

Montessori Episcopal School

Parent Handbook



602 North Old Orchard Lane
Lewisville, TX 75077
(972) 221-3533

www.montessoriepiscopal.com

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Montessori Episcopal School! As the leader in Montessori education in Denton County, we are proud to celebrate our 50th year of continuous education. As the only faith-based Montessori school in the area, we welcome you. It is our desire to provide a superior Montessori education for children and their families within a Christian environment.

Please review this handbook where you will find school policies and procedures as well as general information about MES. We trust that the information provided will be helpful. We are here to answer any questions that may arise. As parents, please talk with your child's teacher to find out ways that you can support your child's school success. We believe that a partnership between the teacher and parents is vital. These early preschool and kindergarten years are critical to your child's development as foundations for the future are built and nurtured.

Thank you for entrusting the care of your child to Montessori Episcopal School. Please call or stop by the office if there is anything I can do for you or to answer any questions.

Faithfully,

Tracey Reinhart

Tracey Reinhart
Head of School
Montessori Episcopal School

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

Mission Statement

The mission of Montessori Episcopal School is to provide a superior education within a rich, nurturing, Christian environment, following Montessori Method and Philosophy, which inspire joy, enthusiasm, excitement, and confidence.

Vision Statement

Incorporating the traditions of the Episcopal Church and the Montessori philosophy, MES is committed to respecting the worth of every person, celebrating the rich complexity of community, and embracing the value of persistent hope and principled conviction.

The school staff, parents and church work together to develop the mind, spirit and physical body of every student. We seek to encourage students to use their gifts and talents for the glory of God.

It is our goal as a Christian community to nurture students in academics, independence, creativity, service, critical thinking, leadership, Christian values and a love of learning.

The Mission and Vision Statements are based on these Core Values:

- Provide Biblical training
- Create individualized instruction for each child following the Montessori Method and philosophy
- Present a challenging academic program that recognizes diversity
- Encourage the full physical, mental and spiritual development of the child
- Involve every staff member in teaching every child
- Build a partnership with parents
- Integrate school staff, parents and church for a strong unified community.

School Admission Policy and Requirements

Montessori Episcopal School(MES) admits students of any race, sex, sexual orientation, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. MES does not discriminate based on any race, sex, sexual orientation, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, or any other school administered programs.

For admission, we must have on file the following documents:

- Enrollment agreement, including emergency contact information, for the current year, signed by both parents/guardians
- Student Health Record accompanied by all updated shot and Vision/Hearing records; signed by doctor
- Any special instructions/testing records regarding behavioral, medical (including allergies), or nutritional concerns.
- Food Allergy Emergency Plan completed by your child's physician

Children having special needs can be considered for a provisional enrollment period after parent interview, documents gathering regarding the special needs, an observation and screening of the child by an administrator.

Classes

Our school begins with our Toddler I Class, age 12 months – 24 months and Toddler II Class, age 2-3. During the Toddler years, your child will experience an explosion of language, along with dramatic advancement in fine and gross motor control, problem-solving ability, independence, and social interaction. Our Toddler classrooms are designed to foster that independence and help your child fall in love with learning. Our Preparatory Classes, age 3-6 (including Kindergarten) focus on the four major areas of learning; Practical Life, Sensorial, Language and Math. In addition, our Preparatory classes enjoy the added areas of Cultural, Science, and Godly Play. All of our classes are designed to allow the teacher to plan specifically for your child's development. MES reserves the right to place students in the appropriate class and makes no guarantee of the child's placement with a particular teacher.

Hours of Operation

Our Academic Day is from 8:30-2:30. Teachers are ready to accept students in their classrooms at 8:15. For the convenience of many of our families, we offer extended day from 7:00am-6:00pm. MES closely follows LISD schedule for beginning and end of year and most holidays. We are pleased to provide optional Holiday Care on most holidays and Summer Camp for all except one week of summer.

Arrival and Dismissal

Any students arriving before 8:15, should be walked into school by an adult and checked into the Before School Care (BSC) room. Prior to this time, teachers are occupied with Morning Prayer and class preparation. All students in our Toddler classrooms must be walked in and picked up by an authorized adult. For our Preparatory classes, carline is from 8:15 until 8:30 and again in the afternoon at 2:30 (please see below). Children may only be released to persons listed on your child's authorization release form. Students arriving after 8:30, must be walked in and signed in at the school office. Office personnel will walk all tardy students to class. Please do not allow your child to walk into the building unescorted after car line is complete at 8:30.

Carline

Your child's safety is very Important to us. During morning drop off and afternoon pickup, school staff and volunteers are outside during car line to watch your child enter the school safely. Please make sure totes, lunches, and jackets are ready. Car line drop off is always one lane only along the white curb. To enter the school for the carline, please enter from **College Parkway and drive behind the school**. Car line starts at

the white curb in front of the school and on busy mornings will extend around the side of the school along the playground fence. The *entrance from old orchard* should be used for parking and car line exit only.

Please do not attempt to enter the car line from Old Orchard, as it would be disruptive to the car line process. Please keep in mind that parents with Toddlers use the parking area and walk their children into the building. Drive slowly and watch carefully for children.

Afternoon pick up is located in the same area. However, we use two lines to help facilitate a speedy dismissal. Teachers will give you a color coded hanging for your car to use at the beginning of the year. There is no need to exit your car. The teacher will bring your child and buckle him into the car seat. If you need to speak to your child's teacher, please send a note in your child's tote, Remind message, or email the teacher so that she may call you at an appropriate time. Long discussions at the car line not only holds up the line, but also does not allow for the teachers to properly keep an eye on the children. We ask that you please supervise your child once they are released to you-it only takes a second for them to dash into the parking lot when a parent is otherwise engaged.

Pick up

It is your child's best interest that he/she be picked up on time as some children become upset if they are kept waiting. Your child will be taken to after school care and you will be charged the appropriate "drop in" rate. If an emergency arises, please phone the school immediately and let us know if you have made alternate arrangements. If you have not picked up your child by 2:45, you will pick them up in the after-school room.

The school must have in writing the names of people (must be over 18) and driver's license numbers whom you have authorized to pick up your child (you have an opportunity to put them on your Emergency Card at Orientation). This includes babysitter, grandparents, car pools, and other school families. Please advise these people to have their Driver's License available.

Car Pools

The office, as well as your child's teacher, must be informed in writing of any regular car pools. This note should detail which families are picking up children on certain days as well as appropriate phone numbers.

After School Care

ASC dismissal occurs in the ASC classroom or the playground. There is a sign out sheet that must be signed when you pick up your child. School closes promptly at 6:00 each day. *A late fee of \$25 will be charged for late ASC pick up.*

Health Issues

A health statement is required yearly. This is a written statement from a health care provider who has examined the child within the past year, indicating the child is physically able to take part in the program.

Unfortunately, no matter where your child attends school, there is always the risk of getting sick. In order to keep the children and staff healthy, we ask that you keep your child home if he or she displays any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher within the past 24 hours, without medication
- Vomiting (no matter the cause)
- Diarrhea (more than two episodes in an hour)
- Swollen glands
- Green discharge from nose or eyes
- Rash (need a doctor's note to return to school to indicate that the rash has been identified)
- Nits/lice found in hair

Your child must **be contagion free and fever free without medication for 24 hours**. If your child should become ill during school, we will call you to come and pick him or her up. Unfortunately, we do not have the

facilities to care for and isolate sick children, so it is necessary for your child to be picked up promptly. Communicable diseases can be minimized by keeping children at home when they show signs of being contagious. If you take your child to the doctor and get a diagnosis, please call the school so that we may inform the other parents of the class. If we do not know the cause of symptoms that occur, it is difficult for us to keep contagious diseases out of the school. Please communicate openly with us about illnesses so that we may work together to maintain a healthy environment.

In the case of a medical emergency, emergency medical services will be contacted immediately. The child's parent and physician on record will be contacted as well. First aid or CPR will be administered where appropriate.

*Please supply the office with any documentation of your child's updated shot records.

Medication

Medication is administered through the office. Please come into the office in the morning to sign the Medication Authorization Form for the number of days the medication needs to be administered. The medication must be in the original container. **Please do not send medicine in your child's tote.** We are unable to dispense or topically apply any medication without the parent's written permission.

*We are not allowed to apply insect or sunscreen without written medical permission.

Health Concerns/Special Diet/Food Allergies

If your child has any special dietary concerns, allergies, or asthma, please list this information on the admissions form and also inform your child's teacher. A list is compiled in the beginning of the year and is posted in the office and in each classroom so that all staff are aware of the allergy needs for specific students. Children with food allergies must have their doctor complete a *Food Allergy Emergency Plan* that is then posted in the classrooms.

Snacks

Toddler I students bring their own snacks. MES supports breastfeeding when possible and when the family's choice. Breastfeeding mothers shall be provided a place to *breastfeed* or express their milk. *Breastfeeding* mothers, including employees, shall be provided a private and sanitary place (other than a bathroom) to *breastfeed* their babies or express milk. Please let your child's teacher know any special requirements and how to properly store your child's milk.

The school provides a healthy snack for children in Toddler II and the Preparatory Classes. The snack list is posted in all classrooms and published in our school newsletter. Following our Montessori philosophy, students in the Preparatory classrooms help prep the daily snack in their room. The Preparatory classes also utilize a snack host once a week. Your child's teacher will explain in detail. Students in After School Care will also receive an afternoon snack.

Lunches

Lunches must be packed in a lunch bag that fits inside your child's tote. Hot or cold food must be kept in a hot/cold container as we do not have the facilities to refrigerate or heat up food (with the exception of our Toddler I class). Please send a nutritious lunch for your child. We encourage children to eat their lunch (healthy food first), but will not force them to finish. Many young children get distracted by classroom friends and activities and do not place a priority on finishing their lunch, so do not be alarmed if their lunch is not finished. **Please do not include sweets, candy, fast food, juice, sports drinks or soda in your child's lunch.** State guidelines require that children are offered water with their lunches. *We encourage our parents to visit periodically and have lunch with their child. Please inform the office and your child's teacher when scheduling a lunch date with your child so that the teacher can plan accordingly.* **Please send a water bottle every day with your child as they will also take it to the playground.**

Naptime

All of our children nap on mats provided by the school. Please send your child any sleeping bags, blankets, etc. they wish to use for naptime. Items will be returned to you each week for washing. Children in our Toddler I and II classes take a nap after lunch every day. Our Preparatory Classes nap in After School Care each afternoon. Children who do not sleep are offered an alternative quiet activity until rest time is over. Occasionally at the beginning of the year, some of our younger Preparatory students need an earlier naptime and these students may join our Toddler II group as needed.

Discipline

It is our desire for Montessori Episcopal School students to be salt and light in the world, showing the way to live by example and leadership! A very important part of the MES experience is helping children learn how to get along in the world, enjoy being with other children, and follow the direction of an adult other than their parent. A caring and positive approach will be taken regarding behavior management and discipline. The teachers will focus on the positive behaviors of the children, never using any form of corporal punishment and reinforce those positive behaviors as often as possible. Our goal is to help the children develop self-control and responsibility for their actions.

Our discipline procedures will consist of the following strategies:

1. Encouraging children to use their words when having a disagreement with another child. Teachers facilitate children in their attempts to settle their own disputes and practice role-play situations in the classroom to help equip our students for possible scenarios.
2. Redirecting behavior when this seems potentially effective.
3. Separating a child from the group, such as working at an independent table in the classroom.
4. Counseling children individually about their behaviors.
5. Making parents aware of on-going and continued or escalating disciplinary concerns.

We at MES understand that developing self-control is a learning process and a developmental skill built over time. Our teachers will strive in all situations to guide children through the process based on each child's developmental stage. It is our goal to keep all children safe while they learn strategies for coping and socializing. Due to the Montessori atmosphere of our classrooms, most children flourish and develop positive social skills. On the rare occasion, that a child might struggle with the learning process of socialization, we have developed further strategies to ensure the safety and security of all our students and teachers.

Continued disruptive behavior distracts from the full benefit of the program and will result in consequences based on the child's developmental level. The following behaviors are considered disruptive:

- Requiring constant attention from the staff
- Inflicting physical or emotional harm on other children, adults, or self
- Disrespecting people and materials provided in the program
- Consistently disobeying the rules of the classroom
- Verbally threatening other students and/or staff
- Using inappropriate language repeatedly
- Using verbal or physical activity that diverts attention away from the group of children
- Physically hitting, kicking, biting, or pushing another child

Discipline procedures for continued disruptive behavior:

- Generally, most children continue to learn and develop strategies for appropriate behavior. Sometimes, continued or escalating disruptive behavior will need to be addressed in an incident report. This report will be shared with the parent and will explain the behavior and how the behavior has affected others. It will also explain how the situation was resolved. The incident report will be placed in the child's folder to be taken home, signed, and returned the next day to the teacher.
- If a child has difficulty managing his/her behavior on a recurring basis, parents will be asked to meet with the child's teacher and Head of School.

- If the child's behavior continues to be inappropriate, consistently disruptive, and/or dangerous, it may be necessary for the child to be sent home for a time to be determined, or removed from the program altogether.

It is our desire to guide children to become self-disciplined and develop a moral compass to guide them in decision making. Partnering with our parents to develop suitable strategies for their individual child is our first step in guiding our students and integral to our goal of independent decision making.

Dress Code

Uniforms are worn by all Preparatory Classes (ages 3-6) children Monday through Thursday. Friday is uniform free day. All clothing should be clean and in good repair. Additionally, all clothing should be easy for the child to manipulate, allowing for independence.

Girls Uniforms

Chapel Day (Wednesday)	Non-Chapel Day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MES-specific plaid jumper with modesty shorts or tights underneath • Short or long-sleeved white blouse • Coordinating socks or tights or leggings (worn under skirts or dresses only) • Closed-toed shoes (tennis shoes are fine) • Red sweater (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as Chapel uniform or; • MES-specific plaid shorts or skort or; • Navy cotton, twill pants, shorts, skort, or jumper (no cargo, knit or athletic pants) • Solid red, navy or white polo style top • Closed-toed shoes (tennis shoes are fine) • Red, navy, or white crew, v-neck or cardigan sweater (solid colors only) • MES logo t-shirt or sweatshirt

Boys Uniforms

Chapel Day (Wednesday)	Non-Chapel Day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short or long-sleeved white Oxford style collared shirt • Navy cotton, twill pants or shorts, (no cargo, knit or athletic pants) • Coordinating socks • Closed-toed shoes (tennis shoes are fine) • Red sweater (optional) • MES-specific plaid tie (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as Chapel uniform or; • Navy cotton, twill pants or shorts, (no cargo, knit or athletic pants) • Solid red, navy or white polo style top • Closed-toed shoes (tennis shoes are fine) • Red, navy, or white crew, v-neck or cardigan sweater (solid colors only) • MES logo t-shirt or sweatshirt

Please refrain from sending your student in the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cowboy boots • Flip flops • Clogs • Sandals • Crocs • Bare mid-drift or halter tops/dresses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewelry • Sweatpants • Cargo Pants • Corduroy Pants • Stretch Pants • Gym Shorts
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The following items are not allowed:

- Umbrellas

- Toys, unless previously agreed upon by your child's teacher for a specific event such as Show and Tell
- Money, wallets, purses
- Backpacks- we have limited storage and use tote bags
- Sweets, candy, fast food, sodas, gum – we encourage your children to eat healthy with an occasional treat

Special Activities

Chapel

Our Preparatory classes attend weekly Chapel services in the Sanctuary at the Episcopal Church of the Annunciation on Wednesdays at 9:15am. Our Toddler II Class usually joins us for Chapel approximately halfway through the year (when it is determined they are ready). We require Chapel Day Dress on Wednesdays (see Uniforms) for 3-6 year olds. Our Chapel service is a developmentally appropriate service for children featuring many great songs and a simple lesson. Our service is led by one of our priests, the Head of School, and our Music teacher. We are proud to teach the children American Sign Language with many of our songs and prayers.

Godly Play

In Godly Play (beginning in our Toddler II class), the invitation is given not for play in general but for play with the language of God and God's people: our sacred stories, parables, liturgical actions and silences. Through this powerful language, through our wondering, through the community of players gathered together, we hear the deepest invitation of all: an invitation to come play with God. Godly Play is deeply rooted in our Montessori principles and allows children the freedom to develop a personal relationship with God through the use of manipulatives and reflection.

Specials Classes

At MES, we appreciate that children need times of focused activity and times of unscripted play. We are pleased to offer Specials classes to add to our students' well-rounded education. When possible, group activities are done in small groups to ensure an active and enjoyable experience for all. Your child's teacher will inform you of your child's Specials schedule.

Music

All of our classes enjoy weekly Music and Movement classes with our Music teacher. Our Toddler I and II classes are blessed to have the Music and Movement class brought directly to their classroom once a week for 30 minutes. All other classes, enjoy a weekly 30 minute class in the Music room.

Library

Beginning with our Toddler II classroom, our students enjoy the benefit of a well-stocked library of over 5,000 books. For our Toddler II classroom, the library is brought to them each week. Our Preparatory Classes all visit the MES library each week in small groups. Your child's teacher will give your child a special library bag. Each child will make library selections once a week (two books). We recommend that your child hang the bag in a special place in your home (such as a closet doorknob) so as not to get the books mixed up with personal books.

Please send the books back in the same bag each week. Your child will be unable to check out new books without returning the books from the previous week. You may help your child with this responsibility by encouraging them to take special care of the library books, and making sure your child returns them to his/her library bag. If a book is lost or destroyed, parents will need to pay a fee to replace the book.

Art

We are extremely proud of our Art program at MES. All Preparatory classes attend a weekly Art session (45 minutes) in small groups. This hands on class exposes children to the many mediums of art throughout the year, enabling them to work at their own pace on everything from wood sculptures to studying the classics and more.

PE

Physical fitness is a key component for any well-rounded education. Our students have daily recess to allow them free play time to use their imaginations. In addition, our Preparatory classes attend a weekly PE class (30 minutes) to learn how to move their bodies in fun, healthy ways. Stretching, yoga, nutrition, sleep needs, dancing, throwing, catching, and balancing are just a few of the skills they will practice.

Birthdays

Our Toddler I and II classes usually do not hold birthday celebrations since children are not developmentally ready for parents to come and go from the classroom.

However, for our Preparatory Classes, please plan to participate in your child's "Celebration of Life", which is a special ceremony that we hold to celebrate your child's birthday. Children with summer birthdays will usually celebrate their half birthday. Parents are asked to bring one picture for each year of their child's life. Please, no props or other mementos other than pictures to ensure that all children share the same experience. Usually, a special snack is brought to share with the class. See your child's teacher for scheduling and specifics for your classroom.

In addition, monthly, children with birthdays are blessed during Chapel. Many children choose to donate a book to the library in honor of their birthday – a special placard is placed inside the book with your child's name.

Volunteering

MES is required to have a criminal history check on all school volunteers who work in the classrooms or any activity where children are involved. Background checks are good for two years. In addition, as members of the Dallas Episcopal Diocese, all volunteers must complete "Safe Church" training, a quick on-line course. Your child's teacher and the office will provide forms when necessary.

Each family is expected to help with at least two events each school year. Children who witness their parents volunteer learn the importance of giving back to the community. There are numerous ways to volunteer: assisting with car line, teaching phonics, our Annual Auction, classroom activities, Book Fair, helping with minor upgrades and repairs, and more! If you have a special skill that you would be willing to share, just let us know!

There are other easy fundraisers that the school benefits from each year. Parents, extended family and friends can support MES with minimal effort by:

- Recycling printer cartridges by bringing them to the school office
- Tom Thumb Reward Program – designating MES (#1576) as your Good Neighbor recipient
- Kroger-link your Kroger Share Card to MES
- Target – designate MES (16480) as your recipient on your Red Card
- Clipping General Mills' food products "Box Tops for Education"
- Participate in North Texas Giving Day and designate MES as your recipient

Classroom Events

Your child's teacher will communicate classroom needs. Periodically, additional help is needed in the classroom for special activities or celebrations. If you are a volunteer, having an additional child with you can take away from your duties. Please make alternative arrangements for siblings unless discussing it with your child's teacher prior to the event.

Communication

Communication is a vital component to the success of any relationship. At MES, we take communication with our parents very seriously. We strive to communicate in numerous ways to ensure the dissemination of information.

- The office prepares a bi-monthly electronic newsletter. This is distributed through “Constant Contact” and can be emailed to as many addresses as needed. Please make sure to recognize our Constant Contact address as safe since some email servers send it to your junk mailbox and notify us of any email address changes.
- Each classroom will also prepare an e-newsletter to be distributed a minimum of bi-monthly.
- Toddler I teachers complete a daily tracking chart and send it home.
- All classrooms maintain a closed Shutterfly site for parents. The site includes pictures and important information. See your child’s teacher for specifics.
- All teachers have an individual email address for school use. Please see your child’s teacher for their specific address. All employees strive to respond to school related emails within 24 hours, except on weekends which will be responded to by the following school day.
- The school email: mesoffice@montessoriepiscopal.com
- Head of School: Tracey.Reinhart@montessoriepiscopal.com
- MES uses the Remind App as an additional means of communication between the MES community. Teachers use the Remind App with parents as a form of direct communication (instead of cell phone numbers). MES maintains separate groups for all school and individual classrooms.
- We also use a whiteboard at carline and teachers will occasionally send notes home attached to your child’s tote bag.
- If you need to speak to your child’s teacher, please arrange a time when they are not in the classroom. Messages can be relayed through the office. Teachers are prohibited from using their phones while supervising children, but usually check them first thing each morning and at the end of the day. If you need to speak to someone immediately, please call the office (972) 221-3533.
- Please visit our website: www.montessoriepiscopal.com
- Please “like” us on Facebook!

Grievances

If at any time you have questions or concerns about the welfare or education of your child, please do not hesitate to schedule a conference to discuss matters with your child’s teacher. If at any time, you do not feel your concerns are properly addressed or you are uncomfortable discussing items with your child’s teacher, do not hesitate to contact the Head of school. The Head of School will have final responsibility for seeing that the issue is addressed and resolved. If you are still not satisfied with the resolution from the Head of School, you may, in writing, request a hearing before the Executive committee of the Board of Trustees. A decision by the Executive Committee is final.

Homework

As a school, our emphasis is on a Montessori education. The purpose of a Montessori education is to cultivate the child’s own natural desire to learn. All of the materials in the classroom allow the child to use his or her hands for learning. A concrete foundation is being laid for the more abstract thought process needed for higher learning. The materials which are used at ages 3 and 4 will help the child to develop the concentration, coordination and working habits necessary for the more advanced exercises he or she will perform at ages 5 and 6. As a result, you will not see “homework” coming home in classes where the children are 2 through 5 years of age. Occasionally, your child will bring home phonics review cards or sight words for further practice and our Kindergarteners may periodically have additional study practice.

Conferences

Each year, we hold parent/teacher conferences. Your child's teacher will let you know when it is time to sign up for a conference. You will need to make alternate arrangements for your children as it is not appropriate for your child to attend the conference. Conferences are held before or after school and sometimes during specials times. You may also request a conference at any time.

Should you need to discuss something with your child's teacher during the year, we ask that you; send a note in your child's tote bag, call the school office, or email/remind your teacher directly. She will contact you within 24 hours.

We welcome parents to the school whenever possible, but please keep classroom disruptions to a minimum. If the teacher is conferencing with you at the door or carline, she is unable to give her full attention to the children. The office is happy to deliver messages to the teacher at any time.

Visitors

MES has an *Open-Door Policy*. Parents are always welcome at the school at any time. For safety precautions, please check in at the school office for a "Visitor's Badge". A staff member will then help you with your needs.

Licensing

Please contact the school administration to review the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers. The most recent licensing inspection report is located on the public bulletin board inside the school, as well as instructions on how a parent may contact the local licensing office through the Texas Department of Family and Protective services (DFPS), the DFPS child abuse hotline and the DFPS website.

Abuse and Neglect

The safety and wellbeing of children is a serious concern for educators and schools. MES's policy is that all faculty, parents, volunteers, administrators and staff share the responsibility of the prevention and reporting of suspected child abuse and sexual molestation. The school will comply with the provisions of the laws of the State of Texas and the guidelines established by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Employment

MES will not knowingly employ anyone who has been convicted of child or sexual molestation. Periodic follow-up background checks are conducted as part of continuing employment every two years as required by the State of Texas.

Texas Law

Child abuse and neglect are against the Law in Texas, and so is the failure to report it. Abuse is defined as mental, emotional, physical or sexual injury to a child or failure to prevent such injury to a child.

Anyone who suspects a child has been abused or mistreated is required to report it to the Texas Department of Family Services (TDFS) or to a law enforcement agency as soon as possible, but no later than 48 hours before bruises and marks start to fade. The report can be made using the Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1-800-252-5400).

Your report to TDFS is confidential and not subject to public release under the Open Records Act. The law provides immunity from civil or criminal liabilities for innocent persons who report even unfounded suspicions, as long as the report is made in good faith.

Molestation Prevention at School

MES expects all employees to limit the opportunities for molestation, responding quickly and appropriately to suspicious situations and taking actions or making reports when warranted. The school reserves the right to investigate employee or volunteer misconduct even if no complaint has been made.

Employees are expected to adhere to the following guidelines of behavior:

- Limit occasions of being alone with a child and be suspicious of anyone who is. Whenever possible have another teacher or adult present or be in an open, public area.
- Monitor volunteers and visitors to ensure they are never alone with a child.
- Report any known misconduct or questionable behavior on the part of fellow employees, volunteers, visitors and students.
- Report any personal criminal convictions immediately to the Head of School.

Montessori Episcopal School is in a gang free zone where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty. Please know that we follow all legal precautions to keep your child safe.

Emergency Procedures and Closures

Fire Drills are performed monthly. Sheltering and lock down drills are practiced four times a year. Practicing enables our staff and the children to carry out these plans in the event of an actual occurrence.

MES will follow closures made by Lewisville ISD in the event of inclement weather. In addition, if LISD schedules late opening, MES will still be closed. The office will use the Remind App and email to notify teachers and parents. Teachers will also use the Remind App to inform their students. Inclement weather days will not be made up during the school year.

Tuition

Tuition payments, along with all other fees and incidentals will be billed through FACTS Tuition Management. You may choose either to pay once a month or two times a month on the 5th or the 20th. Automatic payments can be made from a checking or savings account. Your payments are processed securely through a bank to bank transaction. You may check your personal account or make additional payments online from the convenience of your home or office anytime. FACTS management charges an annual fee for account maintenance.

Policy Enforcement and Updates

By signing the tuition agreement, the responsible party agrees to pay all fees and costs incurred by MES to collect past due tuition, including attorney's fees, and authorized the school to release tuition account information, along with other necessary records (e.g. transcripts) which are requested by a private school, local credit bureau, collection agency, or school official, employee or agent who has a legitimate educational or legal interest in this information.

Guidelines Considering Hardship or Extenuating Circumstances

The Head of School may attempt to set up a special tuition payment plan for these accounts. If an account is delinquent for two months, the Head of School, at his or her discretion, may refer these accounts to a collection agency or attorney for collection.

The family's payment history, communication with Head of School, and willingness to work toward paying the tuition will be taken into consideration.

Collection Procedures

Children may be removed from the school and not be readmitted until tuition is paid in full or placed on a special tuition payment plan. Families are notified that they may not be able to reregister their children for the following school year unless tuition is current. Further action may be taken to collect past due tuition which could include but is not limited to legal action through the court system, use of a collection agency or reporting to the credit bureau.

Parent Handbook

This handbook will be provided to each family at the beginning of the school year. The handbook will be reviewed periodically to ensure the continued applicability of all information contained herein. School administration and/or MES Board of Trustees retain the right to amend the handbook as deemed

necessary. Parents will be notified in writing if any changes to the handbook are made. For the protection of both the school and the parent, the attached statement will be signed by the parent and placed in their child's file stating that they have read the handbook and agree to be governed by the policies and procedures continued in the handbook.