing **at least five days** before the planned application. Notices will also be posted

on the entryway door, on the bulletin board, and on the school grounds if the application is outside the building. Notices will remain posted for 48 hours after the application.

In compliance with the Maine Board of Pesticides Control, the school will also keep records of prior pesticide applications and information about the pesticides used. You may review these records as well as a copy of the Pesticides in Schools regulation (CMR 01-026 Chapter 27) by asking the Office Manager, who will serve as our IPM coordinator. For further information about pesticides and your right to know, call the Board of Pesticides Control at (207) 287-2731 or visit the Maine School IPM web site at www.thinkfirstspraylast.org/schoolipm.

Sun-screen and Insect Repellant

Children have an outdoor recess period at noontime (times vary, depending on the classroom). On those days when the sun is a potential hazard, please apply sun-screen at home before sending your child to school. We will reapply sun-screen to children in the aftercare program for afternoon recess (4:00). We do not use insect repellant. If you wish your child to have insect repellant applied, you must provide your own and fill out a Medication Release Form (available at the front desk).

Child Abuse and Neglect

As a childcare facility, KMS is a mandated reporter of suspected instances of child abuse, including physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse and neglect. KMS staff is required by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (22 M.R.S.A, 8402-A, section XXII.A) to report any incidents which might endanger the physical or emotional well-being of the child. This includes transporting a child in a vehicle while intoxicated or impaired. Under DHHS guidelines, this is a reportable offence.

GROUND RULES AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Playground Ground Rules

In order to maintain a safe environment and a positive atmosphere in school and on the playground, we ask that the children follow some basic ground rules. Parents can help by reinforcing these guidelines with the children at all times.

On the Playground we DO:

- Walk straight into and away from swings, not crossing behind or in front of them.
- Swing in a sitting position.
- Slide in a sitting position, one at a time.
- Go up the ladders and down the slides.
- Walk (not jump) on the bridge.
- Walk around, rather than through the mulched areas.
- Watch out for each other.
- Stay within sight of the teachers.
- Say goodbye to the teacher before leaving.**

On the Playground we DO NOT:

- Twist the swings.
- Use the monkey bars above the swings.
- Jump off the swings.
- Play on the mulched areas.
- Hang upside down from the bars or trapeze.
- Eat snow.

Pick dandelions or other plants.
Go beyond the shelter without a teacher or parent.
Leave without saying goodbye to the teacher.

Classroom Ground Rules

In the Montessori environment there are certain ground rules designed to protect the good of the community as well as the individual child. They are meant to reinforce respect for others, for the classroom materials and furnishings, and for the class as a whole. At the beginning of the school year, the children in the Elementary class work to develop a list of ground rules specifically for their classroom. The following list is not comprehensive, but includes our fundamental guidelines that help the Primary children learn how to work in their classroom, and how to function as part of a school community.

In Our Classrooms:

We treat others the way we like to be treated.
We walk.
We speak softly.
We push in our chairs.
We use a mat for working on the floor.
We finish our work.
We put work back where we find it.
We clean up after snack.
We say please and thank you.
We raise our hand if we have something to say.
We look and listen when someone is talking to us.
We keep our hands on our own bodies.
We let others concentrate on their work.
We share our friends.
We know that every person is special and important.

Behavior Management

It is our experience that children who are productively engaged in the classroom have fewer problem behaviors. When issues do arise we strive to protect a child's self-image by using age-appropriate positive communication strategies and techniques. The safety of all children is the priority of KMS and we expect all children to show respect for other people and their property. Firm reminders (not loud, not unkind) are sometimes needed. When appropriate, students are asked to explore alternatives to their behavior and to think about the effects of this behavior on others. This helps them to develop a sense of responsibility for their actions and to further develop consideration for others. Problems with behavior are handled by the classroom teachers. When a situation warrants, parents are notified and may be asked to follow up at home to support the child's success in the classroom.

CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Clothing

Simple, loose, easy to manage clothing is best for the younger children. **All Primary children must have a complete change of clothing, including underwear and socks.** Children enrolled in the Full-Day program must have a second set of clothing to be kept in the Common Room. These should be brought to school in a bag labeled with the child's name. Since outdoor play is an important part of the curriculum for children, all should dress accordingly during the winter months. The children need to wear suitable clothes for the season and suitable shoes for playing outdoors. Shoes with heels and

pointed toes prevent children from running around and climbing and are, therefore, not recommended for school. Should the temperature drop below 13°F, or the weather conditions prove to be unsuitable for outdoor play, the children will stay indoors for recess. **All personal items must be labeled.**

Inside Shoes/Slippers

Each child should bring a pair of plain slippers or slip-on sneakers, marked with their name, to wear in school. These should be left in the child's cubby. Younger children should wear shoes that they can easily put on and remove by themselves. Snow boots should be large enough for the child to put on by him/herself without difficulty.

Backpacks

Each day, a backpack large enough to carry homework papers, parent notices, etc., should be sent to school with your child. Backpacks should be emptied daily when your child arrives home. We ask that you avoid backpacks on wheels as they are often too large to fit into our cubbies.

Toys and Jewelry

No toys, purses, blankets or non-appropriate jewelry items may be brought to school as they distract the children from their work. Educational items for geography, history, nature study, etc. are welcome.

Lost and Found

Unlabeled personal belongings that are found on school property will be placed in the Lost and Found bin located in the entryway to the right of the Primary 2 classroom. If your child is missing an item, please check the bin first. The items in the bin will be cleaned out at the end of the year and donated to a local charity.

Non-commercial Policy

We strive to create an atmosphere at KMS that is commercial free. You can assist us by avoiding the purchase of backpacks, clothing, and lunch boxes that feature commercial messages or characters.

SNACKS AND LUNCH

Morning Snack

Families are assigned two weeks during the year to provide a morning snack (food and drink) for their child's class. You will receive a schedule of the assigned weeks at the beginning of the year. **Three-day children are responsible for supplying snack for the entire week.**

Afternoon Snack

Children staying for aftercare should bring something extra in their lunch box each day for afternoon snack.

Healthy Choices, Please!

Because of the challenges that sugar and additives pose, KMS has created a policy that does not allow frosting, candy, and other foods with excessive sugar content. Having snack is an important and enjoyable part of the children's daily routine, and we can promote good nutrition by providing them with wholesome choices while they are at school.

When planning snacks for the children, remember to choose foods that are nutritious and encourage healthy eating habits. Please avoid foods with artificial ingredients, such as colors or flavors, and excessive sugar and salt. There is also a growing body of evidence linking partially hydrogenated oils

(trans fats) with a variety of health problems.

To help with your planning, we are including a list of appropriate snack foods that have proven to be popular with the majority of the children. This list was developed with the help of some of our parents.

Please note that the only beverages we will serve to the children are 100% fruit juice, milk (preferably low-fat) and water.

Fresh fruit - skewered or sliced (melons, grapes, bananas, apples, etc.)

Fresh vegetables with dip (carrots, celery, peppers, cucumbers, broccoli, etc.)

Bread with butter/jam/peanut butter (whole wheat is best)

Cheese and crackers

Bagels and cream cheese

Pretzels Muffins Breads (banana, carrot, fruit, corn, etc.)

Rice crackers, whole wheat crackers

Pita chips with salsa

Graham crackers

Cereal bars (not the chewy, sweet kinds)

Animal crackers

Popcorn (plain or seasoned with nutritional yeast)

Please have your snacks prepared before you get to the classroom. For example, wash and pre-cut vegetables, fruits, and cheeses into serving size pieces, and make up your juice in a pitcher if needed.

Make sure there is a portion for each child in the class (see class list). Large fruits, like bananas, will feed two children. The best advice we can give is to **keep it simple**; the children like it that way!

Lunch

Children who stay for lunch need to have a nutritional lunch. Please do not send candy or gum to school. We do not have room to refrigerate lunch boxes. Ice packs work well to keep food cool. Your child will need a cloth napkin as well as a paper napkin and any necessary cutlery. Remember to label your child's lunchbox and any containers used for lunch.

We ask that you not send in candy or chocolate to school, and highly recommend a minimum of sugary and highly processed foods that you pack in the lunchbox. These foods often has a pronounced negative effect on the children's mood and behavior.

Microwaves are available in each classroom. **Please send food to be heated in pyrex containers as plastic containers and plastic wraps emit toxins when heated in the microwave.**

Milk and Juice

At the beginning of school year, you may pay for either milk or juice to go with your child's lunch, which will ensure that the drink has been refrigerated, and eliminate the daily thermos spills and breaking bottles.

Rest Time

In accordance with Maine Department of Health and Human Services regulations (22 M.S.R.A., 8401-A, section XVI.B.1), all children of preschool age are required to be given an opportunity for rest. This rest period will begin after lunch. The school provides mats, pillows and blankets. Please do not send in your child's bedding, as we have no storage room for these items.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of each child's learning experience. They can also be a very special time for you and your child. A list of field trips and dates will be provided at the beginning of the school year in order for parent volunteers to plan in advance. We rely on parent volunteers to make these field trips possible. **Each family is encouraged to participate in at least one field trip per year.** If you plan to drive on a field trip, please sign up. The teachers will assign children to vehicles. Please do not make your own arrangements to drive with friends. Parents not driving on a field trip will need to leave their child's car seat at school on the morning of a trip. Reminders shall be posted the day prior to a scheduled trip. KMS teachers and staff are not allowed to transport students in their personal vehicles.

Volunteer Drivers

Any parent who volunteers as a field trip driver is required to complete the Volunteer Driver Form. In order to ensure a safe and fun experience for all, please make sure to adhere to the following guidelines:

- **All children under 40 lbs. are required to have a car seat, regardless of their age.**
- **All children under 80 lbs. are required to have a booster seat.**
- If a child is under 4'9" tall, it is highly recommended that they ride in a booster seat, regardless of age or weight.
- All children less than 12 years of age and weighing less than 100 lbs. are required to ride in the rear seat of a vehicle.
- No child shall be placed in the front seat of a vehicle with an air bag.
- The vehicle must have adequate seat belts for each child.
- Drivers must drive directly to and from the field trip with no stops in between.
- **Siblings of field trip participants generally may not attend field trips. Please speak to your child's teacher about exceptions.**
- Drivers should refrain from using cell phones while transporting children except in an emergency.

Special Subjects

All children receive basic instruction in **Spanish, Art, and Music**. School concerts are held twice each year. The Extended Day and Elementary children receive additional instruction in Art and Music as part of their curriculum. The Elementary children learn to play the tin whistle and will need to have a D-scale tin whistle. Special instruction in **Physical Education** is also offered to the Elementary children.

Birthdays

The Montessori celebration of a child's birthday consists of a special ceremony and the sharing of stories and photographs remembering each year of the child's life. A tradition we like to encourage is that of the birthday child presenting a book to the KMS library in honor of his/her birthday. Books should be inscribed with the child's name, the date, and the child's age.

In order to keep the focus on the child and minimize any exclusions due to dietary needs and allergies, we do not include food as part of the birthday celebration. **Please do not send a birthday snack to school.** For children with summer birthdays, parents should contact the teacher to arrange a special birthday celebration at some other point during the year. The half-year point works well.

Please do not send private birthday party invitations to school. This eliminates any disappointment for those

who have not been invited. Children are reminded not to talk about these events at school for the same reason.

Cross-Country Skis and Sleds

Children in the **Extended Day** and **Elementary Programs** are invited to bring sleds to use during recess and the after school program beginning in **January, after the Holiday break**. Elementary children may also bring cross-country skis. You will need to sign a permission slip allowing your child to participate in these activities. Skis and sleds may be left outside the school at your own risk. **Please label your child's equipment.**

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent Participation Program

KMS families are asked to contribute 20 hours of volunteer time to the school during the academic year according to individual interests, skills, and schedules. The school counts on the support of parents for activities such as organizing the Annual Auction, driving on field trips, listening to readers, washing blankets, weeding the gardens, etc. There is no end to the opportunities for helping! A Parent Participation Program binder is located on the office counter. **Please log your hours each time you help at school.** Thank you--all the children in the school are enriched by the unique contributions of its families.

Emerging Readers Program

If you can volunteer an hour or two per week on a regular basis to listen to the children read, please sign up on the volunteer list posted outside your child's classroom. Those who can volunteer on occasion may schedule a date with the teacher as the opportunity arises. Parent participation in this reading enrichment program contributes significantly to the children's progress. In the primary classes, children who are reading will bring photocopies of books home to read with their parents. Please ensure that these photocopies are returned promptly so others may use them.

Annual Auction

Each fall KMS holds its Annual Auction, which is the major fundraising event of the year. Through the efforts of our parent volunteer auction committee, we receive many wonderful donations from local businesses as well as KMS staff and families. It is also a wonderful opportunity to socialize with other parents and have an enjoyable evening out. The proceeds from the auction are essential to covering the gap between tuition revenue and the cost of education so that we can keep tuition as low as possible for all families. Our goal is 100% participation from KMS families.

Classroom Observations

Parents are encouraged to observe a class in session (either their child's or another). Appointments may be made through the office. Observations begin in November.

School Social Events

During the school year we have occasional social events for KMS families, as well as receptions following our concerts. These events are fun for parents and children, and provide an opportunity for KMS families to socialize with each other and the teachers. Parents are asked to contribute food and drinks for these occasions.

Fall and Spring Clean-up Days

Two Saturday mornings during the year are designated for school clean-up. Some chores that parents can assist with during clean-up days are: removing/installing window screens, cleaning out ceiling vents, preparing/cleaning out the gardens, mulching, washing windows, storing outside equipment for winter and other seasonal tasks.

Holiday Celebrations

During the year we recognize different holidays, such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Hanukkah. Although we are a non-denominational school, we do explain the reason why these holidays are celebrated. We encourage parents to come to the classroom to share their cultural traditions and special customs associated with these and other holidays.

Community Service

Throughout the school year, we strive to assist those in need, both within our local community and on a more global basis. Some efforts in the past have included penny drives for disaster relief, UNICEF drives at Halloween, supporting the Maine Children's Home for Little Wanderers Holiday Giving Tree, collecting food items for our local food pantry, and more. Additional suggestions for service projects are always welcome and can be made to your child's teacher or the Head of School.

KMS Parent Library

KMS has a growing collection of books, magazines and videos available for parents to borrow on a variety of topics, including Montessori materials, parenting, and other topics of interest to parents. If you would like to borrow an item from our library, please see the Office Manager. A full list of titles is available on our Web site: www.kennebecmontessori.org/Today@KMS.

REFERRAL SERVICES

Referrals to social, mental health, education, and medical services may occasionally be needed by children at KMS. The referral may come at the request of parents and/or the child's teacher. A conference between the child's parents and Head Teacher will determine the best course of action. School-age children (age 5 by October 15) will be referred to Special Education services through M.S.A.D. 49, regardless of the town of residence of the child. Children under this age receive services through Project PEDS. If you have any concerns about your child's development, please speak to your child's teacher.

Community Services

Project PEDS Child Development Services (children up to age 5)
163 Silver St., Waterville 04901 877-2498

M.S.A.D 49: Fairfield, Albion, Benton, Clinton (school-age children)
41 West. St., Fairfield 04937 453-4200

Maine General Center for Health and Rehab (physical, occupational, speech, photo therapy and physiatry)
30 Chase Ave., (Seton Unit) Waterville 872-4400

Waterville Area Hospice Volunteers 873-3615
304 Main Street, Waterville
www.hvwa.org

We wish everyone a happy and productive school year!

Rev. August 2011