



Parent / Student Handbook 2017-2018

Amelia Island Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, race, color, religion, sex or disability. We endeavor to respect and protect the rights and diversity of individuals we serve.

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ameliaislandmontessori.com

Licensed by:



Accredited by:



Member of:



“Whoever touches the life of the child touches the most sensitive point of a whole, which has roots in the most distant past and climbs toward the infinite future.”

Dr. Maria Montessori

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The History Of Amelia Island Montessori School

In the spring of 1973, a group of parents decided they wanted a Montessori preschool education for their children. They visited other Montessori schools and studied the writings of Dr. Maria Montessori. The group approached the Amelia Island Company (AIC), the corporate name for the Amelia Island Plantation, who provided assistance, both in personnel and financing. The Amelia Island Montessori School opened in the fall of 1973 with 25 students.

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The school remained housed in a rented trailer until January 1981, when the parent-run Board of Directors decided a permanent structure and location must be found. The school received a donation of a two-story office building on the Amelia Island Parkway. In June 1981, the Amelia Island Montessori School was moved to its present location.

Expansion was now an option. In 1983, AIMS grew from one Primary (3-6) classroom to two classrooms with 25 students in each room. The After School Program was instituted in the same year, and the staff grew to two certified Montessori Directresses, two assistants, and two childcare aides. In December of 1984, the school received its first foundation donation. Annual gifts by the anonymous foundation opened the way for further grade level expansion. Responding to a parent survey, a Toddler program was developed in 1984.

In the fall of 1987, the Elementary Program was established. By the fall of 1993, this program required two full time Directresses and two assistants to handle the growing number of students. In June of 1995, ground was broken for a new Elementary building, and two months later its doors were opened for 50 students in grades 1-3.

In August 1997, the Upper Elementary class celebrated its inaugural year with 10 students. In the fall of 1998, the Upper Elementary class nearly doubled to 17 students.

Amelia Island Montessori continued to look forward to the future. In 2010, the Lower Elementary building was completely remodeled and renovated. In the summer of 2011, a part of the upstairs in Building Five was renovated for the Upper Elementary Class and in the Spring of 2014, the Board of Trustees approved to initiate a Middle School Program. In the summer of 2015, renovations again took place in the Upper Elementary environment, as their population had outgrown its space. Within one year, the Middle School program also enjoyed an increase in enrollment and expansion was necessary. AIMS is excited to now provide services to children from 18 months to 15 years of age. Projects for the continued improvements of the campus are planned in the near future.

Presently, Amelia Island Montessori School is a non-profit corporation, incorporated as Island Education, Inc. Our school is accredited by the Florida Council of Independent Schools, Florida Kindergarten Council, licensed by the Department of Children and Families and a member of the American Montessori Society.

Maria Montessori: A Brief Biography

Maria Montessori was ahead of her time. Today, many educators realize that she is in fact, ahead of *our* time. She saw then what many schools across the country and world are trying to *now* implement. She was born in Italy in 1870 and was one of the first female physicians in Italy in 1896. In her medical practice, her clinical observations led her to analyze how children learn, and she concluded that they build themselves from what they find in their environment. Page | 5

Shifting her focus from the body to the mind, she returned to the University to study psychology and philosophy and was made a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Rome. Her desire to help children was so strong, however, that in 1906 she gave up both her University chair and her medical practice to work with a group of sixty young children of working parents in the San Lorenzo district of Rome.

It was there that she founded the first Casadei Bambini, or “Children’s House.” What ultimately became the Montessori Method of education developed here, based upon Montessori’s scientific observations of these children’s natural ability to absorb knowledge from their surroundings, as well as their tireless interest in manipulating materials. Every piece of equipment, every exercise, every method Montessori developed was based on what she observed children do “naturally,” by themselves, unassisted by adults. When put in a nurturing, well planned organized environment with stimulating materials, children teach themselves. This simple but profound truth inspired Montessori’s lifelong pursuit of educational reform, methodology, psychology, teaching, and teacher training – all based on their dedication to furthering the self-creating process of the child. She observed, that when allowed freedom of choice, respect, independence and trust, the child will develop mental order and structure within their own mind.

Maria Montessori made her first visit to the United States in 1913, at the invitation of Alexander Graham Bell. During this time the Montessori Educational Association was founded at his Washington, D.C. home. Other strong American supporters were Thomas Edison and Helen Keller. In 1915, Dr. Montessori attracted world attention with her “glass house” schoolroom exhibit at the Panama-Pacific International Exhibition in San Francisco. On this second U.S. visit, she also conducted a teacher training course and addressed the annual conventions of both the National Education Association and the International Kindergarten Union. The committee that brought her to San Francisco included Margaret Wilson, the daughter of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson.

The Spanish government invited her to open a research institute in 1917. In 1919, she began a series of teacher training courses in London. In 1922, she was appointed a government inspector of schools in her native Italy, but because of her opposition to Mussolini’s fascism, she was forced to leave Italy in 1934. She opened the Montessori Training Centre in Laren, Netherlands in 1938, and founded a series of teacher training courses in India in 1939, with her son, Mario. Later, she founded the Montessori Center in London in 1947. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times – in 1949, 1950, and 1951.

Maria Montessori died in Noordwijk, Holland, in 1952 at the age of 82. Her teaching and method of “following the child” lives on throughout the world.

Montessori Method and Philosophy

Dr. Maria Montessori found through her careful and tireless observations, that children possess within themselves the full potential of the person who they will become. In an environment that offers the opportunity for curiosity to be encouraged and satisfied, this innate potential may blossom to its highest possibility.

A Montessori environment includes carefully timed introductions within each academic area and freedom to make choices, as the child experiences new concepts. Each child is greeted at their developmental level, and carefully guided through the curriculum at their individual pace. The Montessori Directress weaves the experiences within the curriculum to develop the physical, intellectual and spiritual potential of the child to the fullest, allowing for freedom and self-correction, in a safe environment.

The well designed Montessori materials give the student a hands-on “concrete” approach to learning, which involves all of the senses, and engages all learning styles. The innate qualities of these materials develop order, coordination, concentration and independence. The child is shown each step of a lesson or skill and then given time for repetition of practice. This self-directed pace creates an ordered and sequential manner and they soon realize that they may indeed master what seemed too big a challenge, one step at a time. This process offers structure within the child’s mind.

Respect for one’s self and others is the main principle of this philosophy. Through the dynamics of trust and independent work, many opportunities arise to help another or ask for help, as needed. This creates a community within the class where considering others and communicating your own thoughts and needs are highly valued. The children in a Montessori class both act as role models and learn from those around them. It is through helping others, cooperating and finding solutions as issues arise, that the child may develop confidence within their place in the classroom, the family and the world.

The main premises of Montessori education are:

- Children are to be respected as different from adults and as individuals who differ from each other.
- The child possesses an unusual sensitivity and intellectual ability to absorb and learn from his/her environment that is unlike those of the adult, both in quality and capacity.
- The most important years of a child's growth are the first six years of life when unconscious learning is gradually brought to the conscious level.

“The child has a deep love and need for purposeful work. He works, however, not as an adult for completion of a job, but the sake of an activity itself. It is this activity which enables him to accomplish his most important goal: the development of himself – his mental, physical, and psychological powers.”

Dr. Maria Montessori

Amelia Island Montessori School's Mission Statement

AIMS will provide an authentic Montessori education, developing students to their highest potential.

Section 1 School Organization

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A. Governing Structure

The school is governed by an elected Board of Trustees. Income is derived from tuition, fundraising events, donations and charitable gifts.

B. Board of Trustees - Biographies for BOT members may be found on the school's website.

Aaron Bell, President & Chair
aaron@sciencefirst.com

Tom Harris
tharri01@gmail.com

Kevin Lin, Vice President
maximklin@yahoo.com

Jeremy Powell
jpowell@citrahealth.com

Mike Brooks, Treasurer
Mike.Brooks@cbtnationalbank.com

Mary O'Donnell
maryc.odonnell@omnihotels.com

Diane van Lanen, Secretary
thevl4@me.com

Martha McDowell
mcsandall@comcast.net

Gayle Davis, Non-voting
tgdavis310@comcast.net

Harsha Patel, AIMS Bookkeeper, Non-voting
harsha.patel@ameliaislandmontessori.com

Diane M. Dodds – Head of School, Non-voting
diane.dodds@ameliaislandmontessori.com

C. Acronyms used in this handbook

BOT – Board of Trustees

HOS – Head of School

BSP – Before School Program

ASP – After School Program

TBD – To Be Determined

VPK – Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

D. School Staff

Biographies, along with email addresses, may be found on the school's website.

1. Administration

Diane M. Dodds – Head of School

Linda Waldo – Compliance Coordinator

Harsha Patel – Bookkeeper

Donna Daniels – Administrative Assistant

2. Faculty

Toddler Program

Sue Hildebrand

Sarah Mayes

Lisa Mohn

Victoria Smith

Primary Program

Sandra Ara

Tania Castro

Sierra Goltry

Krystal Lawnick

Kati McClurg

Brittney Wilson

Lower Elementary Program

Debbie Hodsdon
Kim Philo

Upper Elementary Program

Dee Dee Neal
Beth Perkins
Shannon Philo

Middle School Program

Edie Blankenberg

Before / After School Program

B/C: Susie Hildebrand
ASP: Martha

3. Specialists

Abigail Poirier - Music
Rebecca Ayers – Library/Technology
Victoria Smith – Art

Renaissance Youth - Physical Education
Primary Spanish – Sandra Ara
Elementary & Middle Spanish – Tania Castro

E. School Improvement Teams

School Improvement Teams will be developed as the Strategic Plan is developed and the BOT moves forward to implement the goals and objectives set forth for the school.

Section 2 Daily Operations

A. School Hours

| | <u>Arrive</u> | <u>Start Time</u> | <u>Dismiss</u> | <u>Late Pick-up</u> |
|--|---------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| BEFORE SCHOOL PROGRAM | 7:30 AM | | 8:45 AM | |
| TODDLER & 3&4 YEAR-OLD PRIMARY ½ DAY PROGRAM | 8:45 AM | 9:00 AM | 12:00 PM | 12:05 PM |
| TODDLER & 3&4 YEAR-OLD PRIMARY FULL DAY PROGRAM | 8:45 AM | 9:00 AM | 3:00 PM | 3:05 PM |
| VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN | 8:45 AM | 9:00 AM | 1:00 PM | 1:05 PM |
| KINDERGARTEN | 8:45 AM | 9:00 AM | 3:00 PM | 3:05 PM |
| 6-9 LOWER ELEMENTARY PROGRAM | 8:30 AM | 8:45 AM | 3:00 PM | 3:05 PM |
| 9-12 UPPER EL | 8:30 AM | 8:45 AM | 3:00 PM | 3:05 PM |
| MIDDLE SCHOOL | 8:30 AM | 8:45 AM | 3:00 PM | 3:05 PM |
| AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM | 3:00 PM | | 6:00 PM | 6:05 PM |

B. Morning Arrival

- Children enrolled in the Before School Program (BSP) MUST be escorted by their parent/guardian to the Before School Program room (Toddler West).
- Any child participating in the BSP will be escorted by AIMS staff to their classroom.
- Any student arriving after the 15 minute interval arrival period will be considered tardy.

C. Tardy Policy

- All students should arrive prior to the class start time and be ready to start work when class begins. Punctuality to school IS ESSENTIAL IN PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR A SUCCESSFUL DAY. When a child is tardy, they have missed important structure and routines that help their day to run smoothly. If a child will be late, the parent should notify the school's office. Students arriving late must check in at the business office in order to be admitted to class. In order to prevent interruptions after instruction starts, parents should make every effort to have their child arrive on time.
- When parents/guardians are unable to pick up children at the designated time after school, children will report to the After School Program. Parents may pick up children in ASP from the playground or Toddler East. If prior arrangements are not made, a \$25 fee will be assessed, payable upon pickup. In addition, should the child remain in ASP for more than 10 minutes, a charge of \$15.00 will be due for every 5 minutes that the child remains in ASP. This policy obviously discourages overcrowding ASP for a long period of time, but will offer children a welcome place to wait for their parent(s).

D. Dismissal

- Florida State Law mandates the names of all persons with whom a child may leave must be on file at the school. This is not blanket permission. Each time a child's normal pickup schedule is changed, a written notice must be submitted. A note to the child's teacher is the most efficient manner to offer this information. Emails to administration are acceptable; however, notice must be made by 1:00 p.m. Telephone notification will be accepted on an emergency basis only.
- Faculty members cannot transport students to or from school unless a release of responsibility and liability is signed by a parent and is filed with the Head of School.
- AIMS will require identification of anyone whom a parent has given permission to pick up a child if he or she is not familiar to our staff.

E. Attendance

- Daily attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of the parents and the student. Proper attendance assures the greatest potential for learning opportunities for your child.
- Florida Law states that children between the ages of 5 and 16 must attend school with only excused absences of illness, death in the immediate family and other extreme explanatory circumstances. AIMS recognizes the following circumstances:
 - a. Medical reasons
 - b. Death in the family
 - c. Legal reasons verified by a lawyer or a court
 - d. Circumstances as approved by the Head of School
- In the event that your child is absent, please call the school office. **A written note explaining each absence must be submitted upon return to school.**

Excessive absences may place a child in academic jeopardy for progression to the next grade level.

- Should a child need to be away from school for excessive days (and the reason not stated above), this absence must be preapproved by the Head of School. Please submit an explanation at least one week in advance so that the Directress may develop meaningful assignments that can be completed while the student is away.
- Students missing excessive days will have their cases reviewed by a school committee comprised of their Directress, the Head of School, and other appropriate staff. The committee will review the attendance data and documentation, provide the parent/guardian with an opportunity for explanation if necessary, and determine whether an exception is to be granted.

** If a child did not attend morning classes, they must be signed in through the school office by a parent. Missing class, but attending ASP will be handled on an individual basis, and is not a normal school practice.*

F. Illnesses

We know that you want your child protected from illness as much as possible and so we ask your cooperation in helping us protect all children and staff from undue exposure. Parents must err on the side of caution when sending their child to school. All children who have an illness should be kept home. Determination of your child's health will be based upon the following :

- ***Temperature above 100.4 degrees (normal is 96.6-98) by the axillary (armpit) method***
- ***Conjunctivitis (pink eye)***
- ***Skin rash other than a localized diaper rash***
- ***Vomiting***
- ***Diarrhea***
- ***Any evidence of lice infestation or nits***
- ***Continuous nasal discharge that is unclear in color***
- ***Sore throat***
- ***Persistent cough***
- ***Earache***
- ***Anytime that the child is not feeling well enough to tolerate a normal school day, whether it be due to illness, lack of sleep, or a disruption in the usual family routine.***

Please follow the stated guidelines. Should you have questions, please ask your teacher.

1. Students who have a contagious disease/condition should be kept at home. A student who has/had a fever, has/had diarrhea or has/had vomited within the previous 24 hours, or has a cold or cough which causes discomfort or fatigue should also be kept out of school for at least 24 hours after the last episode or the fever has broken. If your child has/had strep throat, he/she may return to school after antibiotic treatment has rendered the condition no longer contagious, but no less than 24 hours. If your child has/had conjunctivitis (pink eye) he/she may return to school 24 hours after medical treatment has begun. Parents should notify the school to report a health related absence.
2. Please know that certain viral conditions (such as contagious viral pneumonia) are very serious in the classroom environment. Coughing, especially at night, difficulty breathing, difficulty sleeping, nasal congestion (with or without discharge), diarrhea, and fatigue and/or tiredness are some of the symptoms. Bacterial pneumonia, while not as contagious can also be very serious and does not necessarily carry a fever. Sensible concern should be given to attendance of a child with any of the above. The child is extremely uncomfortable and the conditions are easily spread to other children and staff. The same guidelines as stated in number one should be followed.
3. When a student becomes ill during school hours, parents or the emergency contact person will be called to take the child home as soon as possible. Prior to that time, the child will be isolated and kept under adult supervision.
4. If it is necessary for medication to be given during school hours, parents must fill out HRS FORM 5013

and send the form and medication, in the original pharmacy-labeled container, to the Head of School. Staff members are trained through Nassau County Health Department to dispense medication to students. Forms are available in the business office.

5. To be excused from participating in Physical Education activities, parents must provide a written request. However, any time a child has to be excused from Physical Education for frequent or prolonged periods of time, the parent must provide a written note from a physician.
6. All students should be properly trained in personal hygiene habits which include; urinating in the commode, flushing, washing hands, and disposing of hand towels in the trash can. This does not apply to the Toddlers. The Toddler Directresses will be happy to assist in this development of your child, as needed.

G. Classroom Procedures

The following list describes the structure of the classroom and how the children are expected to work within the environment. By using these guidelines in the home, not only will you reinforce AIMS procedures, but your child will feel a sense of structure and security in his/her life as well.

- Be respectful of self, others and the environment.
- Walk when inside the classroom.
- Speak in a quiet tone of voice.
- Carry one thing at a time, using both hands.
- Put work away when finished.
- Roll up the work rug slowly and tightly, keeping the ends even, and put it away.
- Push chairs in when leaving tables.
- In circle, keep legs crossed and hands to self.
- Raise hand to talk.
- Walk around the work rugs.
- Respect other students' work.
- Clean up whatever is spilled or dropped.
- When the signal is given, stop, look and listen.

H. Restroom Procedure

The following describes how the children are expected to utilize the bathroom facilities.

- Receive permission from the Directress to leave the room.
- Flush the commode after each use.
- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Put paper towels in the trash can.
- Return directly to the classroom.

I. Playground Procedures

Our staff adheres to the following guidelines to ensure consistency for the child and his/her knowledge of what is allowed when using the playgrounds.

- Walk to and from the playground on the sidewalk.
- Go ONLY up the steps and DOWN the slide.
- Climb using two hands. Toys are left on the ground while climbing.
- Respect others who are climbing.
- Swing keeping the chains straight and sit forward in the seat.
- Stay on the swing until it stops, then get off.
- Stay clear of people while they are swinging.
- Throw balls to people on the ground and only when they are aware the ball is coming.
- Stay away from the fence.
- Play gently with others.
- Keep the sandbox toys in the sandbox or in the storage container, and return equipment to its proper place.
- Keep portable toys off stationary toys.

- Hazardous natural objects (such as sticks and limbs) on the playground should be cleared to outside the gate. Mulch must remain on the ground.
- A child must be capable of mastering the equipment without adult assistance before it is safe for him/her to use the equipment.
- Bend knees when jumping.
- Sit on the seat of the picnic tables.
- Protect the flowers and the gardens.
- Ask permission to leave the playground; wait for an adult to open / close the gate.

Please note that due to liabilities, the playground can only be used if an AIMS staff member is present. Scheduled hours will be communicated for after school use.

J. Alternate Nutrition Plan

1. To comply with Florida Department of Children and Families (FDCF), parents must sign the “Alternate Nutrition Plan Agreement.”
2. On a weekly basis parents may be asked to provide snacks, consisting of juice and a variety of foods, for the whole class. Directresses will plan the schedule and inform parents of their scheduled time. Otherwise, parents will provide a snack for their own children. **Please advise, in writing, of any food allergies and/or diet restrictions your child may have. AIMS has initiated a school wide Wellness Program. Your participation is greatly appreciated! Please see the Wellness booklet for full details.**
3. Please *do not* pack foods that could be a choking hazard such as hot dogs, popcorn, nuts/seeds, whole grapes, chunky peanut butter, raw vegetables, chunks of meat and cheese, etc. for children ages 4 and under.
4. Children in the full-day program should bring their lunches in bags or lunch boxes labeled with their names. Lunches should consist of a protein, fresh fruit and a vegetable. Sandwiches can be meat, cheese, egg, etc. Other items may be included at the parent’s discretion with the exception of candy, frosted desserts and gum. The children will be encouraged to eat the nutritious foods first. Milk or water should also be included. Please do not include any kind of soda.
5. At the end of the lunch period, the children are directed to rewrap any substantial amount of uneaten food. This will help you determine the quantities to send for your child/children and also their likes and dislikes of food packed for them. Allowing your child/children to help choose and prepare his/her lunch not only builds independence, but encourages them to eat the food he/she has chosen.
6. Recent studies have shown that certain food additives affect the behavior of the children. Please take this into consideration when packing lunches.

K. AIMS Attire

1. Uniform Policy

AIMS believes that wearing uniforms is beneficial for the student for the following reasons:

- A.) Helps academic success
- B.) Places emphasis on learning, not clothing
- C.) Reduces peer pressure and social stigmas
- D.) Facilitates security by identifying outsiders
- E.) Encourages distinction of character and personality, instead of appearance
- F.) Allows for cohesive presentation as a group
- G.) Enhances school spirit
- H.) Lowers long-term clothing costs

Please adhere to the following regarding AIMS’s Uniform Policy:

- Uniforms will be required Monday through Thursday.
- Uniforms should consist of the following:

- *Pants*- Navy or Khaki must be worn. Pants may be cotton, cotton blend or corduroy. Pants can have an elastic waist. Yoga pants, tights, or “jeggings” are not considered to be pants.
- *Skirts, Jumpers and Skorts*–Navy, Khaki or Plaid; can be cotton, cotton blend or corduroy; must be knee level or longer and can have elastic waist. A blouse or polo shirt must be worn under jumper and the jumper must be embroidered with the AIMS logo.
- *Shorts* – Navy or Khaki; shorts may be cotton, cotton blend or corduroy and may have an elastic waist. No gym shorts. Shorts should be one to two inches above the kneecap for both male and female students.
- *Shirts, Collared Dresses* – Navy, White, Light Blue, Royal Blue, Red and Pink collared polo shirts/dresses with the school’s logo should be worn. A white blouse or polo must be worn under jumpers.
- *Sweatshirts or Sweaters* may be Pullover or Zippered – must have the school’s logo on them.
- *Shoes or Sneakers* - Shoes/Sneakers must fit securely on the foot and be closed-toe. Light-up shoes or roller shoes are not appropriate.
- Each Friday will be a “free choice” day in which your child may choose the clothes they wear, which **must** follow the basic dress code policy explained below.
- Play clothing such as princess outfits, superhero accessories, etc. should be saved for events away from school.

2. Dress Code

Even though AIMS has a Uniform Policy, there are some considerations to keep in mind when “free choice” clothing, outer wear, and shoes are being selected. Independence is an important Montessori principle, and therefore, clothing should not only be comfortable, but also be easy enough so the child may dress him/herself. Please choose clothes that are sized to be comfortable.

- Elastic waistbands are much easier to deal with than zippers and belted pants.
- Coats with simple fasteners and rain boots are helpful if they are about 2 sizes larger than your child’s regular size.
- *Shoes must have closed-toes, backs, and soft soles.* They should be suitable for running and climbing, i.e. sneakers. *Cowboy boots or flip-flops are not permitted.* Crocs must only be worn inside the classroom; the child must bring a change of shoes for outdoor time.
- *Indoor shoes* are to be worn inside the building at all times. This assists with the indoor/outdoor transitions, helping children to appreciate the different behavior in both settings. It keeps the environment free from mud and dirt; this is essential since the children often work on the floors. Indoor shoes also keep the room quieter for the work environment.
- Children who are learning to tie laces need encouragement and every possible chance to succeed. Laces that are long enough to handle make the task even easier for the child to master.
- Please, label your child’s backpack and clothing, particularly coats, gloves, umbrellas, etc.
- For younger children, please provide a complete extra set of clothes in a Ziploc bag, labeled with your child’s name.
- Leggings worn under skirts, shorts or skorts OR socks should be a solid white, beige, or navy, or a solid color which matches the shirt worn. Leggings and socks must follow these rules on “free choice” Fridays.
- Beginning in the 1st grade, because of the physical development of children, no tank tops, spaghetti strap shirts, or short shorts/skirts are to be worn. Wearing a jacket does not constitute compliance with this rule.
- Please, no unnatural hair colors such as blue, pink, purple, green, etc.
- No clothing should cover the face. This includes ski hats, winter hoods, hoodies, etc.
- So that a child can learn effectively, all hair should be neatly groomed and out of the child’s face while on campus. All long hair must be secured via modest tie back, hair elastic bands or headbands.
- Friday “free choice” clothing must be free from distractions.

3. Implementation of Uniform / Dress Code

The school will strive to achieve full compliance through the use of positive reinforcement measures, and will resort to disciplinary action only when positive measures and supports fail to assure compliance.

No student will be considered non-compliant with the uniform policy in the following instances:

1. When the student wears the dress of a nationally recognized youth organization or activity, such as Boys/Girls Scouts.
2. When the student's parent or guardian has secured exemption from the school policy for religious or health considerations.
3. When a student is on school grounds outside of normal school hours (for example, Student Showcase), appropriate attire is required.
4. When a field trip or school event may require specialized clothing, (for example, a Theater Program), appropriate attire is required.

4. *Non- Compliance:*

- First Occurrence: Teachers will speak to remind parent/guardian of the policy.
A letter will be sent home reminding parents of the uniform policy.
- Second Occurrence: A call home to have the parent to bring in clothes and remind them that the student must adhere to the school uniform policy.
- Third Occurrence: Parent is notified to pick child up from school.

L. Birthdays

- In the Montessori classroom, every child's birthday may be celebrated in a special way. It is called the "Walk Around the Sun." To celebrate the children's years on Earth, the child carries a globe (which is one of our works) as they walk around the sun (a candle). The child walks around the sun one time for each year of life. We talk about how the Earth goes around the sun and every time it goes around once, that it is the same as one year or 365 days. The months are laid around the sun. The child then starts and stops at their birthday month. This celebration is great for learning the months, the concept of the Earth revolving around the sun, the concept that we live on Earth, and it's great for counting! Teachers may ask parents to provide a photograph for each year of their child's life, along with a description of any special event that occurred during that year (a trip, a new sibling).
- Parents who wish to provide a special snack should make arrangements with the Directress at least one day in advance. The celebration takes place before lunch so the servings should be small. We suggest muffins (fruit, carrot cake, banana bread, etc.) Please, no frosted cupcakes because they typically do not fit the Wellness Program.
- Children's birthdays can be a source of joy and pain. Parents should only bring invitations for the Directress to hand out or put in other children's backpacks when ALL of the children are invited. If only a few select children are desired, parents are asked to handle their child's party invitations by mailing them from home or with a phone call. Please help your child develop an awareness and sensitivity for the feelings of others by being discreet about party plans.
- Join our School Library Birthday Club and commemorate the day by purchasing their favorite book for the library. The books you purchase will be dedicated in your child's name. Bookplates are inscribed with your child's name to honor the special gift. Please check with the Librarian for details.

M. Holiday Observances

The Directress structures all holiday observances. Assistance from room mothers is always appreciated. Those classrooms without room mothers may wish to use sign-up sheets for help with tasks and supplies. Observed holidays include, but are not limited to: Maria Montessori's Birthday, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Valentine's Day, Earth Day and Memorial Day.

N. Sharing Time

Children often wish to share special things and bring various items to school. Items of educational interest

are welcome i.e. flowers, musical instruments, objects and dolls from foreign countries, things from nature, postcards, and photos. A note of explanation enables the Directress to help the child in the presentation. Children may bring something on their assigned day of the week. Toys, treasures, money, play jewelry, etc. are to be left at home. Children are not permitted to play with them at school as they are easily lost.

O. Field Trips

On occasion, AIMS will sponsor and conduct field trips for the educational enrichment of the students. Participation in field trips is a privilege. No student may participate in a field trip unless a signed parent/guardian permission slip (provided by the school) for the specific event is submitted to the School. Some field trips require a fee. Teachers have extensive directions regarding field trip procedures.

In order to drive on field trips, parents are required to have on file:

- (1) The notarized "Affidavit of Good Moral Character" form
- (2) The Volunteer Affidavit
- (3) Volunteer Emergency Information sheet
- (4) A copy of a current driver's license, and
- (5) A copy of proof of current insurance.

P. Transportation Policy

Because of the heavy auto traffic during arrival and departure times, children are not allowed to be in the parking area. Each parent or legal guardian is responsible for their child's observance of this policy until the child enters the school building.

Florida State Law mandates the names of all persons with whom a child may leave must be on file at the school. This is not blanket permission. Each time a child's normal pickup schedule is changed, a written notice must be submitted. A note to the child's teacher is the most efficient manner to offer this information. Emails to administration are acceptable; however, notice must be made by 1:00 p.m. Telephone notification will be accepted on an emergency basis only.

Transportation Release: Faculty members cannot transport students to or from school unless a Release of Responsibility and Liability is signed by a parent and filed with the Head of School.

Car Seats: All passengers in all vehicles are required by law to be buckled in.

Florida law states:

Children 7 years old or younger must be secured in a federally approved child restraint system.

- Children 3 years old and younger must use a separate car-seat or the vehicle's built-in child seat.
- Children 4 to 7 years old must sit in either a separate car seat, a built in child seat or a seat belt, depending on the child's height and weight.

It is suggested that parents use the following car seat **guidelines** from the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles while driving with a child in your vehicle.

Birth to 1 year old and at least 20 lbs.

- Use a rear-facing child car seat in the back seat of the car.

1 year old and 20 lbs. – 4 years old and 40 lbs.

- Use a forward-facing child seat in the back seat until they reach the weight and height limits recommended by the manufacturer.
- Switch to a booster seat in the back of the car

4 years old and 40 lbs. – 8 years old or 4 ft. 9 inches tall

- Use a booster seat in the back seat until your child is big enough to use the car's seat belt..

8 years old or 4 ft. 9 inches tall –12 years old

- Have your child sit in the backseat with a seatbelt.
- At 13 years old, your child can sit in the front seat of your car.

Q. Student Discipline/Behavioral Policy

The development of inner discipline in a child is a continuous goal at Amelia Island Montessori School. Within the Montessori environment, the individual rights of the child and adult are highly respected. Should this respect not be shown, the following procedures will be implemented:

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1. The incident is reviewed discreetly between the child/children involved and the faculty member present.
2. The child/children may be removed to a designated “peace” chair / space, but kept within the program environment. If this occurs, the Head of School is notified.
3. If the severity of an incident or the incident is repeated, the child is removed from the program environment to calm down under the guidance of a staff member. The parent is notified of this occurrence.
4. At the request of the Head of School, faculty member or parent, a conference may be scheduled.
5. Following such conference, a mutually agreed upon behavioral plan will be designed to best meet the needs of the child/children and the others within the program environment.
6. If the behavioral plan is not successful, professional consultation may be recommended.
7. Refusal on the part of the parent to follow the behavioral plan will result in dismissal of the child from the school.
8. At no time will corporal punishment be used.
9. All personnel must comply with the Amelia Island Montessori School’s written disciplinary practices. Such policies shall include standards that prohibit children from being subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating, frightening or associated with food, rest or toileting.

If the result of the assessment combined with observation of the student’s behavior indicates a need for further evaluation, the Directress may recommend educational and/or psychological testing.

R. Anti-Bullying Policy

Amelia Island Montessori School is committed to providing an educational setting that is safe, secure and free from harassment and bullying for all of its students and employees. This includes students bullying students, adults bullying students, adults bullying adults and students bullying adults.

AIMS will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited:

- during any academic day or activity conducted by the school
- during any school-related or school sponsored program or activity
- through the use of date or computer software that is accessed through a computer system, or computer network of the school.

“*Bullying*” means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is defined as any unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual’s school performance or participation; and may involve but not limited to:

- teasing

- social exclusion
- threat
- intimidation
- stalking
- physical violence
- theft
- public humiliation
- destruction of property

Bullying is *not* routine misbehavior during which children are “playing” with each other. It’s intentional, unwanted, and repeated action.

“*Cyber Bullying*” means electronically transmitted acts (i.e., Internet, e-mail, cellular telephone, personal digital assistance or wireless hand-held device) that a student, adult or a group of students or adults exhibits toward another particular student(s) and /or adults, the behavior both causes mental and or physical harm to the other student/adult and is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student(s) or adult (s).

“*Cyber Stalking*” means to engage repetitively in an unwanted course of conduct to communicate or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.

Signs a Child is being Bullied

- Personal belongings are missing, damaged or scattered
- Unexplained bruises or wounds
- Exclusion or isolation from peers; lack of friends
- Not wanting to go to school
- Appearing to be depressed, unhappy, distressed, anxious, withdrawn, or insecure
- Loss of interest or inability to focus on schoolwork

Strategies for Students:

Students need a variety of appropriate actions to take if they experience or observe bullying:

- Seek immediate help from an adult.
- Speak up or offer support to the victim.
- Privately support or offer words of kindness to those being hurt.
- Express disapproval of bullying by not joining in on the laughter, teasing, or spreading of rumors or gossip.
- Attempt to defuse problem situations by taking the bully aside and asking him/her to “cool it.”

If your Child is the Bully

Parents are the best resources to help their children stop bullying and have better relationships with their classmates.

Signs a child may be a bully:

- Lacks empathy and doesn’t sympathize with others
- Values aggression
- Likes to be in charge
- Is an arrogant winner and a sore loser
- Often fights with brothers and sisters
- Is impulsive

To reduce harm to students/adults and to protect AIMS from liability, the following policy will be implemented:

- We will explain, reinforce, and uphold the standards of behavior we expect of students and adults.
- We will take all reports seriously and investigate all complaints promptly and thoroughly according to a standard procedure.
- We will ensure confidentiality.
- We will provide interventions appropriate for the level of seriousness of infractions.
- We will protect witnesses and victims from retaliation.
- We will implement appropriate consequences if allegations are substantiated.
- We will promptly report suspected child abuse, sexual assault, or other criminal acts.
- AIMS will not tolerate any type of bullying or harassment.
- With each situation, we will take into consideration the age, and the developmental level of the child.

If a person suspects bullying, the HOS should be notified and further action will take place.

Section 3

Communications

A. School → Home

1. E-Mail

It is essential that parents check your e-mail daily and open all Constant Contacts from the school.

All newsletters, individual family monthly tuition invoices, and other notices are sent home via e-mail. Communications via e-mail are sent on an as needed basis. **It is essential that parents/guardians be attentive to each of these communications as many questions are answered within these communications regarding the life of the school and necessary requirements for your child.** Should paperwork be necessary, it will be sent home in the backpack or handed to you personally at drop-off / pick-up by a staff person.

2. Assembly

Assemblies are being developed for this school year and information about them will be communicated to the parents. We are planning to continue to develop a greater sense of school community while teaching students how to behave within a large setting. Parents are welcome to attend.

3. Calendar

The annual calendar is posted on the website and in Montessori Compass. Reminders of upcoming events will be sent as timely as possible. Please note that some dates and activities may change; however, parents will be notified ahead of time of any significant changes.

4. Website

All current information will be posted on the website and can be viewed at www.ameliainlandmontessori.com.

5. Facebook

We encourage all parents, staff, alumni and supporters of AIMS to join our Facebook group, Amelia Island Montessori School. To help protect children from Internet harm, there will be no individual classroom Facebook pages. The same information will be made available via Montessori Compass. Also, due to liabilities that may occur, staff members will not have personal connections with parents of children in their class through Facebook. As far-reaching as Facebook can be, this policy is intended to protect children and staff members. Personal connections may be made after children (or upcoming siblings) have completed the teacher's class.

B. Relationships with Employees of AIMS

School is an extension of the child's home environment. Therefore, we feel it is most important for the parent and Directress to closely communicate with each other. Parents can learn what their children are doing during the hours spent away from home. Directresses can learn about any factor that may be influencing the child. Any changes, whether positive or negative, can influence children's behavior. Grandparents visiting, the death of a pet, illness, divorce or separation, moving, etc., all contribute to changes in your child's daily routine. Please make your child's Directress aware of these changes so he/she can better meet the needs of your child.

Parents are requested to keep all employee relationships on a professional level. We understand and appreciate how much faith and trust you place in us. Employees are forbidden to accept gifts from parents in return for special treatment of a student. Employees are also forbidden to accept outside employment from you which include such services as tutoring and babysitting. Employees are subject to disciplinary action or up to and including termination if they engage in such activities. Please do not place an employee in the uncomfortable and possibly awkward position of rejecting your request for such services or favors. These behaviors do not further the professional partnerships that we are committed to and this intentional community that we hold so important to furthering our vision and mission in the world.

AIMS asks that you refrain from texting or calling your child's teacher on their cell phone. You are welcome to leave a message for your child's teacher in the business office. We will gladly relay the message and you should be contacted by the end of the day. If you are contacting your child's teacher by e-mail, please realize that it will be necessary that she email you back within 24 hours.

To continuously offer the best education for your child, we must protect the instructional time and environment from interruptions. We appreciate your understanding and help in this matter.

C. Conferences

- Parent-teacher conferences are an integral part of Montessori philosophy. The importance of communication is necessary for both parents and the staff at AIMS. Conferences will be held three times a year (Fall, Winter, Spring) or more frequently if necessary. Parents are encouraged to request a Directress conference should a need arise.
- These conferences allow parents to get to know the teacher, understand the academic curriculum and learn about the progress their child is making in the Montessori classroom. Appointments are made through the child's Directress or assistant. Keeping the lines of communication open with your child's Directress is an important part of the Montessori experience.
- Observations by the teacher and the parent are a key tool to assess student progress. Parents are welcome to schedule an opportunity to observe their child prior to the conference.

Section 4 Parental Rights & Responsibilities

A. Parental Responsibilities

1. Parent Involvement Team

Our Parent Involvement Team holds various roles in our school community. The major function of this team is to create a connection between the school and parents. This committee assists in organizing many school-wide activities, such as: timely communications between school and parents, acquiring volunteers for events for the school, seeking information to be included in our parent resource library, and providing the link for all stakeholders – BOT, staff, parents, students, community and alumni. *It is all parents' responsibility to*

respond as much as possible to this team when requested; it is evident that many hands make light work of a heavy load. If you are interested in serving on this group's Leadership Team, please let the HOS know.

2. Required Educational Programs

In order for parents to continue to develop understanding of the Montessori education, and as stated in each student's contract, ("Within the child's first year at AIMS, it is mandatory that all parents attend at least four (4) hours of parent education meetings, and two (2) hours every year thereafter.") there is the requirement to fulfill the hours for parent education. These hours are beyond the volunteer hours; however, they may be logged in the volunteer log for documentation. There is a parent resource library which allows parents to check out books to read and self-educate; however, please feel free to ask questions of your teachers. There is a computer that is on-line with a list of websites available for research and learning. There will also be opportunities for attendance at educational occasions, (such as The Silent Journey and Discovery, Open House, Orientation, Transition Meetings, Article Reviews and Showcases,) held at the school for everyone's participation. If parents need assistance or resources, please speak to your child's teacher or the HOS.

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3. Volunteer Obligations

There will be many opportunities for each family to fulfill their required volunteer hours. Volunteer Work Parties are one method. They become wonderful social events hosted by our Parent Involvement Team while necessary maintenance and repairs to our school take place.

Each family is required to fill 20 volunteer hours at various projects during the school year. At least ten hours must be given to school wide projects. The remaining ten hours *may* be given in the classroom; however, if parents are unavailable during school hours to give time to the classroom, more hours may be given to school wide projects. Each family will receive a questionnaire to indicate area(s) in which they would like to volunteer. Should there be an area of interest not covered, these hours must be preapproved by the HOS.

Volunteer hours are contracted to be met. In the event that volunteer hours are not met by May 1, planned arrangements must be made to meet this requirement or a \$20.00 fee per uncompleted hour will be assessed to the student's account. When you volunteer, it is very important to record your time on the via the volunteer sheet in your child's classroom. This is how your hours are tracked for completion for your volunteer time.

Every attempt will be made to put the recording of volunteer hours process on-line so that you may sign up for volunteer opportunities and to track your hours away from school. Please watch for details.

4. Court Orders

If there is a court order specifying the rights and responsibilities of individual parents, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the School with an official copy of the court order. The custodial parent should submit to the Head of School the "Custody Section" of the divorce decree if it contains information which may be useful to the School in fulfilling its obligations.

5. Buckley Amendment¹

Our School abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, AIMS will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given to the non-custodial parent, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

¹ / Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, Ch. 1002, FS.

It is essential to communicate the same information to both parents at the same time. Therefore, if possible, joint conferences will be held. If either parent is uncomfortable with scheduling joint conferences, he or she should contact the HOS to discuss the situation.

6. Phones

If you need to speak to a teacher, please call the school at 904.261.6610 and your message will be delivered to the teacher. Please do not call or text your child's teacher during class time. Teacher attention to children must not be interrupted. Their attention should be on the children while they are in the classroom. When their attention goes to a phone, we are out of compliance with ratios and the students suffer. Teachers have school phones in their class and can make contact with you if necessary. Page | 21

Also, please be respectful and leave your cell phone in the car or turn it off completely (not just on vibrate) so that children's learning is not interrupted if you are visiting the classroom. Your child deserves your full attention while you are in his/her class.

7. Expectations – What AIMS can expect from you as a parent

- Attendance at meetings, orientations and parent/teacher conferences.
- Acceptance of the Montessori philosophy and adherence to the guidelines of the Parent Handbook.
- Communication concerning situations that may affect your child's school performance.
- Early communication to the Directress or Head of School about problems or concerns.
- Involvement in parent volunteer activities and other fundraising projects to support the school.
- Prompt response to tuition and paperwork obligations.
- A positive attitude towards the school and philosophy you have chosen for your child.

8. Respect

We expect that all persons involved at AIMS (to include employees, parents/family members, BOT, students, and volunteers) will treat each other with dignity and respect. Harassment will not be tolerated. Harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, sexual, or visual, that is based on a person's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, or disability. If an allegation of harassment arises, the Head of School will promptly conduct a discreet investigation. If an investigation reveals that harassment has occurred, AIMS will take corrective action. At all times, AIMS reserves the right to refuse to serve parents whose behavior constitutes a hostile environment for AIMS employees.

B. Parental Rights

1. Classroom Observations

All Primary and Lower Elementary programs have observation rooms. While the Toddler East Class and the Upper Elementary Class do not have these specific rooms, there are guidelines to the observation process. These guidelines are available upon request from the Directress. Parents are welcome at any time to observe their children. However, upon arrival at the school, the parent should check in at the front office and be escorted to the observation windows.

Observations within the classroom should be scheduled with the Directress ahead of time. However, cell phones should be left in the car or turned off completely (not just on vibrate) as the children will be interrupted when a phone is checked in any method. AIMS knows that parents understand every child deserves the individual attention a parent can give while observing by turning the phone to the off position.

2. Expectations -- What you, as a parent, can expect from AIMS

- A safe, caring and secure environment to help children develop a strong sense of character and a

- confident place in society.
- Faculty and staff who live by the stated philosophies of the school and Dr. Maria Montessori – the founder of the Montessori Method of education.
 - Care and respect for your child as an individual who progresses at his/her own pace.
 - Realistic goals for your child.
 - Information about your child’s progress and advice when needed.
 - Appreciation of your point of view.
 - Positive thinking and professionalism.
 - A prepared environment that gives your child the opportunity to cultivate curiosity and interest in an orderly and neat fashion that is easily accessible for the child.

Section 5

Emergency Procedures

Amelia Island has adopted an extensive Emergency Crisis Management Plan. Staff are fully trained and prepared and the school will run drills from time to time.

Section 6

Administrative Procedures

A. Student Support Team

The student support team is designed to provide support to students who may be having academic, emotional or social difficulties in the classroom. There are several steps in this process:

- Parent is notified by teacher of concerns.
- Parent gives written approval to initiate the Student Support Team process.
- Teacher fills out the Teacher Input Form and submits to Head of School.
- Another AIMS staff member observes child and fills out the Student Observation Form.
- Head of School observes child and fills out the Student Observation Form.
- The Student Support Teams meets to discuss options and steps to be taken.
- Student Support Team and Head of School meet with parents to discuss strategies and a timeline.

Within 4 weeks of identifying concern, the student is either showing consistent improvements or failing to demonstrate positive changes. Further action will be taken if needed.

B. Students with Learning Differences

In the event that a student appears to have a learning difference, learning needs or a recurring emotional, medical, behavioral, or disciplinary problem, the school will contact the child’s family to communicate concerns in a timely, sensitive and thoughtful manner. Children with mild physical, mental, or educational difficulties are considered for admission if their needs may be met within the context of the Montessori program.

Initial and/or periodic assessment by qualified professionals may be required. AIMS reserves the right to ultimately determine whether continuation in AIMS or transition to another program is in the best interest of the child and/or school classroom environment. While the school works to respond to each child’s specific needs, the school may lack the expertise to develop appropriate learning strategies for children with special needs.

Please be aware that a child may be able to function in one environment during a particular phase of development and not another. This does not presume that AIMS will be able to offer the structure, assistance and supervision necessary for optimal growth of the child in the next class. If a facilitator is required for a

child with special needs, the facilitator must meet all the requirements and will be under the supervision of the Directress and the Head of School, in conjunction with the parent or guardian.

C. Privacy of Student Files

Student files are confidential records and are kept secure from unauthorized access. Each student file should contain a log (name, date, purpose) of those persons or agencies that have had access to the student's file. Parents or guardians may have access to the child's file by written request to the office at least 24 hours in advance. The file must be viewed in the presence of an AIMS staff member.

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Officials of the State or County Health Dept. and the State Dept. of Education may have the right to review student files without the parents' or guardians' permission. However, with a written court order, other government officials may inspect the contents of a student's file without the permission of the student or parent/guardian, and the school will inform the student and his family in writing that such an inspection has been requested or made.

A copy of the student's file may be sent to an outside professional, such as a psychologist or educational diagnostician, if requested in writing by the parent(s), guardian(s), or student if he/she has attained the age of majority, with notation of pertinent papers to be sent.

D. Disclosures Without Consent

- Disclosures without consent can be made to school officials with legitimate educational interests.
- A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
- A school official is a person employed by AIMS as one of the following:
 - an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff;
 - a person serving on the school board;
 - a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her professional responsibility.
- Under certain prescribed situations, disclosure can be made to state and local officers of the juvenile justice system.
- Notification of the existence of a subpoena from a federal grand jury is not required for parents and eligible students.
- If a court or other issuing agency issues a subpoena for a law enforcement purpose and orders the school not to disclose the existence or contents of the subpoena to the parent or student, the school shall not be required to notify prior to compliance with the subpoena.

E. Student Records & Previous School Records

Attendance records are retained for all children. The Department of Children and Family requires that all attendance records include the date and time of drop off and pick up of each child. AIMS retains attendance records for 3 years. Attendance records for all students are detailed and filed in the students' permanent file.

The full cooperation of the parents is required regarding previous school records and/or test results. Test results, evaluations, report cards, etc. need to be submitted or obtained if applicable. Any professional recommendations (tutoring, therapy, etc.) must be provided to ensure the child's success. All evaluations and professional recommendations are at the parent's expense and must be shared with the school.

F. Records/Transcripts Requests

- All requests to access student records by parents shall be submitted to the Head of School or designee

in writing.

- If a parent disagrees with any information in their children's record and requests a change be made, the request shall be submitted in writing. The Head of School will investigate the information in question. After such investigation, if the information in the students' record is deemed incorrect, the Head of School will make the appropriate change to the record. If the information is deemed correct, the Head of School will provide the parent a written statement explaining and justifying such decision.

G. Transcripts

- By written request, the parent/guardian or, upon attaining the age of majority, the student may ask that a photocopy of the student's file, along with completed recommendation forms, be issued to another school. Copies sent directly are marked "Official Transcript" and are noted in the file.
- Report cards and transcripts cannot be issued if a student has an outstanding balance on his or her account that is more than sixty days past due. They will be forwarded once the account has been brought up to date.
- According to Florida Law, Health and Immunization Records will be forwarded upon request.

H. Tuition Payments

The tuition scale (including fees and discounts) may be found at www.ameliaislandmontessori.com.

- Monthly statements will be issued via e-mail; it is essential that AIMS have the correct email address on file.
- Monthly tuition payments are due on or before the 1st day of each month. Semi-annual tuition payments are due July 1st and December 1st. Annual payments are due on July 1st. Late payment is considered after the 10th of the month in all payment plans.
- All payment plans will begin July 1st and end March 1st. The deposit made with the current contract will become April's payment.
- All contracts which reflect Payment Plans 2 or 3 must be accompanied by an ACH (automatic) debit form; your designated checking or savings account is automatically debited on the parent-selected 1st, 5th or 10th of each month. (Should the 1st fall on a Saturday, Sunday or a National Holiday, your account will be charged upon the next immediate open date.)
- Should parents prefer their bank account to not be accessed, payment (check or credit card) in the correct amount must be delivered, via mail or in person, to the business office prior to the access date. *Please note:* Payments made by mail or through a payment service, *must arrive* by the designated date to the school.
- Please make checks payable to AIMS. A \$30.00 charge will be levied on all returned checks.
- A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged on the 11th of each month if payment is not received. Additionally, a finance charge of 1.5% of any outstanding balance will be charged.
- If you choose to pay by credit card, we accept all major credit/debit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover) for tuition payments. If you would like to pay with a credit/debit card there will be a Convenience Fee of 3.9% for each transaction. Also, there will be a \$30.00 charge levied for all declined cards.
- ASP contracts will be developed at the beginning of the school year and payment plans set forth at that time.

I. Accounts Receivable & Collections Policy:

This policy defines both the normal and optional procedures for the collection of funds due the school for services rendered. It does not provide for the collection of funds due from the sale of assets. It should be understood that in all matters concerning collection and other means of debt satisfaction, the concurrence of the President of the Board and the Head of School is required. All burden of proof of payment is upon the payee. All decisions are subject to Board Review per notification to its President.

1. Normal Collection Procedure: Tuition is payable by the first of each month. A \$10.00 late payment fee is charged after the 10th of each month and a 1.5% finance charge is assessed the last day of the month.
 Any form of outstanding balances will be reviewed and categorized as 30-60-90 days past the due date. Each category will be handled in the following manner after the indicated time has elapsed and the amounts due have not been paid.
 - 30-Days: Another invoice will be sent to the family with late fee.
 - 60-Days: Invoice and a Notification of Delinquency will be mailed to the family.
 - 90-Days: Notification of Intention to send to Collections if arrangements are not made with the Head of School and Bookkeeper.

2. Alternative Collection Procedure:
 - Payment Plan: arrangements can be made with the Head of School to set up a payment plan if the situation warrants.

3. Non-Sufficient Funds Procedure
 - For all returned checks and/or a declined credit card, a charge is levied. A certified check, money order or cash will be required within three (3) working days.

J. Child Abuse Policy

AIMS staff adheres to the child abuse policies and guidelines as written in the Florida State Legislation. The Florida Department of Children and Families requires that all early childhood personnel be trained to recognize and respond to suspicious situations. Suspected child abuse or neglect is reported by calling 1-800-96ABUSE.

K. Smoking & Alcohol Policy

The Florida Clean Indoor Act prohibits indoor smoking areas in any school or educational facility. AIMS requests all parents model healthy choices and not use any form of tobacco, especially on campus.

No alcoholic beverages may be consumed at the school during regular school hours, when the After School Program is in session, or when children are present at the school. No open consumption of alcoholic beverages will take place during a school-sponsored event when minors are present.

L. AIMS Grievance Procedure for Parents

In order to assure grievances are handled properly, the following procedure has been implemented.

Although parents and other non-employees are not required to follow the following Grievance Procedure, if any AIMS employee or Board member (further known as representative) is contacted by a non-employee regarding a grievance, the representative shall direct the complainant to the Grievance Procedure in the Parent and Employee Handbook and direct them in proceeding to the initial step which may be taken in an attempt to resolve complaints confidentially.

Any representative contacted regarding such matter shall keep any and all information confidential and shall disclose such information only in response to an investigation conducted by the Head of School, Board of Trustees, or a Grievance Committee, or in response to a proper request made during legal proceedings regarding such matter.

If, and only if, the complainant's problem directly involves the Head of School, the complainant may skip steps 1-3 and may present his/her grievance in writing, on the form provided in Appendix A/B of this Handbook, directly to the President of the Board. Page | 26

1. The complainant should schedule a first conference, as soon as possible, with the Head of School. If a specific incident has given rise to the problem, this first conference should be scheduled as close to the date of the event as possible.
2. If this first conference with the Head of School fails to resolve the problem, an official complaint should be submitted to the Head of School, in writing, on the form provided in Appendix B/C of this Handbook, within fifteen (15) working days following the first conference. The grievance form requires the complainant to describe in detail the problem and steps that have been taken to resolve it. Upon receipt, the Head of School shall date the grievance form and return a dated copy to the complainant.
3. The Head of School shall begin an investigation into the problem. The Head of School has ten (10) working days to complete the investigation. Upon completion of the investigation the Head of School shall meet with the complainant and inform him/her of the results of the investigation and what remedy the Head of School thinks is appropriate. This meeting is the second conference. The Head of School shall also provide an answer to the grievance in writing prior to the second conference. If the situation warrants, the Head of School may choose to bring the problem to the attention of the President of the Board at this time. If the complainant is not satisfied with the Head of School's investigation or suggested remedy, he/she may appeal to the President of the Board of Trustees by submitting a written complaint, on the form provided in this Handbook, within ten (10) business days following the second conference. Upon receipt, the President of the Board shall date the grievance form and return a dated copy to the complainant.

If a problem is brought to the President of the Board of Trustees, a Grievance Committee shall conduct an investigation into the complaint and shall respond in writing to the grievance within thirty (30) working days. The Grievance Committee shall consist of three members, including an educator, and an attorney, both from outside the school, as well as a former AIMS parent. Any decision made by the Grievance Committee shall be final and binding. The BOT President reserves the right to appoint a current board member to be part of this committee should it be warranted.

In order to preserve the integrity of this internal procedure, no employee is to take any matter to a member of the Board of Trustees or to any other person without first taking the appropriate steps laid out in the grievance procedure. Any conferences between faculty/staff members and Board members, or other non-faculty/staff members who are not directly involved concerning a grievance, which take place outside of the internal grievance procedure, are highly inappropriate and inconsistent with our goal of maintaining the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of employment information.

Section 7

Additional Information

The following information may be found at www.ameliaislandmontessori.com on our website under “Additional Information.”

- ✚ Program Descriptions
- ✚ Scholarship Policy
- ✚ Admissions Policy
- ✚ Progression Policy
- ✚ Preferential Policy
 - Toddler Preferential Policy
 - Primary Three To Six Preferential Policy
 - Elementary Program Preferential Policy
 - Fourth And Higher Grade Placement
 - Before And After School Program (ASP) Preferential Policy
 - Summer Program Preferential Policy

- ✚ Withdrawal Or Dismissal
- ✚ Termination of Student Attendance

Section 8

Dr. Montessori believed in the following:

- Each child matures or develops at a rate different from that of others. The rate changes over time, thus comparing children of the same age does not produce useful information and causes unnecessary anxiety.
- Encourage children with positive comments. We strongly suggest the school and home use the same philosophy.
- Provide sensible, flexible rules and limits that your children can accept and follow easily. This gives them a sense of security in his/her environment and relationships.
- Always let your children do things for themselves that they are capable of doing independently.
- *Demonstrate* each activity to your child in a slow simple manner with as few words as possible and let him/her try the task. Give time to practice; let your child use real objects.
- Only touch a child when invited to do so.
- Speak only positive comments of every child. *Little ears hear everything!*
- Be ever ready to answer the call of a child who needs you.
- Respect the child who makes a mistake and then can later correct it.
- Stop immediately and firmly correct any misuse of the environment and any action which endangers the child.
- Treat the child with the best of good manners and offer the best you have of yourself at your disposal.
- While television and computers have vital roles in the household, it is suggested that electronic/technology time for children be limited and guided. A reminder: these activities can take valuable time away which can never be regained.



Appendix A
GRIEVANCE FORM
Head of School

NAME: _____

Date: _____

1. Please explain your grievance with specific details: (use separate sheet if necessary)

2. Date of first conference with Head of School _____

My grievance is not resolved because: (use separate sheet if necessary)

3. My grievance could be resolved by: (use separate sheet if necessary)

Received by the Head of School

Date: _____

Copy: _____



Appendix B
GRIEVANCE FORM
BOT President

NAME: _____

Date: _____

Steps 1 - 4 have been completed with the Head of School. A copy of that form should be attached here.

5. A second conference was held with the Head of School to discuss the investigation of the complaint on _____

My grievance is not resolved because: (use separate sheet if necessary)

Received by President of the Board

Date: _____

Copy: _____

6. Response of the Board

Representative of the Board

Date