



# Handbook for Families

*School Year 2024-2025*

**Children's House Montessori is 501 (c) (3) Non-Profit**

**EIN: 27-0710534**

**Primary Campus (3-6 years old):**

4021 Range Rd.

Rapid City, SD 57702

(605) 791-0466

**Elementary Campus (1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grades):**

3520 West Main Street

Rapid City, SD 57702

(605) 341-0824

**email: [director@chkids.net](mailto:director@chkids.net)**

**Website: [www.chkids.net](http://www.chkids.net)**

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## **A SPECIAL NOTE**

Thank you for joining us as we share this stimulating time in your child’s life. We look forward to sharing our enthusiasm and our excitement about the Montessori approach to education with your family.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The basic idea of the Montessori philosophy of education is that children carry within themselves the person they will become. Montessori educators say the world of the child is full of sights and sounds which initially appear chaotic. From this chaos children must gradually create order, learn to distinguish among impressions that assail their senses and slowly but surely gain mastery of themselves and their environment.

Dr. Montessori developed what she called the Prepared Environment which inherently possesses a certain order and allows children to learn at their own speed, according to their own capabilities and in a non-competitive atmosphere. The acquisition of good manners and social graces are integral along with responsibility to community and fellow human beings.

Dr. Montessori recognized the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child. The teacher prepares the environment, directs the activities and offers the child stimulation, but it is the child who learns, who is motivated through work to persist in a given task. Children who have acquired an “inner discipline” from their exposure to physical and mental order are the children who are free to learn. This is the premise of the Montessori philosophy. Montessori teaches children to observe, to think, and to discriminate. It introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social discipline go hand-in-hand.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- To develop a positive attitude toward school and an enthusiasm for learning
- To develop a sense of high self-esteem and self-confidence
- To develop and foster an abiding curiosity
- To develop habits of concentration, initiative and persistence
- To develop an organized, sequential approach to problem solving and academic skills
- To develop self-motivation
- To develop independence, self-knowledge and self-discipline
- To develop sensory-motor skills in order to sharpen the ability to discriminate
- To develop and embrace socially acceptable behavior

- To help each child reach their ultimate potential through high self-expectations
- To build positive relationships with adults and other children
- To develop an understanding of the importance of contributing to a community
- To realize their own “spirituality” (their inner spirit) and use that understanding to be a person willing to serve the common good

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

We will prepare a safe and nurturing Montessori environment for all children while maintaining South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE) accreditation. Our classroom community, including our families, will be one where mutual respect and empathy are modeled and respected. We will meet all students at their individual developmental level and inspire them each day to reach their full potential – socially, physically, academically, and spiritually. We will encourage them to challenge themselves by highlighting their successes and assisting them as they refine their areas of difficulty. We will advocate for their individual and collective rights. Our classroom will be a joyful place where children can develop relationships and build self-confidence. Intrinsic gratification and pride in their accomplishments will be their motivation as they develop the love of learning. We will strive to make every day an excellent day for each student.

## **CHILDREN’S HOUSE HISTORY**

Children’s House began as a Montessori preschool founded in January 1990 by Janell Jewett. Having done her Montessori studies in London, England and her internship in West Germany, she wanted to bring a Montessori educational opportunity to the children and their families of Rapid City. Children’s House opened its doors to one class of 5 preschool children and one guide but began to grow rapidly. With the growth, kindergarten classes were quickly added and it continued to expand and we now serve students from ages 3 to 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

The school, which is incorporated, has gone through facility changes. What began in a little house with a small back yard on Clark Street, moved to the 3520 West Main Street location in the summer of 1996. In 2022, the school expanded to a second location at 4021 Range Road to house our growing primary classrooms. The West Main Street location remains home to our elementary classrooms.

Children’s House Montessori became a nonprofit state accredited school in 2001 and adheres to the requirements set down by the South Dakota Department of Education while following the tenets of a Montessori curriculum using Montessori materials.

Children’s House Montessori, as a non-profit organization, is guided by a board of directors. A current list of board members is available on our web site. In addition, we welcome parent involvement at board meetings which are generally scheduled on the last Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm in the Upper Elementary building.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**PRIMARY:** This includes all students in the 3–6-year-old classrooms including half day preschool, full day preschool, and Kindergarten.

**PRIMARY CAMPUS:** This location opened in August 2022 and is for our 3-6 year old students. It is located at 4021 Range Road.

ELEMENTARY: Students in Lower Elementary (1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade) and Upper Elementary (4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade).

ELEMENTARY CAMPUS: Located at 3520 W. Main Street and houses are Lower and Upper Elementary classrooms.

### **MIXED-AGE CLASSROOMS**

Children's House Montessori continues the Montessori tradition of having mixed-age classrooms. At our school, the Primary classroom includes students from 3 to 6 years old (preschool and Kindergarten). We offer half day programs beginning for students who are 3 years old on or before September 1 and completely self-sufficient in toileting. At the age of 3.5 birthday on or before March 1 and potty trained, students are eligible to stay for the full day program. We offer a 3-Morning Per Week Program (Tues, Wed, & Thurs), a 5-Morning Per Week Program (Mon-Fri), or a 5 Full Day Program (ages 4 and up). Kindergarten is a full day program.

The Lower Elementary classroom has students from ages 6 to 9 years old or 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> grades. The Upper Elementary encompasses 9 to 12 years old or 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **SUMMER CAMP**

Summer Camp is offered for eight weeks each summer. We offer a camp for students ages 3 to 6 years old (includes incoming Kindergarteners) at our Range Road location. At our West Main Street location, we offer a camp for elementary aged students who are 6 to 12 years old (includes incoming 1<sup>st</sup> graders). It runs from the first week of June to the first week of August with a break during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday week. Hours are from 8:15-3:15 Monday through Friday.

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

#### **Primary Campus (4021 Range Rd)**

School starts at 8am. Dismissal for morning only students will be at 11:30am and full day primary and Kindergarten dismissal will be between 2:45-3:00 pm.

#### **Elementary Campus (3520 W. Main St.)**

Drop off between 8:00am-8:15 am and pick up between 3:00pm-3:15 pm.

### **BEFORE SCHOOL CARE**

Before school care is available to students starting at 7:30am each regularly scheduled school day. It starts the second week of school (see calendar for start date). Parent or guardian is responsible for signing in the student in the Before School Care binder. Before school care is charged \$5 per use, regardless of start time. Enrollment will take place on our web site via TUIO.

### **AFTER SCHOOL CARE**

After school care is available on either a monthly or drop-in basis from 3-6 pm Monday through Friday. It will be held only days when school is in session for the full day. If there is an early dismissal, there will not be after

school care. It will commence the second week of school (see calendar for start date). Enrollment will take place on our web site via TUIO.

## **DROPPING OFF STUDENTS**

Please park in **designated spaces** and walk your child to the front door. **DO NOT** park at the ends of the buildings or idle in a non-parking area. At the Primary Campus (Range Road), the parking lot is one way with the driveway circling the building for exit. Please park and walk your child to the door.

Keep your child **IN HAND** while crossing the parking lot both before and after school. Do not allow them to run across the parking lot alone. Larger vehicles cannot see the children when they are backing up. We will visit with the children about parking lot safety and we ask that you please do the same. The teacher will open the door and greet your child at the start of each day.

## **PICKING UP STUDENTS**

For your child's protection, we will not release any child to someone other than a parent or persons listed as an Authorized Pick Up. **Please let the person who is picking up know that we will ask them to show proof of identification prior to releasing your child.** We do not mean to offend anyone by asking for identification, we do it for your child's safety. Please advise a teacher if your child will be picked up by someone other than you. It is imperative that you keep the school up-to-date on phone numbers, emergency numbers and all pertinent information. Please call or email your teacher or the director to let us know if there is a change in the person picking up your child.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

**It is imperative that arrival and dismissal times are closely adhered to.** The time before and after class is vital for teacher preparation to ensure a smooth and productive day.

Promptness in a child's life is very important. **Tardiness is very disruptive to the teachers and to the children already in class.** We regard this as a preparation for continued education and expect all children to arrive on time and be picked up on time. Children who arrive late feel embarrassed and uncomfortable when entering a class already in progress. Children picked up late feel apprehension wondering if someone is coming for them.

Realizing everyone confronts difficulties occasionally, we ask that if you will be late, please call to inform the school. We appreciate your efforts to ensure this situation does not happen often.

## **PARENT ORIENTATION**

The week before school starts, we will gather with parents and caregivers to provide an orientation on our school, answer questions, and set expectations. We appreciate at least one representative from each family attending the orientation. For our Primary families (preschool & kindergarten), we politely request that you attend the orientation without your child. We appreciate the opportunity to have your undivided attention during this time. For our returning families, we appreciate if you attend the orientation even if this is not your first year at the school. It's an opportunity to hear about any changes and also to meet other families. Elementary students are welcome to attend their orientation. If you are not able to attend the scheduled

event, please reach out and we are happy to go over the details with you. We will notify you via email the dates and times of orientation, but in general they take place the week prior to school starting.

## **FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL SCHEDULE**

The first week of school is abbreviated as we transition into the school year and provide orientation to the students. Please see schedule below and reach out to clarify if you have any questions.

### **Primary and Kindergarten Classes (3-6 year olds)**

Your child will be assigned a first day of school. On your child's assigned first day of school, they will attend for just ½ the day from 8-11:30am (this includes full day preschoolers and kindergartners). Your child will not attend the alternate day as we split the class to provide orientation. The third day of school all students will attend regular schedule.

### **Elementary Classes**

On the first day of school, 8:00am to 1:00 pm and will need lunch this day. The rest of the week will be regular schedule 8:00am to 3:00 pm.

## **KINDERGARTEN/ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Attendance for kindergarten and elementary students is mandatory according to State law. As a State accredited school, we report student attendance to the Department of Education. Any student who has excessive absenteeism (15 days or more per calendar year) **OR** an excessive tardiness record will require an explanation to state officials by the administration and the family. **Excessive absenteeism may result in student retention.** When considering school absence, please evaluate your child's attendance record and try to schedule family vacations during our regular school holidays. Excessive tardiness is documented and considered part of your child's attendance record. Every 6<sup>th</sup> tardy is equal to 1-day absence and will be considered as such in the total attendance record.

## **ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT**

Children's House Montessori admits students of any race religion, color, national and ethnic origin. Students are afforded all the rights, privileges, programs and activities available. Children's House Montessori does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin in the administration of it educational and admission policies.

Enrollment for the new school year takes place each February for returning families and March for new families.

## **TUITION**

### **Children's House Montessori Tuition**

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Updated tuition rates are available on our web site [www.chkids.net](http://www.chkids.net).

## **PAYMENT POLICIES**



A non-refundable application fee of \$100 is required for all programs. A non-refundable tuition deposit is required at time of enrollment. The deposit is \$300 for half day programs (3 Morning and 5 Morning Primary) and \$400 for full day programs (5 Full Day Primary, Kindergarten, Elementary). A student's spot is not secured until this deposit is paid. The deposit is applied to next year's tuition. The deposit is forfeited if the student does not attend CHM.

If a family departs prior to the end of the school year, a 30-day notice is required in writing. The family will be responsible for paying the remaining tuition if such a departure occurs. Any exceptions are at the discretion of the CHM Board of Directors. The CHM BOD meets monthly and the current roster of members is available on the CHM web site. If a departure can be made prior to the second semester starting, we can generally fill the spot from our wait list and the departing family would not be held responsible for the remaining tuition balance.

Students are required to be self-sufficient in toileting. If a child is not toilet trained by the first day of school and does not attend CHM in September, the family forfeits the first semester deposit. If the child is not toilet trained by the first day of the second semester, then the remaining deposit is forfeited. If a child is toilet trained but there are no vacancies at CHM in January, the second semester deposit can be applied to the following school year but if the family chooses not to return to CHM, the deposit will not be refunded.

## **TUITION AGREEMENT**

During enrollment, families will be asked to sign a Tuition Agreement which is a contract between the family and the school. Agreements, which are due at time of enrollment, notify the school of the family's commitment to pay tuition and sets up the payment plan schedule. The following Payment Plans are available: pay in full by July 15th to receive a 2% discount, make two payments one at the beginning of each semester (Sept & Jan), or set up monthly recurring payments (10 monthly payments).

The following payment plan and transactions fees are paid directly to TADs (subject to change):

\$20 to set up a payment plan of 1-2 transactions

\$55 for more than 2 transactions.

Electronic bank payments will incur an Electronic Processing (ACH) Fee starting at \$3 per transaction. As payment amounts exceed \$1000, the fee will assess at 0.3% with a maximum fee of \$7.

Credit card payments are charged a 3% transaction fee.

You may submit a check directly to the school for School Year Tuition only if you are paying in full otherwise all payments must be made through TADs.

## **DISCOUNTS**

A 5% discount is given to siblings after the first enrolled child. A 2% discount given to families who pay in full by July 15. The sibling and pay in full discount can be combined.

## **REFERRAL**

If you are responsible for the enrollment of a student new to CHM, you will receive \$100 towards your tuition. Said student will need to mention you by name on the application form.

## **COPY OF ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT**

*Electronically signed at time of enrollment via TADs*

I/We wish to enroll our child at Children's House Montessori School (CHM).

I/We understand that:

1. We are our child's primary educator.
2. We are entering into a partnership with CHM and we agree to work closely with our child's teachers to help our child grow emotionally, socially and academically.
3. We will strive to be involved in the school community and support the activities throughout the school year.
4. We will know and comply with the school policies and procedures outlined in the Student Handbook. The current year's Student Handbook is available online and the new handbook will be sent via email prior to the start of the school year.
5. We agree that our child's success at CHM is dependent upon regular attendance and punctuality. We will strive to ensure our child arrives on time, maintains regular attendance and if an absence is necessary, we will notify the school in a timely manner.
6. We agree to moderate and limit screen time use for our child based on current research and recommendations for our child's age.
7. (For Primary families) We agree that our child must be potty trained by the time they start school.
8. We are aware of and agree to the following financial responsibilities and commitments to CHM:
  - a) I/We are to pay the non-refundable application fee to Children's House Montessori.
  - b) I/We are to pay the deposit and that deposit will be applied to the tuition.
  - c) I/We understand that the deposit secures our child's spot at Children's House Montessori.
  - d) I/We understand that we forfeit the deposit if our child does not attend CHM.
  - e) I/We understand that we must give the school a 30-day notice in writing if we leave prior to the end of the school year. We will be responsible for paying remaining tuition if such a departure occurs. Any exceptions are at the discretion of the CHM Board of Directors. A current list of the Board of Directors is available on our web site.

- f) I/We understand that if our account is more than 30 days past due on December 1, we will be asked to withdraw our child from the second part of the school year unless the account can be made current by December 15.

## **IN-CLASSROOM ENRICHMENT**

We are always seeking ways to enrich our curriculum with outside resources. We do this through field trips, presentations, and workshops. Each year we contract with outside instructors to come in and do six-week in-class workshops with our students. This has included art, yoga, music, theatre, STEAM and Destination Imagination, but varies year to year depending on student interest and instructor availability. If you or someone you know has a special skill that you think our students might be interested in, please contact us!

## **PARENTS AS PARTNERS**

Children's House Montessori places great value on the engagement of parents in the educational process. We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children and serve as role models for the development of their child's life physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically.

As partners in this process, we ask parents:

- to establish a bedtime routine for good sleep hygiene for school nights;
- to provide nourishing breakfast to increase focus at school;
- to keep a conversation going about how the child is feeling;
- drop off and pick up their child from school on time;
- actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences;
- to notify the school when the student will be absent or tardy;
- to meet all financial obligations to the school;
- to inform the school of any special situations regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health;
- to read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education;
- to treat teachers and staff with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems.

## **SCHOOL AS A COMMUNITY**

If you are interested in engaging with our school community, we offer opportunities for parents to volunteer in the classroom generally for special events and other times when we need extra hands. We will either email or send out those opportunities in your child's green folder.

Children's House Montessori school is guided by a volunteer board of directors. Parents are welcome to attend monthly board meeting and are also welcome to join the board. If a parent doesn't wish to join the full board, but still wants to contribute, we also have committees such as Fundraising, Building & Grounds, Accreditation/Certification, Policies, Technology, and Ad-Hoc.

## **ROOM PARENTS**

Room parents are parent volunteers from each classroom who organize social functions and help support the classroom and the teachers.

## COMMUNICATION

Honest, open communication with your child's teacher is highly desirable and should be the primary contact person for questions that may arise about your child. Email or call the school at any time. If teachers give you their personal cell phone numbers, please be respectful of their time. Individual classroom emails will be given at parent orientation.

Please call the campus where your child attends to report any absences or tardies.

**Elementary Campus:** 605-341-0824

**Primary Campus:** 605-791-0466

**Director Email:** [director@chkids.net](mailto:director@chkids.net)

The school will seek to inform families about events at school via a variety of methods including email, student Wednesday folders, Facebook, and text. We will provide a monthly newsletter and calendar to give you an update on happenings in the class, special activities and general school information. Please read the newsletter and save the calendar! We will be using a green folder to help with communication for all children. Folders will be sent home on Wednesday and should be returned to the school, in your child's backpack, on Thursday. All families should check their child's backpack each day; kindergarten and elementary students should begin to take the responsibility to share the information brought home and ensure the folders are returned to school. **Please check for these folders each Wednesday and help your child remember to return them on Thursday.** Getting into a routine of checking/emptying backpacks DAILY helps with their independence and organizational skills. There will be \$5.00 charge for lost/missing folders.

The website ([www.chkids.net](http://www.chkids.net)) and the school's Facebook page will be updated regularly. We encourage you to use this as your primary source for information. Before emailing or calling the school to clarify dates or information for upcoming events, please check the website. You should be able to get any information you may need pertaining to activities/events either on the website, in the newsletter or on the calendar. Information will also be posted on the outdoor whiteboards next to each door.

We will also use our One-Call system to contact families regarding upcoming events and important notices. Please make sure your contact information remains current so you will continue to receive important notices. Let us know if any other caregivers need to be added to the school announcement contact list.

School text messages sent through the One-Call system will show up from number: 79041. Some carriers reject the messages, so if you are not receiving them, you may need to "opt-in" to receive messages. You can do so by text "YES" to 87569 in the text field.

## CONFERENCES

Parent Teacher Conferences are scheduled in the fall and in the spring. Children's House begins taking enrollment applications for the upcoming school year in February for current families and March for new families. Timely enrollment is important to secure your child's spot for the next school year. Teachers or parents may also request special conferences at any time during the year. You can help us by writing down

questions, comments or concerns you have pertaining to your child on the space provided on your scheduled conference form. This is our time to share information about your child's development with you and your time to share your insights about your child's development with us. One family member from each family is expected to attend these conferences. We will make every effort to accommodate your schedule if the assigned time does not work for you.

## **SNACKS**

Children's House Montessori **Primary Campus** maintains a **NO PEANUT AND NO TREE NUT environment**. Please do not send any peanuts or peanut related products or any tree nuts or tree nut related products to school with your child. We maintain a nut-free environment for the safety of our students. If you have any questions about a product, please ask the director before bringing the product on campus.

The **Elementary Campus** will allow peanuts and peanut related items in the classroom if no students are allergic during that school year. This is determined on a year-by-year basis and will be announced at orientation. You can also ask your teacher if it's okay to pack peanuts.

However, for all-school events we will only serve non-peanut items and request that any family donating or preparing a food item ensure that it is free of peanuts.

At the beginning of the school year we will enjoy our snack together. As the children become familiar with pouring, serving and cleaning up, we will go to individual snack time. This allows for your child to choose when they would like snack and it encourages their independence.

Except for special occasions, the drink of choice will be water. We believe this is the healthiest choice and the one that generates the least concern for food allergies.

Children's House will encourage positive environmental awareness and application at every possible opportunity. To this end the children will use glass plates, plastic or glass glasses and cloth napkins. All jars and cans are rinsed according to guidelines set down by Waste Management and picked up weekly as part of our commitment to the earth and our children.

## **SNACK SCHEDULE**

Each family will be asked to provide snack for the classroom one week per year. You will receive a schedule at orientation with your assigned week. At least once during the year, each child will be asked to bring **2 boxes of crackers** (healthy crackers, please) **and a large bag of fruit or vegetables** (enough for 25 students for the week) for group snack.

Children with allergies or other diet restrictions are welcome to keep their own box of crackers at school (such as gluten-free or dairy-free crackers). These will be provided to your child individually.

## **LUNCH**

Children attending full day school will need to pack a healthy lunch with appropriate quantities. We encourage you to pack a healthy, waste-free lunch. This could include a sandwich or another main dish, fresh fruit and/or fresh vegetables in a **reusable** container/s. Please include a cloth napkin, **reusable** silverware, drink containers and lunch boxes. If you include a treat, please make sure it is small. Children will be required to eat their regular lunch before having their treat. We will have water for them to drink but you can also send a water bottle with them. If you choose to send a drink other than water, ensure that it is not overly sugary or caffeinated.

For Primary students, we ask that your child's lunch not contain peanuts or tree nuts for the safety of our students, even if your student is not allergic. For example, no peanut butter, but seed butters are an acceptable alternative.

For Elementary students, we will allow food items that contain peanuts if we do not have any students in the classroom who are allergic. Please inquire with your classroom teacher.

## **REST TIME**

Full day preschool and Kindergarten students will have a 30-minute rest period each day after lunch. Teachers explain to the students that it's a time to rest their bodies and minds. If a child is still sleeping by the time rest time is over, the teachers will allow the child to sleep up to an additional 30 minutes before waking them.

Families will send to school a small blanket and pillow stored in a cloth bag or a roll up rest time sleeping bag. No full-size pillows or blankets please as space does not allow. This will be kept at school and sent home periodically for washing (generally over long weekends or school breaks).

## **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

In general, we ask preschool and kindergarten families to provide supplies for general use (such as tissue, paper towels, etc). Elementary students will receive a list from their teachers with supplies for individual use, but may also include a few items for classroom use. The School Supply list will go out to families in August. We also may request items for special group events like the Harvest Feast, Valentine's Day, Art Show, etc.

## **FLOWER SCHEDULE**

Each student will bring a bouquet of flowers to school once per year. The student will cut and arrange the flowers in vases to display throughout the classroom. You will receive a schedule with your assigned week during orientation.

## **BACKPACKS**

Backpacks should be brought to school every day and should be large enough to hold the student's green folder, hats, mittens and jackets. Even though the small ones are cute, they are not very practical.

## SLIPPERS

All students, teachers and volunteers will keep a pair of indoor shoes or slippers at school. Having a designated pair of indoor footwear assists primary children with their gross motor development, makes the environment a quiet place to work, and keeps the floor from getting dirty. Students can wear ballet slippers, plain bedroom slippers or other indoor shoes slip-on shoes such as Toms, Crocs, sandals, flats. We recommend that they have a rubber soled bottom or anti-skid bottom. Please **DO NOT** send character slippers or big fuzzy slippers. These only cause a distraction in the classroom. Please write your child's name clearly on the bottom of the slippers or inside the slippers. Show your child what their name looks like before you bring them to school. Slippers will remain at school. Children will put them on each day after their arrival and take them off at the end of each day and put them in the slipper basket. Teachers will periodically send slippers home for cleaning or if the slippers need to be replaced.

## BIRTHDAYS

### PRIMARY CLASSROOM

On the day we celebrate your child's birthday (or half birthday if their birthday occurs during the summer), we will have a special birthday walk. Parents are welcome to attend this event. If you wish to send treats for your child's birthday, please bring individually wrapped or packaged food items. We ask that the items do not contain peanuts or tree nuts for the safety of our students. Pencils, erasers or little notepads are also great treats. Because of food allergies and restrictions, treats brought to school for birthdays will be sent home with the children in their back packs. Prior to your child's birthday we will send home a paper for you to fill out that will tell about your child's years since birth. You will be asked to provide three pictures to show the class – a picture of your child as a baby, with family, and a favorite. These pictures will be kept in the Birthday Walk book until the end of the school year. The students like to flip through the book throughout the year and see their classmates' photos. Your child's birthday celebration will be prescheduled to ensure we do not double up our birthday celebrations.

### ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

The elementary classrooms do not have a formal celebration like the Birthday Walk, but families are welcome to send to school on your child's birthday a special treat for the class to share. Please discuss it in advance with your classroom teacher and be prepared to provide a treat for students with allergies or diet restrictions.

### INVITATIONS

Individual invitations for birthday parties need to be directly emailed, mailed, or handed to the invitees. If you are inviting everyone in the class, the teacher can distribute the invitations for you. There will be a school directory available for your convenience shortly after school begins.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

Children's House will cancel school for inclement weather any day that Rapid City Area Schools (RCAS) cancels classes. **If the RCAS is on a delayed morning schedule due to weather conditions, our morning half day preschool classes will be CANCELLED.** Full day preschool, Kindergarten, and Elementary classes will run on the same delayed schedule as the RCAS (ex: 2 hour delay). On blustery days you will receive a text message

and email from the school's One-Call system regarding cancellations or change in class schedule. We will also post it to our Facebook page.

## **NO CELL PHONE CAMPUS**

CHM is a no cell phone campus. Because of the hazards associated with using a cell phone while driving, we ask that you do not pull into the parking lot or exit the parking lot while on your cell phone. We ask that once on campus, you refrain from using your cell phone. Your children need and deserve your uninterrupted attention while you are dropping them off or picking them up from school. We appreciate your cooperation with this request.

Students who bring a tech device to school must store their device(s) in their backpack during school hours. The classroom teacher has the authority of when devices can and cannot be utilized. The school may not be held liable for the loss, theft, or damage to personal property.

## **CLOTHING**

Play clothes are encouraged – **simple** (clothing with no advertising logos or cartoon characters is preferred), **washable** (we never know when a painting opportunity may present itself!) and **easy to manage**. Jogging suits or elastic waist pants are great for the primary students. Dressing and bathroom needs are areas in which independence is especially emphasized. In order for the preschool children to become self-sufficient, their clothing must be easy for them to fasten and unfasten. Bib overalls and belt buckles are very difficult for most children to manage. Elementary students should ensure their clothing is appropriate for a school setting and is void of advertising, cartoon characters or trendy topics.

Please **do not send your child to school wearing cowboy boots, clogs or flip flops**. They can be dangerous and are a deterrent to active participation in all aspects of school activity. **Sneakers or rubber soled shoes are recommended.** **Velcro shoes are preferred unless your child can tie.** Remember the children take off and put on their own shoes at school. If you are having difficulty getting your child's shoes on, your child will have difficulty getting them on at school

Think of the changeable weather and dress your child warmly. Provide sweaters, rain gear, jackets, snow pants (also mittens, caps and boots in winter) even on sunny fall and spring days. We will spend some time outside every day in all but the worst of weather. A jacket in the fall and spring and dry socks in the winter for the kindergarten/elementary students kept in the backpack can be lifesavers. Ensure that the zipper is working on your child's coat and work on practicing with your child how to don and zip their own coat.

\*Please ensure **ALL REMOVEABLE CLOTHING IS MARKED** with your child's name. It is not unusual for more than one child to have identical coats, boots, mittens or sweaters.

If you are missing any items, the Lost and Found drop box is in the director's office.



## **RECESS**

Half day students will have one recess per day while all full day students will have a minimum of two recesses per day (sometimes more if the weather permits). If the wind chill falls below 10 degrees F or if the heat index rises about 100 degrees F, we will have recess indoors.

## **TOILET PROCEDURES**

All children attending CHM must be **TOTALLY** proficient with regards to bathroom needs and procedures. We will ensure children know where the bathroom is and that they know the rules about flushing toilets and washing hands. The children are allowed to go to the bathroom at any time. In case of an accident, you may be notified. If your child has an accident, be assured your child's personal well-being will be our main priority and the situation will be handled discreetly to avoid any embarrassment for your child. If you have concerns about your child's independence, a pair of socks, underwear and pants can be stored in a Ziploc bag at the bottom of their backpack.

## **HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

The events we celebrate at CHM are Harvest Feast (November), Holiday Party (December), Valentine's Day (February), Art Show (May) and Wheels Day (May). See school calendar for dates. Special activities will be planned in conjunction with each event. Classroom party days are kept very low key. Each child will be asked to bring special assigned treats or party supplies to one party during the year. Specific assignments will be given to each child no later than one week prior to the party.

## **WHEELS DAY**

For Wheels Day, students are invited to bring their bike, scooter, strider, or tricycle to school. Helmets are required to participate. A student bringing wheels only will not be allowed to ride without a helmet. In the Primary classroom, students will learn bike safety and will be allowed to drive their wheels around cones in the parking lot. The Elementary classrooms generally take a bike ride along the bike trails to the park. The elementary teacher will reach out requesting volunteer parent bikers for this event.

## **ART SHOW**

Parents are invited to attend the Art Show which is a compilation of the students' artwork throughout the year. This generally takes place the first Thursday in May – in the morning at the Primary Campus and in the afternoon at the Elementary Campus. The students prepare special treats and families are asked to donate supplies. The art posters are displayed on the playground and then families are allowed to take the art home at the end of the event.

## **WEEKLY PLAY DATES**

Informal weekly play dates at Wilderness Park located at 514 City Springs Road every Thursday weather permitting.

<b>SCHOOL EVENTS</b>				
<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Parents Attend?</b>	<b>Volunteers Needed?</b>
Halloween Trunk or Treat	Primary Campus Parking Lot	After school/evening	Yes	Yes
Harvest Feast (Nov) – students will prepare and share a meal together	Classroom	During school hours but school is on a shortened schedule	No - but teachers may ask parents to contribute food	Yes in Primary – during the days leading up to it to cut vegetables
Holiday Party (Dec) – students will wear their PJs, share a special treat, and watch a movie	Classroom	During school hours	No - but teachers may ask parents to contribute food	No
All School Holiday Party – Holiday Concert & potluck	Local church	After school/evening	Yes and grandparents and any other family	Yes. Help with set up and clean up.
Valentine’s Day (Feb)	Classroom	During school hours	No but teachers may ask parents to contribute food	Yes in Primary – Parents can sign up to help students distribute valentines
Art Show	At school	During school hours	Yes	Yes at both schools. Help with set up and clean up.
Wheels Day	At school	During school hours	No	Yes.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS AND BIRTH CERTIFICATES**

All new students should submit a copy of their birth certificate and immunization records upon enrollment. Please keep your child’s immunization record up to date by submitting a copy to the office. These documents must be submitted before the first day of school. Medical and religious exemptions are accepted – please inquire with the office for the form.

## **MEDICAL RELEASE**

CHM does not administer medications. If your child is in need of medicine during their time at school, parents/guardians will need to fill out a Medical Administration Authorization Form. If your child has a severe allergy and requires an Epi-pen, a dose must be secured in the school lock box, a medical release form must be completed and staff informed on the usage of the Epi-pen. It is imperative that all allergies are noted on the

Emergency Card and updated as needed. Please note that cough drops and allergy pills are also medicine and will be kept in the office as well, with parent form completed.

## **ILLNESS**

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to all of us. Your child may be sent home if any symptoms of illness appear during the day. In such cases your child will be isolated from the others and made comfortable in the office. The staff waiting with your child may wear a mask. You will be contacted immediately to come pick up your child. Please ensure the contact information on your emergency card is current and accurate.

## **WHEN YOUR CHILD IS TOO SICK**

Talk to your child's doctor or health care provider if you are unsure if they should stay home from school. As a general rule, your child should not go to school if they have:

- A fever over 100.4° Fahrenheit (F) or 38° Celsius (C) – Your child can return to school after they've been fever-free for 24 hours without antipyretics. Antipyretics are medicines that treat or prevent fever.
- Signs they are weak and tired. This is common with the flu.
- Diarrhea – Having loose poop (stool) more often than isn't caused by a change in diet.
- Throwing up (vomiting) – More than 2 times in a 24-hour period.
- Coughing that disrupts normal activity.
- Wheezing or shortness of breath.
- Pain from earache, headache, sore throat, or recent injury.
- Continuous runny nose that may be hard to manage at school.
- Yellow or green drainage from the eye(s).
- A new rash – Not all rashes mean your child must stay home from school. Check with their doctor or health care provider.

## **CONTAGIOUS DISEASE**

A contagious disease is one that can be spread by close contact with a person or object. Your child must stay home from school if they have a contagious disease. They may be contagious **before** showing any signs of illness. Some contagious diseases include:

- COVID-19
- Chickenpox
- The flu
- Pinkeye (conjunctivitis)
- Strep throat
- A cold
- Measles
- Whooping cough (pertussis)

## **COLDS**

Common colds are the main reason children miss school and adults miss work. Each year in the United States, there are millions of cases of the common cold. Adults average 2-3 colds per year and children have even more, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Colds are so common that if kids stayed home every time they had one, they'd never graduate. It's all right to send them to school with a case of the sniffles as long as they follow some tips to keep from spreading their germs.

Teach your child to wash their hands frequently, and ways to sneeze to avoid other people. Either use their elbow, or a tissue to keep the impact to a minimum. Teach your child to blow their nose and sanitize or wash their hands afterwards.

If the symptoms of your child's cold disrupt normal activity, such as excessive coughing or a lot of sinus drainage, please keep them at home.

Your child may come to school if a cold is over but a minor nasal drip remains. As a general rule of thumb, **if your child is too sick to play outside, they are too sick to be at school.**

## **COVID**

When a staff member or student has been exposed to, or tested positive for, COVID, the School will apply then-existing CDC guidelines to determine whether isolation, quarantine, or masking is required. The Board reserves the ability to deviate from CDC guidance as individual circumstances may warrant.

## **SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO ILLNESS**

If a large percentage of our teachers are ill and we are not able to find suitable substitutes, we may have to cancel classes for a few days until the teachers are healthy enough to return to school. In the event of a school closure, students in Kindergarten through Elementary will be invited to participate in online learning and/or be given take-home material.

## **NOTIFICATION**

Please notify the school where your child attends if your child will be out sick that day. The Range Road (Primary Campus) main phone number is 605-791-0466. The West Main Street (Elementary Campus) main phone number is 605-341-0824. You can also email or text your classroom teacher. Please inform us if your child does have a communicable disease (Covid, chicken pox, lice, mononucleosis, etc.) so that we are able to notify the other classroom families. The identity of the child and family will be kept confidential.

## **ACCIDENTAL INJURY**

All staff are CPR/First Aid Certified. In case of an accidental injury, we will treat your child with basic first aid at the school and we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent/guardian. If we cannot reach you, we will call the person listed on your Emergency Information Card and finally your physician. If necessary, we will

call Emergency Services. The school will maintain a consent form agreeing to this arrangement. It is imperative that you keep the school up-to-date on phone numbers, emergency numbers and all pertinent information.

## **SANITIZE FACILITIES**

Our buildings are cleaned daily with a deeper cleaning conducted weekly. Our process for cleaning/sanitizing includes:

- Thoroughly clean and disinfect areas using EPA-registered disinfectants. Use extra care when disinfecting high-touch areas such as floors, doorknobs, tables, handles, etc.
- Entrance doors to all facilities will be wiped down before/after students enter in the morning, mid-day, and after students leave.
- Bathrooms cleaned daily.
- Sanitize all chairs and tables in between uses.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers will be provided for each classroom.
- Additional measures to remind students of hygiene practices will be put into place.
- In the event of an any communicable disease outbreak, we will work with the South Dakota Department of Health for more advanced cleaning protocols.

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

Bullying involves an imbalance of power which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves. This may be seen or felt physically, emotionally or psychologically and includes social isolation or intimidation as well as any threat of violence. We strive to build classrooms that are safe and nurturing environments for all children and we provide lessons to students on how to be good friends, on acts kindness, and respecting everyone. We will reach out to parents immediately if any social situations arise that are concerning. The Anti-Bullying Policy will be available in the policy binder in the office and also on our website.

## **SECURITY ACCESS POLICY**

For increased safety of all members of the Children's House Montessori community, the doors will remain locked at all times. Only contracted staff and approved board members will have access either keyed or keyless. Families will have access through the office door and their child's classroom door according to the student's class schedule. Families using Before School Care may drop off their children through the office door or designated classroom door beginning at 7:30 a.m. We welcome families to visit the school at any time, but please ring the doorbell for entry.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Communicating with families will be a top priority, but will take place after the safety and security of the students and staff is ensured. Families will be communicated with via our One Call text/call and email service. We will conduct drills with the students throughout the year to practice evacuating the building safely. We will also drill our One Call system at these times to ensure that the system works when needed.

1. In the case of a lockdown, no unauthorized person will be allowed to enter or leave the building.

2. During emergency situations or a school lock down - STUDENTS will only be released to parent/guardian or designee on the student emergency form once authorities and/or administration have declared it safe to release students.
3. In the event of an evacuation, a **STUDENT RELEASE STATION** will be established at the **Westminster Presbyterian Church 1012 Sioux San Dr. Rapid City, SD 57702**. All parents or designees who come for students must sign out their child.
4. THE SCHOOL will be in contact with various local emergency services during any type of emergency. We ask for family help and cooperation in the following areas: DO NOT call the school. Communication lines must remain open for emergency calls. DO NOT immediately drive to the school following an emergency. The school access route and street entrance areas must remain clear for emergency vehicles.

## PARENT RESOURCES

### ON MONTESSORI

Books:

1. *The Montessori Method* by Maria Montessori
2. *The Absorbent Mind* by Maria Montessori
3. *Children Who Are Not Yet Peaceful* by Donna Bryant Goetz
4. *Children of the Universe Cosmic Education in the Montessori Elementary Classroom* by Michael and D'Neil Duffy
5. *Montessori for Every Family – A practical parenting guide to living, loving, and learning* by Tim Seldin and Lorna McGrath

Online:

1. The American Montessori Society web site -- <https://amshq.org/>

### ON SCREEN TIME

Too much screen time use for children can have a negative effect on their development of executive functioning skills, fine motor skills (i.e. pencil grip), and social emotional skills.

Latest research provided by: Muppalla SK, Vuppalapati S, Reddy Pulliahgaru A, Sreenivasulu H. Effects of Excessive Screen Time on Child Development: An Updated Review and Strategies for Management. *Cureus*. 2023 Jun 18;15(6):e40608. doi: 10.7759/cureus.40608. PMID: 37476119; PMCID: PMC10353947.

Parents play a crucial role in managing and reducing screen time by raising awareness, setting boundaries, and providing behavioral controls. Parental limitations and the absence of screens in bedrooms have been found to significantly reduce screen usage. Parents should also set an example by managing their own screen time. Overall, it is important for caregivers, educators, and healthcare professionals to understand the potential risks of excessive screen usage and implement strategies to promote healthy development in children, including alternative activities that foster cognitive, linguistic, and social-emotional skills. We can reduce the possible negative impacts of excessive screen time and promote children's healthy development and well-being by increasing knowledge and encouraging alternative activities that stimulate development.

At Children’s House Montessori, we appreciate parents being aware of screen time guidelines for their child’s age and working to build responsible screen time use in the household. Helping children moderate screen time use now sets them up for future use. Guidelines that have helped parents establish healthy habits around screen use include:

- Creating a schedule for screen use helps with predictability and cuts down on tantrums. Exceptions can be made for travel or sick days.
- Setting etiquette such as pausing when someone is talking.
- No screen time use one hour before bedtime cuts down on the risk of interfering with sleep.
- Video chatting with relatives or looking up things with a parent are considered interactive use and are positive ways to show the value of technology.

For current research and additional guidance please review the following resources:

### SCREEN TIME RESOURCES

- 1) Increased screen time: implications for early childhood development and behavior. Radesky JS, Christakis DA. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pcl.2016.06.006>. *Pediatr Clin North Am.* 2016;63:827–839.)
- 2) (2022, July 20). Beyond Screen Time: Help Your Kids Build Healthy Media Use Habits *HealthyChildren.org American Academy of Pediatrics.* Feb. 14, 2024.
- 3) (2022, March 11). How Much Screen Time Is OK For My Kids? *Common Sense Media.* Feb. 8, 2024. <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/articles/how-much-screen-time-is-ok-for-my-kids>
- 4) Screen media overuse and associated physical, cognitive, and emotional/behavioral outcomes in children and adolescents: an integrative review. Liu J, Riesch S, Tien J, Lipman T, Pinto-Martin J, O'Sullivan A. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedhc.2021.06.003>. *J Pediatr Health Care.* 2022;36:99–109.
- 5) Screen time and sleep among school-aged children and adolescents: a systematic literature review. Hale L, Guan S. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smrv.2014.07.007>. *Sleep Med Rev.* 2015;21:50–58.
- 6) *Parenting Generation Screen - Guiding Your Kids to be Wise in a Digital World* By Jonathan Mckee
- 7) *Digital Kids: How to Balance Screen Time, and Why it Matters* by Martin L. Kutscher
- 8) *The Gaming Overload Workbook: A Teen’s Guide to Balancing Screen Time* by Randy Kulman
- 9) *The Art of Screen Time: How Your Family can Balance Digital Media and Real Life* by Anya Kamenetz