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Parent Handbook

This handbook is intended to familiarize families with current policy, practices and standards. This Parent Handbook is available on our website www.peachtreemontessori.com/pmparenthandbook.pdf. Print copies are available upon request. We reserve the right to revise its policies, practices and standards as deemed appropriate by us.

WELCOME

We are delighted you have chosen Peachtree Montessori for your childcare needs. Our goal is to provide a safe and secure environment for your child that fosters physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Parents and/or guardians, as a child's first and most important teachers, are an important part of our program. While you, as parents or guardians, are participating in the program, we hope to develop a partnership, between home and school, which benefits the development and growth of your child. We have teachers who are dedicated to providing quality child care for our children. Please take the time to read this handbook, as it will answer many of the questions you may have concerning our policies and procedures. If you still have any questions or concerns, feel free to talk to your child's teacher or the center's director. If you would rather send an email please do so at info@peachtreemontessori.com. We certainly want the best for you and your child.

PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM

Children self-construct the knowledge through physical and mental activity which they constantly explore in a stable and fun-loving environment. Children are also taught responsibility at their individual sustainable pace in a classroom environment. Our school has multiple classrooms, each classroom offers flexibility to your child. Our method of childcare or pre-schooling is only a guide to the daily activities of your child. We believe flexibility is important in working with children as it caters to each child appropriately. The primary objective of our program is to support and encourage the development of your child as an individual. We provide an encouraging environment to bring out the child's learning skills. Pre-schooling has become an important part of our children's lives. Children are tender, curious, wonderful beings who need a safe and enriching environment to grow and thrive. We will do our best to ensure the safety, comfort, health and happiness of all children in our care at all times and will present them with the opportunity to learn at their own pace. We strive to assist the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of each child. We aim to provide a safe, supportive and nurturing atmosphere where all children are able to express their creativity freely. We will strive to keep the lines of communication open between the families and staff.

PRE-ENROLLMENT VISITS

We believe that children, staff, and parents do best when everyone participates in "get-to-know-you" sessions prior to the first day of care or pre-school. This helps children get used to the staff and allows parents plenty of time to

ask questions of the provider. It also helps everyone feel more comfortable with the situation. This benefits everyone by allowing us to approach the first day of care with ease which helps reduce stress for everyone. Please ask us about this aspect of your participation at enrollment.

HOURS OF CARE & DROP-OFF

We have multiple centers. Our centers are generally open Monday through Friday 7:00AM to 6:00PM or 8:00AM to 6:00PM. Please check our website to see your center's opening hours. We are closed for all major holidays and for other unforeseen circumstances or reasons including inclement weather, among others. Generally, if the local school system is closed for inclement weather, we will be closed too.

Parents are expected to accompany their child into the center. Our teachers will be glad to assist you and your child at your drop-off time. Teachers, however will not assume direct responsibility for your child until you are ready to walk out of the building. It is important for you to keep a watchful eye on your child while you are on the premises.

Lastly, when leaving, please do not allow your child to run to your vehicle while you are still inside the building.

VISITS AND PHONE CALLS DURING REGULAR CARE HOURS

Some parents find it beneficial to gradually phase their child into the daycare. This process may include several visits during the first few days of attendance and perhaps may include staying for several hours on the first day. Phasing-in assists not only the child to a new schedule and a new program but also the parents who are more at ease knowing that their child will adjust happily. We expect that parents will take this opportunity to watch their children at the school.

In addition, parents and guardians are welcome to drop by unannounced at any time during the hours their children are in care. Please be aware, however, that children may not really benefit from these visits. Many children will cry or act "clingy" during drop off and pick up times, but will quickly adjust and start playing happily once mom or dad is out of sight. Having such irregular additional visits could unintentionally serve to interrupt the child's comfortable routine, and can lead to increased distress during regular transition times.

Since we are frequently very busy attending to the children's needs, it may be difficult for us to answer the

phone during regular care hours. We do have voicemail and check it periodically for messages. Please limit phone calls for your children while they are in our care as these calls can disrupt your child's routine.

Please do not call or text the teachers' personal cell phone numbers. Our policy prohibits teachers from saving parents' telephone numbers on their personal devices. In addition, our policy also prohibits cell phone use within the school.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent conferences can be scheduled at request with the parents and/or guardian as desired. We will discuss your child's development, discipline strategies and their needs, among other things. We would welcome your feedback on effectiveness as an educator and care provider, as well as other issues and concerns that may arise. By keeping the lines of communication open, we hope to foster a more stable and enjoyable working relationship with the families we serve.

REGISTRATION FEE

A nonrefundable registration fee is required *annually* for each child. Fee is subject to change without notice. In addition, we may require a security deposit during enrollment. Deposit is refundable if you provide a 30-calendar day advance notice of removal of your child from our care.

TUITION & FEES

Tuition is based on the school year and there is no credit for any absences. We also do not swap a scheduled day for another day. Tuition is due and payable in advance on the first of the month for the entire month. Late fee is assessed per the schedule. There are no refunds, tuition adjustments or "make-up days" when a child is absent due to weather, holidays, illness, or family vacation or when the center is close due to holidays or unforeseen circumstances. Payment in full is required to maintain a place for the child on the school roster. If payments obligations are not met when due, the parents and/or legal guardians are responsible for all collections, including reasonable attorney fees, whether or not a lawsuit is started as a part of the collection process.

TUITION DISCOUNTS

When a family has more than one student enrolled within a school year, a 10% discount may be offered from time to time to the second child's tuition based only on a full-time 5-day enrollment. We may offer other discounts from time to time. Please check our website for any promotions.

Discounts may be discontinued at any time without notice. Continuation of discount offered to you is at the discretion of our director and only to parents who are in good standing in paying tuition on a timely basis. *Please note that reduced fee is a privilege not a right.*

PAYMENT TERMS

We prefer to receive payment by checks or via ACH debits. A late payment charge is levied automatically if tuition is not received when due. We do not have any exceptions for late fee charges. In the unlikely event of a returned check or a rejected ACH, we will require a \$35 service charge. It is your responsibility to ensure there are sufficient funds in your account regardless of when we deposit checks or debit your account via ACH. Late fee may also be assessed if another replacement check or payment is not provided immediately.

WITHDRAWING FROM OUR PROGRAM

If you decide to withdraw from our program, we require a 30-calendar day written notice of your withdrawal, or your deposit will be forfeited. You are still responsible for 30-days of tuition if notice of withdrawal is not provided on a timely basis. We do not provide exceptions to this policy under any circumstances such as financial hardship, change of job, etc.

The parents and child, following their last day of enrollment, are not permitted to re-enter the school premises without prior permission of the center's executive director or director. A withdrawn child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment if they wish to return to the school following the last day of enrollment. Appointments are made at the discretion of the director and are not a right of the withdrawn child or parent.

SIGNING-IN AND -OUT

Upon arrival at the center, the parents or the adult dropping the child off must sign the child into care on the sign-in system/book located in the lobby or the classroom. Children are required to be escorted by their parent or the adult dropping them off, to their designated classroom. Parents are required to help children put away their outerwear and get settled for the day. We discourage parents from sneaking out of the center. Some children exhibit separation anxiety when it is time for their parent to leave. The staff in the classroom will comfort and assist the child through the anxious time. Parents are required to notify the staff of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. The parent must present the special instructions in the form of a letter and verbally discuss them with either the classroom staff or the director.

Regular attendance is strongly encouraged for the benefit of the child as well as the classroom as a whole. If your child will be absent, please call the center as soon as possible so your child's teacher knows about the absence from the parent. If your child will be absent for an extended period of time (more than 4-5 days), the center must be notified in writing of the date the absence begins and the expected date your child will return.

HOLIDAYS & CLOSINGS

School will be closed on the following holidays:

Independence Day (July 4th or as declared), Labor Day (1st Monday in September), Election day (when applicable), Columbus Day, Rosh Hashanah, Thanksgiving Day (third Thursday in November) Thanksgiving Day After (fourth Friday in November), Christmas Eve (December 24th or weekday before), Christmas Day (December 25th or holiday as declared), New Year's Eve (December 31st or weekday before), New Year's Day (January 1st or first working day), Martin Luther King, Jr Day (third Monday in January), President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day (last Monday in May).

In addition, the center may be closed early on certain days or close for the entire day because of unforeseen circumstances including inclement weather as described herein. In the event of an emergency closing and/or inclement weather, parents will be notified by email and/or phone call. Generally, during the school year if the district schools close for inclement weather our school will remain closed. Should the school need to close in the middle of the day, the school staff will attempt to first reach the child's parents to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made. Should the center need to close for any reason, tuition will not be refunded or reduced for closures of less than 10 school days. If the closure extends beyond 10 school days, parents will have their tuition reduced proportionately.

LATE PICK-UP

We will assess a late fee if you pick up your child later than the regularly scheduled time. If you have a regular schedule pick-up time before 1:00PM, you will be assessed a late fee of charged \$5.00 per 10-minute interval per child. If your regular scheduled pick-up time is after 1:00PM, you will be charged \$1.00 per minute until pick-up. We will call the governmental authorities (1-877-NJ-ABUSE) if we do not know your pick-up plan for the day and your child is not picked up by 7:00PM. We also

reserve the right to call such authorities at any time before 7:00PM as we deem it necessary. Under no circumstances will our staff drive your child to your home or any other location directed by you.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

We will not release your child to anyone other than his or her parent(s) or legal guardian, as indicated by your signature(s) on the form. If you wish to have anyone else pick up your child, you will need to provide a signed consent form in advance, listing the dates on which this person may pick up your child.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by a court order, we will need documentation to that effect and will comply with the terms of the court order.

In the event of an emergency, we will attempt to contact you and/or your spouse, or the child's legal guardian, or any other adult listed on your emergency contact form for approval. If we are not familiar with the person, we will require a valid photo ID card from an Authorized Government Agency (such as a valid driver license) as proof of identification before we release the child into their custody.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

We do not believe in spanking, slapping, smacking, yelling or hitting of any kind. For children under the age of about 18 months, we find it most effective to remove the child from the situation, and redirect their attention elsewhere. Although we will explain to the child that the offending behavior was inappropriate, children of this age are rarely able to fully understand what they have done. Fortunately, at this age their attention span is also usually shorter than those of older children, so simply showing a different toy or activity usually helps. For children of about age 2 and older, we will alert the child to the offense by firmly saying "no," explaining why the behavior is unacceptable, and offering the child the choice to correct his/her behavior. We will also encourage children to apologize to the other children involved, when developmentally appropriate. This method not only stops the offending behavior, but also teaches the child consequences, responsibilities, and empathy in a positive manner.

In the rare instance that we feel any child in our care has discipline problems that continue to persist we will request a conference with the parent(s) and/or guardians. If an understanding cannot be reached, we reserve the right to terminate our care immediately in order to guarantee the comfort and safety of the other children in our care.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Our staff is required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. Our staff are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Our staff cannot be held liable for reports made to governmental authorities which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith." Causes for reporting (1-877-NJ-ABUSE) suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Not providing appropriate meals including a drink for your child
- Sending a sick child to school over medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

EXPULSION POLICY

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short-term or permanent basis. We will do everything possible to work with the parents in order to prevent this policy to be enforced. The following reasons, among others, may cause us to expel your child:

Immediate causes for expulsion: (a) when child is at risk of causing serious injury to another child or himself/herself, (b) parent threatens physical or intimidating actions towards our staff, (c) parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff, (d) failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments, (e) failure to complete required forms, (f) habitual tardiness when picking up your child, and (g) other at the discretion of the director. Habitual late payments over time and non-payment of tuition in any month by the end of grace period will result in immediate expulsion.

Child's actions for expulsion: (a) failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time, (b) uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts, (c) bullying or hurting other children no pushing, kicking, punching, cursing etc., (d)

threatening other children with violent words, and (e) other at the discretion of the director.

Schedule of expulsion: If the remedial actions have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center. The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period and the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the center. The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two-week notice depending on the link to other children's welfare or safety). Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

A full expulsion policy is available for your review at the center.

STAFF HIRED BY PARENTS

We strongly discourage our staff from making independent child care arrangements with families at the school. However, in the event that you enter into an agreement with our staff to babysit for your family outside of our normal work hours (6:30AM – 6:30PM after adding 30 minutes for commuting time), it must be done away from our school and with the full knowledge and understanding that the baby sitter enters into such an agreement as a private citizen and not as a school employee. We cannot be responsible for our staff away from school and will not be liable for their acts or omissions when not on our property including the transportation of children. If you do enter into an arrangement, you will be required to sign acknowledgement and waiver to this effect.

If you hire our employee to work for you on a part-time or a full-time basis and that staff resigns from their position with us in order to accept your employment offer, you will be required to pay us a finder's fee equivalent to the highest full month's tuition you paid while your child attended the school.

If our employee resigns to leave the school and you hire him/her within 6 months of his/her resignation on a part-time or a full-time basis, you will be required to pay us a finder's fee equivalent to the highest full month's tuition you paid while your child attended the school.

You will also be responsible for all reasonable collection charges incurred if such fee remains unpaid. We strongly discourage parents and employees to be in such position.

FOOD ALLERGIES

To avoid triggering allergic reaction, we will not serve the following foods to children under 12 months of age, unless you specifically approve them for your child:

- citrus fruits and juices
- wheat products such as crackers

Please alert us to any suspected food sensitivities or allergies.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Our centers do not provide meals to children. Please pack breakfast and/or lunch for your child that does not require heating or cooking. In addition, it is very helpful to have fruit peeled or sliced. The teachers have a limited amount of time in which to prepare the lunches. Lunch boxes/bags should be clearly labeled with your child's name. Your child will be encouraged to eat the balanced meal that you provide. However, if your child refuses certain foods, he/she will not be forced to finish his or her meals. If your child has a food allergy, please complete a Food Allergy Action Plan form which is available in the office. If medication for an allergic reaction is provided, please have your physician sign the Food Allergy Action Plan as well.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

We will not administer any type of medication, including prescription and over-the-counter medications without a signed consent form. This form can be filled out when dropping off your child in the morning. The following information will be needed in order for us to administer medication.

- The child's name, age and current weight
- The name and phone number of your child's doctor
- The name and number of the prescribing doctor (if different)
- The name of the medication
- Possible side effects of medication
- Reason for needing the medication
- Instructions for proper storage and preparation of the medication (such as: should it be refrigerated, shaken, mixed in the water, etc.)

All prescription medications must have been prescribed recently, and must be clearly labeled for your child from

the pharmacy. The medication must be in a clearly-labeled child proof container. We would prefer you to bring the medication in a small sack or baggie labeled with the child's name with all of the above information also but having it in a small bag will prevent from any confusion. Please provide any necessary droppers, medicine spoons, or other dosing aids. Epi-Pens and inhalers MUST be in the original outer package (carton/box) with your child's name and all other things listed above from the pharmacy.

IF YOUR CHILD BECOMES ILL

Although we are not a trained medical professional, we have been educated in the recognition of infectious childhood diseases and we will attempt to alert you at the first sign of any illness.

In order to protect the health of all children in our care, we will call you at home or at work and request that you pick up your child within one hour if he or she exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- *Fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit for more than 1 hour
- *Excessive diarrhea for 2 consecutive diapers or toileting
- *Vomiting in excess of typical infant spit-ups
- *Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- *Persistent complaints of ear or stomach pain
- *Bleeding other than minor cuts and scrapes
- *Excessive greenish nasal discharge, indicating possible infection
- *Head lice
- *Jaundiced Skin
- *Sore throat or severe coughing
- *Infected untreated skin patches
- *Tuberculosis
- *Skin Rash
- *Salmonella
- *German Measles
- *Chicken Pox
- *Scabies
- *Impetigo
- *Hepatitis A
- *Mumps
- *Influenza
- *Shigella
- *Strep Throat
- *Giardia Lamblia

Medications must be given in the ORIGINAL CONTAINERS. Any/all cough medicine other than prescription must be labeled with the child's name. We MUST receive a doctor's note stating that he/she may return.

In the event that your child is sent home due to one of the above conditions, he or she will NOT be allowed to return

until they have been symptom free for a full 24 hours, or until accompanied by a signed note from your child's doctor indicating that the child can attend the school. This policy is intended to help prevent the unnecessary infection of the other children in our care. Although it may seem inconvenient when your child is sent home, you will appreciate knowing that your child's exposure is minimized when other children become ill. We will not send a child home with a common cold, unless accompanied by a fever or other severe symptoms.

LABELING ITEMS

All items that come in our facility must be labeled with your child's name. A few good label companies provide labels with designs and the labels are microwave and dishwasher safe.

TERMINATION OF CARE

Our contract may be terminated at any time for any reason, by either party. According to the contract, parent(s) must provide a written notice to us not less than 30-calendar days prior to the child's last day of care. If you choose to terminate care with less than the proper notice, you agree to forfeit the entire deposit. You will still be responsible for the entire tuition amount less the security deposit for the 30-day period.

We may terminate care for any of the following conditions but are not limited to:

- Frequent delinquent tuition payments
- On-going behavior problems that become disruptive to our program
- Failure to pick-up your sick child within one hour of being notified
- Frequent late pick-ups
- Other issues as we deem necessary

Parent Acknowledgement & Receipt of Parent Handbook

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Peachtree Montessori's Parent Handbook. I understand that it is neither a contract nor a legal document. I understand that it contains information on school's policies and procedures. I also understand this handbook is not intended to cover every situation which may arise but is simply a general guide to refer to. I understand that it's my responsibility to familiarize myself with the information and that I agree with the policies and rules of the school. I further understand and acknowledge that Peachtree Montessori may change, add or delete any policies or provisions in this Parent Handbook as it sees fit in its sole judgment and discretion. I acknowledge and understand that this Parent Handbook supersedes and replaces any and all prior handbooks or materials previously distributed. Moreover, I recognize that it is my responsibility to contact the school for any questions I might have about the contents of the Parent Handbook now and in the future.

Child's Name _____

Parent's Name _____

Date _____

Parent's Signature _____