

Parent Manual

St. Christopher Montessori School

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Director: Becky Meyerson

Mission Statement of St. Christopher's Montessori School:

To create an engaging preschool environment devoted to each child's social, emotional, academic, and spiritual growth; To welcome families of all faiths; To cultivate each child's self-confidence, self-discipline, and love of learning.

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St. Christopher Montessori School

Dear Parents,

I want to thank you for choosing St. Christopher's Montessori School to cultivate your child's development; our first love is shaping young hearts and minds. You and your child are embarking upon an exciting path in choosing a Montessori education, and this path will affect how they will function in their world from today and as they grow to adulthood. St. Christopher Montessori is a spiritual legacy of love in action; created on a foundation of love, devotion, courage and family.

Our family legacy began in 1984, when Bettye Meyerson ran the successful Carillon Montessori with her dearest friend and mentor, Claire Bagby. Working together with St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, the school was brought to its current location where we thrive today. Like all families, our Montessori family has seen its share of highs and lows. The loss of our founders and other inspirational figures has been deep, but we have all grown closer because of them.

St. Christopher Montessori is an AMS accredited Montessori. Our teachers are certified, and those who are not are preparing to attend certification classes. Several of our teachers also have other education backgrounds complementary to the Montessori ideal. Additional training in CPR and First Aid are renewed annually by all staff. These components ensure your child has a loving, nurturing, fun environment in which to develop and grow.

We welcome you to join St. Christopher's Montessori family.

Warmly,

Becky Meyerson
School Director

SCMS 21 Point Check List for Parents

1. SCMS is a 12 month school and childcare facility. Our hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm.
2. Children will be released only to authorized persons on the list provided by the parent(s) on file.
3. Children who are ill or have a contagion must be picked up promptly from the school and can only return when they are symptom-free for 24 hours (without the aid of a fever reducer) or upon a doctor's release.
4. Medicine can only be dispensed by the director or an assistant director if the authorization form is completed and the medication has not expired. Forms can be obtained from the office.
5. In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called first and the parent(s) or emergency designee on file will be notified immediately thereafter. If you have not arrived by the time the ambulance is ready to transport, Becky Meyerson (director), Iris Tracy (assistant director), or Devana Jackson (assistant director) will accompany your child until you arrive to be by their side.
6. School-wide notification of our SCMS families can be made via Constant Contact email, the Facebook page, the website www.stchristophersmontessori.com, and the interior bulletin board.
7. Our discipline and guidance policy is in the Parent Manual and on the school's website.
8. A snack list is posted on the bulletin board each month. Fresh fruit, veggies, dips, cheeses, etc... 100% juice or water will be provided along with snacks.
9. Immunization requirements are listed on the admissions form that is in your child's folder and are to be completely filled out and updated regularly.
10. TB tests are not required at the present time.
11. Hearing and vision screening must be completed by your child's physician by 4 years of age, regularly updated and submitted to the SCMS office.
12. Enrollment procedures are on the school's website and in the Parent Manual. Policy changes will be announced on the website and sent via Constant Contact.
13. SCMS does not provide transportation unless directed by University Park or Dallas Emergency personnel. You may authorize your child's emergency transportation via the admission form.
14. There are Montessori-based water lessons in class, as well as outdoor water play in Summer School. Parent authorization for your child to participate in water activities at SCMS is located in the enrollment packet.
15. SCMS does not take children on field trips; we import interesting visitors to the school.
16. We have aquatic turtles, hermit crabs, and beta fish in the classrooms. The children get to help feed them but do not handle them. For the children's safety, the teachers maintain the habitats.
17. Parent concerns should be made directly to Becky Meyerson, the director. A comprehensive procedure is listed within the Parent Manual, which can also be reviewed on the school's website.
18. SCMS has an open door policy for our parents. If you wish to schedule an observation visit (formal or otherwise), please contact the office.
19. SCMS has an active Parent Teacher Association. You can be as hands-on as you are able to fit within your schedule. Opportunities to participate are only a phone call or an email away.
20. A copy of minimum standards is available for your review in the office or on the Childcare Licensing website: www.dfps.state.tx.us
21. Childcare Licensing exists for the benefit of us all. If you have questions or suspect child abuse, please contact Child Protection Services at 1-800-252-5400, or visit their website (see #20).

Educational Programs

St. Christopher Montessori School (SCMS) was established to encourage and promote the spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social development of young children and to create an engaging preschool environment devoted to each child's social, emotional, academic, and spiritual growth. SCMS strives to welcome families of all faiths; and to cultivate each child's self-confidence, self-discipline, and love of learning. The Montessori philosophy emphasizes the development of the child in a carefully prepared and controlled environment - one in which the child is able to develop freely at his or her own pace.

Our environment allows for the spontaneous unfolding of your child's natural capacities through the manipulation of a graded series of self-correcting materials designed to stimulate the senses, leading the child directly into cognition and abstraction. We emphasize the joy of learning, and responsible freedom and citizenship are encouraged and expected. This combination leads children to develop a positive self-image, the courage to embrace new challenges, and a lifelong love of learning.

Toddler Rooms: Ladybug Room & Koala Room: These rooms are for children who are 2 to 3½ years old. The children are introduced to traditional Montessori areas, including Practical Life, Sensorial, Pre-Math and Pre-Language. The class day includes both group and individual work time. Art, music and story time activities are also included in our Toddler Curriculum. The children learn the basics of functioning within a school environment: finishing what they start, using their inside voices, and following the "I Care" rules. This environment also allows for the development of focus, attention span, and love of learning.

Toddler Activity Plan- This plan is meant as a guide and may vary according to circumstance.

9:00am: Group activities - Story Time, Music, etc.

9:25am: Individual Lessons and Work Time

10:15am: Snack

Diapers changed throughout the day.

11:20am: Lunch Time (Ladybugs a few minutes before; Koalas a few minutes after)

Noon: Lunch ends and Nap (Daycare) begins

(Upon waking, children will be toileted, wash hands, eat snack(s) and engage in free play, story time and art. Children who stay until 6:00 pm will often engage in an additional work cycle).

SCMS Student-Teacher Ratio: 8:1

State of Texas Ratio: 11:1

Pre-Primary Environment: Flamingo Room & Bluebird Room: These rooms are for children between the ages of 3 and 6. The teachers work with the children in the traditional Montessori areas, including Practical Life, Sensorial, Math, Language Arts, Geography, Botany, Zoology, & Earth Sciences. In addition to hands-on lessons, our Montessori provides writing works to complement each work, allowing for abstraction to take place after the lesson has been mastered by the child.

Pre-Primary Activity Plan - Meant as a guide, this plan may vary according to circumstance.

- 9:00am: Line Activities, Individual Lessons and Work Time
- 10:30am: Snack, Playground & Story Time
- Noon: Lunch Time for children who stay.
- 12:30pm: Class resumes; Nap (Daycare) begins for Half-Day students
- 2:15pm: Playground, & Snack Time
- 3:30pm: School is out. Daycare begins for those who stay (Includes snack time, Individual and group play, stories and art)

SCMS Student-Teacher Ratio: 8:1 or less

State of Texas Ratio: 23:1

Children's Chapel: This is a weekly activity that offers age-appropriate, interactive, bible-learning activities based on the Godly Play curriculum. Additionally, a short service is held in the church sanctuary each Thursday morning at 9:30 am. As we are a Montessori School operating under the wing of the Episcopal Diocese, students and staff will attend this service together.

Drama: Included in your paid tuition, St. Christopher's provides exposure to loosely scripted dramatic play. Classes consist of exciting and interactive role-playing stories that promote self-expression and enhance memory, and are provided for all students on Tuesday mornings.

Classroom Guide

Classroom Placement: The heaviest emphasis will be placed on maintaining a careful balance of age, gender and culture/ethnicity. These groupings are the heart of the Montessori Method, so classroom placement is determined by St. Christopher's staff; requests may be considered, but not guaranteed. Once placed, children will remain with their classmates until the staff determines they are ready for placement in the next level and classroom appropriate to their educational, emotional and social needs.

Probationary Status: St. Christopher's Montessori School reserves the right to conditionally accept a student on a probationary basis, or place an enrolled student in probationary observation. The teachers will monitor this student, and regular communication from the family and school will be important until the probationary status is removed.

Smooth Transitions: Some students have difficulty settling into the classroom in the mornings - especially after an illness or extended absence from school for a vacation or holiday. At home and in the car, you can help your child get ready for another exciting day at school by encouraging them to tell you what their favorite work is, or by reminding them what special activity they may look forward to. Please drop your child's belongings in his/her cubby, hail a classroom teacher at your child's classroom door, then offer your child a quick hug with a reassuring word as you leave. This is another opportunity for you to communicate to your child that you are confident in his independence. *We strongly encourage you to resist the temptation*

to return to or linger in or near the classroom, as this not only creates increasing distress rather than the desired reassurance, but it also undermines the child's trust in the teachers and disturbs/distracts the other children. Our open door policy applies to all SCMS parents, but pick-up and drop off are not good times to touch base with the school staff. If you have questions or concerns about your child's progress, merely call or stop by the office to request and schedule the best time for a focused conversation.

Classroom Safety: The security of your child and his/her environment is very important to us, and we look to you to assist us in our goal. The presence of people in the classrooms outside school hours (9:00 am-3:30 pm) compromises your child as well as classroom animals and materials. Rooms without a teacher present, their restrooms, works and animals are not to be entered outside school hours. Instead, your child is welcome to play with the toys provided in the daycare rooms under supervision of authorized staff members. We know we can count on you to respect our request, and rely upon you to pass this information along to your spouse, family members, friends or nannies responsible for transporting your child to and from school.

Outdoor and Optional Activities

Weather and air quality permitting, all of our children enjoy outside playtime. We have a modern playground facility (with solar shield) and beautiful garden courtyard outfitted for children of all ages. SCMS also offers additional exciting activities for your children which are held here at the school. These activities include:

- **Stretch N Grow Fitness** is an energetic educational health class available year-round to students of all ages. Monday morning classes are about 30 minutes. Monthly fee.
- **Cranium Kids** is a mobile technology program that strives to develop hand/eye coordination, computer skills, and preschool fundamentals for pre-primary students. Tuesday afternoons for about 35 minutes. Monthly fee.
- **Spanish** classes are available to pre-primary students, and focus on modern and authentic language and cultural experience. About one hour on Wednesday mornings. Seasonal fee.
- **Fine Art Program** inspires creativity expressed through line, form, and color. Classes are offered in fall, spring, and summer sessions for pre-primary students. Classes meet for 1 hour Sept-May on Thursday afternoons; June-Aug weekday mornings. Seasonal fee.
- **Ballet** instruction in early ballet steps, creative movement, and composition recognition is offered for pre-primary boys and girls. Scheduled according to experience. Monthly fee.
- **Chess Class** instruction introduces the game of chess to young students utilizing movement, songs, videos, and hands on practice playing the game.

Tuition Policies

Tuition is due on the first of the month, and holds your child's space in the classroom, so we cannot prorate, refund or make other allowances for vacations, absences or withdrawal. A late fee of \$20.00 will be charged on the 6th. Failure to remit tuition or late fees within 15 days of due date will result in revocation of your child's space, which will be offered to the next available applicant. A minimum **30-day** advance **written** notice is required before removing your child from school; you are otherwise responsible for the next month's tuition.

Our building closes at 6pm. For the first occurrence, each child remaining past 6:00pm will incur a fee of \$1.00 per minute - payable within the next 5 business days - no exceptions. A second occurrence will incur \$5.00 per minute. A third occurrence will result in a personal visit with the director to discuss revocation of Daycare services. Failure to pay late fees may result in revocation of Daycare services. The time clock stationed at the entry is used to gauge all fees. You may change your Daycare selection for a \$25.00 administration fee each time. Returned checks will incur a charge of \$25.00 each and will be reflected on your statement.

Space permitting, hourly accounts will be charged a fee of \$15.00 per hour (no increments), per child for children dropped off before, and/or not picked by at their scheduled time. Children enrolled in Hourly Care are not eligible to attend on dates when the Daycare is open but the School closed. Be sure to consult the school calendar in order to make advance arrangements for alternative care. Lesser value tuition is discounted for second (and any consecutive) sibling.

Annual Enrollment - Academic Year and Summer Program

We always look forward to the upcoming year, and the opportunity to continue working with our SCMS family. Returning families begin enrollment for summer **and** the upcoming academic year in January. While SCMS Summer School requires separate registration from our academic year, our teachers continue to provide the same academic studies during the same hours. To secure their spaces for summer and/or fall, current SCMS families simply complete Tuition Fee Schedules and return them with registration fees prior to the Open Enrollment date in March.

The registration fee is an enrollment requirement and reserves your space for the duration of the Summer or Academic Year term. It is non-refundable, and will not be discounted for any reason. Our Open Enrollment date begins the acceptance of new and returning student enrollments equally on a first-come, first-served basis, and continues until all spaces are filled. Your child's space is not secure until the requisite forms are received in the office at the time the registration fee is paid in full. Please advise us at your earliest opportunity if your child will not be attending summer and/or the upcoming academic year.

Faculty

Many of St. Christopher Montessori School's staff members have been with us for a decade or more, and our turnover rate has more to do with health and longevity than any other factor. All SCMS staff members have completed high school; most have college degrees as well. All have obtained or are in the process of obtaining Montessori certification. Our teachers are trained annually in first aid and CPR, and attend childcare-related seminars and workshops to add to our skill set. Our staff members are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and dedicated.

Becky Meyerson: Teacher, Director: Becky is a long-time American Montessori Society Member; she received her Early Childhood Certification in 1983, and Montessori Elementary Certification in 1992. Becky has been a member of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church since 1976, and began teaching at SCMS when her mother, Bettye Meyerson, opened the school in 1984. Becky has a Bachelor's in Government, and is pursuing her Master's in Instructional Design and Technology. Yearly CEU's: 32 hours, plus yearly CPR & First Aid certifications. She also teaches workshops for Montessori educators at CCCC via Montessori Plus.

Iris Tracy: Teacher, Director of Curriculum: Iris began her relationship with St. Christopher's Montessori as a mom in 2001, and received her Montessori Teaching Certification in 2006. She develops and implements the curriculum for the Bluebird and Flamingo Pre-Primary (ages 3-6) classrooms. Iris is a member of St. Christopher's Church, and is currently pursuing her Associate's Degree in Child Development. Yearly CEU's: 32 hours, plus yearly CPR & First Aid certifications.

Devana Jackson, Teacher, Director of Accounts: Devana has been a member of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church for over 25 years, and has shouldered the responsibility of church treasurer 18 of those years. Devana has worked with St. Christopher's Montessori School since 2004 and received her Montessori Teaching Certification in 2013. Yearly CEU's: 32 hours, plus yearly CPR & First Aid certifications.

Parent Involvement and Communication

It's important to remember the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child". We as teachers - and you as parents - share the same goals. It's essential to keep the lines of communication open and up-to-date for your child's benefit. We're here to help, educate and care for your children. We're also here for you as parents. You can become involved in our Montessori family by joining the SCMS Parent Association and volunteering. If we work together, our children reap the rewards.

Communication: In addition to school-wide Constant Contact emails, the school bulletin board, and SCMS's website, Shutterfly and Facebook, are the ways you will receive information regarding upcoming events and policy or schedule changes at the school.

Conferences: A formal conference with one of your child's teachers will be scheduled to follow one of two evaluations during the academic school year. Aside from conferences, you may also communicate with your child's teachers via e-mail or telephone. Of course, teachers are needed in the classroom during school hours, but leaving a message with the office will allow us to set up a time to talk that will best accommodate everyone.

St. Christopher's Montessori School Parent/Teacher Association: The parents/legal guardians of every SCMS student are members of the PTA and are encouraged to volunteer and serve on school committees. The SCMS PTA mission is to acquaint parents and the community with the aims of the school and the Montessori philosophy, to assist with various school activities, including support and appreciation of students, teachers, staff and school families and to raise funds for needs which may arise by sharing skills, talents, resources, ideas, and contact with members. Please join in and give your unique gifts of talent and time to any or several SCMS PTA groups and plant a seed that grows forever!

Auction: The Auction is the school's primary fundraiser and a very memorable event. The adults have a relaxing opportunity to socialize, have dinner, be entertained and participate in the SCMS Auction. The funds earned in the annual auction are earmarked to have a direct beneficial impact on the students of our school - classroom and grounds enhancements such as technology upgrades, classroom carpeting, bathroom remodeling and courtyard and playground improvement. We are always seeking goods and services that can be put up for auction to benefit the school. Past donations have included restaurant or salon gift certificates, event tickets, handmade items, jewelry, trip packages, hotel stays, and artwork. Please consider helping us with our most important fundraiser for the year by contacting the PTA.

Donations: SCMS is a non-profit school. We willingly accept donations of goods, services and cash; all donations are tax deductible and a tax receipt can be provided upon request. The teachers and children always welcome new (or gently used!) books, clothing/shoes, toys, etc. Please check with your child's teacher to see if there is a wish list or any specific needs. We can always use plastic grocery bags and other cleaned recyclables.

Board of Trustees

SCMS is an unincorporated parish organization operated by St. Christopher's Episcopal Church and is subject to the oversight, direction and advice of the Church Rector, Vestry and the St. Christopher's Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is subject to the power and authority of the Church Vestry. The responsibilities of the Board of Trustees to the School are, first and foremost, a policy-making board with oversight areas to include School Policy, Finances, Advancement, and Facilities. In addition, the Board of Trustees hires, supports and evaluates the School Director, strategically plans for the future of the School, helps foster strong School-Parish relations, and has oversight authority over the Parent Teacher Association.

The Board of Trustees consists of no less than eleven (11) and up to seventeen (17) members. By nature of position, the Senior Warden of the Vestry and the President of the Parent Teacher Association are full members of the Board. The Director and Rector serve as ex-officio members of the Board. Other members consist of one (1) additional Vestry Liaison, past School parents, community leaders and members of the Church. At least 51% of the Board must be members of the Parish. The Board of Trustees Bylaws, names of the members and meeting minutes are posted on the School bulletin board.

Clothing

All children must wear socks and sneakers (lace-up, Velcro or slip-on) at all times during the Academic Year and Summer sessions. Socks with sneakers is simply the safest option for our indoor and outdoor learning environments when compared to sandals, Crocs, boots, heels and flip-flops, which are best left at home. Your child needs, anticipates, and deserves energetic play every day. Due to the increased potential for injury, children will not be able to participate in physical activities unless they are wearing sneakers and socks.

It's important that the children be able to move around freely and safely in their indoor and outdoor Montessori learning environments, so school clothing should be comfortable and washable play clothes with fasteners that promote independence. For example: send children to school in pants/shorts with elastic waistbands instead of snaps, buttons, belts or string ties. No onesies or bodysuits, please.

In case of spills or other messy accidents, children should keep an extra set of clothes marked with their name (including shoes) in a small shoe-box sized container at the school. If your child is potty learning, we also ask that you supply diapers or training pants and wipes to be kept at school. If you switch to pull-ups, please provide us with the type that can still be refastened on the side. We'll notify you when the supply needs to be refreshed. Please mark the package or individual units with your child's name.

We know we can count on you to respect the safety and comfort of our students, and rely upon you to pass this information along to your spouse and other family members, friends or nannies responsible for your child's school attire.

Lunch

We ask that you provide lunch for your child, but we happily supply plates, cups, napkins and utensils. Lunches are not refrigerated, so please send your child's meal in a clean insulated lunch container (no glass, please) that is clearly marked with your child's name. Dry macaroni and cheese, whole fruits or any foods that require preparation are not recommended. Frozen foods do not keep well in lunch boxes, but including an ice pack will ensure that other foods remain chilled until lunch time. Microwaves are available in each classroom, so you may feel free to send food that can be reheated.

Your child depends upon you as their nutritional provider, so we encourage you to start your child's day off with a nutritious breakfast at home and send them to school with a lunch (reasonably portioned for toddlers/young children) offering an array of healthier foods from which your child can make smart choices. **Avoid sending items such as candy, gum, soft drinks, tea or coffee of any kind, as these are not permitted.** Chocolate is permitted in very limited quantities - such as in a cookie. We rely upon you to pass this information along to your spouse and other family members, or anyone responsible for providing food for your child.

Naps

Naps take place after lunch (Ladybugs and Koalas lie down at noon; Bluebirds and Flamingos, 12:30pm). Our nap period continues until most children have awakened - usually around 2pm. Daycare begins at this time for our Ladybugs and Koalas. Upon their return to the classroom, Bluebirds and Flamingos resume their studies until 3:30.

You will be notified and provided with the required form to change your child's schedule when your Flamingo or Bluebird is transitioning out of the nap rooms. Non-napping Bluebirds and Flamingos have a quiet rest time within the classroom following lunch, and resume the class day thereafter until 3:30. Due to hygienic concerns, we do not use cots, vinyl sleeping mats, sleeping bags, pillows and blankets, but you may bring your child's personal NapPak (or other brand of bedroll) to their cubby at the beginning each week - please remember to take it home for washing at the end of the week.

Snacks

We provide morning, afternoon and early evening snacks for the children. Our snacks range from pretzels to fruit, popcorn to veggies, and a variety of crackers either plain or paired with cheese. These are not intended to be your child's main source of nutrition, but merely something to tide over little tummies until the next meal provided by you. We supply small cups for snack-time beverages, and prefer to serve water and 100% fruit juice (diluted and dye-free). A snack menu is posted on the wall between the doors of the offices.

It's important that you communicate to us on your child's enrollment forms any information regarding food allergies or dietary restrictions. If your child has numerous/severe food issues, we welcome you to "opt out" of school snacks, drinks (other than water) and party foods/beverages. Be sure to let us know in writing that you will be providing your child's snacks, drinks and party treats, and bring these items in a clearly marked snack box to be maintained at SCMS so your child can still participate in the community "breaking of bread" during snacks and parties. **A child who "opts out" will receive absolutely no food from the school at any time.** Please see the Medical Policies section for more information on allergen awareness.

Parking

Several times a day, every day, drivers make dangerous errors due to distraction or haste. **Nothing is so urgent that warrants putting your or someone else's child at risk.** Our parking rules are in place to promote the safety of our children and staff, and we rely upon you to pass this information along to anyone responsible for transporting your child to and from school. Please respect reserved church/school staff and disabled parking at all times.

AT ALL TIMES:

- DRIVE SLOWLY - children may be crossing.
- STAY BACK and put the car in PARK if a line of children is crossing.
- Children must be buckled in when the car is in motion.
- Infants and children **may not remain in the car** when you enter the building.
- Lock the car and take your valuables with you
- Reserved parking is for church/school staff and disabled visitors **ONLY**.
- Do not leave any valuables in your car when you pick up or drop off.

Sign-In/Out

The safety of your children is one of our top priorities. Although we don't anticipate any problems, we know the unexpected can happen. If it is ever necessary to implement our evacuation plan, we will use our check-in/out records to verify that all children are accounted for. We rely on you to ensure that your child is checked in AND out (utilize the sign-in/out sheet or time clock located in the office window) when you escort your child to and from their classroom. Please leave your child in the care of a classroom teacher, as they may not remain unattended in the entryway or hallways of the school.

REMEMBER: Only those people listed on your signed release form on file with the school will be allowed to pick up your child. If you need to amend this list, please bring written notice to the school ahead of time to make any changes. Release authorization via telephone is not permitted, but an email received 24 hours prior may be accepted if it originates from the parent email address we have on file. We rely upon you to pass this information along to your spouse and other family members, friends or nannies responsible for transporting your child to and from school.

Medical Policies

Illness Policy: If you're called to pick up your sick child, please pick the child up as quickly as possible. In accordance with the State of Texas regulations, you'll be called to pick up your child under the following circumstances:

- ◆ Fever of **100°F** or greater
- ◆ Vomiting
- ◆ Diarrhea
- ◆ Communicable diseases or symptoms
- ◆ At the teacher's discretion

Your child must be free of any symptoms without the aid of a fever reducer such as Tylenol or Motrin for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school. Your child will not be allowed to return to school for at least 24 hours unless you bring in a signed and dated statement from your child's physician verifying that the child is not contagious.

St. Christopher's Montessori School is committed to keeping our students and staff in the very best of health. Of course, every parent wants their child to maintain good health, but we also understand that you want to provide the best circumstances for your sick child's recovery. In our effort to achieve these goals and to reduce the risk of compromising the health of fellow students, we encourage you to visit the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services site for a complete listing of licensed *Get Well Care Child Care Centers and Homes* to consider if you are unable to stay home to supervise your child's rest and recovery (http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp).

Medication Policy: All homeopathic, over-the-counter (OTC), topical and prescription remedies require a Medical Authorization Form (available in the office) to be completed, signed and given to the school director along with the remedy for application/dosing in the office - this includes vitamins, cough drops, eye drops, lip balm and skin creams. The container must show a valid expiration date, and be labeled with the child's name.

In addition to the above, Prescription medications must be in the original container with the prescription label intact. The prescription label must be in the child's name and include the proper dosing instructions.

Medical Equipment: A letter from the parent must be on file with detailed instructions on the use of any medical equipment (including breathing machines) that the school nurse or director will need to administer to your child.

Breastfeeding: St. Christopher's Montessori School supports your right to breastfeed and provide breast milk for your child while in our care.

SCMS does not currently require that staff obtain vaccination boosters.

Allergen Awareness: SCMS has several students enrolled that have life-threatening allergies to allergens such as but not limited to fruits, grains, meats, nuts and dairy products such as milk cheese and ice cream. Some children are so severely allergic that any exposure to smell (for example, peanut butter on someone's breath), touch (residue from another child's hands) or accidental ingestion could cause the child to go into allergic shock. Although it isn't possible to eliminate all chances of exposure, we can work together to reduce the risks. Some ways that you can help include:

- If your child has a severe allergy, the allergen and its exposure risk (smell, touch, ingestion) must be clearly outlined in writing in the designated space in the enrollment packet.
- All children's faces and hands should be thoroughly washed to remove any residue following a meal containing peanuts or any other common allergen.
- Remind your child not to share food with friends at school!

It's important that you communicate to us on your child's enrollment forms any information regarding food allergies or dietary restrictions. If your child has numerous/severe food issues, we welcome you to "opt out" of school snacks, drinks (other than water) and party foods/beverages. Be sure to let us know in writing that you will be providing your child's snacks, drinks and party treats, and bring these items in a clearly marked snack box to be maintained at SCMS so your child can still participate in the community "breaking of bread" during snacks and parties. A child who "opts out" will receive absolutely no food from the school at any time. Please see the Medical Policies section for more information on allergen awareness.

We rely upon you to pass this information along to your spouse and other family members, friends or nannies responsible for assisting your child in preparing for school, and providing food for your child to bring to school.

Birthday and School Party Guidelines

Parties are meant to be fun, and we want to enjoy the many holidays that fall within a school year by celebrating together. In order that our class parties do not become unmanageable, please **call the office a week prior to schedule a date/time** and receive a head count.

Please supply fresh fruit treats, cookies or muffins. Gift/party favor bags are not necessary, but must be age-appropriate and safe. If your child has invitations to be passed out for an upcoming off-campus party, please do not place them in the students' cubbies - bring them to the office, and the staff will place them inside the children's lunchboxes while they are in class to minimize any hurt feelings of children not receiving invitations.

Unmarked/Unclaimed Clothing Basket

We make every effort to send your child home with all his/her belongings. In order to achieve this goal, please **make sure that either your child's last name or first name with last initial is clearly marked on everything.** In the interest of reuniting clothing with owners, unmarked and unclaimed clothing is placed in the hamper/basket located just inside the school entry door. Periodically, unclaimed clothing will be donated to charity - all other items are discarded for reasons of hygiene. Toys from home are not for school, and may be claimed by other children; toys should be left safe at home. The school is not responsible for lost or misplaced items - including but not limited to clothing, accessories, books, toys, etc.

Safety and Emergency Evacuation Plan

The safety of the children is one of our top priorities. Although we don't anticipate any problems on the school's property, we know there are unexpected things that can happen. Therefore, we have devised the following evacuation plan that the teachers and children will rehearse during the school year:

If there is a problem on the school property (i.e. minor fire in a classroom), the teachers will assess the situation to determine if the children can be safely evacuated to another location on the church property. In the event of an emergency that requires more extensive evacuation, Park Cities or Dallas Fire Marshall or other authorities will direct our evacuation of the children to Christ Lutheran Church (3001 Lovers Lane) or another safe place they designate. In the event of an evacuation, parents will receive a Constant Contact notification and/or a phone call.

Gang-free Zone: St. Christopher's Montessori School is a gang-free zone, and certain gang related activity that occurs within 1000 feet of our school or playground is a violation of the law, and therefore subject to increased penalty.

School Closures

Health: We consider the well-being of your children to be our highest priority, and our staff keeps a sharp eye on attendance for this reason. If your child experiences fever, rash, diarrhea, vomiting, OR receives a diagnosis of ANY contagious disease (pinkeye, strep throat, flu, chicken pox, etc.), please call the school office **immediately** at 214-363-9391 - even if only to leave an afterhours voice mail message. This is the only way we have to track the health of our children, and if we receive word of serious concern directly affecting any of our families, you will be informed via the usual methods of communication. Please continue to review the website (www.stchristophersmontessori.com), pick up Wednesday folders, and check for lunch box notes. If SCMS ever suffers from a serious a serious illness event, the Dallas County Health Department will decide whether and when we close.

Scheduled: The school will be closed for teacher in-services, parent/teacher conferences, and certain holidays. **Reminder:** Children enrolled in full time daycare are eligible for care on dates when the daycare is open but the school is not. Hourly care children are not eligible for this service. Be sure to consult the school calendar online at www.stchristophersmontessori.org for details of all important dates, and in order to make advance arrangements for alternative care.

Weather: In the event of **inclement weather**, parents will receive a Constant Contact email notification regarding any changes in our schedule. This information will also be posted on the school's website (www.stchristophersmontessori.com), and FaceBook pages.

Complaint/Concern Procedure

One of our top priorities is to maintain positive communication with our students' families. As a result, we've developed a formal procedure for voicing concerns or complaints. We ask that you follow this three-step process:

1. Contact the School Director about the complaint or concern. Within one week, the school director will respond to the complaint or concern and begin work in an expedient resolution.
2. If you feel the school director's resolution of the complaint or concern is unsatisfactory, the school director will notify members of the board of trustees. The board of trustees will review and recommend a resolution. If necessary, a meeting to resolve the complaint or concern will be scheduled with you, the school director and members of the board of trustees.
3. If the complaint or concern still cannot be resolved, the issue will be presented to the whole membership of the board of trustees to finally resolve the matter.

Inappropriate Parent Conduct

As adults, SCMS parents and staff are responsible for modeling appropriate behavior, protecting and providing a safe environment for ourselves and the children in our care. Parents and any and all other adults visiting the school must conduct themselves in a professional and rational manner at all times. SCMS reserves the right to immediately terminate a student's enrollment if parent behavior is deemed inappropriate. Actions that are grounds for immediate dismissal include but are not limited to: violent acts, harassment, possession of illegal substances or firearms, verbal abuse, profanity or indecent exposure.

Prevention Training: Abuse & Neglect

Licensed teachers and childcare providers are legally mandated by the State to immediately report to the Department of Family and Protective Services any reasonable belief that a child may be abused or neglected. SCMS administrative and teaching staff train annually to keep current our methods for preventing, recognizing and reporting abuse. Parents should also be alert to any signs of physical injury or sexual abuse, and are encouraged to report when they have reasonable cause to believe a child may be abused or neglected. If you have questions or think a child may have been abused, call Texas DFPS Child Abuse Hot Line: 1-800-252-5400.

Discipline & Guidance

◆ Discipline must be:

- (1) Individualized and consistent for each child;
- (2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- (3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

◆ A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- (1) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- (2) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- (3) Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- (4) Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

◆ There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- (1) Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- (2) Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- (3) Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
- (4) Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- (5) Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- (6) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- (7) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- (8) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and
- (9) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapters L, Discipline and Guidance