



FAMILY HANDBOOK

Edition 2.2

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Phoenix Montessori Academy

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WELCOME

Dear Phoenix Montessori Academy Families,

Welcome to our school community! The story of the Phoenix, like all great myths, contains deep truths about our environment and us. As the legend goes, the Phoenix is a bird-like creature that has a lifespan of no less than 100 years, and in some myths up to 500 years. At the end of its lifespan, the Phoenix is believed to be consumed by fire, only to emerge from the ashes as a new Phoenix.

This regeneration can symbolize many things. Here at Phoenix Montessori Academy, we see this myth as a representation of a recurring life process: new beginnings, rebirth, opportunity, endless hope, faith, renewal, and resurrection. The Phoenix rising is the rebirth of mankind out of the past in peaceful revolution.

This myth ties in perfectly with the Montessori philosophy, because Montessori education allows children to construct themselves, to explore, and to self-correct. It provides unlimited possibilities and second chances. The children in our school are encouraged to embrace new opportunities, and to constantly re-evaluate themselves and the world around them in order to improve self and the community.

We believe:

- Love conquers all things.
- Every living thing deserves respect.
- Everyone is entitled to happiness and self-confidence.
- Education is paramount, and true academic excellence can only be achieved in the right environment.
- Each member of a community has a distinct responsibility in preserving and enhancing that community.

Goals of Phoenix Montessori:

- To educate the entire child, spiritually, intellectually, and physically.
- To cultivate *good people*, accomplished scholars, and conscientious citizens of the world.
- To maintain a diverse environment where differences are celebrated.
- To achieve *umbutu*, an African term that means that each human being is bound inextricably to the humanity of every other human being.
- To constantly grow and learn as an entire community.

Another aspect of the Phoenix Myth is that there is only **one Phoenix** in existence at any given time. With that in mind, we embrace the calling to be a prestigious educational community that is unique. We are delighted that you have united with us in this mission, and we look forward to a rewarding, life-changing academic experience.

God Bless,

India French-Adams

Head of School

Who We Are

Phoenix Montessori Academy (PMA) is an independent, non-profit school, educating students from ages 18 months to 18 years (Toddler through 12th Grade). Our school was established June 19, 2004 and the first class was held on September 7, 2004. The school was founded by a group of concerned parents and a seasoned teacher, all committed to creating a loving and nurturing environment where the development and care of the *total* child is paramount.

Mission Statement

Our mission at Phoenix Montessori Academy is to develop true scholars, life-long learners, and productive citizens of the world in a diverse atmosphere that incorporates Montessori principles where students demonstrate respect and love for self, others, and their environment.

Program Philosophy

The philosophy of Phoenix Montessori Academy is to provide a high quality learning environment using Montessori methodology as a foundation to child education and development. We believe the well-being of the child is essential, teachers are professional guides to a world of discovery, and parents are key in encouraging and supporting the learning platform. We strive to offer a safe, diverse and challenging environment where young children can grow into true scholars, lifelong learners, and great world contributors.

Our Strategy for Success

We use the equilateral triangle as a symbol of our approach to the practical application of the Montessori Method. The triangle represents construction. This symbol serves as the blueprint for a successful experience at PMA. It is equilateral because each leg holds equal importance.

At one leg of the triangle is the child. The child is expected to take responsibility for learning, by choosing appropriate activities and working to complete assignments. During this experience each student will learn to communicate needs and concerns to the teacher and to parents. The child must take an active role in this process, and must learn to assume accountability for actions, work, and decisions.

The parents make up the second leg. Parents have the greatest influence on their child, and therefore no educational system can truly be effective without parent involvement. Ultimately, parents are a child's primary role model. Parents are expected to communicate and to help identify their child's needs, in order to aid in developing systems that will yield success in reaching academic and social goals. Finally, parents are expected to maintain open and honest communication with the teacher. This will facilitate the problem-solving process and will generate the best educational program for each student.

The third leg is comprised of teachers. The teachers' role is to plan for each individual child, provide an educational curriculum and environment that is excellent, and to

cultivate a community that demonstrates respect and love. The educator works to get to know each child, and to develop an effective line of communication with each child and each parent.

As long as each leg of the triangle is functioning cooperatively, we will successfully construct an educational environment that is safe, genuine, and conducive to learning.

Our Staff & Governing Body

Phoenix Montessori Academy is a Non-profit 501(c)(3) Corporation governed and managed by a Board of Directors (BOD) and Officers. The Officers and members of the BOD consist of parents, community volunteers, and the Head of School. All are committed to the Phoenix vision and mission.

The BOD and Officers, collectively, make key decisions about growth and expansion, financial management, and tuition/fees. They are also responsible for ensuring the school is in compliance with any necessary federal, state & local requirements for operation. This group is mostly focused on the strategy of the school and its long-term plans.

The Head of School, along with the PMA staff, is responsible for setting the direction of the school and orchestrating the day-to-day operations of the school. The Head of School also oversees staffing and sets school policy. The Staff is responsible for classroom management, curriculum, admissions, parent communication & involvement, facility maintenance, student/staff record keeping and other daily functions of the school.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

Phoenix Montessori Academy fully embraces diversity as a core value. The school does not discriminate against employees, applicants, or students on the basis of sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability, or veteran status in its hiring practices, administration of its educational and admissions policies, or any school-administered programming.

Program Demographics:

Program	Age/Grade Range	Max Class Size (1 class each)	Student/Teacher Ratio
Toddler Class	18 mos – 3 years old	12	6:1
Primary	3 – 6 years old	24	12:1
Lower Elementary	6 – 9 years old	20-25	15:1
Upper Elementary	9 – 12 years old	20-25	15:1
Middle School	12 – 14 years old	15-18	15:1
High School	15 – 18 years old	15-18	15:1

Program Offerings:

Toddler Classroom: Children must be at least 18 months before the first day of school.

- Children do not have to be potty trained.

Primary Classroom: Children ages 3-4.

- Children must be potty trained.

Kindergarten (referred to as Enrichment): Children age 5.

- A student who is 4 ½ years old that exhibits a level of maturity and preparedness and is considered ready by both the Lead teacher and Head of School prior to enrollment, can be admitted into the Enrichment program.
- The Primary Lead Teacher reserves the right to recommend a student remain another year in Enrichment, if deemed necessary for the student's success, prior to moving on to the more rigorous Lower Elementary program.

Lower Elementary Classroom: Children ages 6-9.

- This level is the equivalent of 1st -3rd grade in a traditional environment.

Upper Elementary Classroom: Children ages 9-12.

- This level is the equivalent of 4th -6th grade in a traditional environment.

Middle School Classroom: Children ages 12-14.

- This level is the equivalent of 7th and 8th grade in a traditional environment.

High School Classroom: Children ages 15-18.

- This level is the equivalent of 9th through 12th grade in a traditional environment.

Please refer to the Curriculum section for more information on program goals.

SCHOOL HOURS

All year programs are available for toddler and primary classes. Summer camps are also offered for all groups.

Before/After School Care Hours (for Kindergarteners through 8th grade)

Before School Care: 7:30am - 8:15am

After School Care: 3:15pm – 5:30pm

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Hours

We ask that all students primary through High School use carpool for daily arrival and pick-up. Drop-Off and Pick-Up take place in front of the building. Toddlers may be dropped off in and picked up from the classroom.

Please see teachers for specific schedules.

Please, do not drop off your children earlier than the appropriate school hours. Also, please be considerate to our staff during after school hours and pick up your children prior to or by the dismissal times indicated above. Please refer to the Building Access section for more details.

Release of Students

If someone other than you will be picking up your child, please send a note, email, or call the school. The note should bear your signature, identify the person who is going to pick up your child, and indicate the date(s) and time. Please advise your driver to have identification to present to our staff. To ensure safety, we will check identification of any person who is not the parent or legal guardian of the child. **No child will be released to anyone who does not have written consent or is listed as the emergency contact on file.**

School Calendar Overview

We observe all federal holidays. School is also closed for several teacher workdays, Parent/Teacher conferences in the fall and spring, as well as Winter Recess and Spring Break. Please see the current school calendar for a list of all scheduled closures.

Office Hours

The Director of Admissions is available Monday – Friday, during regular school hours.

The Head of School will be available upon appointment.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Enrollment and Tuition

Students at PMA are automatically reenrolled for the next school year, eliminating the need for annual contracts. If, at the end of a school year, you choose to disenroll your child, the following dates and fees should be observed:

- **January 14** – Deadline to opt out of re-enrollment without fees or penalties.
- **February 15** – \$300 re-enrollment fee will be charged for all students who have not opted out.
- **January 15-March 14** – Contract cancellation fee of \$1,000 per student.
- **March 15-May 14** – Contract cancellation fee of \$2,500 per student.
- **On and After May 15** – Contracts can no longer be canceled; full tuition will be charged.

Tuition fees include a non-refundable enrollment fee, the program cost, a FACTS processing fee, and a non-negotiable tuition insurance policy. Additionally, students in 1st-12th grade will be charged an annual field trip flat fee. The current year tuition cost can be

obtained by contacting the business manager at accounting@phoenixmontessori.org.

Families may choose from the following tuition payment options:

- Paid in full by June 1st or 15 for year-round students and July 1st or 15th for school-year students
- Paid in two equal installments, due August 1st and December 1st (with no discount).
- Paid monthly, August 1st or 15th through May 1st or 15th (with no discount).

Families that utilize the “Pay in Full” option will receive a discount of 5% of the program cost, and tuition insurance becomes optional. All students will be enrolled in the FACTS Student Information and Financial Systems.

Tuition payments for families will be processed via FACTS Tuition Management System. The FACTS Parent Portal login information will be provided upon enrollment.

Tuition payments received after the due date will be charged a \$65 late fee per student. If tuition payments are more than 30 days late, a student will be put on financial probation and will be unable to attend classes until the past due balance has been received. If tuition becomes 60 days past due, the student shall be dismissed from the school. If tuition becomes 30 days past due more than twice in a rolling 12-month period the family shall receive notice that failure to bring all payments current within 10 days shall result in immediate dismissal from the school. The family will also be required to pay the entire tuition balance for the remainder of school year, or summer camp duration (if applicable), or be immediately dismissed from the school.

Only students whose tuition is current are eligible to participate in school field trips, including but not limited to annual retreat trips and Montessori Model United Nations.

Full tuition applies to the eldest child enrolled; sibling discounts are available from the next eldest sibling to the youngest sibling. The first sibling receives a 10% discount off the full tuition rate, the second sibling receives a 15% discount, and the third sibling receives the maximum reduction of 20%. In addition, a 5% early payment discount is applied if tuition is paid in full by the 1st or 15th of July. This discount is calculated after sibling discounts.

For students enrolling after the first week of school, tuition is prorated based on a weekly tuition calculation.

If a student is disenrolled no fees will be refunded. A weekly tuition calculation will be used to determine tuition liability based on time spent in the classroom. Families will be responsible for any remaining balance due after tuition insurance is applied. No transcripts will be released until the balance is paid in full.

If a student withdraws, the family is **fully liable** for the total tuition. There is no reduction or remission of tuition fees if a student withdraws before the academic year is completed. As such, written notice of withdrawal must be submitted no less than 30 days prior. The

following tuition refund policy will be followed:

PMA families have several options available to pay their child's tuition. Monthly, semi-annually and scholarship options require tuition insurance. Tuition insurance will cover 50% of the remaining tuition after all insurance requirements have been met. Refer to the information included in the Dewar brochure for a complete list of requirements.) Families that pay in full are not required to take the insurance, but it is available as an option and is highly encouraged.

Families With Tuition Insurance

If the student is disenrolled from the school after the insurance requirements have been met, tuition insurance will cover 50% of the remaining tuition. Families are responsible for paying the final 50%. PMA will forgive or refund the family portion for the following reasons:

1. The family moves 20 miles away from the school.
2. The family provides a letter from a medical professional with a valid medical reason.

Families Without Tuition Insurance

No exceptions will be made for families that have opted not to take advantage of tuition insurance. The remaining tuition will not be reimbursed.

Disenrollment Process

1. Contact the Business Manager, in writing, with your request and withdrawal date.
2. The Business Manager will assist you with the process which may include the following:
 - a. Providing families with the necessary tuition insurance paperwork to complete.
 - b. Calculating disenrollment fees, if any.
 - c. Calculating tuition refund amounts, if any.
3. Once the above steps have been completed, families wishing to dispute the findings are asked to contact the Board of Directors. Note that PMA's Board of Directors follows the contract and policy with regards to refunding or forgiving tuition.

Transcript Requests/Records

No transcripts or other records will be released if there is an outstanding balance due.

Application Process/Fees

For all prospective students, there is a one-time \$35.00 non-refundable application fee due with submission of an Application for Admission. This fee is used to defray additional costs associated with processing paperwork, establishing records, arranging added mailings required during the enrollment process and other related expenses.

Prior to students being permitted to commence school, a contract and all other required forms must be completed and signed. In addition, all fees and appropriate tuition, per the contract, need to be paid prior to the student starting school.

Pick-Up Late Fees

If a student is not picked-up at the scheduled time, the family will be assessed a late fee of \$15.00 for the 1st 15 minutes and \$2.00 for every minute thereafter. When the child is signed out, the parent/guardian must indicate the time on the sign-out sheet. Based on this record, there will be a late fee assessed. If you think you will be late to pick up your child, please call the school immediately so we can prepare your child to remain beyond his/her typical hours.

Field Trip Fees

An annual field trip fee is charged for each student in 1st – 12th grades. This fee will be invoiced along with the selected payment plan. No refund will be given if the child does not attend the planned field trips. The cost of the annual Montessori Model United Nations trip is not included in this fee. A field trip permission form is included in the enrollment packet.

Financial Assistance

ALL families of K-12th students are encouraged to apply for the North Carolina Opportunity Scholarship. Phoenix Montessori Academy is on the list of approved schools. The 2023 Appropriations Act has expanded eligibility, making **all families** with students in kindergarten through 12th grade eligible to apply. This scholarship provides significant financial support, ranging from approximately \$3,000 to \$7,000, depending on household income. The application period for the following school year opens on **February 1st** with priority consideration for applications submitted by **March 1st**. For more information about the scholarship and the application process, please visit the program website at <https://www.ncseaa.edu/k12/>.

Phoenix Montessori Academy follows a process for tuition assistance and forgiveness, requiring all K-12 families to apply for the Opportunity Scholarship if applying for PMA's internal Tuition Assistance/Forgiveness Program. Applications for PMA's Tuition Assistance/Forgiveness Program will open in January. If you qualify for PMA's assistance, your request will be held pending the results of your Opportunity Scholarship application. For more information on the amount and requirements please contact the business manager at accounting@phoenixmontessori.org.

PROGRAM POLICIES

Arrival & Classroom Etiquette

Preparation of the environment is essential in a Montessori classroom. The teacher will arrive by 8:00 in order to ready the environment for your child. Please wait in the hallway with your child until 8:15am before allowing them to enter the classroom or be sure that your child does not enter the building before 8:15.

Class begins promptly at 8:30. Starting on time is imperative to establishing a concentrated work period. Tardiness disrupts the focus and the experience of the other children and it interferes with your child's ability to settle into the day.

*****If your child arrives after 8:30am, please bring your child to the school office to be***

signed-in and allow the Student Services Director to see he/she gets to class. This ensures minimal classroom disruption.**

Sample Daily Schedule

Arrival:	8:15am – 8:30am
Outdoor recess	8:30am – 9:00am
Concentrated Work Period	9:00am – 11:30am
Quiet Time/Circle Time	11:30am – 11:50am
Half Day Dismissal	12:00pm – 12:15pm
Lunch Periods	12:00pm – 1:00pm
Enrichment Subjects (Advanced materials, Music, Art, P.E.)	1:00pm– 3:00pm
Dismissal Periods	3:00 – 3:30pm

Attendance

Prompt and regular attendance is essential in order to derive maximum benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility. There is a direct relationship between poor school attendance and academic difficulties (primarily for school-age children). Parents should call the school early each day that the student is going to be absent.

Students are permitted to miss 10 days per semester for a total of 20 days for the year. Absences above this amount will require the student to attend summer school at the family's expense of \$100/day.

Curriculum

We use the American Montessori curriculum in all classrooms. Please refer to the Curriculum section in the rear of the Handbook for more specific information.

Recess

Each level has a recess period daily where the students are taken outdoors. Students go out before lunch and/or prior to beginning class. Elementary & Middle School students enjoy recess following the Preschool time period. Please dress your child appropriately. Each child will go outside daily unless the weather is extreme.

Nap & Rest Period

Toddler and Primary students who are enrolled in the extended day programs will enjoy a rest time following lunch. Those students who are not enrolled in the Extended Day program may get tired as well and need some down time. In response to this need, each class is designed with a separate "peace" area. These areas can be used for resting when fatigued, quiet time when separation is desired and reflection when necessary.

Dress Code

Phoenix Montessori encourages individuality and does not require students to wear uniforms. However, students are expected to wear clothing that is not a distraction to our learning environment, and is appropriate for a multi-age, mixed gender, learning institution. Students should wear clothing that does not restrict activity, consider the

season, and is appropriate for the current weather conditions. Students are required to wear appropriate shoes at all times for health and safety reasons. Shorts/skirts must be fingertip length when standing erect with shoulders relaxed. Bras and bra straps cannot be exposed.

Clothing that is excessively tight, pants or shorts with graffiti or wording (especially across the bottom), clothing displaying profane or derogatory language, midribs, halter tops, shredded shirts or pants, pajamas, and any display of underwear are all prohibited.

If a student comes to school wearing inappropriate clothing, a parent will be contacted and may be asked to bring in appropriate attire. If a student has a need to change into extra clothing, the extra garments also must comply with the dress code policy. This dress code will be enforced and every student must comply.

Young Children and Clothing / Undergarments

The Montessori environment provides opportunities for the children to work with activities that may cause them to get messy. Additionally, on occasion a child may have a bathroom accident. Therefore, we ask that you provide your child with one or two changes of clothing. Clothing should be “child friendly” – children should be able to dress and undress themselves with minimal to no adult assistance. Please label your child’s clothing. Wet and soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home to be washed. The Health Department considers it unsanitary and unsafe for staff to wash out children’s soiled clothing. Pull-ups are unacceptable in the Toddler environment. Please refer to the Toddler Handbook for more specific information.

Footwear

All children should wear simple closed-in shoes such as tennis shoes. Sandals, cowboy boots, flip flops, and party shoes are difficult to play in, as well as unsafe on the playground. However, Cowboy boots and party shoes may be worn during special occasions, after prior approval by a school official.

Sandals & flip flops are particularly unsafe since little (and big) feet can get caught under swinging doors and get hurt. Therefore, sandals and flip flops should only be worn during field trips to appropriate locations (i.e. the beach, a pool, etc...), after arrival, and only after prior approval by a school official.

Heelys and similar wheeled footwear are not allowed.

We encourage you to provide your child with indoor slippers or slipper socks to wear in the classroom. This practice is more sanitary and safer. This will allow the children to be more prepared if we have a fire drill, or if an emergency arises and they have to leave the building suddenly.

What to bring/not bring

Children may bring objects to school to share with their friends at circle time. Sharing days are determined by classroom teachers. Examples of acceptable items include family photos, objects from nature, pictures or exhibits from a family vacation, or educational books.

Please do not allow children to bring money, jewelry, toys, and/or tools to school. They are inappropriate for the academic environment, a distraction, can be dangerous or they might get lost or damaged.

Weapons, or weapon like items (i.e. blades, guns, pellet guns, etc...), are not permitted at the school at any time and a student who brings one or more to school will be sent to the head of school for disciplinary action.

Birthday Celebrations

It is a PMA tradition to acknowledge each child's birthday. If your child would like to celebrate his/her birthday, please be sure to contact the classroom teacher several days in advance in order to organize a celebration and to get agreement on an appropriate "special" snack to bring. In order to comply with NC regulations, all snacks must be store bought/prepared with ingredient labels apparent.

Field Trips

Toddler students: There are no field trips currently planned.

Primary students: While the 5–6-year-old child is more tolerant of change in the environment, the younger child requires consistency and predictability. For this reason, full-class field trips will be limited.

Elementary through High School students: The four walls of the classroom can hardly contain children at this level. Their imagination excites within them a need to venture out into the world and experience life firsthand. We believe that field trips are an ideal way to provide real-life, practical application to the concepts being studied in the classroom. We take lots of trips (about a dozen) around the community.

Field trips can only happen with parent support. Drivers and chaperones are greatly needed and appreciated. Students less than 80 pounds or under 8 years of age must be placed in a car seat or booster seat when transported on field trips. Parents will have to leave the appropriate restraint device at the school on field trip day (if they are not driving). All parents who drive must maintain a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance.

Field trips are considered to be required school days. If a student opts out of a field trip, then the student will be expected to attend school. If a student misses a field trip and does not attend school, then that student will be counted absent for the day.

Any parent wishing to be a driver and/or chaperone must complete a background check. Contact the Business Manager for further details.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND NUTRITION

Snack

Children are often hungry throughout the day, thus snack becomes a popular part of the daily routine. Snack is an individual choice and the children serve themselves.

In the Toddler and Primary classes, each family is assigned a minimum of one week as Family of the Week. The Family of the Week will be asked to provide a healthy snack for the classroom. The teachers will provide guidelines and food choices to the Family of the Week as well as communicate any known food allergies.

At Elementary through High School levels, a snack should be brought in by each child. We reserve the right to withhold the privilege of snack (not lunch) at the teacher's discretion to maintain harmony within the classroom environment.

Lunch

- Half Day students are dismissed at noon and do not eat lunch at school.
- Toddler lunch is 11:15 – 11:45am.
- Primary through High School lunch is 12:00-12:30pm.

North Carolina Health Department guidelines state that children should have a healthy, balanced meal, with all food groups represented. Please help by packing your child only healthy meals, without excessive sweets such as cookies, cakes, donuts, etc.

Toddler and Primary Teachers will remove items such as candy, cookies, cakes, donuts, etc. and send them back home in the lunch boxes. Lunch boxes will be refrigerated, as space and availability allow. However, it is strongly encouraged parents send cold packs with students' lunch boxes to help keep foods fresh.

For the Elementary, Middle & High School students, there will be a microwave and a refrigerator available for items that may need to be warmed or kept cool. It will be each student's responsibility to refrigerate any necessary items, cook, and clean as appropriate.

Illness Policy

Whenever you child is ill and will not be coming to school, please call the office between 8:00-9:00am. For the sake of the other children, please inform us immediately if your child has been diagnosed with an infectious disease.

Your child is considered sick if any of these conditions exist:

- Fever of 99 degrees or higher (temperature must be taken prior to fever reducing medications being administered)
- Outward signs of illness (rash, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.)
- Flushed or has chills and feels warmer than usual
- Irritable or lethargic for a long length of time

- Frequent coughing that keeps the child from participating in daily activities
- Symptoms of a general cold (nasal congestion/runny nose, chills, sore throat, red & watery eyes, aches, dry cough/hoarseness, breathing difficulty, nasal discharge that is profuse/yellow-green, ear drainage)
- Has tested positive for COVID

Please do not send your child to school if they exhibit any of these symptoms. If we observe any of these symptoms in your child, you will be called to come pick-up her/him immediately.

Students with any illness, including infectious diseases, must stay out of school until 24 hours has lapsed after the last symptom. This includes being fever free without fever reducing medications. You will also be asked to provide a doctor's note in order for your child to return to school following any undiagnosed rash or infectious illness.

Medication Policy

The school cannot assume responsibility for administering medications. Therefore, parents are expected to administer all medication prior to arrival at school. This also means the **children cannot medicate themselves during school hours**, so please do not send any medicines to school in backpacks or lunch boxes for the child to administer. This is a potentially dangerous situation for other children who might find these medications in the environment and seek to experiment with them.

****Exception**:** For children with medical conditions requiring the administration or storage of prescription medications, please contact the Head of School. We will ask that specific written instructions from a physician or authorized health professional be provided. All medication will be given by the staff based upon written instructions, dispensed from its original container and given only to the child bearing its name. Parents will be asked to complete a medication form and we will maintain a medication log. A staff person will be designated as focal point for the administration of medicines and all meds will be stored by staff.

Cleanliness & Sanitation Policy

All children are expected to wash their hands upon arrival - prior to entering the classroom, after each visit to the restroom and just before any meals. All surfaces are cleaned daily with a sanitizing cleanser.

Emergency Procedures

If there is a need for an immediate evacuation from the school, the children will be safely removed from the building and parents will be contacted immediately. If we have to leave the premises, children will be taken to the overflow parking area or a designated offsite area as identified in the school's Emergency Response Plan.

Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather, our school will close on the decision of the Head of School. Delayed starts will be determined on a case-by-case basis, and we will reopen on our own schedule. An e-mail and text message via the FACTS Parent Alert System will be sent to parents and will also be posted on the school's website and Facebook pages.

Accident Procedures

If there is an accident or injury on site, teachers are trained in First Aid and CPR to respond and provide immediate care. All accidents and injuries will be documented on an Incident Report, and parents will be notified. Blood exposures will be noted on your Incident Report and children exposed should be tested for Hepatitis B and HIV by their private physicians or their local Health Department. In the event of a serious injury, 911 will be called and parents will be contacted. Children will be taken to the nearest hospital or the one indicated on the child's Emergency Consent form.

Discipline Policy

Respect is a fundamental quality in our community, and therefore the teacher will address any action deemed blatantly disrespectful. Most issues will be resolved within the classroom setting. If a behavior persists, then parents will be called upon to assist the teacher and the student in resolving the conflict.

We have a Zero Tolerance policy concerning physical/verbal abusive behavior (physically harming, using profane/derogatory language toward someone, spitting, etc.). Every student and teacher has the right to feel safe. Abusive behavior of this nature will result in immediate removal from the environment and at least a one-day suspension from school following the first offense. The second occurrence will result in a three-day suspension, and the student involved will not be invited to return to school until parents, the teacher, and that student, meet in a formal conference. The third offense will result in a suspension and possible expulsion as determined by Head of School. Anything after the third offense would likely result in expulsion from the school.

All families are given a copy of our Discipline Policy before school starts (or as they enroll) (a copy is printed in the back of this book). It is reviewed with each family and must be signed and returned to the school, promptly. A copy is maintained on file.

Child Abuse Policy

The Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina organization defines child abuse as a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child. The organization further clarifies that child abuse includes these non-accidental incidents:

- Physical Abuse - Examples of physical abuse include, but are not limited to: beating, harmful restraint, use of a weapon or instrument, or actions that result in or could result in serious physical injury.
- Sexual Abuse - Sexual abuse is any sexual behavior imposed on a juvenile. This involves a range of activities, including fondling the genital area, masturbation, oral sex, or vaginal or anal penetration by a finger, penis or other object. It includes exhibitionism, child pornography, and suggestive behaviors or comments.

- Emotional Abuse - Emotional abuse is expressing attitudes or behaviors toward a child that create serious emotional or psychological damage.
- Neglect - Child neglect can be defined as any serious disregard for a juvenile's supervision, care, or discipline.

We are required by NC law to report any signs or indications of Child Abuse to the Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services Division. It is important for you to know that:

- We do not need to prove that abuse has taken place; we only need reasonable grounds for suspicion.
- Permission is not required from parents or caregivers to make a report nor are we obligated to inform you that a report is being made.

FAMILIES AS PARTNERS

Expectations

Phoenix is a small independent school. Therefore, we expect each family to volunteer time and talents throughout the year in order to enhance the experience for the children.

Family of the Week (Toddler and Primary Classes, only)

In order to encourage a level of participation in each classroom, each family is assigned a minimum of one week as Family of the Week. The Family of the Week will be asked to provide a healthy snack for the classroom and to bring fresh flowers for the class. The Family might also be asked to bring in additional items based on the classroom needs. In the Primary classroom, the Family of the Week is also asked to take home the classroom towels, polishing mitts, etc. for laundering. When you are serving as Family of the Week, please involve your child in the decision-making process of picking out / preparing snack and selecting flowers for the classroom. This activity allows for expression and sharing with the opportunity for confidence building.

Communication

Your concerns are extremely important to us. If you wish to speak with the teacher, please wait until AFTER the afternoon pick-up at carpool to do so. This will allow your child's teacher to give you the focused attention you deserve. If it is more convenient, you may also call the school and leave a message, send in a written note or for a less urgent matter, send an email to the teacher. Mornings are not a good time for parent communication, unless a conference has been scheduled in advance.

Generally, all school information, classroom announcements and updates, will be communicated via email and accessible on CANVAS. If you do not receive regular emails from the school and the classroom teacher, please notify the teacher and the office.

If you have any school-level concerns, please contact the Head of School. Email is the most effective method to contact PMA; however, you can also leave a phone message on the school phone. Your concerns are very important to PMA, and we will make every effort to get back to you the same day, however, all communications should be addressed within 24 hours.

Monthly Board of Directors (BOD) Meetings

The BOD meets the monthly to discuss ongoing business. All monthly meetings start with an Open Session. All families are encouraged to attend this portion of the meeting. The Board will then move to a Closed Session for Board members only. A meeting notice will be sent one week prior to the meeting. The CANVAS school calendar will also contain Board meeting information. The Board meets remotely via Zoom. Any agenda items from parents are required to be submitted at least one day in advance of the meeting by emailing boardofdirectors@phoenixmontessori.org. Board Meeting Open Session Minutes will be posted to CANVAS after Board approval.

Education Opportunities

Parent Education evenings are planned throughout the year. These sessions are topical workshops that offer information on Montessori philosophy and current educational trends.

Volunteering

Parents have numerous channels by which to volunteer. There is always a need for classroom parents as well as drivers and chaperones on field trips. We encourage each family to find a way to volunteer and get involved with your child's education.

Parents are also encouraged to volunteer time in the classroom by listening to readers, assisting the teacher when asked and/or sharing career and life experiences or talents.

Progress Reports

Progress reports will be issued a number of times throughout the year. Elementary, Middle, and High School will report 4 times. Toddler and Primary teachers will report twice. Teachers will provide a copy of the final progress report at the end of the school year. Progress reports are shared during conferences.

Conferences

It is very important in your child's progress that parents and teachers maintain open lines of communication. Along with daily or periodic informal dialogue, there are two formal parent/teacher conferences scheduled for the year. Both parents are expected to attend. Conferences for 1st through 12th grade students will be student-led.

Individual Education Plan

Parents of an exceptional child who may need accommodation or who has been diagnosed with any learning or social challenges are expected to schedule a conference with the lead teacher and Head of School within the *first 10 days of school*. The conference provides the opportunity to share professional assessments and define clear goals and expectations. The conference will focus on defining an Individual Education Plan.

Observations

Parents are invited to observe their child during class time. **Please schedule your**

observation or class visit with the teacher in advance of your desired visit date.

PROGRAMS

Montessori Methodology Overview

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870 - 1952) was one of Italy's first women physicians. She held a doctorate in psychiatry and philosophy, and was a professor of anthropology. Through much observation and experimentation, Dr. Montessori created a method of education that is based on the developmental tendencies of human beings. She stated that the aim of the Montessori Method is "not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his innermost core."

A Montessori environment is designed for experiential learning. Everything is accessible to the children and is readily available for their use. The materials are beautiful and carefully prepared in order to spark curiosity and stimulate the desire to explore. They are self-correcting, thus fostering independence and auto-education. The opportunity to realize and correct one's own mistakes enhances a student's sense of self-confidence and independence.

Education of the "whole self" is paramount, and therefore personal and interpersonal growth is cultivated as well. Multi-age grouping allows children to develop leadership skills, establish role models and mentors, and learn to live and work in harmony with others. Also, the children move freely throughout the classroom exploring, interacting, and making work choices. This helps to foster responsibility and self-discipline.

Toddler Program & Goals

Toddler Program - 18 months to 3 years:

Class time: 8:30a-12:00p, 8:30a – 3:00p, 7:30a – 5:30p

5 Day (M-F), 3 Day Programs (TWR), Full Day Programs and All Day Programs

Dr. Montessori characterized the stage of development from 0 to 3 years old as the age of the **Unconscious Absorbent Mind**. The child is like a "sponge" absorbing knowledge from the external world. The information is not always acquired through conscious will or memory. The child resembles a person from an unknown culture, a pilgrim, trying to become oriented in an unfamiliar world. This period is the most critical because the greatest changes take place at this stage in life.

The toddler classroom is constructed to facilitate this natural growth and development. The environment **is** the curriculum; thus it is carefully designed to foster independence and self-discovery. It is beautifully and skillfully assembled in a way that eases the transition from family living to living in a community. It is equipped with age-appropriate learning materials and child-sized furniture that make the entire room enticing and easily accessible to the child.

The teacher in a toddler classroom is committed to establishing a sense of trust and

security between the adult and the child. The goal is that each child moves towards independence. Therefore, rather than force activities or attempt to train, the adult offers caring assistance as the child's abilities naturally unfold.

The morning work cycle is from 8:30 – 10:00. Morning circle begins at 10:15 and is followed by outside playtime. Lunch begins at 11:30 and Dismissal for Half Day students is at noon. Following lunch, Full Day and All-Day students nap from 12:15 – 2:15. After nap, children enjoy afternoon snack, circle time, and prepare for 3:00 dismissal. At 3:00 All Day students engage in an afternoon work period, play outside, and prepare for 5:30 dismissal.

Toddler Goals:

To help the children to develop:

- independence
- concentration
- a sense of order
- language skills
- fine motor skills
- gross motor skills
- self care skills
- socialization skills

Please refer to the Toddler Handbook for more specific information.

Primary Program & Goals

Primary Program – 3 years to 6 years:

Class Time: 3 & 4 Year-old Half Day, 3 Day (TWR):	8:30a - 12:00p
3 & 4 Year-old Half Day, 5 Day (M-F):	8:30a - 12:00p
3 & 4 Year-old Full Day:	8:30a - 3:00p
3 & 4 Year-old All Day:	7:30a - 5:30p
Kindergarten:	8:30a - 3:00p

The primary classroom builds from the foundation established in the Toddler program. Around the age of three, a child begins to move from the Unconscious Absorbent Mind to the age of the **Conscious Absorbent Mind**. The analogy of the “sponge” is still applicable during this period, as the mind has an ability to take in all aspects of the environment without effort or fatigue. They are prepared to move about and explore the world around them in order to create the person that they are to become.

The primary environment is carefully prepared so that the young explorer can go about his/her work of discovering the world. The room is rich with sensorial, academic, and everyday living exercises that appeal to the needs of each child. All of the lessons in the classroom are self-correcting in order to promote independence. The environment is outfitted with child-size furniture in order to ensure comfort, accessibility, and utility.

The adult in this classroom has a dual role as a model and a follower, striving to cultivate the creative spirit of the child. Upon careful observation, lessons are strategically organized throughout the room for the child to independently use these works for self-construction. The teacher also presents well-planned lessons to individual children and small groups using specifically-designed, age-appropriate materials.

The morning work cycle is from 8:30 until approximately 11:30. Dismissal for Half Day students, (3 and 4 year olds), is at noon. Lunch begins at noon for Full Day, All Day, and Kindergarten students.

Following lunch, the Full Day and All Day students rest and afterwards engage in whatever activities the teacher has planned for them. The Kindergarten students will engage in a longer work cycle that emphasizes academics and enrichment classes. The Kindergarten children enjoy formal Music and P.E. classes. This session is designed specifically for the development of skills necessary for success in Lower Elementary.

Primary Curriculum:

- Practical Life
- Math
- Reading
- Language
- Writing
- Geography
- Science
- Fine motor skill development
- Gross motor skill development
- Cultural studies
- Education of the senses
- Exploration of Nature

Primary Goals:

- Love of learning
- Self-confidence
- Solid academic foundation
- Respect for others
- Respect and care of the environment
- Care of self
- Independence
- Ability to make responsible choices

Lower Elementary Program & Goals

Lower Elementary Program – 1st – 3rd Grades

Class time: 8:30a-3:15p

Age six marks the beginning of a new developmental plane which is defined by Dr. Montessori as the age of the **Mathematical Mind**. The previous stage involved the **construction of the individual self**, while this stage is more focused on the

construction of the social self. The new gregarious being is concerned primarily with the acquisition of culture, has a highly active imagination, is devoted to morality, and has the ability to grasp abstract concepts. Dr Montessori likened the mind at this age to a “fertile field” where the seeds of knowledge will “germinate into culture.”

The Lower Elementary environment serves as an open landscape where everything has a specific purpose. Children are encouraged to explore the environment both independently and in cooperation with one another. Lessons are often presented in the form of stories in order to engage the imagination. The classroom is equipped with a wealth of color-coded, didactic materials that entice the student to explore. The materials are also self-correcting in order to promote success and independence. This creates a busy, productive atmosphere where intellectual development flourishes.

The teacher in this classroom is more engaged with the students. While the child’s independence is still paramount, the teacher and the students are more engaged in cooperative learning. Free choice is an integral part of this experience however students receive many lessons from the teacher on a daily basis and are expected to complete specific assigned tasks.

Lower Elementary Curriculum:

- Traditional course
- Technology
- Art
- Foreign Language
- P.E.
- Music
- Field Trips
- Annual retreat

Lower Elementary Goals:

- Academic excellence
- Independence
- A love of learning
- Self-confidence
- Social responsibility
- Respect for others
- Respect for the surrounding world and community
- A commitment to promoting peace

Upper Elementary Program & Goals

Upper Elementary – 4th - 6th Grades

Class time: 8:30a-3:15p

This program is designed to provide the lessons and activities necessary for 4-6th grade students to complete their elementary experience, since Upper Elementary is an extension and culmination of Lower Elementary. The teachers and students explore concepts more deeply, and the children engage in more independent studies.

Upper Elementary Curriculum:

- Traditional Courses
- Art
- Music
- Technology
- P.E.
- Foreign Language
- Chess

Upper Elementary Goals:

- Academic excellence
- Independence with Responsibility
- Joyful learners
- Ambassadors of peace
- Responsible citizens
- Knowledge of self

Middle School Program & Goals

Middle School – 7th – 8th Grades

Daily Class time: 8:30a-3:15p

Middle school age children are moving into a developmental plane in which they have the need to venture out into society. Students at this age are motivated by practical, real life responsibilities, and therefore are encouraged to develop relationships with adults in the community. These connections lead to opportunities for the students to learn and work outside of the classroom setting in professions that may interest them.

This is also a time when peer relationships become highly influential. Therefore, our program consists of many community building retreats and fields trips.

Middle School Curriculum:

- Traditional Courses
- Art
- Music
- Phys .Ed.
- Foreign Language
- Technology
- Chess

- Internship
- Classical Studies

Middle School Goals:

- Academic Excellence
- Self-Confidence
- Development of identity
- Community building
- Citizenship

High School – 9th – 12th Grades

Daily Class time: 8:30-3:15

Phoenix Montessori High School Curriculum:

- All core courses are taught to make each student successful.
- English and Social Studies are integrated to create a greater depth in the curriculum.
- We operate on a rotating daily schedule with Advisory and Community meetings built into every week.
- There are 4 two-week intensive field study courses (inter-sessions).

PMA Graduation Requirements & Credits

Mathematics – 4	Science - 4
Social Studies – 4	English - 4
Foreign Language* - 2	Health - .5
Fine Arts - 1	Physical Education - .5
Intersession Electives – 4	Community Service Hours - 200

Upper Elementary through High School Silent Time

Silence is very important in our environment. In such a busy society, we rarely have the opportunity to experience quiet moments, and it is our belief that silence is crucial in the development of concentration and self-awareness. It is with this in mind that we make a conscious effort to incorporate moments of silence into each day. Following lunch, students engage in a silent self-reflection lasting for 20-30 minutes. During this time, the children read, complete unfinished assignments, get started with their work for the day, finish homework, or simply enjoy a quiet moment out of doors.

Please help us to preserve this experience by not entering the classroom during this time.

Work Plans

Montessori education involves independence and decision making on the part of the child. The teacher will collaborate with each student to devise a system of tracking lessons. Work plans serve as a road map to help the children navigate through the day. Assignments are checked off and recorded upon completion. This system is an excellent way for both the teacher and the child to document work.

Homework

Homework will vary from class to class and year to year. See your child's teacher for this year's details.

The teacher is seeking your feedback when homework appears inappropriate for your child. Homework is meant to reinforce and not create stress.

Standardized Testing

Students receive the experience of standardized testing beginning with 1st grade. The Stanford 10 Achievement Test is administered in late spring. While we do not place a great deal of emphasis on these tests, we recognize that test-taking and its results are coveted in our society and culture. Therefore, PMA administers standardized tests as practice for a life skill the children will need in their future.

Test results are usually reported to the school after summer vacation has begun. Results are reviewed with families during a scheduled summer conference.

Annual Retreats

All students in the first grade through High School participate in annual week-long school retreats. The location for retreats varies each year to give students a variety of experiences. Upper Elementary and Middle School students are eligible to take a trip to the Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) Conference in the spring. High School students having participated in MMUN prior are able to serve on the Bureau. Middle School students may take an immersion trip at the end of each five-week cycle. High School students take an immersion trip at the end of the school year.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Our Staff & Governing Body

Visit PMA's website at www.phoenixmontessori.org for a complete list of staff and Board of Directors members under the About Us tab.

B. Discipline and Behavior Management Policy

Positive reinforcement is an effective method of the behavior management of children. When children receive positive, nonviolent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief of how children learn and develop values, Phoenix Montessori Academy will practice the following discipline and behavior management policy:

We:

1. **DO** encourage the children through positive reinforcement.
2. **DO** reason with and set limits for the children.
3. **DO** model appropriate behavior for the children.
4. **DO** prepare and modify the classroom environment in an attempt to prevent problems before they occur.
5. **DO** listen to the children.
6. **DO** provide the children with natural and logical consequences of their behaviors.
7. **DO** treat the children as people and respect their needs, desires, and feelings.
8. **DO** explain things to children on their level.
9. **DO** redirect the children engaged in inappropriate behaviors toward more appropriate alternatives.
10. **DO** allow the children the opportunity to self-correct their behavior provided the behavior is not destructive, disturbing or dangerous.
11. **DO** separate the children from the group if their behavior is disruptive, disturbing or dangerous and give them the opportunity to return when they are ready to follow the ground rules.
12. **DO** remove children from the environment who pose a threat to themselves, other children or the environment.
13. **DO** stay consistent in our behavior management program.

We:

1. **DO NOT** spank, shake, bite, pinch, push, pull, slap, or otherwise physically punish the children.
2. **DO NOT** make fun of, yell at, threaten, make sarcastic remarks about, use profanity, or otherwise verbally abuse the children.
3. **DO NOT** shame or punish the children at any time including when bathroom accidents occur.
4. **DO NOT** deny meals or rest as punishment.
5. **DO NOT** leave the children alone, unattended, or without supervision.
6. **DO NOT** place the children in locked rooms, closets, or boxes as punishment.
7. **DO NOT** allow discipline of children by children.
8. **DO NOT** criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle children's parents, families, or ethnic groups

We have a **Zero Tolerance policy** concerning fighting. **Every student and teacher has the right to feel safe.** Abusive behavior of this nature will result in immediate removal from the environment and at least a one day suspension from school

following the first offense. The second occurrence will result in a three day suspension, and the student involved will not be invited to return to school until parents, the teacher, and that student, meet in a formal conference. The third offense will result in a weeklong suspension and possible expulsion. Anything after the third offense would likely result in expulsion from the school.

C. School Song

Higher

Composed by: Louis Beeler, 2004
Phoenix Montessori Academy

Set us on our path; And let us shine our light;
Show us love and patience; And we'll know wrong from right.
We always strive for excellence; In everything we do
It's the only way we know, And we learned from watching you.

Like a Phoenix in Flight; We Rise Higher Everyday.
With our parents and teachers; Showing us the way:
With imagination and education, We Rise Higher Everyday,
We Rise Higher Everyday.

We are individual thinkers; Building on our dreams.
Becoming good citizens; And showing what that means.
With our mentors behind us; We have bright futures ahead;
We reap the wisdom; From the things that they have said.

Like a Phoenix in Flight; We Rise Higher Everyday.
With our parents and teachers; Showing us the way:
With imagination and education, We Rise Higher Everyday,
We Rise Higher Everyday.

D. Contacts

CONTACT SHEET

Head of School:
India French-Adams

Mailing Address:
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Huntersville, NC 28078

Telephone:
704-875-2139

PMA Website:	www.phoenixmontessori.org
General School E-mail:	info@phoenixmontessori.org
Head of School E-mail:	india@phoenixmontessori.org
Summer Camp Director E-mail:	accounting@phoenixmontessori.org
Business Manager E-mail:	accounting@phoenixmontessori.org
Admissions E-mail:	lorena@phoenixmontessori.org
Athletic Director E-mail:	athletics@phoenixmontessori.org
The Montessori Foundation:	www.montessori.org
Facebook Page:	www.facebook.com/phoenixmontessori

E. Building Access

Objective:

Provide a safe and focused learning environment for our students and to minimize interruptions in the classrooms during school hours.

Overview:

During the school hours of 8:30 a.m. – 3:15 p.m., parents will not be allowed to enter the school. Exceptions include half-day student pick-up, pre-arranged appointments with teachers and pre-arranged class observations. While we encourage parent interaction and involvement, classroom interruptions will be kept to a minimum to provide our students with the best learning environment possible.

Morning Drop Off Process:

PMA Staff will be outside to meet students at the carpool line from 8:15 – 8:30 a.m. Students enrolled in Primary through High School should be dropped off by the school entrance during these hours. Parents of Primary students will be met at the car by the Primary teacher. The daily sign-in sheet will be available for you to sign your child in each day.

Toddler parents will escort their children to the classroom each day. Parents of Toddler students should park in the lot. Students in Primary will enter through the first set of doors. Elementary, Middle and High School students will enter through the doors past the main entrance. All doors will remain locked at all times and will be used as emergency exits only.

Late students will be required to enter through the main lobby/office door. Students from Lower Elementary through High School can proceed to their classroom unescorted. Younger students will be escorted to class by a staff member. Parents are asked to wait in the lobby if a staff member is not immediately present.

Afternoon Pick Up Process:

If your child is enrolled in a half-day program, pick-up is at 12:00 noon. Enter through the Primary/Toddler entrance and proceed to the Toddler or Primary classroom to sign your child out.

Afternoon carpool is at 3:00 p.m. At the designated time, Primary through High School students will be outside and available to be picked up. Staff members will be present to assist with carpool to ensure the safety of all students.

Daytime Access:

If your child needs to leave school for any reason, i.e. doctor's appointment, notify the teacher in advance. Your child will be in the lobby at the specified time.

If you are dropping off lunch, leave the lunch at the front desk with your child's name on the lunchbox or bag. Lunch will be taken to your child's classroom by a staff member.

All adults visiting the school during school hours will be required to sign in at the front desk.

Conclusion:

As our school continues to grow, it is increasingly important to establish guidelines that ensure proper school security as well as to provide the best possible learning environment for our children. We appreciate your help and understanding as we enforce these guidelines.