



# *PARENT* *HANDBOOK*

Clear Lake Montessori School, 2025-2026

281-486-4971 | 2486 Falcon Pass Dr, Houston, TX 77062

## Table of Contents

<b>CLEAR LAKE MONTESSORI SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>MISSION STATEMENT .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A BRIEF HISTORY OF CLEAR LAKE MONTESSORI SCHOOL .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ACCREDITATION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY .....	6
TEXAS RISING STAR QUALITY CERTIFICATION .....	6
<b>STATE OF NONDISCRIMINATION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>OPEN DOOR POLICY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>FAMILY PARTICIPATION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ADMISSION PAPERWORK .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ENROLLMENT CHANGES &amp; RE-ENROLLMENT .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS AND EXEMPTIONS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>HEARING AND VISION SCREENING .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>SPECIAL CARE NEEDS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES &amp; EARLY INTERVENTION SUPPORT .....</b>	<b>10</b>
FAMILY COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION .....	10
EARLY INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES .....	10
OUR COMMITMENT .....	11
<b>WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>PARENT REFERRALS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>HOURS OF OPERATION AND OVERTIME .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>11</b>
SIGN-IN/SIGN-OUT .....	12
DESIGNATED PICK-UP / RELEASE OF CHILDREN .....	12
DRESS CODE.....	12
<b>PARENT CONTACT INFORMATION UPDATES.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY – INDOOR AND OUTDOOR .....</b>	<b>13</b>
INFANTS AND TODDLERS.....	13

<i>Six weeks to six months:</i> .....	13
<i>Six to twelve months:</i> .....	14
<i>Twelve to twenty-four months:</i> .....	14
<i>Twenty-four months to 3 years:</i> .....	14
<i>Preschool age:</i> .....	14
<b>INFANT CARE .....</b>	<b>14</b>
BREASTFEEDING.....	15
<b>AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS AGES 5–12.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CAMP DAYS &amp; SPECIAL SESSIONS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SCREEN TIME POLICY .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>WATER ACTIVITY POLICY .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>TRANSPORTATION POLICY .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>FIELD TRIP POLICY .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>BABYSITTING POLICY .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>LATE PAYMENT POLICY .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>SPOT-HOLDING POLICY .....</b>	<b>18</b>
HOLIDAY CLOSURES.....	18
<b>EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY PAYMENTS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>CURRICULUM GOALS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>ACADEMIC CURRICULUM CLOSED DAYS.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>ABSENCES.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>ARRIVAL &amp; DEPARTURE PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>20</b>
BREAKFAST: .....	20
ARRIVAL TIME: .....	20
LATE ARRIVALS: .....	20
<b>RECOMMENDED DAILY SCHEDULE (10-HOUR LIMIT).....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>DISMISSAL, SUSPENSION, AND EXPULSION POLICY .....</b>	<b>21</b>
GROUNDS FOR IMMEDIATE DISMISSAL OR SUSPENSION.....	21
<b>CHILD ABUSE &amp; NEGLECT POLICY .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>INJURY &amp; INCIDENT REPORTING .....</b>	<b>22</b>

<b>STAFF &amp; PARENT TRAINING.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PERSONAL BELONGINGS &amp; SUPPLIES.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>TOY &amp; PERSONAL ITEM POLICY.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>MEALS &amp; FOOD SERVICES.....</b>	<b>23</b>
LUNCH GUIDELINES .....	23
SNACKS & HYDRATION .....	24
FOOD ALLERGIES & NUTRITION GUIDELINES .....	24
NUTRITION EDUCATION & PROCEDURES .....	24
FOR INFANTS (IF APPLICABLE):.....	24
NUT-FREE FACILITY.....	24
<b>ILLNESS POLICY .....</b>	<b>25</b>
COMMUNICABLE DISEASES .....	25
COVID-19 POLICY.....	26
RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER ILLNESS POLICY .....	26
<i>General Policy</i> .....	26
<i>Communicable Illness Protocol</i> .....	27
DISPENSING MEDICATION .....	27
INSECT REPELLENT & SUNSCREEN APPLICATION .....	28
<b>MEDICAL EMERGENCIES .....</b>	<b>28</b>
EPINEPHRINE AUTO-INJECTORS (EPIPENS) .....	28
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROCEDURE .....	29
<b>GANG-FREE ZONE .....</b>	<b>29</b>
FIREARMS, AMMUNITION & OTHER WEAPONS .....	29
SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT .....	29
<b>NAP / QUIET TIME.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>TOILET TRAINING.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS .....</b>	<b>30</b>
BIRTHDAY GIFTS & INVITATIONS.....	31

<b>STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT.....</b>	<b>31</b>
BITING & CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR.....	32
<b>DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>PARTNERSHIP &amp; SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY.....</b>	<b>33</b>
FAMILY VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT.....	33
<b>COMMUNICATION.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>PARENT CONFERENCES.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>MINIMUM STANDARDS &amp; LICENSING INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>POLICY REVISIONS.....</b>	<b>36</b>

# **Clear Lake Montessori School Parent Handbook**

## **Overview**

Welcome to a new school year at Clear Lake Montessori School, a place where children are not only educated—but nurtured, inspired, and truly seen.

At CLMS, our guiding purpose—our WHY—is simple yet powerful: To prepare children for life, with love, trust, and vision.

This Parent Handbook outlines the key policies, procedures, and expectations that guide our daily operations at Clear Lake Montessori School. It is meant to provide clarity, consistency, and transparency as we work together in service of each child’s development.

A current version of the handbook is shared annually via Procare or email and is available upon request from the school office. Families are required to review the handbook and submit the Parent Acknowledgement Form within five (5) school days of enrollment.

If updates are made during the school year, families will be informed in writing and asked to sign a new acknowledgement form.

It is each family’s responsibility to read and follow the guidelines outlined here. While we aim to cover most situations, unique or unforeseen events may arise. In such cases, updates and guidance will be shared through Procare, email, or other official communications.

## **Mission Statement**

At Clear Lake Montessori School, our mission is to nurture the whole child—emotionally, intellectually, physically, and socially—through an authentic Montessori experience. We honor each child’s individuality within a peaceful, prepared environment that encourages independence, joy in learning, and deep respect for self and others. By fostering strong family partnerships, we invite parents to grow alongside their children and take an active, thoughtful role in their child’s educational journey.

## **A Brief History of Clear Lake Montessori School**

Founded in 1973, Clear Lake Montessori School (CLMS) has served as a trusted educational cornerstone in the Clear Lake community for over five decades. Generations of families have passed through our doors—each one adding to the rich legacy of Montessori education in this vibrant and diverse area.

In 2016, the school entered an exciting new chapter under new ownership. With renewed energy and vision, CLMS continues to uphold the timeless principles of Dr. Maria Montessori while expanding its offerings to meet the evolving needs of today’s children and families.

CLMS now proudly serves children from infancy through Kindergarten age. Our programs include:

- Language Immersion classrooms in Spanish and Mandarin, led by native-speaking educators
- Carefully prepared Infant, Toddler, and Early Childhood (EC) environments
- A dynamic Afterschool Enrichment Program for school-age students, offering experiences in art, yoga, business leadership, and STEM

From our deep roots in the 1970s to our forward-thinking programs today, Clear Lake Montessori School remains dedicated to preparing children for life—with love, trust, and vision.

## **Accreditation**

### **American Montessori Society**

Clear Lake Montessori School is a verified member of the American Montessori Society (AMS). Our AMS verification reflects our commitment to providing an authentic Montessori education with highly trained staff, prepared environments, and a focus on continuous improvement and child-centered learning.

In addition, CLMS is licensed by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and adheres to all regulations set forth in the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers. We undergo regular inspections and maintain full compliance to ensure a safe, nurturing, and high-quality environment for every child.

### **Texas Rising Star Quality Certification**

Clear Lake Montessori School is also participating in the Texas Rising Star program, a quality rating and improvement system for early childhood programs in Texas. Texas Rising Star recognizes schools that go beyond the state's minimum licensing requirements by demonstrating higher standards in teacher-child interactions, curriculum and classroom practices, staff training, family engagement, and overall program quality. Our participation reflects our commitment to continuous improvement and to providing the highest level of care and education for every child we serve.

## **State of Nondiscrimination**

- Clear Lake Montessori School admits students of any race, color, gender, creed, or national origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, creed, or national origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, employment practices, or any other school-administered programs.

## **Open Door Policy**

- At Clear Lake Montessori School, we deeply value the partnership between school and home. While your child is with us, please know that our “door is always open” in spirit—even if the physical door remains locked for safety.
- To protect all children and staff, our campus doors remain securely locked during the day. However, families are always welcome to check in on their child or schedule a classroom observation. We kindly ask that spontaneous visits be approached with sensitivity—particularly for young children who are still transitioning. A brief visit from a parent may be confusing or emotionally challenging for a child who may want to leave with you. Additionally, unexpected visitors can create excitement that may disrupt the classroom’s peaceful rhythm.
- Formal parent observations and conferences are offered twice a year, typically in October and February, and both parents are encouraged to attend. To observe your child’s classroom, please sign in at the front office. You will be guided to the observation area and invited to observe quietly for up to 20 minutes. For the integrity of the learning environment, parents must follow our observation guidelines.
- If additional conferences are needed, teachers are happy to schedule time to connect. Please contact the office to arrange a meeting during the designated conference periods.

## **Family Participation**

Our school thrives because of the strong support and involvement of our families. We encourage you to take part in our shared community by:

1. Attending parent education evenings and school events
2. Volunteering your time or talents when possible
3. Supporting our fundraising and community outreach efforts

Your presence, partnership, and enthusiasm help strengthen the learning journey for all children at CLMS.

## **Admission Paperwork**

- Enrollment at CLMS is contingent upon the completion and submission of all required documents, including:
- Signed Parent Handbook Acknowledgment
- Signed Financial Agreement
- Completed School Enrollment Forms and Medical Records per Child-Care Licensing
- Signed Transportation and Photo Release Forms
- All documentation must be received and approved before a child may attend class or participate in any school activities.

## **Enrollment Changes & Re-Enrollment**

Enrollment at Clear Lake Montessori School is offered on a year-round basis, subject to availability. Families are encouraged to contact the school to schedule a tour and learn more about our programs. Once a space is offered, enrollment is secured upon completion of the required forms and payment of applicable registration and supply fees.

Each year, families of currently enrolled students are given priority for re-enrollment before new applicants are accepted. Re-enrollment for the upcoming school year begins during the last week of April. To guarantee your child's placement, completed re-enrollment forms must be submitted by **April 30**.

Any updates or changes to enrollment policies or procedures will be communicated annually via official school email and the Procare app.

## **Immunization Requirements and Exemptions**

Clear Lake Montessori School follows all state health regulations regarding immunizations for enrolled children. All students must be current on their required immunizations as outlined by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

1. A current immunization record must be submitted at the time of enrollment.
2. Families must submit updated immunization records any time the child receives a new vaccine and again each August to ensure the child's file is current.
3. Children may not attend school without an up-to-date immunization record on file. This is a state law, and the school is required to enforce it.

If a parent is requesting an exemption from immunization requirements for **reasons of conscience**, including religious beliefs, a **notarized, original affidavit** must be submitted to the school **prior to the child's first day of attendance**. This affidavit must be obtained from the Texas Department of State Health Services and renewed as required.

Please note:

- Photocopies or unsigned forms will not be accepted.
- Exemptions for medical reasons must be accompanied by a signed statement from a licensed physician specifying the medical condition and duration of exemption.

It is the parent's responsibility to keep all exemption documentation current and in compliance with state regulations. In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, children with exemptions may be excluded from attending school until the risk of infection has passed, per health authority guidance.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a safe and healthy environment for all children.

CLMS does not currently require staff immunization unless necessary for health and safety. Staff are encouraged to remain informed and make decisions based on professional medical advice.

## **Hearing and Vision Screening**

In accordance with the Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36 and 25 TAC Chapter 37, Subchapter C, CLMS is required to maintain vision and hearing screening records for students of specific ages.

1. All children age 4 and older must have documentation of vision and hearing screening results on file.
2. These screenings may be conducted by a qualified medical professional or through school-arranged services.
3. If vision or hearing screening conflicts with religious beliefs, an affidavit of exemption must be submitted.

For more information, visit: [www.dshs.state.tx.us/vhs](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/vhs)

## **Special Care Needs**

CLMS is committed to providing a welcoming and supportive environment for all children, including those with special care needs.

With parental consent, CLMS will accommodate recommendations provided by:

1. A licensed health-care professional, or
2. A qualified specialist affiliated with the local school district or early childhood intervention (ECI) program

CLMS will:

1. Use adaptive equipment provided for a child as needed.
2. Support access to early intervention or special education services during school hours.
3. Ensure all children participate in inclusive classroom activities alongside their peers.
4. Adapt routines, materials, and instruction to support each child's development and well-being.

Our staff is trained to modify learning environments and experiences to create a natural, inclusive setting that honors every child's ability and contribution.

However, please note that CLMS is not a therapeutic or specialized facility, and our staffing model does not include full-time one-on-one aides. If a child's care or behavioral needs require individualized, one-on-one support beyond what our team can safely and effectively provide, we will partner with the family to identify appropriate outside resources or alternative programs that are better equipped to meet those needs.

Our goal is always to act in the best interest of the child, while maintaining a safe, balanced environment for all students and staff. We value open, ongoing communication and appreciate

your partnership as we strive to meet the needs of every learner with compassion and professionalism.

## **Developmental Milestones & Early Intervention Support**

At Clear Lake Montessori School, we honor the natural developmental timeline of every child. Growth is not a race — it is a unique and beautifully unfolding process. Our role is to observe each child with intention, understand their stage of development, and provide the right environment, materials, and guidance to support their progress.

To ensure that every child receives individualized support, CLMS uses:

- **Developmental milestone checklists**
- **Montessori observations and work records**
- **Ongoing communication between teachers, administrators, and families**

These tools help us monitor each child's growth across key domains, including social-emotional development, language, physical skills, executive function, and academic readiness. Observations are used to adapt lessons, provide appropriate challenges, and help each child grow with confidence and joy.

## **Family Communication & Collaboration**

If a child shows signs that additional support may be beneficial, the teaching team will meet with the family to:

- Share observations and discuss developmental milestones
- Offer strategies that can be used consistently at school and at home
- Provide information about early intervention resources, such as Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) programs, pediatric assessments, or specialists
- Collaboratively develop a plan that respects the child's needs and supports their success

Communication may take the form of conference meetings, written notes, developmental updates, or regular check-ins through the Procare app.

## **Early Intervention and Support Services**

With parental consent, CLMS partners closely with outside professionals, including:

- Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) providers
- Speech, occupational, or behavioral therapists
- Local school district specialists
- Pediatric healthcare professionals

We welcome therapists and specialists to work with children during the school day when appropriate, and we support recommendations that help the child thrive within the classroom environment.

Our goal is to build a collaborative support system — one that honors each child's individuality while ensuring they receive the guidance, encouragement, and resources needed to reach their full potential.

## **Our Commitment**

Clear Lake Montessori School is committed to creating an inclusive environment where every child is respected, supported, and celebrated. Through careful observation, developmental awareness, and partnership with families, we strive to ensure that each child's learning journey is joyful, meaningful, and aligned with their unique path of development.

## **Withdrawal Procedures**

1. A minimum of 30 days' written notice is required if a parent/guardian chooses to withdraw their child from CLMS.
2. Tuition is still due during this 30-day notice period, even if the child stops attending immediately.

## **Parent Referrals**

We deeply appreciate your support in helping Clear Lake Montessori School (CLMS) grow through word of mouth and community connections.

As a thank you for your referral:

1. The referring family will receive a \$100 tuition credit.
2. The newly enrolled family will also receive a \$100 tuition credit.
3. Credits will be applied after the new student has completed 3 full months of attendance and the enrollment process is finalized.

## **Hours of Operation and Overtime**

Clear Lake Montessori School (CLMS) operates year-round. Please refer to the annual school calendar for scheduled closures. We provide childcare Monday through Friday from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM. Any changes to your child's schedule must be discussed with the office and are subject to availability.

## **Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures**

Children enrolled in the school-day program (8:00 AM – 3:00 PM) may be dropped off as early as 7:45 AM. If a child arrives before 7:45 AM, a \$10.00 before-care fee will be charged. If the child picked up after 3:00, there is \$25 late pick up fee. Please note that a late arrival does not extend the pick-up time. Families are strongly encouraged to ensure their child arrives before the Montessori work cycle begins. Punctuality supports your child's success and the smooth functioning of the classroom.

All extended-day children must be picked up no later than 6:00 PM. Any portion after 6:00PM pick up will be \$25 for the first 15 minutes, and then we will add \$1.00 per minute after that. An invoice will be issued, and the fee will be added to the following month's tuition.

Notifying the school that you will be late does not waive the late pickup fee. Please see the "Tuition and Other Fees" section for additional details.

Parents must contact the school before 6:00 PM if they are going to be late. If no call is received and no authorized person arrives by 6:00 PM, CLMS will contact the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. It is the responsibility of each parent to ensure timely pick-up or arrange for an authorized alternative.

### **Sign-in/Sign-Out**

You will create two 4-8digit codes to use to sign your child in and out on the tablet at the front office. Please do not share your codes with others. If someone is listed on your child's pick-up list, they will be able to create their own codes to check the child in and out. This allows us to keep an accurate recording of who is checking each child in and out every day. Please utilize the tablet for sign-in each day, as it facilitates us keeping track of each child's attendance

### **Designated Pick-Up / Release of Children**

To ensure each child's safety, only parents or designated individuals listed on the authorized pick-up form may pick up a child from CLMS. A valid photo ID is required for anyone other than the parent or legal guardian.

If legal custody arrangements are in place, a copy of the court order and visitation schedule must be submitted to the school. Without this documentation, both parents will be assumed to have equal access.

If a parent or guardian is unable to pick up during the designated time, another authorized adult listed on the child's emergency form may do so. Verification will include, but is not limited to, presentation of a valid photo ID.

### **Dress Code**

Clear Lake Montessori School does not require a formal uniform. However, children must wear comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing that allows them to move freely and participate fully in classroom and outdoor activities.

Closed-toe shoes are required for safety. If your child is not yet able to tie their own shoes, we encourage the use of Velcro or slip-on shoes to promote independence and reduce classroom interruptions.

If a child arrives in inappropriate attire or unsafe footwear, parents will be contacted and may be asked to bring a change of clothing or shoes.

---

## **Parent Contact Information Updates**

It is essential that we have accurate and up-to-date contact information for your family. We recommend reviewing and updating your phone numbers, addresses, medical details, emergency contacts, and authorized pick-up list at least once a year.

Updates can be made easily through the Procare app or by contacting the school office. This helps us ensure the safety and well-being of your child in both routine and emergency situations.

---

## **Inclement Weather Policy**

In the event of severe weather or natural disasters, CLMS follows the closure decisions made by Clear Creek Independent School District (CCISD). School closures will be communicated via email, Procare, and posted on our social media platforms. Please also monitor local news outlets for updates.

The classes use 30 degrees Fahrenheit as their usual cutoff, although they may go out when the temperature is lower than 30 degrees, depending upon the circumstances and the wind chill factor. A still, sunny 30-degree day can be delightful. We use the Child Care Weather Chart for our guideline.

---

## **Physical Activity – Indoor and Outdoor**

### **Infants and Toddlers**

Infants and Toddlers need physical activity in order to develop, grow and be strong. Infants learn to reach, grab, grasp, sit up, and roll over. Toddlers learn to walk, run, climb and jump.

*Six weeks to six months:*

Use cribs, infant seats and etc. Tummy time to help build and strengthen shoulder and neck. Provide age-appropriate toys that develop grasping and reaching. Interact with infants to keep them moving around.

*Six to twelve months:*

A safe place to move around for large muscle movement, such as rolling over, creeping, and crawling. Outdoor play is recommended as long as they can, if outdoor is unavailable due to weather, or maintenance, there must be planned indoor physical activity. Finger plays to develop small motor development skills.

*Twelve to twenty-four months:*

Supervised outdoor play in the morning and in the afternoon, to exercise walking, running, climbing, or jumping. Toddlers should get 30 minutes or more in the morning and 30 minutes in the afternoon structured outdoor play. If outdoor play is unavailable due to weather/maintenance, planned indoor physical activity is available. Catching, carrying age-appropriate toys is recommended.

*Twenty-four months to 3 years:*

Practice the children the ability to balance on one foot, climb, throw a ball overhead, run, jump, kick a ball and more. Age-appropriate equipment to develop small and large muscles. Music is available for rhythm and dance; Interactive environment.

*Preschool age:*

Support the children in developing new motor skills like hopping, broad jumping, tossing a ball, kicking, or hitting a ball using a plastic bat. Provide tricycles or other age-appropriate riding equipment, climbing and good fall zones, push and pull toys, nature walk, dancing...

**Outdoor play** is an essential part of the Montessori day and a requirement by Texas Child-Care Licensing. Daily physical activity supports your child's physical, emotional, and social development.

Weather permitting, children will go outside each day. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. If your child is too ill to go outdoors, they should remain at home to rest.

Typical outdoor schedules:

- Infants (0–17 months): Outdoor time as long as developmentally appropriate and weather allows
- Toddlers (18 months–4 years): At least 30 minutes, twice daily
- Children 5 and up: At least 45 minutes, twice daily

During inclement weather, children will engage in movement and group play indoors to maintain daily physical activity.

## **Infant Care**

Until infants are eating table food, parents are required to provide baby food and either formula or breast milk. Parents must also provide diapers, wipes, diaper cream, and several changes of clothes, bedding, and bottles. Food and bottles must be brought to school and taken home daily. An Infant Care Instruction Form will be filled out and returned to the school at the time of registration. All materials brought from home must be clearly labeled with the child's name, and first initial of last name, including bottles.

### **Breastfeeding**

Clear Lake Montessori School provides mothers who wish to breastfeed their baby a comfortable seat in our school. Please let us know if you would like to provide breast milk for your infant while they are in our care.

### **After School Program for Students Ages 5–12**

Clear Lake Montessori School (CLMS) offers engaging after-school experiences in a fun, safe, and stimulating environment designed to support the whole child, including Nutritious Snack served daily; Homework Support available as needed; Themed Enrichment Activities such as: Language Immersion (Spanish/ Mandarin); Arts & Crafts; Outdoor Exploration & Play

### **Camp Days & Special Sessions**

During school breaks and camp days, students enjoy expanded themed activities and hands-on experiences. Many themes include special guests or field trips to enrich learning beyond the classroom.

### **Screen Time Policy**

At Clear Lake Montessori School (CLMS), we believe in minimizing distractions and fostering meaningful, hands-on learning experiences.

- No screen time is allowed during the school day.
- Electronic devices or gadgets from home (e.g., tablets, smartwatches, phones) are not permitted.

This policy supports our Montessori philosophy of presence, focus, and purposeful engagement.

---

### **Water Activity Policy**

Water activities are a joyful and sensory-rich experience offered to children 18 months and older, and may include sprinkler play or splash pad activities.

Guidelines:

- Children must wear appropriate clothing and footwear for water play.
- Advance notice will be shared via email, newsletter, and classroom door signs.
- Staff orientation and safety reminders will be conducted prior to water days.
- Teacher-to-child ratios will be maintained according to state licensing requirements.
- Children not participating will be comfortably supervised in another classroom.

---

## **Transportation Policy**

CLMS may offer transportation services for school-age children, including:

- Pick-up from designated elementary schools
- Transportation to and from designated field trips

Please Note:

1. Check with administration for availability and eligibility.
2. Parents/Guardians must inform CLMS in advance of any changes to a child's transportation needs (e.g., absences or different pick-up plans).
3. Failing to notify the school may result in delays and disruptions to other students' schedules.
4. CLMS staff will verify absences before leaving any elementary school premises.

The bus driver and support staff are responsible for safe, timely, and orderly transport of children.

---

## **Field Trip Policy**

Field trips are an exciting part of our curriculum, but they require careful planning and adherence to state and school guidelines.

Please note:

1. Children under 4 years of age do not participate in off-campus field trips.
2. Field trip uniforms are required (must include school name and phone number).
3. Transportation is provided by CLMS vans or contracted buses.
4. Parents/Guardians may not drop off or pick up children directly at field trip sites.

To participate, children must:

1. Meet state-mandated age, height, and weight requirements.
2. Have written permission from a parent or guardian.
3. Arrive on time and travel with the group to and from the school.

4. Be checked back into school by an authorized staff member before being picked up by parents.

## **Babysitting Policy**

To maintain professional boundaries and ensure the safety of all children, Clear Lake Montessori School does not permit staff members to provide babysitting services for enrolled families. Any private arrangement made between a staff member and a family is outside the scope of our program and is not authorized, endorsed, or covered by the school in any way.

For the safety and protection of our students and staff, teachers are **not allowed to remove any child (unless they are a legal guardian or family member) from school grounds under any circumstances**, whether during or outside of school hours.

We appreciate your understanding as we uphold these guidelines to ensure a safe and professional environment for all.

---

## **Late Payment Policy**

To ensure the smooth operation of our school and respectful partnership with families, Clear Lake Montessori School (CLMS) enforces the following tuition payment guidelines:

### **Monthly Tuition Due Date**

1. Tuition is due by the 1st of each month.
2. A \$35 late fee will be applied if payment is not received by the 3rd.
3. Beginning on the 5th of the month, an additional \$20 per day late fee will accrue until the balance is paid.

### **Non-Payment After the 15th**

1. If payment is not received by the 15th of the month, the student will not be permitted to attend school.
2. The account will be considered delinquent and may be referred to collections.
3. All legal, attorney, or administrative collection fees will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

### **Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) Policy**

1. A \$55 fee will be charged for any returned checks or failed ACH collection due to insufficient funds.
2. In addition, a \$35 late fee will apply, following the same structure outlined in the Late Payment Policy above.

## Spot-Holding Policy

At Clear Lake Montessori School (CLMS), we understand that families may need to temporarily pause attendance due to travel, family needs, or special circumstances.

If you wish to go on vacation for one week or two weeks, the tuition is paid in full. If your child will be absent more than **two weeks or more or up to 6 months**, you have the option to hold their spot by:

1. Notifying the school at least two weeks in advance, and
2. Paying a spot-holding fee of \$125, prorated based on the length of the absence.

This fee secures your child's enrollment status and guarantees their spot in the classroom upon return, while allowing us to maintain staffing and classroom ratios. If your child did not come back after 6 months, you have to reenroll your child and pay the enrollment fee of \$175.

## Holiday Closures

Please note that **official school holidays and scheduled school closures do not count toward the two-week absence period** required to initiate spot-holding or prorated arrangements.

Holiday closures (such as Christmas Break, Thanksgiving, or other dates listed on the CLMS School Calendar) are not eligible for tuition prorating and may not be applied toward any absence calculation.

Families may not include these school closure days as part of a two-week vacation or extended absence request for the purpose of prorated tuition or spot-holding. Tuition for holiday closure weeks remains unchanged and is not subject to adjustment.

## Extracurricular Activity Payments

1. All extracurricular fees, including any prorated amounts (for Chess, Robotics, STEM, etc.) are handled directly by the instructors.
2. Enrollment forms and payment must be submitted to the school at least two weeks prior to the start of the class to ensure your child's participation.

## Curriculum Goals

At Clear Lake Montessori School, our curriculum is grounded in the Montessori philosophy and designed to nurture the whole child — intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically. Our goals guide every aspect of the prepared environment and ensure that each child develops at their own pace while being supported through careful observation, purposeful work, and joyful exploration.

Our curriculum aims to:

- Foster independence and confidence by allowing children to make choices, engage in meaningful work, and develop the skills needed to care for themselves and their environment.
- Strengthen concentration and academic readiness through hands-on materials that build foundational understanding in language, mathematics, sensorial exploration, and cultural studies.
- Support social-emotional development by modeling grace, courtesy, empathy, peaceful conflict resolution, and respect for self and others.
- Promote physical development through daily movement, fine-motor and gross-motor activities, and opportunities for outdoor exploration aligned with developmental needs.
- Encourage curiosity, creativity, and problem solving by offering open-ended learning experiences that spark discovery and allow children to follow their interests with purpose and joy.
- Honor each child's developmental stage by using ongoing observation, developmental milestones, and individualized planning to meet children where they are and help them grow toward their full potential.
- Build strong communication and early literacy skills through rich language experiences, conversation, storytelling, and exposure to vocabulary and reading readiness activities.
- Cultivate cultural awareness and global understanding by introducing geography, science, history, nature study, and celebrations that help children appreciate the world around them.

In partnership with families, our curriculum supports the natural unfolding of the whole child — helping them develop the skills, confidence, and sense of purpose they need for lifelong learning and well-being.

## **Academic Curriculum Closed Days**

Full Time Students may attend the ACC without extra fee.

School is closed for School Time students, if attending there will be a fee of \$59/day for ACC (Academic Curriculum Closed Days). Fee is paid through ACH Tuition Express or by cashier's check attached to the ACC attendance form. Cashier's check is only used for non CLMS students enrolled for ACC days only.

## **Absences**

If your child will be absent from school, please notify the office as soon as possible. If your child is enrolled in our after-school program, please make sure to inform us by noon if your child does not need to be picked up.

Consistent attendance plays a vital role in your child's emotional and academic development. Regular participation helps children form strong connections with their peers, guides, and environment—building a sense of belonging and community.

---

## **Arrival & Departure Procedures**

### **Breakfast:**

1. CLMS provides a light breakfast for children who arrive early.
2. Breakfast is served until 7:50–8:00 AM, allowing children to transition smoothly into the Montessori work cycle.

### **Arrival Time:**

1. All children must arrive no later than 8:30 AM to participate fully in the morning session.
2. Arriving on time supports your child’s sense of order, independence, and readiness for learning.

### **Late Arrivals:**

1. Frequent tardiness disrupts the flow of the classroom and can cause distress for your child.
2. Please make every effort to arrive on time and call the school if you are running late.

#### **Tips for Parents on Separation: Saying Good-bye**

We understand that separation can be challenging for both parents and young children—especially at the start of a new school year. It’s natural to feel a bit nervous when saying goodbye in a new environment.

If this is your child’s first year at Clear Lake Montessori School, we recommend visiting the campus a few times before their first day. Familiarity with the setting can ease the transition and help your child feel more comfortable and confident.

When it’s time to say goodbye, we encourage a brief, calm, and confident farewell. In most cases, a quick hug, a smile, and a loving “See you later!” is all your child needs to begin their day with trust and ease. Prolonged or emotional goodbyes—though well-intended—can often increase a child’s anxiety and make the separation more difficult.

Please allow our team to gently guide your child into the classroom. Our guides and assistants are highly trained and experienced in supporting children through these emotional moments with patience and care.

You can also support your child by reassuring them where you’ll be during the day and what time you’ll return. Some children may need a few days (or even weeks) to fully settle into the new routine. Your consistency, warmth, and positive attitude will go a long way in helping your child feel secure and confident.

Departure:

1. Please drive slowly and remain alert in the school parking area at all times.
2. Children should be picked up promptly at their scheduled dismissal time.
3. A long wait at pick-up can be emotionally challenging for young children. Timely departures help maintain a calm and predictable daily routine.

---

## **Recommended Daily Schedule (10-Hour Limit)**

While we understand that families may have varying schedules, CLMS strongly recommends that children not remain at school for more than 10 hours per day.

Extended hours may lead to fatigue, overstimulation, and emotional stress, which can affect your child's overall well-being and learning. A balanced school routine supports healthy development, concentration, and joyful participation in classroom life.

## **Dismissal, Suspension, and Expulsion Policy**

At Clear Lake Montessori School (CLMS), we are committed to fostering a respectful, safe, and supportive environment for all children, families, and staff. However, in certain circumstances, a child's enrollment may be suspended or terminated.

---

### **Grounds for Immediate Dismissal or Suspension**

Childcare services may be suspended or terminated immediately for any of the following reasons, including but not limited to:

1. Failure to comply with the policies outlined in this Parent Handbook
2. Breach of the signed enrollment or financial agreement
3. Repeated destructive, unsafe, or hurtful behavior by a child that continues despite collaborative efforts with the family
4. Non-payment or recurring late payments of tuition or fees
5. Lack of communication: failure to attend or notify the school of absence for 5 consecutive days
6. Failure to complete or submit required enrollment or medical forms
7. Behavioral or developmental needs that require staffing or support beyond what CLMS is able to provide
8. Blatant disrespect toward CLMS staff, administration, or other families
9. Knowingly bringing a child to school while they are ill or contagious, placing others at risk

---

Every effort will be made to collaborate with families when concerns arise. However, CLMS reserves the right to make decisions in the best interest of the child, the classroom, and the broader school community.

## **Child Abuse & Neglect Policy**

At Clear Lake Montessori School (CLMS), the safety of every child is our top priority. As required by Texas law, all staff are mandated reporters and must report any suspected abuse or neglect, including physical, sexual, emotional harm, or neglect.

If there is reasonable cause for concern, we will immediately notify Child Protective Services (CPS) and/or local authorities.

To report abuse:

1. Phone: 1-800-252-5400 or 713-287-3238
2. Online: [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)
3. Mail: 1330 E. 40th St. MC:182-6, Houston, TX 77022

---

## **Injury & Incident Reporting**

1. Please notify your child's teacher at drop-off if your child has any visible injuries.
2. If a concern arises during the day, an Incident Report will be completed and shared with parents the same day.
3. All reports are documented and kept on file.

---

## **Staff & Parent Training**

All CLMS staff receive annual training on recognizing, preventing, and reporting signs of child abuse and neglect. Parent workshops are also offered throughout the year to support child safety at home and school.

## **Personal Belongings & Supplies**

To help us keep your child comfortable, clean, and happy throughout the day, we kindly ask that you provide the following:

1. A full change of clothes — including a shirt, pants, underwear, shoes and socks
2. Diapers, pull-ups, and wipes (if your child uses them)
3. A labeled **water bottle** for daily hydration
4. **A set of bedding** (crib sheet and blanket) if your child naps at school
5. Any other personal care items your child may need

Please make sure all items are **clearly labeled with your child's name**. This helps us stay organized and ensures that belongings return home with the right child. While we do our best to care for personal items, Clear Lake Montessori School is not responsible for lost or misplaced belongings.

We recommend checking your child's cubby regularly and keeping an open line of communication with your child's teacher. If supplies are running low or need replacing, we'll be sure to let you know — and you're always welcome to check in as well.

---

## **Toy & Personal Item Policy**

To promote focus, sharing, and harmony in the classroom, toys from home are not permitted. Exceptions include:

1. A small blanket for nap time
2. A small comfort item (such as a soft stuffed animal), to be used only during rest time
3. Show & Tell items when scheduled by your child's teacher

For Show & Tell, we encourage educational or meaningful items that support verbal development and classroom engagement. Please avoid sending toys. Suggested items include:

1. Books (e.g., animals, nature, favorite stories)
2. Shells, stones, or special vacation finds
3. Family or pet photos
4. Coin or stamp collections (in a container)

Let's work together to keep our environment peaceful, organized, and joyful for every child.

## **Meals & Food Services**

At CLMS, we believe mealtime is a valuable part of the day where children build independence, social skills, and healthy habits. We are proud to provide fresh, homemade lunches prepared daily in our on-site kitchen by our dedicated staff.

### **Lunch Guidelines**

A monthly lunch menu will be shared with families in advance. Parents may choose to participate in the school lunch program or send a packed lunch from home.

If you choose to pack your child's lunch, please follow these guidelines:

1. Send food in a small, easy-to-store lunch box labeled clearly with your child's full name.
2. No food or drinks should require refrigeration or heating. We do not store lunches in the fridge or warm up meals.

3. Please avoid foil-wrapped food or foil containers.
4. A small soup thermos may be used if you'd like to send something warm.
5. If no drink is provided, we will offer filtered water to your child.
6. We are a nut-free school. Please do not send any items containing peanuts, tree nuts, or nut-based products.

Lunch boxes will be sent home at the end of each day. For health and safety reasons, perishable items such as meat, dairy, or unfinished drinks/juices will be discarded daily and not returned home.

Your support in following these guidelines helps us maintain a safe, healthy, and smooth mealtime experience for all children.

## **Snacks & Hydration**

CLMS provides healthy snacks and water based on your child's daily schedule. Snack and lunch are served only during designated times, as outlined in each classroom's routine.

## **Food Allergies & Nutrition Guidelines**

Please inform us of any food allergies, dietary restrictions, or cultural/religious food practices upon enrollment. If your child requires a special diet due to allergies, medication, age, or family beliefs, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide a well-balanced snack and/or lunch that meets your child's specific needs. Please do not send soft drinks, gum, candy, or other sugary treats.

## **Nutrition Education & Procedures**

1. We encourage families to provide a nutritious breakfast at home before arrival.
2. CLMS provides breakfast (before 8:00AM) and afternoon snack, as well as daily hot lunch freshly prepared in our on-site kitchen.

### **For Infants (if applicable):**

For children not yet ready for table food, CLMS will obtain written feeding instructions signed and dated by the parent or healthcare professional. These instructions will be reviewed and updated every 30 days to support the child's developmental needs. Clear written guidance ensures that all caregivers, including substitutes, can consistently follow your child's feeding routine.

CLMS follows the meal and snack patterns established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which is administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture.

## **Nut-Free Facility**

Clear Lake Montessori School (CLMS) is a nut-free campus. To ensure the safety of all children, no peanuts, tree nuts, or nut products of any kind are allowed on school grounds—this includes lunchboxes, snacks, and baked goods brought from home.

## **Illness Policy**

At Clear Lake Montessori School (CLMS), the health and well-being of our students and staff is a top priority. In accordance with the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services Minimum Standards for Licensed Schools and Centers, children should remain at home if they are ill and unable to fully participate in the normal activities of the school day—including outdoor play.

A child must be kept home if any of the following conditions apply:

1. The illness prevents the child from comfortably engaging in classroom routines and outdoor activities.
2. The illness requires a level of care that would compromise the ability of staff to safely care for other children.
3. The child exhibits one or more of the following symptoms, unless a healthcare professional has determined the child is not contagious and is well enough to attend:
  1. An oral temperature of 100.4°F or higher, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs of illness
  2. Symptoms indicating possible severe illness such as unusual lethargy, difficulty breathing, persistent vomiting (two or more episodes in 24 hours), uncontrolled diarrhea, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, or any behavior suggesting the child may be seriously ill
  3. A diagnosis of a communicable disease without written medical clearance confirming the child is no longer contagious

We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining a healthy environment for all students and staff. Children who become ill during the day will need to be picked up promptly. If you have any questions regarding symptoms or return-to-care procedures, please contact the school office.

## **Communicable Diseases**

Clear Lake Montessori School (CLMS) follows guidelines established by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) regarding communicable illnesses in child-care centers.

If your child is diagnosed with a communicable illness—or if you suspect they may have one—please notify the school office immediately so appropriate health measures and parent notifications can be made.

Common communicable illnesses include, but are not limited to:

1. Common cold viruses

2. Hand, foot, and mouth disease
3. Fifth disease
4. Impetigo
5. Wound and skin infections
6. Ringworm
7. Head lice
8. Roseola
9. Mononucleosis
10. Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

Per state guidelines, children diagnosed with a communicable disease must follow the exclusion and return-to-care requirements defined by the Texas Department of State Health Services. In most cases, written clearance from a licensed healthcare professional (physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or local health authority) is required for re-admittance to school.

### **COVID-19 Policy**

If your child is exposed to COVID-19, test 3–5 days after exposure and monitor for symptoms. They may return to school when:

1. Fever-free for 24 hours without medication
2. Symptoms are mild and improving

For 5 days after returning, we recommend:

1. Good hand hygiene
2. Covering coughs/sneezes
3. Optional mask use

Please keep your child home if they have a fever with symptoms like cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, vomiting, diarrhea, or known COVID contact.

If your child tests positive:

1. Stay home for 5 days from symptom onset
2. Must be fever-free and symptoms improved to return
3. Mask use is encouraged for 5 days after return

### **Return to School After Illness Policy**

To maintain a safe and healthy learning environment for all students and staff at Clear Lake Montessori School, the following guidelines must be followed when a child is returning to school after an illness:

#### ***General Policy***

Children must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication (such as fever reducers or anti-diarrheal medication) before returning to school, unless approved by doctor.

Children should be well-rested and able to participate comfortably in daily classroom activities upon returning.

Please keep your child at home if they are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100°F or higher
  - (Must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication)
- Two or more episodes of vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours
  - (Must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication)
- Persistent cough, sore throat, or difficulty breathing
- Thick or discolored nasal discharge
- Any suspected or confirmed contagious illness, including but not limited to:
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Strep throat
- Ringworm
- Rashes of unknown origin

### ***Communicable Illness Protocol***

In accordance with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS):

All children must comply with communicable disease exclusion and return requirements.

A doctor's note may be required before a child may return to school following certain communicable illnesses, to confirm that the child is no longer contagious.

We appreciate your cooperation in following these health and safety protocols. These guidelines help us minimize the spread of illness and maintain a healthy environment for all children and staff.

### **Dispensing Medication**

To ensure the safety and well-being of all children, CLMS follows strict guidelines for administering medication:

1. If your child is prescribed antibiotics, they must remain at home for the first 24 hours of treatment, as they are still considered contagious during that time.
2. We are unable to administer any medication—prescription or over-the-counter—without a completed and signed “Permission to Administer Medication” form.
3. All medication must be submitted to the front office in its original, labeled container.

4. Medications are dispensed only by authorized administrative staff at 12:00 PM and 3:00 PM.
5. For safety reasons, medications may not be left in children's backpacks, lunchboxes, or diaper bags.

Medication permission forms are available at the front desk or upon request.

---

### **Insect Repellent & Sunscreen Application**

To help protect children during outdoor activities, we ask that parents apply sunscreen and insect repellent at home before arriving at school.

If reapplication is needed during the day, teachers may assist, provided that:

1. Parents have submitted a written request
2. Sunscreen and/or insect repellent is provided by the parent in the original container
3. The product is clearly labeled with the child's full name

---

### **Medical Emergencies**

Your child's safety is our top priority. While minor bumps and scrapes are part of growing up, our staff provides close supervision and a prepared environment to minimize risk.

1. Minor injuries will be treated with appropriate first aid, and parents will be notified.
2. In the event of a medical emergency, we will contact parents immediately. If neither parent can be reached, we will call the emergency contacts listed on your enrollment form.
3. In the event of a medical emergency, immediate care for the injured child is our priority. If necessary, we will call 911.

---

### **Epinephrine Auto-Injectors (EpiPens)**

CLMS does not carry unassigned epinephrine auto-injectors on site. If your child has severe allergies or a condition that requires an EpiPen, the following are required before your child may attend:

1. A parent-provided EpiPen (with valid expiration date)
2. A physician's note detailing the condition and emergency protocol
3. A completed Allergy & Emergency Action Form available at the front office

## **Emergency Preparedness Procedure**

We have an established Emergency Preparedness Plan in place to guide our response during a variety of situations. All staff receive regular training, and children participate in age-appropriate drills throughout the year.

### **Evacuation & Relocation**

1. In the event of fire, carbon monoxide detection, or any situation requiring full evacuation of the building, students and staff will relocate to Walgreens 16185 Space Center Blvd, Houston, TX 77062
2. Families will be notified promptly with updates and instructions for student pick-up.

### **Severe Weather / Tornado**

3. If there is a tornado warning or other severe weather emergency, children will be taken to the safest interior part of the building, away from windows, in accordance with our shelter-in-place protocol.

### **Intruder / Lockdown**

4. In the event of an intruder or security threat, children will be brought into their classroom bathrooms or designated lockdown areas. Doors will be secured and local authorities contacted immediately.

CLMS staff will remain with the children at all times and follow all safety procedures until the situation is resolved and it is safe to resume normal activities or begin dismissal.

## **Gang-Free Zone**

In accordance with the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a licensed child-care center is designated as a Gang-Free Zone. Criminal activities related to organized gang behavior occurring within this zone are subject to enhanced legal penalties.

---

## **Firearms, Ammunition & Other Weapons**

To ensure the safety of everyone on campus, firearms, ammunition, knives, explosives, pepper spray, mace, or any other weapons are strictly prohibited anywhere on Clear Lake Montessori School property.

---

## **Smoke-Free Environment**

CLMS maintains a 100% smoke-free campus. The use of cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes (vapes), and marijuana is not permitted anywhere on school grounds, including the parking lot and sidewalks. We appreciate your cooperation in promoting a healthy and safe environment for our children.

---

## **Nap / Quiet Time**

All children will participate in a daily nap or quiet time as part of their routine. While we do not require children to fall asleep, all children are expected to rest quietly on their mats during this period.

1. Children over the age of 5 may be given the choice to continue working quietly if they are not in need of a nap.
2. If you plan to pick up your child early, we kindly request that you do so before nap time begins, to avoid disruptions to the classroom environment.

---

## **Toilet Training**

CLMS is happy to work in partnership with families during the toilet training process. If you have a method that is working well at home, please share it with your child's teacher so we can support consistency.

1. If you decide to pause or discontinue toilet training at home, please inform the school so we can adjust accordingly.
2. If a child shows signs of readiness, we will support the process gently and respectfully. However, if a child is not showing interest or readiness, we may choose to pause toilet training and revisit it at a later time.

---

## **Birthday Celebrations**

At CLMS, birthdays are a time of joy and reflection. Each child's special day is honored through a Montessori "Celebration of Life", a meaningful classroom tradition that highlights the child's growth and journey around the sun.

1. Families are welcome to participate and contribute to the celebration.
2. Please notify the front desk or your child's teacher in advance so that the celebration can be thoughtfully scheduled into the classroom day.
3. If you wish to bring a treat or small gift for the class, please coordinate with the teacher for allergies and age-appropriate options.

## **Birthday Gifts & Invitations**

Many children enjoy leaving a lasting impression on their classroom, and birthdays are a wonderful opportunity to do so. If your child would like to donate a book, plant, or another thoughtful item to the class in celebration of their birthday, please speak with your child's teacher during the planning process.

If you are hosting a birthday party outside of school and plan to invite classmates, we kindly ask that you be sensitive to the feelings of all children:

1. Please invite either a small, discreet group or the entire class to avoid hurt feelings.
2. If all students in the class are invited, CLMS will be happy to distribute party invitations in student folders or backpacks on your behalf.
3. If only some children are invited, please send invitations outside of school (e.g., by mail or direct contact).

We appreciate your partnership in fostering a warm, inclusive, and respectful classroom community.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

At CLMS, we believe that every child has the potential to grow into a respectful, responsible, and compassionate individual. All students are expected to uphold the values and expectations outlined in our Student Code of Conduct.

By enrolling at CLMS, students agree to follow this code and contribute positively to their community.

CLMS aims to:

1. Balance freedom with responsibility, recognizing the rights of the individual while honoring the needs of the group
2. Provide a learning environment rooted in encouragement, affirmation, community, and personal accountability
3. Prioritize each student's physical and psychological safety
4. Foster moral integrity and growth in self-discipline and internal motivation
5. Create a safe space for learning by encouraging a healthy relationship with mistakes as part of the learning process
6. Treat each student with respect, fairness, and consistency

Student Expectations:

1. Treat others with dignity and respect, using kind words and actions
2. Treat oneself with respect, maintaining confidence, self-care, and integrity
3. Respect the work and property of others.

## Biting & Challenging Behavior

1. At CLMS, we understand that behaviors such as biting can be a normal part of early childhood development. While common, we take these behaviors seriously and address them with care, consistency, and partnership between school and home.
2. When biting occurs, teachers will respond calmly and firmly, ensuring the safety of all children. We will work closely with families to identify patterns and support positive behavior. Incident reports will be sent home, and parents will be kept informed throughout the process.
3. For ongoing or more serious behavioral concerns, the teacher and director will meet with the family to express concerns, discuss observations, and develop shared strategies for support. Communication may take place through face-to-face meetings, the Procare app, paper reports, or scheduled conferences.
4. Staff will maintain a communication ***and behavior log*** to document patterns and progress as we work collaboratively toward resolution.
5. Our goal is to support the social-emotional development of every child in a respectful, proactive, and compassionate way.

## Discipline and Guidance

At CLMS, we believe that true discipline is an inner development—cultivated through love, trust, consistency, and respect for each child’s individuality. Our approach is grounded in Montessori philosophy and aligned with best practices in early childhood development.

Discipline at CLMS is always:

1. Individualized and consistent, honoring each child’s unique needs and temperament.
2. Developmentally appropriate, based on the child’s age and level of understanding.
3. Focused on teaching, rather than punishing—guiding children toward acceptable behavior and inner self-control.
4. Rooted in positivity, fostering self-esteem, self-direction, and peaceful conflict resolution.

To support this, we intentionally use:

1. Encouragement and praise to recognize positive choices and desired behaviors.
2. Clear and kind reminders of expectations, offered in consistent, age-appropriate language.
3. Positive redirection, helping children make better choices while preserving their dignity.
4. Brief, supervised separation from the group (when necessary), used calmly and respectfully—never exceeding one minute per year of age—to help the child reset and rejoin the group with purpose.

## Partnership & School Expectations

CLMS values a strong partnership with families to support each child's growth and conduct. While we strive to work together through challenges, the school reserves the right to dismiss a student at any time if, in its judgment, the student's continued presence is harmful to themselves, others, or the school community.

---

---

## **The Role of the Family**

At Clear Lake Montessori School, we recognize that families are a child's first and most important teachers. The home-school connection is essential in shaping a child's success—academically, socially, and emotionally.

Research confirms what we see every day: nurturing, responsive, and engaged families create a foundation for children to thrive. When families and schools work together with trust and mutual respect, children experience a consistent message of love, purpose, and support across all environments.

We strive to foster open, two-way communication with every family—honoring your voice, culture, and contributions. Together, we form a meaningful partnership that reinforces the values of independence, curiosity, and peace that lie at the heart of the Montessori approach.

### **Family Volunteer Involvement**

Parents and guardians are encouraged to contribute their time, talents, and energy in ways that feel meaningful and manageable for them. There are many opportunities throughout the year to get involved, including:

- **Cultural Celebrations** – Share your heritage, traditions, or favorite holiday customs with the children.
- **Career Day** – Inspire young minds by introducing your profession or special skills in a fun and age-appropriate way.
- **Classroom Reading Time** – Volunteer to read a favorite book to your child's class and foster a love for stories.
- **School Events & Festivals** – Help plan, decorate, or assist during our seasonal and community events.
- **Garden & Classroom Support** – Lend a hand with light gardening or classroom material preparation.

Whether you can volunteer once a year or once a month, your contribution is deeply appreciated. If you have a special interest or talent you'd like to share, please let us know — we'd love to find a way for you to get involved!

Parent volunteers for field trips

There will be an orientation for volunteer guidelines for parent/guardians to keep in mind.

Copy of driver license

- Signed orientation guidelines
- Cellphone number for communication while volunteering

## Communication

At Clear Lake Montessori School, we believe that strong home-school communication is key to creating a peaceful and trusting environment where every child can thrive. We value open, respectful, and timely communication with our families.

For **Early Childhood (EC) classes**, we provide regular updates on your child's progress through **Transparent Classroom**, a software designed specifically for Montessori environments. This platform allows families, teachers, and the administrative team to stay connected and support each child's individual journey.

CLMS primarily communicates with families through the **Procare App** and **email**. These platforms are used to share:

- School updates and announcements
- Daily reports (such as meals, naps, toileting, and activities)
- Reminders about upcoming events or required items

For **urgent or time-sensitive concerns**, we kindly ask that you call the front office directly so we can assist you promptly.

Please note that during classroom hours, our teachers are fully engaged with the children. Their priority is to maintain a safe, focused, and nurturing learning environment, so they may not be available to respond immediately to messages or questions.

If you need to get a message to your child's teacher, feel free to:

1. Send a note via the Procare App or email
2. Call the school office and leave a message with our front desk staff
3. Request a scheduled conference if you'd like a more in-depth conversation

To ensure a smooth transition for all children, we respectfully ask that parents avoid lengthy conversations with teachers during drop-off and pick-up times. These are key moments for welcoming and safely dismissing children, and we appreciate your understanding.

## Parent Conferences

Clear Lake Montessori School schedules two formal Parent-Teacher Conferences each year—typically in the fall and spring—to discuss your child's progress, development, and classroom

experience. Additional conferences may be arranged as needed by either the family or the teaching team.

To request a conference outside the scheduled times, please complete a Conference Request Form at the front office or contact us via the Procare App or email. We will do our best to find a time that works well for both the family and the teacher, respecting everyone's schedule and responsibilities.

---

## **Important Dates and Events**

Please refer regularly to the CLMS School Calendar for up-to-date information regarding:

1. School holidays and closures
2. Parent education nights
3. Community events and celebrations
4. Staff development days
5. Observation and conference windows

The calendar is shared at the beginning of the school year and updated as needed. All changes and reminders will also be communicated via the Procare App and email.

## **Minimum Standards & Licensing Information**

Clear Lake Montessori School is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). We are committed to maintaining full compliance with all state regulations to ensure a safe, nurturing, and high-quality environment for every child.

Parents are welcome to review:

1. A copy of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers
2. Our school's most recent Licensing Inspection Report

These documents are available for viewing in the front office upon request.

If you have questions or concerns, you may contact:

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Child Care Licensing Division

1330 E. 40th Street, MC 182-6

Houston, TX 77022

 (713) 287-3238

 [www.hhs.texas.gov](http://www.hhs.texas.gov)

## **Policy Revisions**

CLMS policies, procedures, and forms are reviewed regularly and may be updated as needed. Families will be given at least two weeks' notice of changes, unless new state regulations require immediate implementation.

Updates will be shared via Procare or email, and parents will be asked to sign an acknowledgment of receipt.