



# *Parent Handbook*

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*FAR HORIZONS MONTESSORI SCHOOL*

*PARENT HANDBOOK 2024-25*

Hopefully, this handbook will enable you, the parent/guardians, to work with us in providing the best Montessori experience for your child/children. Should you have any questions concerning this information don't hesitate to call.

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## INTRODUCTION

Although the entrance age varies in individual schools, a child can usually enter a Montessori classroom between the ages of two and one half and three, depending on when he can be happy and comfortable in a classroom situation. She will begin with the simplest exercises based on activities which all children enjoy. The equipment which he used at three and four will help him to develop the concentration, coordination and working habits necessary for the more advanced exercises he will perform in the elementary. The entire program of learning is purposefully structured. Therefore, optimum results cannot be expected for a child who misses the early years of the cycle, or for one who is withdrawn before she finished the basic materials.

Parents should understand that a Montessori school is neither a baby-sitting service nor a play school that prepares a child for traditional kindergarten. Rather, it is a unique cycle of learning designed to take advantage of the child's sensitive years between three and six, eventually leading to the elementary class. A child who acquires the basic skills of reading and arithmetic in this natural way has the advantage of beginning her education without drudgery, boredom or discouragement. By pursuing his individual interests in a Montessori classroom, he gains an early enthusiasm for learning, which is the key to his becoming a truly educated person.

## SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Far Horizons Montessori School follows the teaching methods developed by Maria Montessori (1870-1952). We are also dedicated to maintaining the high academic standards established by the Oregon Department of Education. We at Far Horizons create a non-violent, non-sexist, non-racist environment in which cross-cultural ideas and values are presented and valued. The Montessori method is based on a respect for children and the individual's desire to learn.

The children at Far Horizons are aided and directed in the process of self-education by trained Montessori teachers and the Montessori learning materials. A natural inner order leads the child from interest to interest and subject to subject. The curriculum is individualized, although small & large group lessons are regularly scheduled to present new subjects.

Our Montessori classrooms develop the privileges and responsibilities of freedom. The child learns care of the environment and the person as well as following his or her sensitive learning periods to more specific types of knowledge and subject matter.

Montessori learning materials and apparatus help the child master practical life experience's building concentration which progress to math, language, geography, history, etc. The materials are sensorially based, aiding the child to develop a well-defined concrete concept which leads to abstract concept formulation. Far Horizons Montessori School offers a curriculum including art, music, drama, Spanish, computer use, and physical education as well as the traditional subjects; mathematics, reading, social studies, handwriting, health and science.

Far Horizons Montessori School is a family-oriented school. We offer two weekend days a year for working parents to come in to visit their children in the classroom, as well as an open-door policy to all parents to visit and observe at any time.

The children at Far Horizons truly do feel "at home" in this nurturing environment. The families who choose to be here believe in our approach to education, classroom learning, family and community inclusiveness.

## THE MONTESSORI METHOD

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that no human being is educated by another person. She/he must do it for themselves or it will never be done. A truly educated individual continues learning long after the hours and years spent in the classroom because she/he is motivated from within by a natural curiosity and love for knowledge. Dr. Montessori felt, therefore, that the goal of early childhood education should not be to fill the child with facts from a pre-selected course of studies, but rather to cultivate the child's own natural desire to learn.

In the Montessori classroom this objective is approached in two ways: first, by allowing each child to experience the excitement of learning by choice rather than by being forced; and second, by helping the child to perfect all her/his natural tools for learning, so that her/his ability will be at a maximum in future learning situations. The Montessori materials have this dual long-range purpose in addition to their immediate purpose of giving specific information to the child.

### QUIET RULE

While in school, hallway and elsewhere – please adhere to our general quiet rule. Always use a soft voice. As a courtesy to the teachers, children and others please turn off your cell phone while in the school building.

**No smoking of any kind at any time on school grounds.**

### CHILDCARE

The regular after school childcare hours are “end of school day” to 6:00 pm. **A late fee past 6:00 pm will be charged at a rate of \$3.00 per minute, to be paid directly to the teacher staying late with your child.**

We ask you to sign up and commit to a flat rate for aftercare. Please contact Lynn if you need this service. Activities and art projects as well as free play will be part of the childcare program.

Contracted childcare will be available on all No School Days if there are enough children. We must have a minimum of 5 children sign up to be open on No School Days (due to stable group needs). Look for sign ups via email. Once you sign up for the hours needed, you are committing to pay for those hours even if you don't use them. We staff for No School childcare days based on our sign ups. We will be closed on National Holidays.

## PARKING & ENTRANCE

Far Horizons entrance can be accessed from the driveway off 25th Place. Please do not enter the parking lot from Hilyard Street. To exit our parking lot, please use Hilyard Street only. We will have the safest parking lot if we are consistent in how we enter and exit, as well as how we use Hilyard Street. Be mindful of busy drop off and pick up times and exit onto Hilyard.

The crosswalk is always to be used to cross the parking lot with your child. Four spaces to the side of the crosswalk are not to be used for parking. (You will see they are filled in with lines and marked by cones.)

We keep Hilyard Street doors and 25th Place doors always locked for security, as well as parking lot entrance doors 9:30am-2:30pm. Call us or tap on the window to enter.

**Please always turn off car engines.**

**You may not leave other children in vehicles unattended.**

## ARRIVAL PROCEDURE

When you arrive, exit your car with all supplies needed for the day. Approach the entrance to your classroom and wait to be greeted by a teacher. Say goodbye briefly and we will walk them to the door and direct them into their classroom. Primary 1 and 2 will enter through the glass doors, Lower Elementary will use the outside stairs, and Upper Elementary will use the Multipurpose Room doors.

## DISMISSAL

Pick up will be similar to drop off. Please wait for your turn to receive your child during your scheduled classroom dismissal time. If you are using aftercare or are picking up during an unusual time that day, you can alert us to your arrival in several ways. Primary 1 and 2 have windows to the left and right of the glass doors. Lower Elementary has a window to the right of the door at the top of the outside staircase, and Upper Elementary has windows on the south end of the building. Knock on the window and we will bring your child to the door. And then if none of that works, our phone number will be posted on the Parent Board so that you can call the school phone and let us know that you are here. If we are on the playground, line up at the gate and wait for us to bring your child over.

## LUNCH AND SNACK

All children will need to bring a lunch box, basket, or sack lunch labeled with her/his name, with an ice pack when needed. We strongly encourage you to send a “balanced meal” in your child’s lunch. The children will be learning how to make healthful

food choices and should be encouraged to pack their own lunch. Please no candy, soda pop, gum, fast food lunches, or single use items. Think about using all reusable containers. Our licensing requires us to check lunches, add to, and send notices if lunches are deficient. Drinks need to be contained in reusable containers so the lids can be closed tight.

Some parents have been concerned that their children have not eaten their lunch. If that happens consistently let us know. Also, if your child stays for childcare, we encourage them to eat leftovers as an additional p.m. snack.

A healthful snack will be served daily in the morning and in after school childcare. Daily snack will be posted. Let us know about dietary do's and don'ts, and food allergies. If you would like to bring a special snack from time to time contact your child's teacher.

### REST TIME

If your child is under five, resting is required, and nap is available. No stuffed animals or pacifiers at nap. Please send a nap blanket to be kept at school and take it home on Fridays to wash and return on Monday mornings.

### TOILET TRAINING POLICY

All children attending Far Horizons must be toilet trained when they begin school. We realize there are often setbacks, or the child is still working on mastery. Should this be the case, we will set a 30-day trial period to be evaluated by the teachers. \*No pullups are allowed at school, training pants only please. We are not licensed for "diapers."

### CLOTHING

Children in the Primary classrooms need 2 full sets of extra clothes and two pairs of underwear. Each item must be labeled with your child's name. When clothes are used please refill. Please house these items in a container in their cubby, labeled with your child's name.

Please check our lost and found from time to time for missing items.

### INDOOR SHOES

All children will be wearing an indoor shoe during their school day. No outdoor shoes will be worn in the classrooms. We ask that the indoor shoe has a solid sole for use outside during our monthly fire drills, and not be distracting to other students.

## BIRTHDAYS

Parents and children have enjoyed bringing a snack on the child's birthday. We appreciate **healthy snacks** i.e; fruits, veggies, nuts, cheese, banana type cakes. We will need store-bought food, not prepared in the home this year. We also would like a short, written biography with highlights of your child's life and baby photos, one photo for each year of age. **Please do not bring birthday invitations to school.** It's too hard on those not invited. Use the school phone book and ask for a new copy if needed.

## SIBLINGS

Siblings not enrolled must always be supervised by their parents. Siblings may come to childcare with the enrolled student once we receive the required paperwork.

## SCHOOL FORMS

Please make sure all your registration and immunization forms are at school by your child's first day of attendance. Children will not be accepted without completed forms.

If someone new is coming to pick up your child, please send an email or call and let us know. We will not release any children unless we receive authorization from you, and we will ask for I.D. if we do not know the person.

## HEALTH

We **STRONGLY** urge you to keep your child home when ill. You know best when your child is not up to par. Please keep your child home for the following reasons:

fever	persistent pain	chills
diarrhea	enlarged glands	rash
earache	inflamed eyes	cough
runny nose	vomiting	temperature

Please keep your child home if they are showing any signs of illness. Get a covid test if the symptoms might be explained by that illness. If your child does test positive for Covid, please stay home for 5 days. They can return after that with improved symptoms and no fever for 24 hours.

There will be outdoor play daily. In general, a child too ill to partake in this activity should be home.

## MEDICATION

Sometimes, it is necessary for your child to have medication while at school. It must be in the original bottle with both the child's name and doctor's name, and directions for use. You will also need to use a medical authorization form to authorize us to administer it. Email for a copy.



## CONFERENCES AND OBSERVATIONS

We schedule one conference a year. However, anytime you need to talk with us, call or email for a conference appointment or come in and make an appointment. The fall conference will be in person, getting to know each other and checking in. A written report will be issued in June with conference in addition if necessary.

## SCHOOL CALENDAR

We follow Eugene School District 4J's calendar --- with some exceptions. We take several workdays for teachers to come in and ready the Montessori environment. There is no school on these days, but childcare is available with sign up.

We take all regular school holidays including Winter and Spring vacations. Please mark these days on your calendars and keep Far Horizons' calendar to refer to throughout the school year. Childcare is available on these breaks if there are enough children. We will be closed for national holidays.

We close school for weather if Eugene School District 4J closes. Please tune in to your radio or computer for 4j closures and delays. You may also check in with Lynn by email. We will post an alert on our website.

## HOLIDAYS, ILLNESS & VACATIONS

There will be no credits or "make-up" days for holidays, illness, or vacations. Tuition is computed on a yearly basis as stated in the enrollment agreement.

## BILLING QUESTIONS

Lynn is available at 541-790-2495. Email is also a great way to get your questions answered.

## TUITION

Tuition is computed on a yearly basis. You may choose to break this tuition into 10 monthly payments, pay quarterly, or yearly.

Tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> school day of the month unless you have made other arrangements. **You have until the 5th of each month before your bill is charged a \$25.00 service charge.** This applies to childcare charges as well as tuition. If the bill is not taken care of then you will be asked to take your child out of school. Tuition payments should be handed to one of the teachers or paid online.

## WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

Withdrawal procedures are outlined in your enrollment agreement. All students must give a 60-day written notice along with explanation of withdrawal. Withdrawal notice is not accepted after March 15 without employer notice of transfer.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Please make appointments to talk with Lynn with any concerns or grievances. We want to work together with you to support your child.

All daily messages should be emailed. Please keep us informed regarding illness, changes in your child's schedule, trips, etc. Also notify us immediately of any change of address, telephone, or authorized persons.

Parent-Teacher communication is very important, and we urge you to call us with concerns (we also like to hear good things you are feeling!).

Parent letters will be written often. These contain a lot of information about the school. Please provide an email address to receive letters. Both parents should read these letters so you can gather all the school info you need.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Our complete emergency procedures are posted on our website:  
[www.farhorizonsmontessori.com](http://www.farhorizonsmontessori.com)

Should we have to evacuate our school, we will take the children to the Amazon Community Center at 2580 Hilyard Street, Eugene OR 97405. We will take our emergency kits complete with emergency contact lists. We will contact you by phone and/or email. We have monthly emergency drills for fire, earthquake, lockdown, and evacuation. If the Amazon Community Center is also unsafe, we will go to Roosevelt Middle School at 500 East 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

## SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY

1. Setting loving and consistent limits
2. Dreikerine Philosophy - logical consequences, i.e. a child writes on the walls with crayons, then she isn't allowed to use crayons for a while and clean the walls.
3. Positive Reinforcement
4. Moral Education - discussions about feelings, appropriate behavior and coping skills
5. If behavior is extreme, dangerous to self or others or property then "time-out" is used. Sometimes parents need to be called to pick up their child. Meetings are called with parents. Children may be put on a 30-day probationary period.
6. Peaceable discussion between children involved with a teacher mediating

## 7. Grace and Courtesy lessons

### SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

We define special needs as either physical, educational, or emotional limitations. As a staff we are not trained in Special Education. However, we are willing to accept special needs children for a 30-day trial period with the limit of 1 or 2 per classroom depending on the needs of the child. Before acceptance we will:

1. Observe the child interacting in the classroom
2. Evaluate whether we can meet her/his needs
3. Obtain professional help if necessary
4. Work closely with the parents

### DIVORCED FAMILIES

As advocates for your child we need to set up a peaceful situation at school. Far Horizons needs to have all the pertinent information, i.e. divorce decree, court order, pickup schedules, etc. We must remain neutral; thus, we do not need details of relationships unless it directly relates to your child. We need you to set up a positive pick-up and drop off situation. There may be no confrontations between ex-spouses on the school premises, especially in front of the children.

### TO HELP MAKE SCHOOL A SAFE PLACE

We try very hard to make Far Horizons a safe loving place for your child. At times problems occur at school between the children. We want to be able to have open communication with you, the parents, when this occurs. And perhaps communication between the teacher, the child/children and respective parents. Please expect that we will call and send your child home if violent actions occur. If a child is constantly jeopardizing the safety of the group and, as a staff, we feel we've done all we can, he or she will be asked to leave Far Horizons.

### STAFF/CHILD/PARENT CRISIS STRATEGY

A crisis situation is any relationship or behavior (directly experienced or observed) which has become unmanageable. Unmanageable is the inability to confront the situation or person both positively and directly.

When an unmanageable situation occurs;

1. Write down incident as soon as possible, recording objective facts and subjective feelings.
2. Call and schedule a meeting with Lynn and discuss.
3. Plan strategies with Lynn and/or classroom teachers.  
Follow up meetings may be necessary

May call in outside facilitator or professional

May call staff meeting

4. Evaluation of situation with Lynn (and other involved parties if deemed necessary).

\*Clear, direct, compassionate communication is our goal.

\*We reserve the right to refuse service at any time parent behavior is not respectful.