



GREAT RIVER

montessori

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2023/2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK

"MONTESSORI IS AN EDUCATION FOR INDEPENDENCE, PREPARING NOT JUST FOR SCHOOL, BUT FOR LIFE."

-DR. MARIA MONTESSORI

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About Us

Contact Information

Center Name	Great River Montessori Inc.
Address	N5560 County Road ZM, Suite 4, Onalaska, WI 54650
Phone Number	(608) 615-1800
Website	greatrivermontessori.com
Email Addresses	admin@greatrivermontessori.com
Additional Information	Children’s House 3K Teacher: Ali Bastek (Ms. Ali) Children’s House 4K Teacher: Alexa Quam (Ms. Q) Elementary 1 & 2 Teacher: Samantha Jenson (Ms. Sam)

History

Great River Montessori Inc. (GRM) is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit, private, non-denominational school that was established in January 2019. The location and newly built facility were specifically chosen to serve the children and families of the Onalaska and Holmen communities and is centrally located at N5560 County Road ZM, Onalaska, WI 54650. GRM was designed as a one classroom building to enroll students in three year old preschool through sixth grade in two multi-age classes. The facility has an expansive outdoor environment for play and nature study/care. It is also located near bike trails, a wildlife refuge, Lake Onalaska and the Mississippi River, and is surrounded by prairie.

GRM was founded by Samantha Jenson and Alexa Quam based on the Montessori Education Method. It was developed with the intent to provide a high quality education alternative to the community’s youth and provide them with an authentic Montessori education.

Mission

Great River Montessori is a growing partnership between children, school, community, and nature. GRM embraces the Montessori principles, developing the child's full potential and a life-long love of learning.

Core Values

Great River Montessori:

- Provides a high quality and authentic Montessori education for all students, guided by the Montessori philosophy, curriculum, and materials.
- Maintains a carefully prepared learning environment indoors and outdoors of the facility that is safe, promotes problem solving and independence, and is filled with nature and beauty.
- Creates a school culture that embraces diversity, promotes peace, acceptance, and development of the "whole child".
- Goes beyond the traditional academic curriculum and provides an additional nature and Mindfulness curriculum, along with connections to the local and global community.
- Attracts and retains exceptional, Montessori-trained, passionate teachers who believe in a child-centered education approach and in easing the transition between home and school.

School Hours and Daily Routine

Children's House Preschool Program

GRM's Children's House preschool program has full-time and part-time options:

- ❖ The full-time program operates from 8:00am to 3:00pm.
- ❖ The morning program operates from 8:00am to 11:00 am, with Additional Care available at additional cost until noon.

Kindergarten and Elementary 1 & 2 (Grades K-6)

The Kindergarten program and Elementary 1 & 2 program operates from 8:00am to 3:00pm.

- Students must be in attendance by 8:10 AM, unless notifying school, or will be marked tardy.
 - If the number of unexcused absences or tardies begins to affect the students uninterrupted work period or academic success, a meeting with administration and parents will be required.

Before School Care

Before school care is available at an additional cost beginning at 7:00am.

After School Care

After school care is available at an additional cost until 5:00pm.

Daily Schedule

7:00 - 7:50 AM	School opens for before school care, supervised free play
7:50 - 8:00 AM	All students arrive and prepare for the day
8:00 - 10:30 AM	Work period with Montessori materials and independent snack
10:30-10:45 AM	Morning line/meeting time
10:45-11:15 AM	Recess
11:00 AM	<i>Part-time preschool dismissal</i>
11:20 11:30 AM	Lunch preparation: set tables, wash hands, begin lunch
11:30-12:00 PM	Lunch and clean up
12:00 PM	<i>Preschool lunch-care students dismissal</i>
12:15 - 2:00 PM	Quiet/Rest Period for all students (rest, independent reading, buddy reading, afternoon lessons, and other quiet options).
1:30 - 2:45 PM	Extension activities, Mindfulness lessons, Nature lessons, and other creative enrichment activities.
2:45 - 3:00 PM	Clean up, end of day jobs, and dismissal.

3:10 - 5:00 PM	After school care
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Programs

Great River Montessori currently offers programs in the Children’s House classroom and Elementary One classroom. Both classrooms follow the Montessori philosophy, scope and sequence, and curriculum.

Students in GRM programs are growing their love for learning and their respect for others and the environment. They become critical thinkers and problem solvers, and strive to further their own knowledge and independence. They are learning about and becoming part of the natural world, building a relationship with all living things, developing social and emotional skills, learning the virtues of character, grace and courtesy, and becoming more mindful of the world around them, their peers, and their own thoughts and feelings.

Children’s House

Children's House is a multi-age group of three and four-year-old preschoolers and five-year-old kindergartners. The environment is designed to bridge the gap between school and home. It is filled with beautiful, purposeful Montessori materials that start with the most hands-on and concrete and move on to the more abstract. These carefully designed materials and associated activities promote independence through social interactions with others. The Children’s House classroom includes child-sized furniture and fixtures that also serve a purpose and intentionally build students’ confidence and independence. The classroom design reflects beauty, nature, and respect for each individual. The teacher serves as a guide and presents lessons to the students individually or in small groups. Lessons are initially presented by the teacher; then the students may choose to engage with whatever most interests them during the three-hour work period.

GRM offers multiple opportunities for preschool and kindergarten students to attend. Below are specific program options:

Preschool Program Options

Children’s House-3 year old preschool or Children’s House-4 year old preschool

	Full Time	
	8:00 AM - 3:00 PM	
5 day a week		4 days a week
	Part-time Options	
	8:00 - 11:00 AM	
5 days a week		4 days a week

Kindergarten (only offered full time/5 days a week)

8:00-3:00PM

*After and Before School Care available at additional cost starting 7:00 AM and ending at 5:00 PM.
AM Children’s House extension available at additional cost until noon.*

Elementary 1 (E1) & Elementary 2 (E2)

E1 is a multi-age group of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders. In this room, and E2 is a multi-age group of 4th, 5th, and 6th graders. You will find students working as a community exploring all that life entails. The materials for these students are beautifully designed pieces that attract the children's eyes and intrigue them to take off the shelf and manipulate. The Montessori curriculum spirals, pulling from prior learning and adding new experiences that build up to future lessons.

Elementary E1 & E2 (only offered full time/5 days a week)

8:00 - 3:00 PM

Elementary 1- First Grade, Second Grade, and Third Grade

Elementary 2- Fourth Grade, Fifth Grade, and Sixth Grade

Full Day Lunch Care

Lunch Care is included in all the full day programs . Students will bring their own lunch and eat together in the classroom; there is a kitchen for heating any necessary lunch items. After lunch students will participate in recess and age appropriate rest time or quiet time activities until the afternoon lessons begin.

Additional Care

Before School Care

This program provides care from 7:00-7:50 AM for families that need childcare before school begins. Any child arriving prior to 7:50 AM must enroll in this program. Families may sign up for this program at an additional rate.

Lunch/Recess/Rest Care

This program is an extension of a child's Montessori morning program and additional rates only apply to part-time preschool students if chosen. This program runs from 11:00-12:00 PM. This program will include line-time and lunch time.

After School Care

This program is for families that need childcare beyond 3:10 PMs. After school care is from 3:10 PM to 5:00 PM. Families may sign up for this program at an additional rate.

Teacher to Student Ratios

GRM's current facility is zoned for up to 40 students. This limit, along with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) child-to-teacher ratios, serves as the guidelines which

GRM uses in determining the most effective student-to-teacher ratios. (See <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/>). Ratios are subject to change based on enrollment, part-time and full-time student numbers, teacher referrals and needs, classroom needs, and student needs.

Montessori Philosophy and Methods

Great River Montessori is an authentic Montessori school providing high-quality education for students in 3-year-old preschool through 6th grade. This unique methodology of teaching, developed by Maria Montessori, focuses specifically on the development of the whole child and on each child's unique range of abilities, celebrating each child's individuality. The school provides an atmosphere where students learn through the following:

- Engaging hands-on Montessori materials
- The children's own intrinsic motivation to learn
- A diverse and appealing environment
- The connection of nature to learning

The goal of this intentionally prepared environment is to create a space where children are free to explore the world around them and to grow a lifelong love for learning.

At Great River Montessori, our goal is to provide a child-centered environment where all children, parents and families feel welcomed and valued. Children participate in a program of educationally challenging activities and supportive personal interactions planned to foster their social, physical, emotional and intellectual development.

Montessori Materials and Curriculum

The Montessori curriculum is child-centered and based on scientific observations of the child. The curriculum is personalized and follows each child's development as it unfolds. Classroom materials are specifically designed and crafted out of real, natural material. They are not toys, and each one has a specific purpose. These materials lead to self-directed activity, incorporate the children's interests, and involve the children's senses, which intrigues them and motivates them to engage, play and learn. The materials and lessons in each curriculum area move from the most concrete and hands-on to the more abstract, following the typical pattern of children's neurological development.

The curriculum areas in the classroom are interconnected and specifically ordered to promote success and purposeful learning. These curricular elements include practical life, sensorial, math, language, history, science, and geography. Art, music, and physical activity are also incorporated into the environment. These materials and curricula promote movement, problem solving, social interactions, and peace education. Children move through these curriculum areas at their own pace, under the guidance of the teacher. GRM builds from the Montessori philosophy and curriculum to make mindfulness and connections to nature a particular focus of specific lessons and experiences.

Classroom and Environment

GRM offers three multi-age Montessori classrooms, Children's House, Elementary 1, and Elementary 2. The Children's House classroom includes three-year-old and four-year-old preschoolers and kindergarteners. The Elementary 1 classroom includes first, second and third graders. The Elementary 2 classroom includes fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. Multi-age classrooms afford students many benefits. Children in multi-age groupings form strong relationships with their peers and teachers, learn from each other, and are motivated to try new lessons they see older students completing. Older students, in turn, learn to be patient, caring, and compassionate toward younger peers.

The classroom is filled with beauty, natural light, and real materials, and incorporates nature. The environment reflects various cultures, families, and students. It is furnished with purposeful materials and furniture that are all developmentally and size appropriate to promote independence. The culture of the classroom celebrates diversity, promoting peace, respect, and responsibility, and supports connections with the local community and the surrounding natural environment.

Individualized Education

A child's lifelong love for learning begins in the Montessori environment. The child receives freedom to explore, to follow their intrinsic motivation, and to benefit from an individualized educational experience.

GRM utilizes Montessori child-centered pedagogy that follows the development of each child. We provide students with lessons in small groups or individually. Lessons are chosen based on the specific skills each student is working on, not by age or grade.

The schedule each day includes an uninterrupted work period. During this period, students explore the works, or materials, that are interesting to them, socialize with others, move freely, and solve problems. These experiences help students learn to self-regulate and be independent while the teacher observes. Teachers also guide students through works and lessons that build the skills necessary to act freely and gracefully.

Academic Standards in a Montessori Setting

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) define baseline expectations for each grade level in English Language Arts and Mathematics, for publicly-funded schools.

While the Montessori approach to education varies greatly from a traditional educational approach, Montessori education is time-tested and research-based and meets or exceeds these baseline minimum standards. The Montessori curriculum takes the child beyond basic academic skills, and helps develop skills that not only help them master the Common Core State Standards, but also prepare them to apply what they have learned in new and creative ways inside and outside of the classroom.

Montessori education and materials provide students with a deep understanding of concepts, as

well as deep motivation to continue learning independently, to problem solve, and to work collaboratively. By using the scope and sequence of the Montessori curriculum, observing and assessing progress often, and respecting the child, Montessori students not only meet but often exceed the CCSS.

In her book, *Montessori: The Science behind the Genius*, Dr. Angeline Stoll Lillard states, “No other single educational curriculum comes close to the Montessori curriculum in terms of its levels of depth, breadth, and interrelationship across time and topic.”

Learning Outcomes at GRM

Based on observation, interaction with students, and the Montessori work being completed, GRM assesses each child’s development and the pace at which they are reaching developmentally appropriate learning outcomes. These learning outcomes will be determined by the child’s own development, state standards, and observation. Learning outcomes and mastered works will be available for families to view via a Montessori communications website that is private, secure, and carefully monitored by staff members. Each student has a unique profile on this site, through which observation notes, presentations, and other learning artifacts can be accessed by approved individuals.

The Montessori Teacher’s Role in Learning

The role of the teacher in a Montessori classroom is very different from the role of a standard public school school teacher. The Montessori teacher is a facilitator and guide. The child is the center of attention, not the teacher. The teacher does not spend much time working with the whole class all at once and instead works more often individually with students. The teachers show the students respect by using positive, polite, soft, and clear speaking voices. The teachers' work is to prepare an intriguing and organized learning environment and help each child develop to their fullest potential. Observation is a key component of a Montessori teacher’s job. By closely observing the students, teachers can build a relationship with the child, understand their needs, understand their development, and prepare an enriching environment suitable for them.

Great River Montessori is determined to offer the highest quality Montessori education possible. To do this, we must have teachers and educational assistants who are passionate, educated about child development, and Montessori certified or knowledgeable. All GRM’s teachers hold a bachelor’s or master’s degree in education and are also Montessori certified for their respective grade levels.

Student Rights

Montessori programs are child-centered and focused on respect for self and others. As a Montessori school, GRM recognizes and respects the child's rights, including the following:

- The child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect at all times.
- The child has the right to be spoken to and spoken about with respect at all times.

- The child has the right to confidentiality of records.
- The child has the opportunity to engage in any play or learning activity that does not interfere with the safety and rights of others. This activity will be observed and channeled so it complements the philosophy of the program.
- Adults must not discuss the child in his/her presence unless specifically planned for therapeutic and educational purposes.
- All children are allowed to participate in all aspects of the curriculum provided by the school.

Discipline Approach

All behaviors that respect others, oneself, and the school environment and materials are acceptable in a Montessori environment. The focus of our trained teachers is to act as a positive guide and facilitate the preparation of an environment, both physical and psychological, that promotes the development of self-discipline and acceptable social interactions for children. Concentration, focus, and independent learning are our values. Children must always be respected.

Physical harm to oneself, others, or the school environment and materials is not acceptable. Parents and staff will work together to be consistent at home and at school with child guidance methods and limit setting. Freedom in a Montessori classroom is not without limitations. For example, a child must not interfere with other children's work, if not invited. Materials should be returned to their proper places and be handled with care.

GRM School Expectations and Practices

General Behavior Guidelines for Students

- Take responsibility for your actions and learning -- honesty is valued
- Stay with staff members and adults and within designated school boundaries
- Use respectful language – if it hurts someone, it is not respectful
- Follow adult directions
- Keep your body safe and respect others boundaries
- Toys are for home
- Walk inside the building
- Respect yourself, others, and materials
- Put away what you take out
- Use a whisper or low level voice inside
- Do your best

General Behavior and Discipline Strategies Used at GRM

- Redirection

- Mindfulness training
- Intrinsic motivation (limiting the use of external rewards)
- “Take a break”
- Natural consequences
- Grace and courtesy lessons

Severe Behavior

Severe behavior that causes a threat or harm physically or emotionally to oneself or others will:

- Be documented in the child’s records
- Warrant a phone call or in-person meeting with parents/guardians
- In severe cases result in removal of the student
- Necessitate a written follow-up plan for modification that includes input from the teacher, parents, and any other professionals that are agreed upon

Parent and Family Definitions

In the Family Handbook, and in all other forms and correspondence in use at our organization, we use the term “parent” or “parents/guardians” to indicate the adult or adults legally responsible for the child. A parent can be the child’s biological parent, a step-parent, a foster parent, an adoptive parent, or a legal guardian assigned by the court. You (the parent) tell us who you include when you use the term “family”. This can include a child’s sisters, brothers, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, but it can also include friends and neighbors that are dear and important to you. Some rights and responsibilities belong to parents and other legal guardians alone – such as enrolling the child in the program, attending the intake interview, granting permission for your child to take trips with the class, accountability for any fees and consulting with the teacher or others about a child’s needs, behavior or performance. Parents tell us which family members and friends are allowed to pick up their children from GRM and who should be notified in case of an emergency.

Family Members as First Teachers

Children learn about the world from their parents and other important family members from birth through childhood to adulthood. While your child is enrolled in our organization you have a golden opportunity to learn a great deal about high-quality early childhood education. Digital communications, parent meetings and workshops, parent lending library resources and conferences with your child’s teacher are all ways to learn how children’s development can be promoted in all areas.

Parents are the experts when it comes to their own children. Teachers do not know your child nearly as well as you do, but they have known hundreds of children your child’s age and they have gone to school to learn about child development and early childhood education. When you share your special knowledge of your child and your family, and the teacher shares her or his general knowledge of how children learn and grow in healthy ways, you are both better equipped to meet the challenges of successful child rearing at home and at school. The teacher

knows your child better by talking with you. The better the teacher understands your child, the better she or he can individualize your child's education to capitalize on your child's interests and skills.

It is helpful to tell the teacher what is important to you about your child's education and upbringing. The teacher can make adjustments in the classroom to honor these values. Often the teacher can show how our educational program already supports values commonly held by parents such as the goal of high academic achievement for their children. Parents' understanding of what is a good program does not always reflect current industry standards for high-quality early childhood education. Parents learn valuable, up-to-date information about early childhood education when they talk with their child's teachers.

Parent-Teacher Partnership

The teacher in your child's classroom is in charge of the curriculum, schedule, and supervision of all other staff members, volunteers, or visitors in that room. Feel free to set up an appointment to discuss any concerns or questions with the teacher. Some teachers may be able to correspond with parents by email. All teachers keep records documenting individual children's growth. They track children's interests, skills and conceptual development. This data is used to write reports for parents to present at parent/teacher conferences, and it is used to tailor curriculum to each child's learning needs in the class.

Parents are permitted to visit GRM at any time. Feel free to join the classroom activities and accompany us on field trips. Signs, permission slips, and sign-up sheets give details about events and trips, including how parents or other adult family members can help.

The ultimate goal of parent-teacher communication is fostering a lifelong, rich relationship between a child and his or her parent(s).

Family Involvement and Communication

Family involvement is an integral component of high-quality education. We respect and support families by maintaining ongoing communication between teachers and parents (and other important family members when appropriate). Teachers communicate with families regularly through: daily take home folders, community posts on social media, email correspondences, and phone calls, when appropriate.

Nothing is more important to the ultimate success of teachers' work with the children than communication with parents. In a Montessori classroom, we prepare the social/emotional environment by modeling the values of respect, kindness, flexibility, optimism, good humor, etc. We know the children need to develop. This is supported by providing the means for them to practice the skills that underlie emotional intelligence; by gentle guidance; by active listening; by showing the children that we believe them to be capable of growing and learning in the social/emotional arena.

In short, we offer the children the skills, the freedom and the time they need to develop socially and emotionally. Psychologists, brain scientists and other researchers who have looked into Montessori education tell us that nobody supports the development of “executive functions” and high-level thinking skills as well as Montessori teachers. Part of what makes our approach work is we do not constantly involve the parents in all the day-to-day social/emotional drama.

- Teachers will communicate patterns of behavior (both positive and negative) and extreme incidents.
- Formal conferences, convenient for both parent/guardian and teacher, will be scheduled twice a year by the school. Conference times are listed on the school calendar. Teachers provide summaries at each conference, as well as their attendance record, which becomes part of the permanent school record.
- An additional conference may be held at any time during the school year at the parent/guardian and teacher's discretion.

Conferences are a collaborative time for you and the teaching staff to work together to understand and support your child. Conferences are not a time for surprises or worries. If a teacher has any concerns about your child, he or she will let you know in a timely manner. Likewise, if you have any concerns, you may always meet with a teacher by arranging an appointment. It is very important for teachers and parents to establish and maintain close communication. Please feel free to ask questions or discuss anything related to your child's progress; however, please realize that a teacher's responsibility during school time is to the students and interruptions should be kept to a minimum. If you must speak with a teacher, please make arrangements to meet before school begins or ends. Unless arrangements have been made in advance, teachers may not have time to talk to you. Arrivals and departures are very busy times and not the best for relaying important information about your child. These are times when the teachers can only interact very, very briefly with parents. Furthermore, children should not be present when concerns are expressed. Instead, if it is urgent, we ask that you provide a written note with a few times when you can talk via phone and one of our staff will make every attempt to call you during one of those times. Likewise, you can email a message to admin@greatrivermontessori.com to set up an appointment or share any concerns.

In order for us to help your child with guidance, we do need to know if there are any changes in your child's regular/routine life. If a parent is out of town, if you move or have plans to move, if you change jobs, marry, blend your family with another, are having a baby, get sick, or if a family member dies, your child will feel the stress, excitement, fear or sadness of these events. We need to know of any changes like these because they will affect your child's behavior.

GRM invites families in for observation, parent/teacher conferences, and meetings for any concerns to be properly addressed, and for all community involvement and fundraising activities.

Observation

Parents are always welcome to observe the classrooms and observation is part of the Montessori philosophy. However, if you would like to formally observe inside the classroom, please contact your child's teacher ahead of time to arrange your observation.

Please see the observation procedure below:

- When you enter the class, you will see an adult-size chair that is set at a vantage point for you to get the best observation without being intrusive to the teaching area.
- When you sit down, children (including your own) may come up to you; please try not to engage them in conversation. A polite “hello” and a direct response as to who you are is fine – and then quietly ask the child to return to work.
- Please stay seated during your observation. If you have questions, please contact the teacher after your observation.
- Twenty to twenty-five minutes is ample time for classroom observation. Please leave the room as quietly as possible. It is best if you keep your goodbye to your child brief and positive. It is helpful if you prepare your child for the fact that your visit to the classroom will be limited and that you will leave and then see him or her at the regular dismissal time. Rest assured that even the most agitated child will calm down very shortly after you leave.
- All observations of students are confidential and must only be discussed with the teacher at an appropriate time in the school while children are not present. Discussions will respect students’ privacy and only focus on your specific child.

These observations are a great opportunity to watch the classroom, teachers and students in action. You will gain a lot of understanding regarding how the Montessori classroom works, and how the children work with the materials. We do ask that you wait until your child has been at the school for at least a month before you schedule an observation.

Clothing/Shoes

Children learn self-respect through self-mastery. Gross motor development is critical to a Montessori curriculum. Children need to be free to run, jump, climb, and work with success.

Children must therefore keep a pair of inside shoes at school along with a pair of tennis shoes (these can be the same pair). These shoes must be supportive and non-slip. Students will change from their outside shoes into their inside shoes upon entrance into the school. If sandals or slippers are worn, they must have rubber soles or grips. In addition, both inside and outside shoes should be a type that promotes safety, self-confidence, and freedom. If a child comes to school wearing improper school shoes, they will not be able to participate in gross motor activities like Creative Movement and recess.

You can assist your child by purchasing comfortable loose clothing with large buttons, big zippers, and large shoe boots that slip on or close with velcro along with hats and gloves that your child can easily put on and take off. Remember our goal is independent dressing. Simple inexpensive and comfortable styles are preferable for daily wear. Children work with water, paint (washable, non-toxic tempera), and handle a variety of foods. Aprons are worn but stains still happen. Clothes that you do not want stained must remain at home.

Shorts or tights under skirts and dresses are required. Jewelry can create dangers for small children (i.e. swallowing, abrasions, etc.), so please keep that in mind when deciding if it is appropriate for your child to wear.

GRM promotes peace education along with positive (nonviolent) discipline. Consequently, clothing that displays violent characters or language is prohibited. If you have any questions regarding the appropriateness of a clothing article, please contact your child's teacher.

Extra Clothing

If your child had a busy and involved day at school, chances are he or she got at least a little dirty. Please be sure to always send at least 1 change of clothes (including socks and undergarments) for your child to keep at school for each season. To prevent confusion or loss, please label each piece with the child's name. These clothes will be used for your child if there is a mishap, from toileting to wet or muddy activity. Parents should check regularly that the extra clothing stash is complete.

All winter clothing should be labeled with your child's name, including boots, coats, jackets, sweaters, snow pants, mittens, hats, scarves, etc. A pair of snow pants may be kept at the school on your child's coat hook, and extra mittens may be stored in your child's bin. Students will be required to wear at least a light jacket until temperatures consistently reach 60 degrees. They will also be required to wear boots and snow pants when there is snow, temperatures require extra protection, or the ground is especially wet. Please always be especially thoughtful about your child's abilities when dressing for cold weather play; independent dressing is our goal and some fasteners (velcro, for example) are more child-friendly than others.

Naptime Needs

Full day children under 5 years old will be given a minimum of a 30 minute rest time after lunch/recess. At 5 years old, a child may choose if he or she would like to rest. Please provide for your child a 2 inch thick nap mat, a small pillow, and either a small sheet and blanket or a sleeping bag. These items will be stored in your child's nap cubby.

During rest time, soft music may be played and a staff member will be present in the room at all times. It is our policy that if a child falls asleep, their body requires rest and we will let your child sleep. We would like the wake up experience to be very natural. If parents have specific requests about nap time, they should speak to the teachers. Children who do not sleep or do not rest longer than 30 minutes will be moved to a different quiet time space and participate in age appropriate quiet time activities. Children who sleep for more than one hour will be awakened gently by a staff member and invited back into the classroom.

Coat Hook

Your child is assigned a coat hook located in the entryway. This is where his/her outdoor wear is hung. Space is tight; please do your best to only bring what your child needs for the day in order

to allow enough space for everyone. If you are late, please speak quietly in this area as you help your child prepare to enter the classroom.

Required School Bags

A school bag is necessary for taking work and important communication papers home and to safely navigate with free hands. If the child does not bring a school bag, his work will stay at school.

Toys from Home

Comfort toys and family photographs can help a child feel more secure away from home. Other toys from home can create problems at school and are to be left at home, unless specified by the teacher. If you are wondering about what your child can bring to school, and what should stay home, talk to your child's teacher.

Field Trips

When completing your initial child registration form, you will have the option to permit your child to accompany the class on regular neighborhood outings, such as walks to the closest nearby park or taking a bus to a community member's local business. Parents will receive notification of any field trip in advance. If you did not authorize field trips in your enrollment paperwork, you will have a chance to authorize trips on a trip-by-trip basis. Your regular school hours will remain the same on days of field trips. Parents who have completed a background check are always invited to attend and help with the day. We are not able to include children who aren't registered with our center. Note that our teachers always bring along cell phones and can be reached at any point during a trip. Travel details for any field trips will be included on separate permission slips.

On site demonstrations are times where we invite parents and community members into the school to give a special sharing session. Examples of these sessions could be learning the parts of a bicycle from a parent bike expert, learning about dragonflies from a parent naturalist, learning about toothbrushing from a nearby dentist office, learning about mail from our postal carrier, etc. If you have knowledge that you think might be appropriate, please let our staff know; we are happy to work with you to schedule a demonstration.

Cell Phones

Students are not allowed to use cell phones at school. A phone in the office or entryway is always available for emergency use. Parents must have their cell phones turned to silent during the day or evening when they are in the building. If you need to make an outgoing call, please step outside of the school building. Cell phones are never to be used when you chaperone for

field trips, volunteering in the school, or during observation as full attention cannot be given to children while conducting other business. They should only be turned on if you need to call out in case of an emergency. Please do not use your cell phone to take photos of other students or the school unless you have permission for a specific event or activity. We want to respect the privacy of all students and families. For teacher and student safety, parents please no cell phone usage during pick up or drop off. Your full attention should be directed to the staff and your child.

Phone Calls

Parents wishing to speak with the teachers about their child or requesting general information are asked to call between the hours of 7:30 to 7:50 AM or 3:15 to 4:00 PM. A message will be given to the teacher and he or she will contact you at his or her earliest convenience. It is best not to call the school during the classroom hours, except in the case of an emergency or immediate transportation change.

Mailing, Correspondence, and Daily Take Home Folders

To reduce the amount of paper used throughout the school year, GRM sends information to families via email as much as possible. Most of the school's communication is conducted in this manner.

Students will also have a daily take home folder, which will at times include paper copies of information that is not available online or via email. Families may always write a note to the teacher or vice versa using this folder. Families are responsible to check their child's take home folders regularly.

Correspondence can be sent directly to Great River Montessori at N5560 County Road ZM, Suite 4, Onalaska, WI, 54650. To hand deliver payments and correspondence, place them in an envelope and return them in your child's take-home folder. Please do not set payments or correspondence on desks.

Holiday and Birthday Celebrations

GRM honors a variety of cultures and traditions as part of our educational philosophy. We invite parents to come visit and present traditions from their families and backgrounds to the children. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher.

We find the excessive commercialism in our culture surrounding many holidays distracts and often confuses children. As a result, we may downplay or prohibit certain practices. For example, Halloween costumes are prohibited at school because they can be frightening to many young children. Instead, we discuss the origins of customs, show artifacts relating to celebrations, share a meal or a song, etc.

Each child and their family will be able to participate in a birthday celebration for their child. The specifics of this celebration will be provided when the celebration is scheduled. Health standards require commercially prepared goods only. This standard protects children with allergies and ensures that foods consumed at school are prepared according to local health department specifications.

Attendance, Absences, Late Arrivals

Regular attendance at school is essential for continuity in the educational process and consistency of the educational program. Attendance is taken daily. Staff members record the times children arrive and depart. Attendance records kept by teachers will be available to parents at conferences or upon request.

Tardiness can create a disruption to the class and limits your child's opportunities to learn.

Students who do not participate in the before school care program may begin to arrive at 7:50 AM to prepare for the day. The full-time students and the part-time preschool program will be able to prepare for the day between 7:50 AM and 8:00 AM. Children are expected to arrive during these times to maximize opportunities for learning.

Late pick-up reduces a teacher's time to prepare and clean up the classroom. Please make every effort to be on time for picking up your child. Full-time students who do not participate in the after school care program may be picked up between 3:00 PM and 3:10 PM. Part-time preschool students may be picked up between 11:00 AM and 11:10 AM. Part-time preschool students who participate in the morning program and the lunch care program may be picked up between 12:00 PM and 12:10 PM.

Arrival and pick-up times for before school care and after school care are well-documented in this handbook and other GRM materials and parents are responsible for educating themselves regarding these times and for adhering to them. Students who arrive before the specified drop off times or are not picked up during the regular pick-up hours will be charged the hourly rate for the before school care, lunch care, or after school care program based on the time of day. Children who miss excessive amounts of school may not be eligible to move to the next level.

As a private school, we are required by law to provide a sufficient number of annual hours of classroom time as set forth by the State of Wisconsin mandates. Kindergarten and Elementary students are not to be absent in excess of 10 days per school year. If absences exceed the 10-day maximum, contact will be made by the teacher. As we are concerned about your child, we ask that parents/guardians contact the school office before 7:30 AM if your child is to be absent for any reason. If a child is absent and no contact has been made with the school, an email will be sent to notify the parent/guardian that the child is absent from school. Please notify the school via phone or email and provide as much advance notice as possible if it is a planned change of schedule, such as a vacation or appointment.

Vacation absence should be discussed with your teacher directly. You will be responsible for all center fees during this time. If your child becomes ill with a fever or shows other signs of being

unwell, it is important to keep them home for the day. When your child has a medical or dental appointment, please inform GRM as soon as possible, ideally shortly after the appointment is arranged. Please ask the medical provider for a note of absence from school and turn the note into administration when you return your child to school.

Transportation/Drop Off and Pick Up

GRM does not provide transportation for students to or from school.

Drop Off and Pick Up procedures protect the safety of all staff, students, and family members during drop off and pick up times. Please follow these safety procedures at all times.

Drop Off

Beginning at 7:00 AM, students participating in the before school program may be dropped off.

Beginning at 7:50 AM, students not participating in the before school program may be dropped off. GRM staff or volunteers will be ready to greet children and assist them with the drop-off service inside the building.

Beginning at 7:50 AM students are welcomed to their assigned classroom.

The school morning starts at 8:00 AM.

Pick Up

Full-time students who do not participate in the after-school care program may be picked up between 3:00 PM and 3:10 PM.

Part-time preschool students may be picked up between 11:00 AM and 11:10 AM.

Part-time preschool students who participate in the lunch care program may be picked up between 12:00 PM and 12:10 PM.

Students who participate in the after-care program must be picked up by 5:00 PM.

When weather permits, students may end their day outside and parents may pick their child up in the fenced playground area. Otherwise, students will be ready and waiting in the entryway for pick-up by the designated pick-up times. Parents may park in the parking lot and come into the building to pick up their child or use the pick up lane and wait patiently for their child.

For reasons of safety and security, children cannot be left unsupervised in the school or anywhere on GRM grounds. It is imperative that no child is left unattended in a vehicle. Under no circumstances leave other children unattended in the car while you drop off or pick up your student. Children are not allowed in the classrooms outside of regularly scheduled hours.

Arrival and Dismissal Protocols for Parent/Guardians

Child Preparedness

As the parent/guardian of the child, it is your responsibility to make sure your child is ready to enter the classroom. We understand that some days this may require more patience as your young preschooler has normal ups and downs. These challenging moments tend to happen more often during growth spurts and times of stress. It is important that you set a reassuring and positive tone for your child. Please plan sufficient time at the beginning of the school day to allow your child adequate time to independently remove his/her coat and change into indoor shoes and get ready to enter the classroom.

Classroom Entry

Say your normal goodbyes to your child at the door . Your child will be greeted by a teacher at the door to bring them into the building.

Dismissal and Departure

When picking up your child, please wait outside the building door. A teacher will escort your child out of the building. The teacher will say goodbye individually to your child and make eye contact with you.

If you have not picked your child up within ten minutes of their program dismissal time you will be charged the drop-in rate of \$9.50 per day. Children in the after-care program not picked up by 5:00 PM will have a \$1.50 per five minutes charge assessed to their accounts.

Non-Discrimination and Special Needs

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Great River Montessori school (GRM) values diversity among our students and admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. Further, we will not discriminate on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, mental or physical condition or disability in the administration of our educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Students with Special Needs

GRM serves children with special needs and challenging conditions whenever possible. Any eligible applicant with special needs or handicapping conditions will be enrolled in the program if, after careful evaluation of the child's care needs and the school's capabilities to meet these needs, it is felt that the child can participate in and benefit from the program/services the school

offers and the school can make reasonable accommodation to provide safe care to this child, as well as to the other enrolled children, should this child be enrolled. The School Leadership Team makes the final decision regarding admission and works collaboratively with the school district it resides in to assure all of these needs are able to be met. It operates the school on a daily basis, guided by a Board of Directors. The School Leadership Team consists of, but is not limited to, school administration and GRM staff.

The emotional and physical well-being of all children at all times is the foundation of a Montessori classroom. All children are enrolled at GRM on a provisional basis. It is possible that a particular child may not adjust or be suited to the Montessori environment. If this occurs, and if in the judgment of the School Leadership Team, or the parent/guardian, the child is not benefiting from the Montessori experience, and/or is interfering with the class function, the parent/guardian may be instructed, or instruct the school, to withdraw the child.

Success is the goal of an Intervention Team, and communication is essential for this dynamic to thrive. The Intervention Team consists of all necessary staff to better the student, his/her safety and education. As children grow and develop, so does the possibility of disabilities to morph and change, presenting new challenges. If a child requires an intervention therapist to enter our classroom and/or the child is working with other therapists outside of school, scheduled meetings with the School Leadership Team, Intervention Team, family, and therapist(s) may be required, and, depending on the school district's involvement, could be at the family's expense.

Enrollment and Withdrawal

Admission and Enrollment

Applications for enrollment are accepted at GRM based on the following criteria: age, readiness, previous records, program demands, needs of the child, behavior within the classroom and school, and the commitment of the parent/guardian to GRM policies and procedures. First priority for admission to a program will be given to children of staff members who apply for and are recommended by the appropriate teachers for the program. The staff member must have completed no less than one school year of service at Great River Montessori School. After children of staff members, returning students and their siblings are given early enrollment opportunities. From there enrollment opportunities will be extended to all other interested families.

Children entering the Children's House classroom must be two and a half years of age by the start of the school year. GRM will accept students into our Elementary Program if the child does not have prior Montessori experience, but prior Montessori experience is encouraged.

In order for a spot to be held, all students need to submit a complete and accurate new application for enrollment for each returning student, each year. Enrollment applications are submitted through an online program called TUIO. Families will be provided instructions on how to use this program. Once accepted, families will also be required to submit a \$100 enrollment fee for each child that has been accepted. This application and enrollment fee not only reserves a spot in the classroom, but also ensures families are committed to the policies and tuition for

that school year. Other mandatory forms may also require an update before the start of the upcoming academic year.

Registration Forms

Once accepted, all children must complete the mandatory Enrollment Form via TUIO by the date specified unless otherwise communicated. Families will be emailed a link to complete these forms.

It is the responsibility of the student's parents/guardians to inform GRM of any changes needing to be made to the child's information.

Parents/Guardians may request a change in programs and/or tuition payment plans by contacting administration. Please note, program changes are not guaranteed, and are effective at the beginning of the requested month only.

Toileting Policy

Children's House students are expected to be independent with toileting. Children are independent with toileting when they recognize when their bladder/bowel is full and can successfully manage going to the bathroom on their own. Occasional accidents are expected. The key to success is the ability to change into dry/clean clothes with minimal assistance. Exceptions can be made if a child has a medical problem that prohibits toilet independence. Please keep the teachers informed of any medical issues.

Independence with toileting is an important factor in admission, re-enrollment, and withdrawal decisions.

Waitlist

GRM allows for tours and classroom observations by interested families and accepts applications throughout the year; however, if there is full capacity or if it is still the early enrollment period, a waitlist will be started. If a child is not yet old enough to attend, the names of children who are recommended for the program will be placed on a waitlist.

The waitlist does not guarantee enrollment. Waitlist applicants will be contacted via email and will be expected to decide, submit an application, and pay the registration fee to secure the spot within 48 hours of being contacted.

Orientation Process for New Students

Parents of newly admitted and previously enrolled children are encouraged to attend the beginning of the year open-house. This orientation will be held in August. Parents and children will have the opportunity to learn about the classroom, school, policies, protocols, and meet their teachers. The open-house orientation will also be a time to review the Family Handbook and submit any remaining registration forms.

Classroom Visits/Open Door Policy

GRM encourages family visits and interactions in the classroom environment anytime during normal hours of operation. Please contact the office to make arrangements for a visit to the classroom and review visitor expectations.

We encourage parents to raise both gratitude and concerns; respectful communication is essential for a safe, healthy, and effective community environment. We encourage families to participate in the life of the GRM community. Our office is not staffed full-time, so we ask you to make an appointment if you would like to set a meeting to collaborate.

Changes in Enrollment Schedule

Changes to a child's enrollment schedule will be accommodated based on availability; this includes permanent changes to your child's regular attendance schedule as well as use of our additional care options. Please speak with the teacher to determine what might be available.

Withdrawal

GRM requires a 30-day written notice of intent to withdraw. The application fee is non-refundable, and the following month's tuition will be due. The entire payment obligation remains in effect until GRM grants release from the contract in writing. For example, if you withdraw your child on October 12th, the next month's tuition (November's) will be due in its entirety.

The emotional and physical well-being of all children at all times is the foundation of a Montessori classroom. All children are enrolled at GRM on a provisional basis. It is possible that a particular child may not adjust to or be suited for the Montessori environment. If in the judgment of GRM or the parents, the child is not benefiting from the Montessori experience and/or is interfering with class function, the parents/guardians may be instructed, or may instruct the school, to withdraw the child.

GRM may terminate enrollment of any child for the following reasons:

1. A parent/guardian fails to follow correct admission procedures, especially failure to submit legally required forms.

2. A parent/guardian fails to comply with the tuition agreement and service fees according to the policy.
3. The retention of the child would be detrimental to the health and safety of other children, staff, or the child him/herself.
4. Egregious policy violations that become or prove to be unresolvable.

Key Records & Updates

It is extremely important to tell us about changes in home address, home phone number, workplace (or school), work (or school) address, work (school) telephone, and cell phone of parents in the home, emergency contacts and all those authorized to pick up the child. For your child's welfare we must be able to reach you (or your alternative emergency contacts), all day, every day. Keep us informed daily of phone number changes.

All pertinent information related to your child's health should be updated regularly, including allergies, food restrictions, medical procedures, health conditions, and your pediatric health provider's name, address and phone number. Also include your child's health insurance information.

Each student's record may consists of:

- Basic identifying information
- Academic transcript including test scores, if applicable
- Attendance records
- Staff/Parent/guardian communications
- Health records
- Family background information
- Psychological evaluations
- Special Education files
- Teacher anecdotal records
- Disciplinary information
- Correspondence from parents to the school
- Correspondence from the school to parents

All students' records are confidential and may be reviewed only by the student's parents and handled only by certified teachers, the Leadership Team and Administrative Assistants. Parent/Guardians may request an appointment to review their child's records by contacting the office.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Types of information that are kept confidential and shared only with those who need it to carry out their jobs include: medical history including any current or suspected medical problems; family status; financial information; and other personal issues like family matters or children's behaviors.

Access to written records is restricted to administrative staff, state monitors, and the teachers directly responsible for the child. In order for records to be released to any other person, school or agency, written permission is needed from the child's parent.

Areas of concern (like problem behavior or other special needs) are discussed with parents in private and in a problem-solving manner, respecting the roles we all can play in helping children feel competent and successfully become part of the group.

Family Education Records Privacy Act

Under this act, families have the following rights:

- Parents/guardians and eligible students (over 18 years of age) have the right to inspect and review the education records of the student. When a request is made, the school is required to make the student's records available (or give copies of records if circumstances make appointment difficult). Limitations:
 1. Only information relating to that student (e.g., document that contains an incident of that student and other students must have the others' identifying information redacted.)
 2. Student, no matter how old, may not inspect the parents/guardians' financial records.
 3. No right to inspect letters and recommendations dating to before 1/1/95.
 4. After 1/1/95, no right as long as student waived their right and if recommendations are related to application for receipt of honor, employment, and for admission to another educational institution.
- Parents/guardians and eligible students have the right to request amendments of educational records they believe are inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's rights.
 1. The school must respond within five working days and if the school denies the request, the school must inform the parent/guardian of their right to a hearing on the issue.
- In an expulsion hearing, the school has a right to refer to any records in a student's file, but needs to notify the parent/guardian of their right to review this information prior to the hearing. (The school has an obligation to make sure these records have already been edited to redact the identities of other children other than the student concerned.)
- The school has to annually notify families of these rights as well as school policy regarding directory information under FERPA requirements. Anyone to whom we release records must not disclose that information to anyone else.
- Exceptions to Nondisclosure
 1. Officials/Employees of the school district (including teachers who have legitimate educational interests).

2. Officials of another school district in which the student wishes to enroll may receive records without consent. GRM will give the parent/guardian copies of the records we forward in this special instance. (Whether we have parent/guardian consent to forward or not, we must forward the records by five working days.)
3. The school can disclose information in connection with financial aid. (Any information of this type is given to the financial aid committee with identifying information redacted.)
4. Education records can be disclosed through requests by judicial order or subpoena.
4. Healthcare providers or emergency medical personnel if necessary to protect the health/safety of the students or others.
5. Directory Information if the school has complied with FERPA rules of notification/written policy.

Transfer of Records

In accordance with Wisconsin Statute 11.8.125(4), within 5 working days, a school district shall transfer to another school or school district all pupil records relating to a specific pupil if the transferring school district has received written notice from the pupil if he or she is an adult, or his or her parent or guardian if the pupil is a minor, that the pupil intends to enroll in another school or school district or written notice from the other school or school district that the pupil has enrolled or from a court that the pupil has been placed in a secured correctional facility, as defined in s. 938.02 (15m), a secured child caring institution, as defined in s. 938.02 (15g), or a secured group home, as defined in s. 938.02 (15p). In this subsection, "school" and "school district" include any secured correctional facility, secured child caring institution, secured group home, adult correctional institution, mental health institute or center for the developmentally disabled, that provides an educational program for its residents instead of or in addition to that which is provided by public and private schools.

Tuition, Invoicing, and Fundraising/Service Expectations

GRM tuition includes licensure required fees, a portion of school operational expenses, and staff salaries. A few times a year, a field trip or the transportation for a field trip might require an additional fee. Participation in these events is optional; however, alternative care is not available on site.

GRM charges a fixed monthly tuition for your child's regular schedule. We do not deduct tuition for school closings, scheduled breaks, sick days, vacation or other absences.. Additional care usage will be billed separately from the tuition statement. For your convenience, different

options for tuition billing are available. Families choose which option works best for them when their child is enrolled.

- 9-month billing cycle (tuition is due on the first business day of each month from August to May)
- 12-month billing cycle (the 9-month tuition is divided between 12 months, with the first payment due the first business day of each month, starting in August and ending in August)
- Bi-monthly 9 or 12-month billing cycle (payment is due on the 1st and 15th business day of each month based on the 9- or 12-month choice)
- One Installment Tuition (tuition is paid in full for the upcoming year, due by August 1st, **and at a 10% discount**)

Parents are required to make electronic payments through TUIO.

Sibling Discounts will be applied as follows: first tuition (no discount); 2nd tuition (10% year's tuition); 3rd tuition (20% year's tuition); 4th tuition (30% year's tuition). No tuition refunds are offered for children's absences. Parents/Guardians are obligated to pay the entire annual tuition and applicable fees regardless of their choice in payment plan options.

Delinquent Accounts

A grace period of five days will be allowed. After this grace period, the account will be considered delinquent and the student(s) will not be allowed to attend GRM until all tuition is current. Additionally, a late fee of \$35 will be applied and a statement will be emailed along with a daily fee of \$5.00 for each day after the grace period tuition is not paid. If an account is past due after the five day grace period immediate payment will be expected. If full payment cannot be made, a payment plan needs to be set in place within 30 days. The payment plan will not exceed 60 days and will be agreed upon by both parties. If contact and/or a payment plan cannot be worked out within 30 days of the past due tuition, the account will go to Small Claims Court and services by GRM will be terminated.

Additional Time and Service Obligations and Opportunities

Family Service Hours

It is recognized that tuition alone is insufficient to fund all expenses aimed at providing excellent educational environments. Thus, additional support – in volunteer time and in funds – is necessary to offer our high quality of education and services. Being a non-profit school, the team approach where “everyone pitches in” is the only way to keep costs down and educational excellence soaring. Tasks vary depending on school needs and your skills. Please watch for volunteer opportunities and participate when possible.

Donations

GRM, is a not-for-profit corporation and may accept contributions from any source that is knowledgeable of this information. Corporate and private gifts are always gratefully received.

Donations to GRM are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please request a donation form if needed or ask a teacher about any donation questions.

Fundraising

In order to meet our budgetary fundraising goals, all families are strongly encouraged to participate in all fundraising events throughout the school year. GRM makes a great effort to limit the number of fundraisers as much as possible by choosing ones that have proven to be most successful.

As a private non-profit institution, Great River Montessori's main sources of funding are tuition and fundraising. The Leadership Team works diligently each year to keep tuition costs at a reasonable rate while also keeping in mind operational and staffing expenses. Fundraising is a vital key to keeping tuition increases each year to a minimum and reaching budgetary goals.

Security and Safety Policies

Sign In and Sign Out Safety Protocols

Each child's safety and behavior is the responsibility of the parent/guardian until such time as the child is dropped off or walked to their classroom and/or dismissed to a parent/guardian.

Child Pick-Up Authorization

Children are only permitted to be picked up by those individuals authorized to do so by the enrolling parent(s). These persons are listed on the pick-up form. Please keep the list up-to-date. If you need to ask someone to pick up your child who is NOT on the form, please notify us ahead of time, either in person, by email, or by telephone. Remember to notify your regular carpool driver of the change. If an adult does not have written permission from the parent/guardian and/or is not on the pick-up form, the child will not be released to them, with no exceptions. Great River Montessori staff reserves the right to request picture identification and refuse release without such proof of identity.

Any individual picking up or dropping off your child must adhere to the drop off/pick up policies stated in this handbook.

Security and Locked Door Policy

To improve the level of safety for children at GRM, all exterior school doors will remain locked at all times. All visitors will need to be escorted into the school. All visitors and staff are to use the front door upon entering and exiting the school. Additional information regarding the school's security procedures will be distributed as needed. When school is in session, visitors must check in upon entry.

Photograph and Social Media Policy

GRM policy defines a student's photograph as "Student Directory Information" and thus is public information, unless you provide the appropriate notification to the school that you would not like this information to be public. If your child's information is public, for example, your child's photo and name may appear in school pictures and classroom publications. Also, should your student or school receive a public honor or recognition, the school would provide your child's school picture to the honoring organization and/or media upon request. The school does also have a website, Facebook page, and print media that your student's picture or work may be displayed on.

Each child must have a media form on file at the beginning of each year that will provide or deny permission for the following media purposes:

1. During the school year, the media may visit your child's school, with school permission and parents notified in advance, to cover special events and may want to interview, videotape or photograph your child.
2. GRM may also wish to use your child's photograph, voice, likeness or student work for promotional and educational reasons, such as in publications, posters, brochures, newsletters and videos; on the school websites; on local cable television channels; or at community events (e.g. expos or fundraisers).
3. GRM does have a presence in social media to keep parents and the community informed about the school and upcoming events and may use a child's photograph, videotape, or special projects on their school Facebook page or public website.

Outdoor Policy

Being outdoors in a natural environment is a key part of Montessori education and a child's health. Students will go outside multiple times throughout their school day. Students will be outdoors for recess as long as weather permits. If your child is well enough to attend school, s/he is well enough to go outside.

Children must always have appropriate clothes for outdoors. During cold months, please be sure your child has a hat, warm coat, mittens or gloves, boots, and snow pants, so that they can enjoy outdoor time. We suggest supplying your child with two pairs of mittens or gloves. Some weather conditions prohibit outdoor activities. Students will not go outdoors when the temperature is ten degrees Fahrenheit or below or in conditions that the classroom teacher determines to be too severe.

Our curriculum and nature studies include experiencing a variety of seasons, studying seasonal weather patterns, and learning about their effects. Therefore, students may at times experience

rain and will require rain boots and rain jackets. Please provide them with appropriate outerwear no matter the weather.

Inclement Weather Closures and Related Emergency Procedures

We aim to notify parents at least 24 hours in advance of any anticipated closures due to inclement weather, most notably in the case of a major snow or ice storm. It is possible that in some cases 24 hours' notice is not possible. All family members will be notified by email of any school closures as soon as possible. If you do not receive an email regarding a weather related closure, assume the center is open as usual. Closings will also be posted on our Facebook page and local news stations when possible.

Because of GRM's location, we generally follow the Holmen School District closing schedule.

Delays

If the Holmen School District has a two-hour delay, due to inclement weather, full-time students will arrive at 10:00 am and the morning preschool session will be canceled.

Early Closings

If the Holmen School District has an early release, due to inclement weather, GRM will ask parents/guardians to have their child(ren) picked up as soon as possible.

Severe Weather

If severe weather warrants dismissal during a school day, please look for a confirmation email, posting on Facebook, and/or local news stations. In the event of tornado or fire, emergency procedures that are practiced will be followed. Young children may want to talk about these drills and are carefully prepared for them by the teachers.

Possession of Firearms and Dangerous Weapons on School Grounds

It is a felony for a person to knowingly possess a firearm (concealed or otherwise) on the grounds of a school. Wis. Stat. § 948.605(2)(a).

It is a forfeiture for a person to knowingly possess a firearm (concealed or otherwise) at a place that the person knows or has reasonable cause to believe is within 1,000 feet of the grounds of a school. Wis. Stat. § 948.605(2)(a).

Exceptions: There are a number of exceptions to the restrictions on possessing a firearm in or on school grounds or within 1,000 feet of school grounds. It is lawful to possess a firearm in or on the grounds of a school or within 1,000 feet of the grounds of a school as follows:

- On private property that is not part of school grounds. Wis. Stat. § 948.605(2)(b)1m and 18 USC 922(q)(2)(B)(i).

- By a law enforcement officer acting in his or her official capacity. Wis. Stat. § 948.605(2)(b)1m and 18 USC 922(q)(2)(B)(vi).
- The firearm is not loaded and is encased or in a locked firearms rack that is on a motor vehicle. Wis. Stat. § 948.605(2)(b)3a and b.
- By a state-certified commission warden acting in his or her official capacity. Wis. Stat. § 948.605(2)(b)2m.
- By a person who is a CCW licensee or out-of-state CCW licensee may possess a firearm within 1,000 feet of the grounds of a school, but not in or on school grounds. Wis. Stat. § 948.605(2)(b)1r.

Other weapons: It is a crime to possess a dangerous weapon (other than a firearm or BB or pellet gun) on or in any school building, school grounds, recreation area, athletic field or any other property owned, used or operated for school administration. Wis. Stat. § 948.61.

Evacuation Drills

For the purpose of organization and proficiency, GRM practices fire drills and tornado drills. Drills may evoke strong emotion or curiosity in your child; please be prepared to have calm and reassuring conversations with your child if/when safety drills are brought up. We will do our best to notify families prior to practicing these drills.

Health Policies

Any child suspected of having a communicable disease is separated from the other children immediately. The teacher will then discharge the child to the care of his/her parents/guardians or the person who has been designated by the parents/guardians.

Children who have a contagious disease must be kept at home until they are no longer contagious. GRM must be informed of such illness so that other parents/guardians may be warned to look for symptoms.

Children may come into health risks and dangers associated with the transmission of the COVID-19 virus, and other communicable diseases, such as; long term effects on an individual's heart, lung and brain and other health effects, known and unknown, including a possibility of death. The exposure to the COVID-19 virus, or other communicable diseases, could occur while my child is in the care of Great River Montessori Inc. (GRM).

COVID Release of Liability and Waiver of Claims Agreement (“Release”)

Please read this agreement thoroughly, as it discusses the potential risks of placing your child(ren) in the care of Great River Montessori Inc. during the current public health crisis.

I, the undersigned, in my capacity as parent or legal guardian, hereby acknowledge the health risks and dangers associated with the transmission of the COVID virus, and other communicable

diseases, such as; long term effects on an individual's heart, lung and brain and other health effects, known and unknown, including a possibility of death. I recognize that exposure to the COVID virus, or other communicable diseases, could occur while my child is in the care of Great River Montessori Inc. (GRM).

As such, and in consideration for educational services, child care and supervision to be provided by Great River Montessori Inc., I, the undersigned, for myself, my minor children enrolled in Great River Montessori Inc., and others I live with fully assume all of the risks associated with participation in the Program, including the possibility of COVID (or the novel coronavirus) community spread and the known and unknown risks associated with COVID.

I, as parent and/or legal guardian, have read and fully understand and acknowledge the contents of the release and agree that I am voluntarily waiving, releasing, indemnifying and discharging Great River Montessori Inc. and its officers, directors, employees and volunteers from any and all liability, damages, and each and every action collectively, ("claims") by participating in and/or associated with placing my child(ren) in the care of Great River Montessori, including, but not limited to, exposure or transmission of the COVID virus.

I understand that if my child(ren), myself, or others that I live with require medical treatment, even if I suspect that the medical treatment is required due to some exposure to a contagion while my child was in the care of Great River Montessori, I agree to be financially responsible for the cost of such treatment. I am aware Great River Montessori does not provide health insurance for my child(ren), myself, or others that I live with and I should carry my own health insurance.

Should any part of this agreement be declared invalid by a court of valid jurisdiction the remaining provisions of this agreement shall remain in full force and effect.

MY SIGNATURE BELOW IS CONFIRMATION THAT I HAVE READ AND FULLY UNDERSTAND AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTENTS OF THE RELEASE AND AGREE THAT I AM VOLUNTARILY WAIVING, RELEASING, INDEMNIFYING AND DISCHARGING GREAT RIVER MONTESSORI INC. AND ITS OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS FROM ANY CLAIMS AND WAIVE THE RIGHT TO FINANCIAL RECOVERY FOR HARM, RELATED TO THE COVID PANDEMIC, SUFFERED AS A RESULT OF MY CHILD(REN) BEING IN THE CARE OF GREAT RIVER MONTESSORI INC., TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF THE LAW.

Student health criteria for exclusion from school

Children should not come to school if an illness:

- Prevents them from participating comfortably in activities.
- Poses a risk of transmission.
- Results in care greater than our staff can provide.
- Includes a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

- Students must be fever-free, without assistance of medicine, for 24 hours before returning.

Children who have been out of summer-care due to illness must be kept home until fully recovered. If a child has been diagnosed with a contagious disease, the parents/guardians must call and report such disease to the office. GRM will notify families when a contagious disease is reported.

No oral medication, topical medication, drops, vitamins, or fluoride supplements are administered by GRM staff unless they are in their original packaging and a Medication Administration Form is filled out, signed, and dated by a licensed physician or parent/guardian. All prescribed medication must have signed consent by the child's licensed prescribing physician.

Specific illnesses and conditions related to exclusion from school

Unwell or overtired children should not attend school. Contagious diseases or conditions that necessitate exclusion from GRM include but are not limited to chicken pox, German measles, infectious hepatitis, measles, mumps, whooping cough, diphtheria, meningitis, H1N1, conjunctivitis (pink eye), hand and mouth disease, COVID, and parasitic infestations or infections. These diseases or conditions must be reported to the school immediately upon confirmation so other parents and the county health officer can be notified. A child must be absent for the amount of time indicated by the health department before attending school again.

If a child becomes sick, or, for example, a condition like lice is noted, while the child is at GRM, the parent is immediately called and the child is moved to a rest area away from other children until the parent arrives. A staff person will attend to the needs of the sick child while we wait for you to arrive. Please pick up your child within 60 minutes of receiving a call. If we cannot reach you, we will contact the people on your Emergency Care plan form.

Children should stay home if they have:

- A fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher within the past 24 hours*
- Severe nasal and/or chest congestion
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea within the past 24 hours*
- Unidentified rash
- Symptoms of: pink eye, strep throat, measles, mumps, impetigo, chicken pox, scabies, ringworm, pinworm, head lice, or COVID.

* Please note, fevers controlled by medication are still fevers; children must stay home until free of fever for 24 hours without medication. Children must be free of persistent fever or diarrhea for 24 hours and no longer in a contagious stage of any communicable disease before returning to the school.

No staff member, volunteer, visitor or parent with symptoms of serious illness or communicable disease, or whose behavior gives reasonable concern for the safety of the children, should be on school premises.

When a child is suspected of having chicken pox, German measles, infectious hepatitis, measles, mumps, poliomyelitis, scarlet fever, whooping cough, diphtheria, meningitis, COVID or other reportable communicable diseases, the local public health officer shall be notified.

A child may be re-admitted without a statement from a physician after having had a communicable disease only if the child has been absent for a period of time equal to the longest usual incubation period of the disease as specified by the health department.

Random, visual checks for lice and nits may occur during predictably risky times. The procedure that will be followed if lice or nits are detected is:

- Parents of individual children with lice or nits are informed, shown what was discovered, and given information about the GRM no nit policy.
- The child is sent home for treatment and removal. A visual check will be completed by a GRM staff or faculty member when the child returns to confirm that all nits are gone.
- On the day of discovery, all children will receive a visual check for lice and nits.
- Seven days after lice or nit discovery, every child in the school will receive a visual check for lice and nits.

Emergency Transportation and Medical Treatment

In the case of a medical emergency GRM will adhere to the following procedure

- Qualified staff will attend to injuries and provide first aid.
- Parents will be contacted.
 - If parents are unavailable, emergency contacts will be notified.
- Emergency medical services will be contacted if deemed necessary.
- GRM will arrange for medical transportation. Transportation may include ambulances or other emergency vehicles.
 - If the situation is life-threatening, the child will be transported to the nearest medical facility.

First Aid & Medical Preparedness and Procedures

- All GRM staff are trained in first aid and basic emergency care.
- GRM maintains first aid kits.
- A backpack with a first aid kit, a list of each child's medical and allergy care needs, incident reporting documents, and child emergency contact information is taken on all walking and transported field trips; this backpack stays with the designated staff member at all times.
- When an incident warrants medical attention, parents are called immediately. According to legal regulations, parents are notified immediately if there is a head injury. Otherwise, parents are notified via email or a written form sent home with their child.
- Incident records are reviewed periodically to determine that all possible preventative measures are being taken.
- Accidents are noted in the medical log and in the child's permanent file.

Protocols for Medication Administration on Premises

If your child is on medication, try to arrange the medication schedule so your child does not need the medicine at school.

Please provide us with any medications that your child would need in an emergency (for example, asthma medications, or an EpiPen for allergic reactions).

Complete and sign all medication forms. Under no circumstances may children hold their own medicines, and medications may never be kept in children's backpack.

The following steps are required for the school to administer medications:

1. Bring signed prescription from a prescribing medical professional that includes the child's name, dosage directions, date, and physician's name.
2. Bring original bottles only.
3. Fill out the Medication Administration Form.
4. Stored medications will be reviewed on a quarterly basis. If a medication is close to expiring, an attempt will be made to contact the parents/guardians to verbally advise. The medication will be maintained for two weeks from the date of this contact before discarding.
5. If a child requires medication longer than 30 days, an updated evaluation/examination is required. Neither prescribed nor non-prescribed medications may be taken by children on their own.

Definition, Storage, and Records: Accidents, Injuries, Medications, and Health Care Substances

For our use, medication policy and protocols apply to all health care substances to be given to a child for health reasons, including but not limited to the following: prescriptions by a physician; over-the-counter medicine such as acetaminophen, cough syrup, cough drops, etc; and other care substances such as lip balm, homeopathy, sunscreen, lotion, herbal remedies, etc.

All health care substances must be kept and administered by a staff member, unless documented differently on the child's Health History and Emergency Plan document. DO NOT store these in the child's backpack, or lunch box, even if it is just lip balm. Children have a tendency to share or try whatever another child has available, which poses a potentially high health risk. Health care substances will be stored safely and out of the reach of children.

A written record is kept of the medication given, dosage, time, and staff member administering the care substance. This record is kept in the medical log.

Teachers will also keep written records of accidents and injuries. Copies will be given to parents and placed in the child's file for the following types of problems:

- Hitting or biting that leaves a mark or breaks skin.

- Persistent misuse of materials, e.g., deliberate damage, throwing, or hitting with materials.
- All behavior problems that require interventions beyond redirection will be documented on the appropriate form(s).

This documentation becomes part of the child's record. Parents of children who are hurt by another child will be notified via an incident form or phone call, depending on the injury, that same day. Examples of such incidents include, but are not limited to: physical harm, destruction of personal property, and excessive teasing.

Additional Health Measures

All staff are trained in proper bodily fluid handling both for first aid and cleaning and/or disposing of any contaminated clothing or equipment; this training covers proper care for blood, vomit, urine and feces contact.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

We at GRM take the safety and cleanliness of our school seriously.

Children are instructed to wash their hands with soap and water before handling food and after toileting. Teachers may help children with the hand washing process and stress its importance. Staff members also wash their hands with soap and water frequently, and especially after assisting children with toileting or after assisting an ill child.

Disposable gloves are used for changing soiled clothing, first-aid, and bathroom cleanup. Wet or soiled clothing will be changed promptly and sent home in a plastic bag. Please remember to replace your child's extra set of clothing. GRM does keep extra clothing on hand for emergency use but cannot guarantee proper sizes will be available.

All tables and food preparation/serving areas are sanitized. Cleaning materials are washed on a regular basis by staff. Disinfecting wipes may also be used on surfaces.

Naptime bedding should be taken home and washed every other week. Staff will put bedding in a bag and send it home with your child at the end of every two weeks. Please remember to bring it back, washed and clean, on the next scheduled school day. .

Physical Examination

All children shall have an initial physical examination not more than one year prior to nor later than three months after their first day of attendance. The Child Health Report Form must be signed and dated by a licensed medical professional. Each child shall have a subsequent physical examination by a physician at least once every two years.

Immunizations

An Immunization Record Form must be on file for each child. This immunization history must indicate immunizations the child has received or that the immunization requirement is to be waived for that child by a compliance alternative. An electronic printout from the Wisconsin Immunization Registry or other registry maintained by a healthcare provider may be used in place of the Immunization Record Form.

Children who have not received subsequent doses of vaccine appropriate to their age must receive such subsequent doses within one year of the first day of attendance and must notify GRM in writing as each dose is received. Immunization requirements are waived upon signature of the parent/guardian on the Immunization Record Form.

Smoking, Vaping, and Alcohol Use Policy

The State of Wisconsin prohibits smoking in any child care facility and in any indoor or outdoor area of the center where children are allowed, on any day the center is in operation, regardless of whether children are present. GRM maintains a smoke-free environment at all times. Additionally, GRM prohibits the use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, smoking, and vaping on school premises with the exception of drugs used as medication and prescribed by a physician.

Allergies

Parents are required to make Great River Montessori aware of any and all known allergies as is requested during the enrollment process. If your child has a life-threatening allergy, please notify the GRM administration upon enrollment and/or upon discovery of allergy.

In the case of allergies, GRM requires the following medical documents:

- Physician identification of allergen(s).
- Physician-prescribed treatment that can be administered by a non-medical professional.

GRM may make reasonable accommodations for specific allergies on a case-by-case basis in consultation with parents and in accordance with physician guidelines. Please keep in mind that while GRM may make every effort to prevent a child from coming into contact with an allergen, these preventive efforts are not foolproof in a school environment with small children, family members, and volunteers present throughout the day.

Child Abuse/Neglect

The health and safety of the students attending GRM are our top priority. If a staff member suspects abuse or neglect of any child in our care, our team is required to report it to Child Protective Services in accordance with section 767.11.

Please also be aware that staff members cannot release children to individuals who appear to be impaired. If our team has reason to believe that any family member or guardian picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, an emergency contact will be called to pick up the child and the incident will be reported.

No person making a report under these criteria may be discharged from employment for doing so. To make a report, the staff member will contact, by telephone, the County Department of Social Services, the Child Protection Agency or the Police Department. All suspicions of abuse will be documented and kept on file at the center, including the name, address, age, and sex of the child involved and the type of abuse or neglect suspected.

Definition of abuse and neglect as stated by law

- Abuse refers to any physical injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means, including sexual intercourse or sexual contact.
- Physical injury includes, but is not limited to, severe bruising, lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, or any injury contributing great bodily harm.
- A neglected child refers to a child whose parent, guardian, legal custodian, or other persons exercising temporary or permanent control over the child neglects, refuses, or is unable, for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, clothing, medical, or dental care or shelter, so as to seriously endanger the physical health of the child.

Any parent or guardian who has reason to suspect abuse by a school staff member should report his/her concern to the County Department of Social Services, the Child Protection Agency, or the Police Department.

Sunscreen and Mosquito Control Policy

Mosquito and sun exposure are mitigated at GRM by the following means:

- Personal Protection: We recommend that insect repellents and sunscreens be used. All mosquito repellents and sunscreens must be provided in the original package and have a prepared sunscreen/mosquito repellent use form accompanying them.
- Parents/guardians who have additional concerns are encouraged to dress students in long sleeves and long pants for further protection.
- Breeding Habitat Control

Classroom Pet Policy

To assist in the development of care and responsibility, classrooms may choose to have a classroom pet. All classroom activity involving a pet will be directly supervised by the teacher. All pets and their habitats (bowl, cage, etc.) will be kept clean. Each classroom will advise parents of classroom pets. If there is a special event where an animal will be present, parents will be advised ahead of time. Please let staff know of any pet allergies your child may have.

Nutrition Policy

All students are to bring a lunch from home. No meals are prepared on-site for your child. Dishware, napkins, utensils and water are available, but we do encourage you to pack these items with your child's lunch. We will clean and sanitize according to regulation any reusable items we provide. Please use an insulated lunch box/bag with an ice pack as lunches will not be placed in a refrigerator unless it is an emergency. Microwaves will be available to be used to warm food during lunch. Please use a thermos for foods that need to remain warm if possible.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to ensure that sack lunches provide half of the child's daily nutritional requirements. Sack lunches should consist of at least one item from each of the following categories:

- Protein sources, such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cooked dried peas or beans, cheese or peanut butter
- Two vegetables, two fruits, or one of each
- Cereal or whole grain or enriched bread products

Milk and water are encouraged during lunch. Candy and soda are prohibited.

One of our goals at GRM is to provide your child with a healthy well-balanced snack. All the children and their families are responsible for providing a snack to have available to them during the school day. These snacks should be designed with basic food groups and healthy nutrition in mind, consisting of whole grains, fresh fruits, vegetables, and proteins such as eggs or cheeses. GRM will provide snacks in an emergency situation or for special occasions throughout the year. We strive to make snacks nutritious and delicious. We want your child to learn that food choices can be tasty and good for you too. We hope these snacks will assist your child in developing lifelong healthy eating habits. Children who stay past 3:30pm and are in our after-care program will be given time to have a second healthy snack in the afternoon.

Please keep in mind that certain foods are considered high-risk choking hazards for younger children. If your child is younger than 4 years of age, we ask that you not send popcorn. Also please do not send hot dogs or grapes unless it is prepared in a safe manner: hot dogs should be sliced lengthwise, not in rounds. Grapes must be quartered. Meat and cheese should be cut into small strips that can be bitten and swallowed. Please be aware of your young child's ability to easily eat items like raw vegetables, hard pretzels, and seeds, and send only what you believe to be a safe food for your child.

If your child is attending Before Care, you may pack his/her breakfast and our care staff will offer it. All other children should have a nutritious breakfast before arriving at school.

We encourage independent eating. No child will be encouraged or discouraged from eating any specific thing you pack for their meal; no child will be asked to eat their lunch in a particular order; and no child will be forced to sit and finish their lunch. Staff is not responsible to track what your child eats.

Parents must notify the school of any food allergies or sensitivities. If your child needs special requirements for food, please advise your child's teacher. We strive to work well with families who request dietary accommodations.

Insurance

GRM does not provide any type of health or accident insurance for injuries incurred at school or at school-sponsored events and trips.

Organizational Structure and Guidelines

The Board of Directors consists of the Great River Montessori Community: faculty or staff, community members, and/or parents. GRM is a Wisconsin 501(c)(3) Not-For-Profit Corporation, licensed as a Charitable Organization. The School Leadership Team operates the school on a daily basis, guided by a Board of Directors.

Decision-Making Processes

The School Leadership Team makes decisions related to aspects and quality of care and education. The Board of Directors and the School Leadership Team collaboratively make large-scale financial decisions, review policies, and plan future strategy after consultation with the staff and parent/guardian body. Specific responsibilities and composition of the Board of Directors is detailed in the Bylaws. Board meeting minutes are available upon request.

Bylaws

Copies of the school's Bylaws are available to parents upon request.

Grievance Procedure

- Any matter concerning a child, the facility, or a teacher must be brought to the attention of that child's teacher before all else. Teachers are afforded the first opportunity to offer explanation and/or resolution to the parents.
- The School Leadership Team must then be informed by the parent/guardian and/or teacher and is responsible to intervene in such cases where parents and teachers cannot come to an agreement.
- If either party is not satisfied with the solution, they may submit a grievance form for review. Families and staff must follow these steps, as they are crucial to resolving disparities with good grace.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors meet quarterly with the goal of meeting one evening per month at the school (unless otherwise posted). If you are interested in serving the school as a member of the Board of Directors, please contact the School Leadership Team prior to the annual business meeting held in May or June of each school year.

School Calendar

GRM is closed during the school year for holidays, conferences, and teacher inservices. These days off are noted on the school calendar along with key school events and happenings. An at-a-glance calendar and electronic copy of the calendar are available on our school website. Hard copies of the calendar are available in the school office upon request. GRM generally follows the Holmen School District with closings or delays for inclement weather.

Great River Montessori Family Handbook Signature Page 2023/2024

Please read the GRM Family Handbook on our website (www.greatrivermontessori.com) or ask for a paper copy in the school office. Sign and return this form to GRM before the start of the school term.

- I have received and read the Great River Montessori Family Handbook.
- I understand and agree to abide by the policies and procedures stated within.
- I understand that GRM may implement or change policies as needed, and that I will be notified of such changes.

Parent/Guardian 1:

Name (print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian 2:

Name (print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

The Great River Montessori school (GRM) values diversity among our students and admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. Further, we will not discriminate on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, mental or physical condition or disability in the administration of our educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.