



PARENT HANDBOOK
2024-2025 School Year

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OUR SCHOOL

History

The Petoskey Montessori Children’s House (PMCH) was founded in November 1973 by a small group of dedicated parents. The first classroom of four children met in a rented space. Since then, the school has purchased its own property and expanded its programs to include services for children two months to 12 years of age. Such growth bears witness to the commitment and the generosity of parents and the dedication of the staff.

In the spring of 1997, the Public Schools of Petoskey accepted a proposal and signed an agreement with the Petoskey Montessori Children’s House Elementary class, stating that children from first to sixth grade are to become part of the Public School System. Thus, the Petoskey Montessori Elementary School (PMES) was created. Kindergarten students are now included in this agreement as well. This change, from a tuition-based private school to a state-funded public education alternative, does not change the methodology, philosophy or pedagogy of the Montessori program. The public school contracted with PMCH to provide a pure and viable Montessori elementary program with very few interruptions or deviations from our original program. The facilities, materials, equipment and grounds continue to be owned and maintained by the parent corporation known as the Petoskey Montessori Children’s House (a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation). The elementary classroom has been AMI Recognized since 1999. In 2024, Public Schools of Petoskey elected not to renew the management agreement.

Mission

We are a Montessori based school and child care program committed to fostering a safe, nurturing environment for children to develop a respect for self, others and their environment while fueling their innate passion for learning.

Vision

To inspire our school community to develop an inquisitive mindset that will set them on a journey of lifelong learning, critical thinking and inclusive collaboration as they discover and embrace their authentic selves.

Values

Lifelong Learning

We foster the innate desire to explore and learn, through purposeful hands-on activities and a culture of respect, collaboration, creativity and independence.

Stewardship

We are aware of the uniqueness, beauty, and fragility of the natural world, and actively protect and respect the environments that surround us.

Students are encouraged to see themselves as active and valued members of their classroom, school community, and the wider world.

Our families are active participants in the school community and their children's learning.

Integrity

All our actions and decisions are led by honesty, transparency, and ethical behavior.

We aspire to achieve high performance standards to develop the maximum potential of every child and employee.

Compassion

We nurture the development of children's social and emotional intelligence by modeling and teaching skills that promote empathy, social responsibility, and teamwork.

We appreciate the individuality of each member of our community, and create an environment of trust and mutual respect that encourages the acceptance of self and others.

Independence

Both students and teachers are empowered to be self-motivated, self-disciplined, and independent learners. Guides model actions and behaviors and encourage independence to each child's ability.

Students are given the freedom & opportunity to engage with the work in their prepared environment.

Philosophy

The Montessori education method was developed in the early part of the 20th century by Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator. From observations made while working with young children, she developed a method that revolutionized teaching concepts and brought to the classroom a sense of joy and accomplishment. The aim is to enable the child to function in the environment independently; the underlying principle is one of freedom within established limits, which permits the child to gain self-esteem and self-reliance.

Montessori takes advantage of each child's unique sensitivities and offers exercises in language, development, sensorimotor development, reading, mathematics, physical and natural sciences, geography and cultural studies, music, art, drama and body movement. Children develop at their own pace in a trusting atmosphere with the aid of the guides. In this environment, education comes through spontaneous exercise of the child's own faculties. Education, according to Maria Montessori, integrates the application of life skills with academics and is not merely a search for intellectual skills.

Admission and Enrollment Process

PMCH administers its programs and admits students of any race, color, national origin, religion and disability to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school.

Step 1 - Apply Online: Prospective families are asked to apply through the link on our website. The link will direct the applicant to Brightwheel, our classroom management software. Once the

application is complete, the student(s) will be added to our applicant pool. Please be sure to complete the application in its entirety.

We do rolling admissions throughout the year, depending on space availability and fit. Applicants who are not immediately accepted will be included in our applicant pool for the year and will remain under consideration for future spots. You may also apply for future school years by indicating your desired school year in the application.

Step 2 - Schedule a Tour: Prospective parents/guardians will be contacted to visit the school for a classroom observation and a meeting with the school administrator and classroom guide to discuss values and goals within the Montessori pedagogy.

Step 3 - Schedule Child Visit: Families will be invited to visit the classroom. During the visit, the child will have a chance to meet the guide, orient themselves to the environment, and observe the morning work cycle. The final decision to continue or terminate the enrollment process is made by the school administrator and teaching staff.

Step 4 - Notification of Availability: Once a spot opens, we will notify you we have space available for your child and verify enrollment.

Orientation

Prior to the start of each school year, there is an orientation for the parents and new students. All new students are then scheduled for an individual visit to PMCH before the actual classes begin. The purpose of this visit is to introduce the children to the guide and the environment, thereby helping them to feel more secure on their first day of school.

Following the individual visits, the new children attend several days of special orientation sessions. These are usually shorter days, allowing the guide to give much individual attention to the new children. It is common for new children to experience separation anxiety; the major purpose of these orientation days is to help them adapt to a new situation, demonstrate basic procedures, and generally make them feel more comfortable.

If a child enters the primary class during the school year, the orientation procedure is very similar to the fall schedule. The child first has an individual visit with the guide. He/she then attends class for only part of the morning, gradually lengthening the time in the class over several days until, by the end of the week he/she is attending the full morning session.

OUR CLASSROOMS

The Montessori program seeks to parallel the developmental cycle of the child at each stage of growth. The curriculum and classroom time vary according to the development level. There are, however, three components in all Montessori classes, from infant to elementary levels:

- (1) A prepared environment designed to take advantage of the child's own tendencies and to build upon his/her interests, encouraging self-motivation
- (2) A trained guide who observes the child and links them to activities and materials according to his/her needs and interests
- (3) Freedom of choice, which increases as the child's responsibility expands (always balanced by an understanding of personal responsibility within the classroom)

Each classroom has children of mixed ages within the developmental plane. This allows the children to work at their own pace and level, interacting with each other and the adults in a spontaneous and caring atmosphere. From the earliest age, each child experiences him/herself as a respected and contributing member of a group.

Young Children's Community / Nido (2 months to 3 years old)

Montessori child development is designed to maximize the development of young children. The specially trained adult conducts carefully planned activities which lead the child to build sensory-motor skills, socialization skills, high self-esteem, inner security, and abiding habits of concentration.

PMCH features two child environments: The Nido or "nest" is for infants 2 to (approximately) 14 months old. The children enter the Young Children's Community between 14 and 18 months old, when they are walking well, until (approximately) 3 years of age. The children are active as community members within multi-age groups, being guided toward the exercise of freedom and independence

The program has been created to give the child a rich, stimulating and inviting environment which allows for the natural development of the child. The carefully chosen materials of the prepared environment will provide the child with control of its mental and physical stimulation. Independence and determination, assets of a strong personality, are developed through work carried out with full concentration. This happens through an activity which completely absorbs each child and fulfills his/her urge to explore the world.

Primary (ages 3 to 6 years old)

Through observation, Dr. Montessori saw that, at certain times in children's early years, they show heightened interest or unusual ability in acquiring particular skills or knowledge. Montessori called these "sensitive periods" and noted that they manifest at the same time in the life of all children, regardless of their cultural heritage. If the child's environment is expanded and prepared so as to "feed" these sensitivities at the proper time, the child can develop these areas in a natural and joyful manner, satisfying his/her own inner urges. Otherwise, it requires more conscious effort to master the same concepts or abilities at a later age.

For this reason, we encourage parents to enroll their children in the primary level between 2 ½ to 3 ½ years old, so that they will be able to take maximum advantage of the sensitive periods in an environment designed to recognize and support them. Children may be enrolled at various times during the school year to ensure that they begin the moment they are ready.

The young child learns in a special way, having what Montessori termed an "absorbent mind". Impressions and information about the world are taken in as a whole, providing the indirect preparation for later analysis and classification.

The primary class is designed to respond to the special characteristics of the young child who explores and learns primarily through the senses. Movement is an integral component of all learning at this age, especially the use of the hand for manipulation. As the child uses the rich environment to meet his/her needs or interests, there are several noticeable results: increased power of concentration, love of work, growing independence balanced by self-discipline, more interest in cooperative work with others, and a general "*joie de vivre*", which manifests in a fascination with all life and the surrounding world.

All primary students attend five days per week. PMCH offers a unique cycle of learning and growth designed to respond to the "absorbent mind" and the sensorial nature of a young child during the first 6 years of life. Each successive development is made possible by the direct and indirect preparation which has preceded it.

Classroom Placement

Children are accepted into each level for the duration of the full development cycle, beginning at the age 2 months in the Nido, approximately 14 months in the infant community, and age 2 ½ to 3 ½ in the primary and continuing into the kindergarten year.

Children are placed according to available space in the classrooms. We seek to maintain a balance of age and sex in each room. The timing is determined by the primary class guide in consultation with the administrator, elementary class guide and the parents. For our younger children who are enrolled less than full time (5 days) in the Nido or YCC classroom, a weekly schedule is determined at the time of enrollment. Due to ratio constraints, we are unable to accommodate changes week to week without revising the child's permanent schedule as space permits.

Daily Schedule

The daily schedule will have slight variations for each program level. Each program (YCC, Nido, and Primary) has an uninterrupted morning work cycle, lunch, snack, recess and afternoon quiet/nap time, in accordance with Child Day Licensing requirements. The morning work cycle period is two to three hours, depending on the child's age. The work cycle is composed of a few key concepts, child-initiated work, and an opportunity for a prolonged period of work without adult interruptions. Work that is chosen by the child's enthusiasm and desire to learn tends to be more meaningful and fulfilling. In YCC/Nido, daily routines take into consideration individual needs for eating, toileting, and sleep.

YCC/Nido

07:30 am to 08:30 am - Arrival

08:30 am to 09:30 am - Morning work cycle (diapers/toileting/hand washing)

09:30 am - 10:00 am - Snack

10:00 am to 10:30 am - Group time

10:30 am to 11:30 am - Outside time

11:30 am to 12:30 pm - Lunch (diapers/toileting/hand washing)

12:30 pm to 02:00 pm - Nap/Rest time

02:00 pm to 03:00 pm - Snack (diapers/toileting/hand washing)

03:00 pm to 03:30 pm - Carline for school day students

03:30 pm to 05:30 pm - After-school care

Primary

07:30 am to 08:30 am - Arrival and early care, creative and movement activities

08:30 am to 10:45 am - Morning work cycle (snack available during this time)

10:45 am to 11:45 am - Outside recess

11:45 am to 12:30 pm - Lunch

12:30 pm to 01:00 pm - Rest/quiet time

01:30 pm to 02:45 pm - Afternoon work cycle

02:45 pm to 03:00 pm - Clean up and carline preparations

03:00 pm to 03:30 pm - Carline, outside play time

03:30 pm to 03:45 pm - Afternoon snack and clean up, bathroom break

03:45 pm to 05:30 pm - After-school care

Drop-off and Pick-up

Arrival

Drop-off car line is between 8:00 and 8:30 am. Students bid farewell to their parents at the gate and walk to their classes; younger students are assisted by staff. It is important that children arrive on time to ensure the classroom work period in the morning.

- YCC/Nido and Primary students arriving before 8:00 am should be walked to the classroom door by their parents.
- YCC/Nido and Primary students arriving after 8:30 am should be walked to the Administrator's office, not the classroom.

Dismissal

Pick-up carline is between 3:00 and 3:30 pm. At dismissal, children will wait at the gate and will be walked to their car by a member of the staff.

All cars should enter the driveway on the west side and exit on the east side. Do not allow your child to get out of the car and walk up the driveway past waiting vehicles. If you wish to talk with the guide or another parent at arrival or dismissal, please park your car in the staff/visitors lot so as not to block the driveway.

After 3:30 pm, parents should pick up their children in the classroom.

Please be on time. Children are very sensitive about being picked up late. If you are unavoidably detained, please call us right away. When a child is picked up after 5:30 p.m., you will be billed a late pickup fee of \$10.00, and then will be charged for every 10 minutes past 5:30pm.

Children are permitted to leave school only with parents, except when another person has been designated, in writing, on the child information card.

If for any reason you are unable to pick up your child at the end of the day, please notify the office of the name and driver's license number of the person authorized to pick up your child.

Children will not be released to anyone other than the parent without authorization. Please follow this procedure even if the person you are authorizing to pick up your child has been named on your emergency card. In this case the office only needs the person's name.

If your child will be going home to visit with another child on a given day, please send a written note to the guide clearly stating the plan for the day.

If your child is in a carpool, be sure the drivers are listed on your child's emergency care, and give us a note describing your arrangements, to keep in your child's file.

Remember that all children under the age of 4 belong in a car seat in the back seat; booster seats are required until the age of 8 or a child reaches 57 inches in height. A child will not be released to a vehicle not properly equipped.

If your child will regularly walk home or ride the bus, please inform the child's guide, in writing, at the beginning of the year. Also, please send written notes concerning any changes in dismissal plans.

Snacks, Lunch, and Food Allergies/Special Diets

Snacks

A snack is available for the children in the Nido, Young Children's Community and Primary classes. Having a snack is a popular activity which offers the children many opportunities to practice skills and grow in independence. The children set the table, arrange or prepare servings, clear the dishes and table, and sweep the floor. It is quite a complex series of activities; the process itself is as enticing to the children as the food.

The following are some of the guidelines that the staff uses to plan snacks for the students:

- For the Nido community, parents are asked to send individual snacks for their children. In the Young Children's Community (YCC) and Primary classroom, parents provide snacks on a rotating weekly basis. We suggest items that have not been over-prepared, as the children enjoy slicing cheese, peeling fruits, chopping vegetables, sprinkling raisins, etc. Ethnic specialties are always welcome.
- PMCH makes every effort not to serve items which contain sugar or artificial coloring as some children are highly sensitive to such ingredients. This includes granola bars or fruit roll-ups, which have high sugar content. Here are some examples of suggested snack items:

Raw vegetables with a dip
Cheese with whole grain crackers
Whole grain muffins
Whole grain breads with peanut butter
Fresh fruits
String cheese
Yogurt

Lunch

Lunch time is an enjoyable social and educational experience as well as a time to refuel the body. The children help to set the tables, arrange their own food and clean up after the meal. All meals are family style, with the children and their teachers sitting at tables to promote good manners, healthy eating habits and socialization skills.

Good nutrition directly affects a child's health, concentration, and behavior. Ideally, lunches should include a protein, fruits, vegetables, and a bread or cereal item. Staff will encourage children to eat their healthier choices first, followed by healthy snacks. It is preferable if candy and junk food is not sent in the child's lunch box.

On Fridays, the Primary class has pizza (pepperoni and cheese) and breadsticks. You will be billed for your child's pizza charges at the end of each month. On all other days, students need to bring lunch from home.

All lunches for YCC/Nido will be brought from home. If a parent forgets to pack a lunch for their child, a meal will be provided.

Food Allergies/Special Diets

If your child is allergic to specific foods, please talk with his/her guide. If special foods need to be substituted for the regular snacks, the guide will be glad to work out a procedure which will still allow the child some independence in preparing his/her own snack. The need for special diets, such as lactose-free, meat/poultry free, etc. is respected at PMCH. Please discuss the specifics with your child's guide.

The food program for the Nido class students differs dramatically due to age/developmentally appropriate foods for each child. We rely on input from parents for specific needs and concerns. A written policy on the Nido class food program can be obtained from the Nido class guide.

Naps

The younger YCC/Nido and Primary students who stay for the afternoon have a rest period each day after lunch; this nap time is in accordance with the Child Day Care Licensing Bureau requirements.

Each napping child should have his/her own crib-sized sheet and blanket or quilt. Some also like to have a small pillow, which remains at the school for nap time. These items will be stored in a plastic, zippered pillowcase and will be sent home weekly to be laundered.

Toileting

In the Young Children's Community, we follow a process that we find is most beneficial to the child; we use training pants or pull-ups rather than diapers. Because the pants are less bulky, we find that the children have more freedom of movement and as they begin to stand and walk, they are able to stand straighter, with better balance and grace.

Formal toileting is initiated by the child, but we find that it happens rather easily, because in training pants the child is more aware of urinating or having a bowel movement. The theory behind our

approach is that it is the normal human condition to be clean and dry. Therefore, it is very important that we help the child change into clean, dry pants promptly (though we are careful never to say “dirty” or “yucky” about a perfectly natural act). Training pants also give children the possibility of helping to dress themselves at an early age, adding to their self-confidence and independence. In both the Nido and the Young Children’s Community, a diaper or training pants and a T-shirt are sufficient in warm weather, making it as easy as possible for children to succeed in personal care.

Please understand that this is an approach that we use successfully to help the child acquire useful information and skills that will make toileting come easily and naturally when the child is ready. This is not early or pressured toilet training.

Parents provide training pants or pull-ups for all children not yet toilet trained. Guides will notify parents when their child’s supply is running low. If possible, contributions of baby wipes are always appreciated.

Children will be allowed to enter the Primary class after toilet learning is complete and entirely in use.

Clothing and Personal Items

There is no formal dress code at PMCH. Children should wear comfortable clothing which permits them to be active indoors and outdoors. In the course of a day, clothing may become dirty, paint-splattered, or wet. Do not send children in clothing which would prevent them from entering freely into activities for fear of getting their clothes dirty.

The Montessori philosophy encourages independent self-care. For this reason, children should come to school wearing simple, comfortable clothing and shoes that are easy to put on and take off by themselves. For example, elasticized pants, Velcro or large buttons, boots which pull on easily, and hats without ties. For indoor wear, a pair of easy-to-slip-on shoes, hard sole slippers, or rubber water clogs will be required. These shoes will be kept at school and used only indoors.

For toddler and primary students, we request that you keep seasonally appropriate changes of clothing at the school for your child. Please bring a new set in the late fall and in the spring as weather changes. All clothing, shoes, lunch supplies and nap supplies should be clearly marked with your child’s name. Wet or soiled clothing will be sent home, and a fresh supply should be sent back with the child the following day. Each child is provided with his/her own bin at school in which to store the slippers and change of clothes.

Outdoor activity is a part of the daily routine. Children need to arrive at school dressed for the weather. Appropriate outdoor clothing, including snow pants or snowsuits, hats, mittens, and closed-toed shoes that are safe for running and climbing are recommended. Children learning to walk, or to perfect the way they move and walk, can succeed best in simple, flexible, non-skid shoes.

Objects Brought to and From School

Children should carry a tote bag or backpack which they bring and take home each day. Inside the bag should be extra clothes as necessary, and any notes or other papers for the staff. Wet clothes, children's artwork, newsletters and notices will be put in these bags to go home with the children.

Parents should provide children with sunscreen and insect repellent to be applied as needed. Please label with your child's first and last name.

Children enjoy bringing items which relate to the work of the class and we encourage such occasional contributions. Natural objects, artifacts, handcrafts related to a certain country – even the occasional animal visitor – all contribute to the children's experience. Children often bring a book to place on the library shelf for a few days. Please limit these to quality books dealing with the real world or classic fiction (no comic books or books featuring TV characters). Make certain that your child's name is written inside the book.

Please do not send any toys, gum, candy, blankets or stuffed animals; it is best to leave these at home. Children who stay for the afternoon may bring a blanket or cuddly toy in their tote bag for use at nap time if they desire.

Written Work

The children's daily written work is kept at school. Periodically, the children bring their collection of work home; we hope that you will take time to review the work with your child.

During the early years of the child's development, there is little written evidence of the work the children are accomplishing. Even artwork may consist of page after page of repetitious circles as the child repeats to perfect a skill. We want to do all we can to encourage the child to choose work from his/her own inner motivation – and to lengthen the periods of concentration. The process and activity itself are of greatest importance – not the product. The young child works to satisfy his/her own needs and to perfect the self; the motivation and choice of work should not be to please the adult.

As a child grows older and enters the extended session, the volume of written work increases. Beginning in the extended session and continuing through the Elementary program, each child keeps all of his/her work in individual files. Before work is sent home, the guide reviews the work with the child, using that occasion to assess with the child his/her accomplishments and to structure follow-up review when necessary. The ultimate purpose of this individual tutorial is to help the child become increasingly responsible for his/her own education, formulating personal disciplines.

School's Lost or Damaged Materials

Each pupil or their parent or guardian shall be responsible to the guide for all books or materials damaged or not returned by the pupil. The cost of the materials will be added to the tuition due to the school.

Birthday Celebrations

The birth of each new being is indeed something to celebrate! Children eagerly anticipate their own birthday and receive affirmation of their uniqueness and special worth through celebrating the event with others.

Each guide incorporates birthday celebrations within the life of the class. Talk with your child's guide ahead of time to plan which day your child will celebrate the birthday at school. You will also learn of any special rituals or materials used to celebrate birthdays in your child's class.

Many children like to bring a special birthday treat to share with their friends. You will want to check with the guide so as to accommodate any special food allergies of children in that class.

Holidays and Other Celebrations

In the PMCH, holidays and other events are celebrated as an outgrowth of the children's own culture or within the context of cross-cultural study. As a non-sectarian school, the PMCH does not promote any particular religion or denomination. Rather, holidays and traditions are explored in a non-judgmental manner as manifestations of specific cultures or historical experience.

Field Trips and Excursions

From time to time a class may decide to venture out on a field trip (requiring parent volunteer drivers) or an excursion (walking to a place close by). You will receive detailed advance information (date, time span, drivers, destination), and an itinerary will be left in the school office. Field trips require an authorization signature from you and may require additional fees. If your child requires a car seat, remember to leave it behind on that day; we will make sure children are properly belted when cars are running.

If you volunteer to drive, we will need to see your driver's license, registration and proof of insurance. You may also volunteer to help shepherd children under the guide's guidance. We travel in caravan for mutual protection and stick together throughout a trip.

If a child arrives late for a field trip departure, you may choose to drive to the destination yourself, to check with the office to see if the child may visit another class, or return home. Be on time!

OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PMCH is a tobacco-free environment.

The licensing notebook contains all the licensing inspection and special investigation reports and related corrective action plans for the last 5 years and is available to parents during regular business hours. Licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports, and corrective action plans from at least the past 3 years are available on the department's child care licensing website at: www.michigan.gov/michildcare

The website where parents can access these rules is: www.michigan.gov/michildcare

Health Policy

Health Forms

The State of Michigan requires a health form for all children enrolled in PMCH. This form includes a record of immunizations. Parents need to update this form yearly, or when a new health condition occurs. Immunizations are required unless there is a medical waiver signed by a doctor or immunizations have started with a plan in place signed by the doctor.

Illness

The Petoskey Montessori Children's House must report absences due to illness to the local Department of Public Health. When a child is unable to attend school due to an illness, or for any other reason, please contact the school administrator by 8:30 am.

In case of communicable disease other than a cold or flu, please notify the school promptly so that a notice can be posted to alert all parents.

Do not send your child to school on days when any of the following symptoms are present:

- Child has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or above;
- Child has three or more cases of diarrhea in one day;
- Child is vomiting;
- Child has signs of infection or contagious disease (i.e. yellow mucus with cold symptoms, chicken pox/measles blisters, etc.);
- Injury or incident is more serious than staff is trained to handle (i.e. bloody nose over 15 minutes in length, loss of consciousness, seriously injured extremities).

Should your child become ill or exhibit any of the symptoms listed above, you will be called to pick up your child. A child will be asked to leave for health or medical reasons that present risks to the child or other children in the program.

When your child returns, we strongly recommend full participation in the day – including playing outdoors. Fresh air is wonderful!

Illness-related Documentation Requirements

From Parents

- Doctor's note stating non-contagious status, if symptoms appear suspicious
- Signed and dated note from parents to PMCH, with specific instructions for administering doctor-requested medication, if needed, during child care hours
- Verbal or written message to PMCH staff verifying child has been fever or vomit-free for no less than 24 hours, without any type of analgesic or medicine
- Any contagious disease or sickness must be reported to PMCH as soon as possible per Public Health Department policy

From PMCH Staff

- Any medication given will have time recorded and initials of the person administering the medication as well as a witness on the class medication chart (child's individual chart in YCC/Nido as well). All medication must be in original packaging and labeled with the child's first and last name.
- Potty Charts for YCC/Nido classes will be posted, recorded and checked often. Proper hygiene is adhered to at all times to prevent further transmittal of sickness
- Incident Reports will be used for any mishap or injury incurred during school hours, a copy will be sent home with your child

Illness Policy for Staff and Volunteers

Any staff member or volunteer must stay home when any of the following symptoms are present:

- A temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or above;
- Three or more cases of diarrhea in one day;
- Vomiting;
- Signs of infection or contagious disease

Staff and volunteers may return to school after providing the following information:

- Doctor's note stating non-contagious status, if symptoms appear suspicious
- Staff or volunteer has been free of fever, vomit and diarrhea for 24 hours

The Public Health Department and Licensing Office will be notified when any of the following illnesses occur and have been diagnosed by a licensed physician:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Chicken Pox
- Diarrhea Diseases
- Diphtheria
- Hepatitis A
- Measles

- Mumps
- Pertussis
- Pneumonia
- Rubella

Parent Notification Plan for Accidents, Injuries and Incidents

If a minor injury or accident occurs, the child's guide or another staff member will apply first aid and document the injury in an incident report. The child's parent(s) will be notified at pick up with a copy of the incident report.

If a serious injury or accident occurs, a parent will be notified immediately via telephone call. If the staff is unable to reach either parent, the emergency person will be contacted immediately for more serious injuries, illnesses, or incidents such as but not limited to head injuries, injuries requiring medical attention, allergic reactions, seizures, incidents involving a lost child, etc. In the case of something more serious and paramedics are called, parents are immediately notified. A staff member will accompany your child. Your child's medical statement and emergency card go along as well. Time may be saved by meeting parents at the hospital. Please check with your insurance company to be sure your coverage includes 911 emergency procedures.

Medication Administration Policy

The Montessori Children's House will only be responsible for administering medication to a child after receiving written instructions from a physician. Medication may be given by a staff member in accordance with instructions and in the presence of another adult. All medication must be in original packaging and labeled with the child's first and last name.

Do not send any medicine to school with your child or in your child's backpack. This includes non-prescription items such as vitamins, cough medicine and aspirin. If you have any questions regarding medication, please talk with your child's guide.

Emergency Policy

We have special, practiced procedures for events such as tornado warnings and fire, posted in each classroom.

School Closure Policy

The Petoskey Montessori Children's House classes will be closed for snow days whenever the Petoskey Public Schools are closed. Teachers will not be in attendance on snow days. Such closings will be announced before 7:30 a.m. on local TV and radio stations. Child care will be in session

between 9:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. for those children in the childcare program, unless we notify the parents of childcare closing as well. In case of an emergency closing, parents will be notified at the earliest possible time.

Financial Policies

Tuition

PMCH is a non-profit school, operated completely upon tuition and donations. The school contracts, in advance, with its faculty and incurs expenses for the calendar year based upon enrollment.

Tuition is calculated for the year and split into equal monthly payments. There are no tuition reductions for holidays, absences due to illness, vacations, or closures beyond our control, including but not limited to weather, Covid-19 or other illnesses.

Parents sign a tuition contract each year that outlines the terms of payment. We offer a sibling discount for families that have more than one tuition-based student at the school.

Tuition is due on or before the first of the month and will be considered late after the 10th of the month. An administrative late fee of \$25 will be assessed for tuition received after the 10th of the month in which classroom services are provided, including latchkey services. Children will be suspended from tuition or fee-based programs if their account is over 40 days late. A finance charge of 1½ percent per month may be charged on all balances more than 30 days past due. A returned check fee of \$35 will be assessed. Delinquent accounts will be handled at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

The tuition is determined by the Board of Trustees in the spring for the following year, which begins in September.

Donations

Many parents and grandparents choose to support the school's program through additional donations. Over the years, generous donations have helped build a fence, establish a fund for professional education and purchase playground equipment, along with other projects that add to the total quality of the school's program and operation. PMCH also participates in the Annual Giving Drive each December, which helps to offset the cost of operations throughout the year.

All donations to PMCH are tax deductible. We encourage you to consider making a special contribution to our program and to recommend the school to relatives and friends who give donations to chosen organizations.

Other ways to contribute to PMCH are:

- Box tops for Education: Box Tops for Education are easy to cut out and send to school, and PMCH receives cash or products from the points earned.

- McLean & Eakin Booksellers: Mclean & Eakin will donate 10% of your purchase to PMCH for the guides to purchase classroom books.
- AmazonSmile: Sign up for [AmazonSmile](#) and designate Petoskey Montessori Children's House as your charity of choice, Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchases to the school, at no extra cost to you.
- Oleson's Receipts: If you shop at Oleson's, please turn in your receipts to the school office, the school receives a percentage back.
- PGI School Gear: you can support the school by purchasing PMCH gear at:
https://www.storessimple.com/pgispiritshop/groupproducts.php?prodgroup_id=14625&prodgroupbypass=true

Behavior Management Policy

One of the goals of the Montessori experience is to provide an atmosphere which encourages the development of self-discipline. From their earliest days in the class, children are given clear guidelines for acceptable behavior which are positively and consistently reinforced. An effort is made to help children understand why some behaviors are not acceptable, and suggestions for more desirable behaviors are offered. The classroom rules children are expected to follow are:

1. Be safe by keeping your hands, feet, and objects to yourself
2. Be respectful and kind to others
3. Be responsible for yourself and your play area

The Montessori guide's interventions formulated based on

1. Respect for the child
2. Knowledge and understanding of the developmental needs and characteristics of the child, as well as the needs of the group, and
3. The understanding that appropriate behavior must be carefully taught and modeled.

The goal of each intervention is to assist the children to develop self-control and self-discipline. The manner in which each intervention is made is expected to reflect a patient attitude and to consist only of verbal, and when appropriate with a younger child, gentle physical assistance. This translates into several basic rules:

- Each person takes responsibility for care of the environment and may not damage or misuse it
- A child may not disturb the work of another child
- No child or adult may strike or verbally abuse another person. Aggressive physical behavior (fighting, hitting, biting, etc.) by a child toward another child or staff member is unacceptable. Staff members will intervene immediately should this type of situation occur in order to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior.

- Physical restraint (a teacher holding a child) will not be used except as necessary to ensure a child's safety or that of others, and then only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation. Parents will be informed if such an incident occurs.

All other procedures and guidelines relate to these basic ground rules and are clearly demonstrated and discussed with the children. As a child's responsibility increases, so do his/her opportunities for choice. Therefore, a child's freedom of activity in the class continues to expand, tempered by the willingness to be responsible for his/her own actions.

To internalize control and grow in self-discipline, a child must experience the natural or logical consequences of his/her behavior within the practical limitations of a given situation. A natural consequence follows immediately upon a chosen action. For example, a child who runs across the room with a full bucket of water finds him/herself in a puddle of water with wet clothing. The logical consequence of that scenario is for the child to mop the floor and change his/her clothing.

A logical consequence is frequently applied by an adult, following the behavior as immediately as possible and as a direct and expected result of the child's action rather than an arbitrary "punishment". For example, if a child is hitting others nearby, a logical consequence would be to immediately intervene and have the child stay with the teacher or work in an area isolated from the others. The message is clear – "Since you are choosing to hurt the other children, you do not have the freedom to be with them right now." An illogical consequence in the form of an arbitrary punishment would be to tell the child that because he/she is hitting, he/she cannot have a snack that afternoon.

When children are allowed to directly experience the consequences of their choices and are encouraged to continue choosing, they grow in their willingness to take responsibility for themselves. The resulting individual is secure, creative and "disciplined."

If either parent or guide has concerns about a child's behavior, it is important that they work together to outline an approach which will be consistent for the child. Agreement and cooperation among the important adults in a child's life encourage the child to more confidently choose what is appropriate and positive.

PROHIBITED METHODS OF DISCIPLINE- CHILD CARE STAFF MEMBERS WILL NOT:

- Hit, spank, shake, bite, pinch, or inflict other forms of corporal punishment.
- Restrict a child's movement by binding or tying him or her.
- Inflict mental or emotional stress, such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child, or using derogatory remarks.
- Deprive a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use.
- Confine a child in an enclosed area such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar cubicle.
- Use any substance in a child's mouth such as, but not limited to soap, hot sauce, or vinegar.
- Use timeouts for children.

Note: Corporal Punishment or other prohibited methods of discipline will not be used even with parental permission.

Children will never be disciplined for sleep habits, toileting accidents, food consumption, or lack of participation in scheduled activities. At all times, a child’s age, emotional state, and past experiences will be considered in discipline matters. Any violation of the school’s discipline policy should be brought to the School Administrator’s attention immediately.

Disciplinary Procedures

In the event a child’s behavior should escalate to endanger the health and safety of her/himself, other classmates or faculty, the following procedure will be implemented:

1. Parent Conference – The parents, guide(s) and school administrator will meet to discuss the situation and to form an acceptable behavioral plan in order to alter the undesired/unsafe behavior.
2. Early Dismissal – If the child continues to be disruptive or the undesired/unsafe behavior continues after the parent conference has occurred, the parent will be called to come pick the child up and the child will be sent home for the remainder of that day.
3. Suspension – Should the behavior continue after the early dismissal has occurred, the child will be suspended from attending school for a period of up to 5 full school days. It will be the parents’ responsibility to arrange for alternate care during the suspension period.
4. Disenrollment – The School Administrator will disenroll a child if the undesired/unsafe behavior continues after the above procedures have been exhausted, or if the child’s behavior is so extreme that it endangers the health and safety of other children or staff disrupts the learning environment of the other children or unnecessarily burdens the faculty of the PMCH. This may occur without notice.

Communication Channels

In order to promote and enhance effective communication, it is important to speak to the right person. Second-hand information is never as reliable as first-hand, so we encourage you to direct your various concerns or questions according to the following channels:

Matter Related To	First Contact	If Not Satisfactory	Final Authority
Guide Classroom Aide Child's Progress Classroom Activity Classroom Procedures	Guide	Joint Conference with Guide and Administrator	Administrator
Business Matters Billing/Accounts Facilities School Finances	Administrator	Board of Trustees Treasurer	Board of Trustees Finance Committee

Curriculum Policy Academic Policy	Guide	Guide or Administrator	Administrator
Public Relations Fundraising Parent Functions	Board Member	Social Committee Fundraising Committee	Board of Trustees

Concerns

If there has been some significant change in your child's home life, please let your child's guide know right away. Oftentimes we can help with a little added attention, understanding, and loving care. Open communication between parents and guides is truly vital, and we will respect your confidentiality.

If you have a question, concern or suggestion about your child's relationship to the classroom, the guide or other children, please talk to the guide directly and promptly. Questions relating to the Montessori community in general may be directed to the school administrator.

Withdrawal from School

If a parent chooses to withdraw their child before the end of the school year, tuition will be prorated to the date of withdrawal, with the exception of the non-refundable tuition deposit.

The Montessori Children's House reserves the right to dismiss any child for (1) failure to pay fees when due; (2) conduct of the child/children or parent/parents which disturb the peace and order of the school or staff; (3) health or medical reasons that present a risk to the child or others in the school in accordance with state and federal law; (4) a determination by the Montessori Children's House that the child is not benefiting from the program.

Support for Families and Staff

PMCH is dedicated to supporting the families of its children and staff. The following policies relate to this support:

- Using staff members as personal babysitters is allowed only during hours PMCH is closed.
- School will be closed two to three days near Labor Day weekend each year. Staff uses this time to refurbish their environment, plan for the implementation of annual goals, attend the staff retreat to coordinate efforts and positive attitudes, and complete annual staff training requirements, such as First Aid, CPR, etc.

Reporting to Children's Protective Services

Any person who works with a child, in a home, in the doctor's office, in a daycare, in a school etc. is required by law to report any signs or suspicion that a child is in danger or has been hurt (abuse & neglect). Employees who work with children can go to jail for not reporting their suspicions.

A report is not an accusation; it is a request for an investigation. If Children's Protective Service is called, cooperate. Their priority is to keep children safe and the family together in a healthy environment for all. If parents/caregivers are under stress or need help, they can provide services.

OUR PARENTS

The opportunities for your child's growth are maximized when the school and the home share common goals and attitudes. This is accomplished through active parent involvement and open, frequent communication.

Parent Meetings

The staff of PMCH offers two to three special meetings a year for parents. These meetings focus upon an aspect of child development, Montessori philosophy or curriculum. This is an important way for parents to broaden their understanding of their child's Montessori experience.

Observations and Conferences

Two periods for parent observations and conferences are scheduled each year, in late fall and spring. Parents have an opportunity to observe their child's class, followed by a conference appointment with the guide. The guide discusses each child's progress, makes available records or other information as applicable, offers recommendations, and solicits parents' insights and ideas.

Parents are welcome to visit their child's class at other times during the year. We do ask that they respect the tone and the work of the class and refrain from interacting with the children in any way that may interrupt classroom activities. Parents may observe the IC/Nido and Primary classrooms through a one-way mirror, so that they do not interrupt the class or distract younger children.

It is best to talk with the guide on the occasion of the first visit to learn his/her specific guidelines for visitors. Any parent or visitor who does not have a scheduled observation appointment must check in at the office before proceeding to the classroom.

Often parents have questions or concerns about their child during the year. Each guide wants to be available to confer whenever the need arises. You can plan for a conference through a note to the guide or a phone call. We ask you to respect the teacher's personal time by scheduling

appointments, and keeping calls and/or text messages brief and within school hours. Likewise, it is important to show respect for the child by not discussing concerns in his/her presence such as during arrival and departure times. Above all, do not think that your question or idea is unimportant or not worth bothering the guide. Quick and clear communication creates the most positive situation for your child- and that is important!

Volunteer Opportunities

An interested parent becomes an active parent and PMCH relies on parents to sustain and support its program and development. Active participation also creates a sense of Montessori community which enriches each family's experience.

Early in the year you will be given a list of various ways to become involved with the school; the options are varied and elicit a wide array of skills and talents. Families are asked to work a minimum of 20 hours per school year. Work can be accomplished in a myriad of ways:

- Room Parents: help guides to set up carpools; help out with field trips; provide refreshments for special events; coordinate help for guides.
- Equipment and Supplies: Work with staff on purchasing, making and maintaining equipment; find resources for throw-away materials we can use (flowers, lumber scraps, fabrics, etc.); organize work groups for construction, refinishing, sewing or gardening projects.
- Publicity: Help us maintain an up-to-date press list. Make the community aware of our school through newsletters, church bulletins, etc. Help put up posters for special events; maintain a school scrapbook; take pictures; host open houses.
- Community Spirit: Plan gatherings for families so we can get to know one another better; host parents' meetings or provide refreshments; greet new families and show them the ropes; pair new families with old; help with any emergency that arises.
- Library: Pick up and return library books chosen by teachers; handle book club orders; inventory and repair classroom books; maintain and promote parent library.
- Fundraising Committee Chair or Member: Help plan and execute our annual fundraising activities.
- Maintenance and Repair of Facilities: Plan and coordinate repair/work days when needed. Help with yard work and/or landscaping. Be on call for emergency repairs.
- Board of Trustees and/or Committee Members

Families unable to complete their volunteer hours may make a monetary donation instead, with a suggested rate of \$15 per hour.

We also expect all families to commit to selling two tickets to our annual fundraiser.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PMCH is a non-profit educational corporation guided by a Board of Trustees who serve without compensation. Nominations for membership on the board are solicited from parents of students at the school, alumni and citizens in the community. The board is responsible for the business and financial affairs of the school, its maintenance, and its continued operation. The board also seeks to promote and expand the understanding of the PMCH program among parents of the larger community.

Board of Trustees 2024 - 2025

Name	Position	Contact Information
Nicky Byron	President	M: (231) 622-1569 E: nicky@petoskeymontessori.org
Anna Collins	Vice President	M: (616) 516-9928 E: anna@petoskeymontessori.org
Chelsea Benson	Secretary	M: (805) 340-4607 E: chelsea@petoskeymontessori.org
Jessi Kuhlman	Trustee	M: (906) 458-4150 E: jessi@petoskeymontessori.org
Angie Moulton	Trustee	M: (734) 293-3348 E: angie@petoskeymontessori.org
Miranda Fisher	Trustee	M: (231) 420-1178 E: miranda@petoskeymontessori.org
Russell Carpenter	Trustee	M: (231) 881-0767 E: russell@petoskeymontessori.org

Written Communication

The Newsletter is sent home electronically to bring parents information about their children's classes, board decisions, school functions, and Montessori principles. Please make it a daily habit to check with your child about written communications from the school. Notices and reminders are sent to parents via Brightwheel and email, as well as printed and placed in the children's school bags. The school calendar and other important information can be found on the school website www.petoskeymontessori.org.

We are frequently asked to distribute or post information from various community groups. We are glad to cooperate with these groups; however, this does not indicate that PMCH endorses or recommends such events, information or services. Any announcement or service specifically endorsed by the Children's House will be accompanied by a communication using the school's letterhead or the signature of a staff member.

PMCH FACULTY AND STAFF

Administration

The administrator is responsible for the total program of the school, overseeing curriculum implementation and establishing procedures and guidelines. The administrator's primary goal is to keep the needs of the child the focus of the PMCH program.

The administrator seeks to coordinate the energies of staff, parents and board members to best aid the development of each child. The administrator is responsible for the selection and supervision of all staff and contracted employees, parent education programs, preparation of an annual budget with long-range program goals for the board, and facilities management.

Teaching Faculty

Our teachers are called "guides", an indication of their role in relation to the child. They seek to guide the energies and tendencies of the child, serving as facilitators rather than disseminators of information. All of the Montessori guides possess either AMI or AMS certification and are active in continuing education.

Each guide is responsible for the arrangement and conduct of their class in accordance with the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, the guidelines of AMI and the general policies of the administration. They establish their long-term goals and daily plans for each child and the class as a whole based upon continued observation of the children. They also train and supervise any aides or assistants in the classroom.

Communication with parents is an essential aspect of the guides' work. They are available for questions and comments about Montessori philosophy, the class or your child. They also conduct several scheduled observations and conferences for parents each year.

Support Staff

Classroom aides assist individual teachers and are responsible for various activities as directed by the guide. The assistants do not do specific "teaching", yet their interactions with the child, whether it be at the door, over the lunch table, or in the yard, reflect the Montessori principles of respect for each child and the nurturing of independence and self-confidence.

Comprehensive Background Check

Any PMCH employee or unsupervised volunteer must pass a comprehensive background check before being in a classroom with children.



I, _____, acknowledge that I have received the Parent Handbook from Petoskey Montessori Children's House. I agree to adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in the Parent Handbook.

Parent signature

Date