



The Brandon Montessori School AT RIVER HILLS    The Riverview Montessori School AT RIVERCREST  
The SouthShore Montessori School AT WATERSET

*Parent Handbook*  
*Policies and Procedures*  
**2018-2019 School Year**

*AMS\*, SACS and NCPISA Accredited*



AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY  
education that transforms lives



[www.wearemontessori.com](http://www.wearemontessori.com)

The [Brandon Montessori School at River Hills](#) (813) 655-9300  
The Riverview Montessori School at Rivercrest (813) 741-3300  
The SouthShore Montessori School at Waterset (813) 677-5000

\* Accredited with non-traditional Montessori age groupings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
<b>VISION &amp; MISSION.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>OUR CORE VALUES .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SCHOOL GOALS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE BRANDON, RIVERVIEW AND SOUTHSHORE MONTESSORI SCHOOLS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>YOUNG CHILDREN, PRE-PRIMARY, KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>YOUNG CHILDREN AND PRE-PRIMARY PROGRAMS AND ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN &amp; VPK-PLUS ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM AND ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>ELEMENTARY PROGRAM CURRICULUM.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>ELEMENTARY PROGRAM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ALL CHILDREN .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>TUITION RATES FOR THE ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>VPK-PLUS AND AFTER SCHOOL RATES, TUITION PAYMENT PLANS.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>MONTESSORI CLASSROOM SCHEDULES .....</b>	<b>34</b>

## **Vision**

To be the premier early childhood education program in the Tampa Bay area.

## **Mission**

To develop and nurture the intellectual, creative and human potential of our children through excellence in all our endeavors.

## **Our Core Values**

**Passion for Children** Our reason for being.

**Integrity** Adherence to the highest moral standards driven by equality, honesty, trust and loyalty.

**Dedication** To the education and safety of our children; the needs of our families; and the intellectual growth of our team.

**Fun** Enthusiastic and passionate in our ability to inspire continuous improvement and a love for learning.

**Professional** In our interaction with our children, our families and each other; based on compassion, mutual respect and positive energy.

**Nurturing** Empathetic to the needs of our children, our families and our team, as ambassadors in our communities.

**Dynamic** To challenge and inspire our children and each other to prepare for and adapt to our changing world.

## **School Goals**

We are committed to:

1. The safety, happiness, and individuality of each child.
2. Building strong relationships with our children and their families.
3. Creating a professional work environment based on the principles of sound ethics, professionalism, diversity, and growth.
4. Continuously improving our schools to enable us to serve the community through many generations.

## **Academic Goals**

Our academic goals are to:

1. Develop the overall potential of each child.
2. Inspire academic excellence.
3. Nurture the creativity, curiosity, and imagination of every child.
4. Create a loving and caring environment that fosters happiness.
5. Create a safe haven for our children.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

The Brandon Montessori School, The Riverview Montessori School and The SouthShore Montessori School (hereafter referred to as The Schools) do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, or handicap/disability in their enrollment practices. The Schools also support equal employment opportunity and treatment for all staff without regard to sex, race, color, religion or national origin, age, sexual orientation, handicap/disability or veteran status in all aspects of employment.

## **Background Information on The Brandon, Riverview and SouthShore Montessori Schools**

RMR Montessori LLC, the parent organization of The Brandon Montessori School at River Hills (BMS), was formed in December 2000 to provide an excellent early childhood education program in one of the fastest growing regions in the Tampa Bay area. In 2005 our second school opened, The Riverview Montessori School, to provide the best quality education for our families in the greater Riverview area. Responding to the demand for quality early education in the Apollo Beach area, The SouthShore Montessori School opened in 2012. Ms. Rohini Rustogi is the President and CEO of all three schools. Her passion for children drives our vision to be the very best.

The Brandon Montessori School (BMS) is adjacent to Lithia Springs Elementary and to the River Hills community. The Riverview Montessori School (RMS) is adjacent to Terrell Sessums Elementary and located in the Rivercrest community. The SouthShore Montessori School (SMS) is located in the Waterset community. The Schools provide a specialized curriculum based on the Montessori Method for Pre-Primary and Kindergarten age children (3 to 6 years) and After School care for Elementary school children. Our Riverview and SouthShore locations, offer a Young Children's Program (2.5 to 3 years). The Riverview Montessori also offers an Elementary Program for children 6 to 9 years.

Consistent with our mission, we want to help each child reach his or her full potential in all areas of life. Our schools are dedicated to the Montessori philosophy and method of education. A child attending BMS, RMS, and SMS will be exposed to a method which facilitates the growth of inner discipline and complex reasoning skills. Our Montessori Schools take pride in our lead teachers who received their Montessori credentials from the American Montessori Society or equivalent organizations. Through the support of our highly trained assistants, The Schools take pride in providing the best quality education to meet the needs of each child.

## **The Young Children, Pre-Primary and Kindergarten Montessori Curriculum**

Each Montessori classroom is designed with the Montessori Philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori in mind. The Montessori Method encourages what Maria saw as the children's innate ability to 'absorb' culture -- the natural means that the child's absorbent mind takes in his environment effortlessly and unconsciously.

The Montessori Prepared Environment is purposeful. Maria Montessori believed that the teacher should prepare the environment and herself with a definite purpose to allow for the spontaneous progression of the child's development. Thus, the Montessori classroom is not just a place of learning abstract ideas but rather, a place to acquire an education for life. The Montessori Prepared Environment with all of the elements comes together to educate the whole child, not just the academics of the child. The *materials* teach the child and the teacher is the *guide*. The teacher is the link between this uniquely prepared environment and the child. There are three main elements that come together to create the Montessori prepared environment: the child, the materials in the prepared environment, and the teacher. We believe that these are the distinct characteristics that stand out when compared to other educational systems.

In a Montessori school, the child is the reason that the prepared environment exists. It is within the environment that the child develops on so many levels. Physically, the child's development is enhanced and stimulated by the simple freedom of movement. There are no desks assigned for the child to sit at for long periods. Rather, the child moves around from one area to another growing and realizing his own place within the environment. It is by ability, not by age that a child challenges himself and becomes self-reliant, focused and independent. Intellectually, the child's freedom of choice in his materials leads to a development in his concentration and thereby knowledge in so many areas of life. The environment addresses the children's needs as they challenge themselves from very basic to very advanced materials.

### **Practical Life**

Practical life exercises are designed to help a child gain a sense of order, to develop coordination and concentration, and to foster independence. Practical life exercises essentially provide the blueprint of life and emphasize building fine motor skills and increasing attention spans associated with daily living activities.

### **Sensorial**

Sensorial experiences appeal to the five senses of sight, touch, smell, taste and sound. Sensorial lessons define shape, color, size, weight, sound, smell and texture. The use of concrete sensorial materials establishes the necessary foundation for the child to later recognize abstract ideas with greater understanding and a more organized mind.

### **Language**

Language development spans all areas of the classroom and is alive with movement. In the Montessori classroom, children learn through phonics as well as sight–reading through labels in the classroom. Individual lessons are based on phonetics, linguistics and sight–reading skills. It is not uncommon for most four year olds, enrolled in our schools, to be reading before their fifth birthday. The children’s interest in reading is never stifled by monotony; rather it is cultivated as their most important key to future learning.

### **Mathematics**

Maria Montessori demonstrated that if children have access to a hands on approach to mathematics in their early years, it serves as a basis for logical thinking and future acquisition of math skills. The Montessori approach to mathematics is logical, clear and effective. Children work with concrete materials representing abstract concepts. The whole math experience is very kinesthetic and visual. Children learn concepts through natural progression. The classrooms are full of materials for learning the concepts of numeration, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and problem solving.

### **Cultural Studies/ Arts & Crafts/ Computer Applications**

Geography, History, Biology, Botany, Zoology, Social Sciences, Horticulture and World Cultures are presented to the children in enriching and exciting ways. Children study about the world through maps and globes. The objective is to increase their awareness of our planet. The Montessori Method offers the children a concrete presentation of history by letting them work with timelines.

Art, integrated into curriculum, enhances the creativity of the child. Talented professional Art instructors design meaningful and inspirational lessons for the Pre-Primary children to gain awareness and an appreciation for the arts. Art is an important form of self-expression. It develops hand-eye coordination, imagination, individuality and aesthetic appreciation.

Computers are used by Kindergarten and Elementary students. Technology related skills are essential for this generation to succeed in the future.

### **Foreign Language**

The curriculum is designed to give the children a working knowledge of an additional language. The program is designed to be colloquial, interesting and useful. Students learn shapes, colors and the fundamentals of the language.

### **Music and Movement**

Physical growth and muscle development are precursors to intellectual development. The Montessori philosophy brings together music, dance and song. An early appreciation of music and movement will contribute to the overall development of the child. Expert Music teachers engage the children in cultural and meaningful songs that express joy and happiness.

The school campuses have wonderful playgrounds. Supervised outdoor play takes place during recess, lunch and after-school hours. The campuses also house an outdoor patio area with a butterfly, vegetable and herb garden.

## **Programs and Admissions Requirements for Young Children & Pre-Primary**

### **Programs for Young Children and Pre-Primary Children (Classes begin at 8:00 a.m.)**

There are a variety of programs to meet the needs of your child:

Half Day Program	7:00 a.m. — 11:30 a.m.
Full Day Program	7:00 a.m. — 2:30 p.m.
Extended Day	7:00 a.m. — 6:00 p.m.

Each child is responsible for bringing his or her own lunch. The school serves nutritious morning and afternoon snacks.

### **Admissions Requirements for the Young Children’s Program (RMS & SMS Only)**

1. Child must be 2.5 years old **and does not need to be fully toilet trained.**
2. Completion of all forms in the Registration Packet.
3. Payment of registration fee (\$350.00 – non-refundable).
4. A month long probationary period for all new students is required to determine whether our academic program is beneficial, and meets the needs of the child.

### **Admissions Requirements for Pre-Primary Programs**

1. Child must be 3 years old **and must be fully toilet trained.**
2. Completion of all forms in the Registration Packet.
3. Payment of registration fee (\$350.00 – non-refundable).
4. A month long probationary period for all new students is required to determine whether our academic program is beneficial, and meets the needs of the child.

### **Student Documentation**

Prior to the first day of class, each child must have the following documents on file in the school, as required by Hillsborough County Childcare Licensing:

1. Certificate of Health (DH form 3040).
2. Florida Certificate of Immunization (DH form 680).
3. Copy of the child’s birth certificate.
4. Emergency Information Card completed and signed.
5. Allergies and health concerns documented.

## **Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)**

Florida was one of the first states in the country to offer free prekindergarten for all 4-year-olds regardless of family income. The FL Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program prepares early learners for success in kindergarten and beyond. Children must live in Florida and be 4 years old on or before September 1 of the current year to be eligible for School Year VPK. Summer VPK requires children to be 5 years old on or before September 1 of the current year. Children may only attend one VPK program.

BMS, RMS and SMS Voluntary Prekindergarten Programs are highly regarded among parents, local educators and also by the Office of Early Learning officials. The Schools' VPK programs are based on the proven Montessori curriculum allowing each child to achieve their full potential. BMS, RMS and SMS VPK students have continually scored high marks on their Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener exams. School Year VPK provides 540 hours of instruction with our Montessori credentialed teachers. Summer VPK provides 300 instructional hours led by FL certified teachers, with our professional Montessori teachers assisting.

### **VPK & VPK- PLUS Morning Montessori Program (School Year)**

Cost Free VPK Class is Monday – Friday\*\* 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Morning sessions combined with the afternoon VPK Class is referred to as **VPK-Plus**.

Children benefit from our proven Montessori environment. Attending the morning session provides the opportunity for children to grow their communication skills, problem-solving skills, confidence and creativity while developing their intellectual skillsets. Special discount rates are available only for the **5 day VPK- Plus Programs**. Refer to the Tuition Rates on page 32.

*\* Dates are based on Hillsborough County Public School calendar and are subject to change*

**\*\*Student attendance is strictly monitored. Children may not miss more than 20% of the VPK days per month. *Student absence over 20% per month is grounds for dismissal from the program.***

Each child is responsible for bringing his or her own lunch. The school serves nutritious morning and afternoon snacks.

### **Admissions Requirements for VPK**

1. Child must reside in Florida.
2. Must be 5 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> for the Summer VPK session.
3. Must be 4 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> for the School Year VPK session.
4. Have not previously participated in a VPK program.
5. VPK Certificate of Eligibility.

### **Student Documentation**

Prior to the first day of class each child must have the following documents/ certificates on file in the school:

1. Original VPK Certificate and School Enrollment Form.
2. Copy of Birth Certificate.
3. Signed Attendance Policy.
4. Certificate of Health (DH form 3040).
5. Florida Certificate of Immunization (DH form 680).
6. Emergency Information Card completed and signed.
7. Allergies and health concerns documented.

### **Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (Summer Session)**

Monday – Thursday

7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

*\* Dates are based on Hillsborough County Public School calendar and are subject to change*

**Student attendance is strictly monitored. Children may not miss more than 20% of the VPK days per month. *Student absence over 20% per month is grounds for dismissal from the program.***

\* Children must be picked up promptly at 5:30 pm. A late payment charge of \$1.00 per minute will apply to all children who are picked up late.

Each child is responsible for bringing his or her own lunch. The school serves nutritious morning and afternoon snacks.

## **Montessori Kindergarten Program**

The Schools' Kindergarten Programs are highly regarded among local education professionals. The children benefit from not only the proven Montessori environment, but also the enriched hands- on academic curriculum presented by talented teachers. The nature of our classrooms (collaborative and joyful learning with high but attainable goals) results in developmentally accelerated children. Our children earn an education for life, and gain an appreciation for lifelong learning.

### **Programs for Kindergarten Children (Classes begin at 8:00 a.m.)**

Full Day Program	7:00 a.m. — 2:30 p.m.
Extended Day	7:00 a.m. — 6:00 p.m.

Each child is responsible for bringing lunch. The school serves nutritious morning and afternoon snacks.

### **Admissions Requirements for Kindergarten Program**

1. Child must be 5 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>.
2. Completion of all forms in the Registration Packet.
3. Payment of registration fee (\$350.00 -- non-refundable).
4. A month long probationary period for all new students is required to determine whether our academic program is beneficial, and meets the needs of the child.

### **Student Documentation**

Prior to the first day of class, each child must have the following health documents and certificates on file in the school. These documents are required by Hillsborough County Childcare Licensing:

1. Certificate of Health (DH form 3040).
2. Florida Certificate of Immunization (DH form 680).

3. Copy of the child's birth certificate.
4. Emergency Information Card completed and signed.
5. Allergies and health concerns documented.

## **The Riverview Montessori School Elementary Program Curriculum**

The Riverview Montessori School at Rivercrest offers an Elementary program for children ages 6 to 9 years. The program follows the Montessori philosophy of recognizing children as they really are by creating environments that encourage growth, social interaction, and learning, all tailored to each child's individual potential. Additionally, the program reflects the growing child's changing needs by: providing individual opportunities to make choices, utilizing their imagination while exploring classroom materials, seeking out detailed information to develop conclusions, and asking questions to stimulate critical thinking.

### **Language and Literature**

The language curriculum emphasizes creative/expository writing, interpretive reading of literature/poetry and increased comprehension skills through various reading activities and book reports. Creative writing allows the student to express thoughts, build sentence structure and gain story writing skills. Grammar and vocabulary studies are designed to reinforce word families, parts of speech, and their functions. Through practice, journal writing and class work, printing skills improve and cursive is introduced.

### **Mathematics**

The curriculum is presented with concrete materials, which reveal arithmetic, geometric and algebraic connections. We extend the knowledge of the decimal system, negative numbers, squaring, cubing and Geometry. Students explore Geometry on a sensorial level. We begin with a study of congruency, similarity and equivalence, preparing them for later area and theorem work. We introduce the study of lines, measurement of angles and construction of geometric figures.

### **Cultural and Social Studies**

History begins with the concept of the passage of time, geologic time and the study of the Solar System and early life on Earth, and all its inhabitants. Students learn how the contributions of humankind throughout history have brought us to where we are today.

Geography studies integrate both political and physical composition of the earth. Maps, globes, charts and models supplement the study of geographical features and landforms. The students explore various cultures, their people and customs.

### **Life Sciences**

Botany, Chemistry, Astronomy, Earth Sciences, and Zoology are presented to the children in enriching and exciting ways. Projects and research help students to understand abstract concepts and draw their own conclusions. Hands on activities and experiments are essential for this study.

### **Computers**

The classroom is equipped with state of the art technology. The children have access to computers and age appropriate software that reinforces their academic studies. Technology related skills are essential for this generation to succeed in the future.

### **Foreign Language**

The study of foreign language and culture is introduced through conversational methods. The program is designed to be colloquial, interesting and useful. Students learn phrases, vocabulary and the fundamentals of the language.

### **Art, Music and Physical Education**

Arts and culture are not separate entities, but are interwoven essentials in each of the subject levels. Focus is on the achievements of humanity, a profound respect and appreciation for what was created by man. Children are encouraged to explore Art, Drama, and Creative Writing during their explorations of the prepared environment and its contents. Talented professional instructors design meaningful and inspirational lessons using various techniques and media.

Physical conditioning, strengthening, rules, cooperation and sportsmanship are taught, along with basic skills in a variety of activities. Students learn to trust their own abilities and gain respect for themselves, others and the environment.

## **Elementary Programs and Admissions Requirements**

### **Programs for Elementary Children (Classes begin at 8:00 a.m.)**

Full Day Program	7:00 a.m. — 2:30 p.m.
Extended Day	7:00 a.m. — 6:00 p.m.

### **Admissions Requirements for Elementary Program**

1. Child must be 6 years old at the time of enrollment **and must have successfully completed Kindergarten.**
2. Appropriate documentation of Kindergarten completion will be required—report cards, class records.
3. Completion of all forms in the Registration Packet.
4. Payment of registration fee (\$350.00 -- non-refundable).
5. A month long probationary period for all new students is required to determine whether our academic program is beneficial, and meets the needs of the child.

### **Student Documentation**

Prior to the first day of class each child must have the following health documents and certificates on file in the school. These documents are required by Hillsborough County Childcare Licensing:

1. Certificate of Health (DH form 3040).
2. Florida Certificate of Immunization (DH form 680).
3. Copy of the child's birth certificate.
4. Emergency Information Card completed and signed.
5. Allergies and health concerns documented.

## **Program and Admissions Requirements for After School**

An After School Program is offered at The Brandon and Riverview Montessori Schools for public school children attending Lithia Springs Elementary or Terrell Sessums Elementary.

After School Care 2:30 p.m. — 6:00 p.m.

(Including “early release days” based on the public school calendar)

Children are provided a nutritional snack. Homework assistance is provided and supervised activities are offered depending upon the needs of the children.

### **Admissions Requirements for After School Care Program**

1. Child must be enrolled at Lithia Springs or Terrell Sessums Elementary.
2. Completion of all forms in the Registration Packet.
3. Payment of registration fee (\$50.00 -- non-refundable).

### **Student Documentation**

Prior to the first day of class each child must have the following health documents and certificates on file in the school:

1. Release form on file at the elementary school.
2. Emergency Information Card & Authorization for Student Release completed and signed.
3. Allergies and health concerns.

## **General Policies and Procedures for All Children**

### **Accident/ Incident Reports**

The safety and security of our children is the first priority of our Schools. All accidents and incidents are documented and reported to the parent(s) or guardian. Reports will be placed in your child's student folder. Please sign and return to the office within 24 hours of the incident. Parents will be notified immediately in the event of a serious illness, bleeding, head injuries or other emergencies. If necessary, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital. All medical expenses will be the responsibility of the parent. It is very important that you keep the emergency contact information in the office up to date at all times. This information should include current home, cell and business telephone numbers, addresses, medications and food allergies.

### **Allergies/Anaphylaxis**

Please notify the school in writing of your child's allergies. We require that parents provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications, as directed by a physician, to the school. All medications should be properly labeled and replaced after use or upon expiration.

Parents will be notified immediately in the event of an allergic reaction or other emergency. If necessary, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital. All medical expenses will be the responsibility of the parent. It is very important that you keep the emergency contact information in the office up to date at all times. This information should include current home, cell and business telephone numbers, addresses, medications and food allergies.

Parents are welcome to bring "safe foods" that will be stored in the kitchen for substitution. Children with food allergies may sit at a designated lunch table to avoid exposure to unsafe foods.

## **Appearance and School Uniforms**

Students must appear clean and neatly groomed which is non-disruptive of the educational activities and processes of the school. The Uniform Policy is strictly enforced, notes will be sent home if your child is not in uniform. Please dress your child in their school uniform Monday through Thursday, and in play clothes on Friday. School uniform shirts are available for purchase through the Director.

Uniform bottoms may be any of the following colors:

1. Navy blue or dark blue and khaki, tan or beige. *Denim is not an acceptable blue.* Jeans are only allowed on Fridays.

Uniform bottoms may include:

1. Shorts, pants, skirts, skorts, capris or overall dresses. Please note that dresses and skirts should be accompanied by bloomers/shorts.
2. Small embellishments around the pockets or hems are allowed. Embellishments that are large can be disruptive during class time.

Play clothes may NOT be:

1. Garments and/or jewelry which display or suggest sexual, vulgar, drug, gang, weapons, or alcohol-related wording or graphics, or which provoke violence or disruption in the school.

Shoes must be sturdy and comfortable. Sandals and flip-flops are highly **discouraged**.

## **Attendance**

To obtain the full benefit of our instructional program, students are expected to attend school regularly and to arrive on time. Daily attendance is taken in each classroom by a teacher. Poor attendance or excessive tardiness results in a loss of continuity and may affect your child's performance. VPK Student attendance is strictly monitored. VPK students may not miss more than 20% of the VPK days per month. Student absence over 20% per month is grounds for dismissal from the program.

Based on our school Attendance Policy for the 2017-2018 school year, we will consider the following as excused absences:

1. An illness of the student or a medical/dental appointment.
2. An accident resulting in an injury of the student.

3. A death in the family.
4. An observance of a religious holiday.
5. A preplanned absence. Please notify the Director in writing at least three (3) days prior to the absence.
6. An emergency such as: severe weather, a major personal or family issue, an accident on the way to school. (Reminder: We follow Hillsborough County School Closing Procedures when a county-wide emergency arises.)

Please notify the school as early as possible if your child will be absent. Each child's arrival and dismissal (sign in/sign out) will be recorded on a daily basis by a staff member. Students who miss more than 20 days of school during the year will be considered excessively absent. The Attendance Policy Form must be signed for all Kindergarten and Elementary students.

### **Authorization of Pick Up**

In order to ensure the safety of each child, no child will be released to any person other than a parent/guardian or persons listed on BMS/RMS/SMS Authorization for Pick Up/Release form without written authorization. If you wish to have someone else pick up your child from school, please send in a note giving staff written permission to release your child into the care of that individual. We will check ID's and make photocopies of driver's licenses of your authorized pick up contacts. Please inform them of our policy. Authorized pick up persons who fail to provide ID will not be allowed to take your child from the school.

### **Birthdays and Holidays**

Holidays and birthdays are exciting and we welcome special snacks to help celebrate your child's special day. In addition to bringing nutritious snacks, children are encouraged to wear a special outfit and bring pictures to help us celebrate. **Please coordinate your child's birthday celebration with the school Director to verify the snack details and day / time of the celebration.**

The Schools will close for winter and spring breaks as well as major holidays, such as Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Memorial Day. We generally follow the Hillsborough County public school holiday calendar. No credits are given for vacation, holidays or school closures. A school calendar will be provided to each family by the first day of the school year.

We understand that particular holidays are not celebrated by all, and we respect your decision to keep your child at home on these days.

### **Calendar, Newsletter and Electronic Information**

Please check your child's folder daily for important messages and school events. Newsletters, Calendars and specific memos keep parents informed of important activities at school. The Schools' website, [www.wearemontessori.com](http://www.wearemontessori.com) , and Facebook site, *The Brandon, Riverview and SouthShore Montessori Schools*, are good sources to watch for school events and activities.

### **Communication & Messages**

A good communication flow between the school and the parents is essential to monitor the progress of each child. Each child will have a file in the reception area that should be checked daily for notes from the school, the teacher and for individual work done by your child. Proactively sharing your child's school experiences will reinforce their love for learning.

We do have an "open door" policy at The Schools. If you have any questions concerning your child, please send a note to your child's teacher or request a conference through the Director. Engaging the classroom teachers or children in conversations can detract their attention and disrupt the classroom routine.

The school cannot accept verbal messages from children. Please write a note, email the Director, or telephone the school. It is important that teachers know if your child's daily routine has had any changes. Common causes of distress for children include:

1. Interrupted sleep.
2. Newly prescribed medications.
3. Visiting grandparents or relatives.
4. Sickness in the family.
5. Traveling parent.
6. Changes in family status.
7. Death in the family or the death of a pet.

In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please inform the Director as soon as possible. The Director will keep you informed of any significant changes in the school environment which may affect your child.

We welcome your ideas and areas of special interest. We are an enthusiastic audience for your knowledge and your talents. Our children benefit by parents sharing their special interests and career talents. It is our objective to work closely with our parents and to create a family friendly environment. If you are interested in volunteer opportunities, please let the Director know.

### **Conferences, Grading and Assessment**

Report cards will be sent home three times a year. Parent-Teacher conferences will take place in the Fall and Spring semester. Lead teachers evaluate the progress of each child through extensive record keeping. We maintain individual records on the progress of every child in all areas of the Montessori environment including Academic, Social and Emotional Development, and Conduct.

Children with delayed intellectual or social development skills are, with cooperation of the parents, referred to a licensed specialist. We may also enlist a licensed speech pathologist periodically to monitor and assess speech and language development. Parents who wish to have their child assessed must give permission for the evaluation. At the end of the school year, older children will participate in a Graduation Ceremony celebrating their completion of their academic year.

### **Damage to School Property**

If a child willfully destroys or loses school property or materials, all costs associated with the repairs or replacement will be the responsibility of the parent(s) or guardian. Repeated destruction of school property is grounds for dismissal from the school.

### **Discipline Policy**

The development of inner discipline is the goal of the Montessori Method; a Discipline Policy Form must be signed for all students. Our teachers are trained to use various techniques to redirect a child's behavior including encouragement, positive reinforcement, and natural consequences for actions. We strive to provide a loving, secure and supportive environment that focuses on children's positive behavior. A month long probationary period for all new students is required to determine whether our academic program is beneficial, and meets the needs of the child. Children shall not be subjected to discipline, which is severe, humiliating or frightening. Discipline shall not be associated with food or rest. Any form of physical punishment is strictly prohibited at BMS, RMS and SMS.

All children must abide by the playground and classroom safety rules. When a child exhibits a consistent behavior pattern that is disturbing to the program, endangers the safety of other children or is damaging to the school, appropriate steps will be taken. Such steps will include, but are not limited to:

1. Immediate notice to parents.
2. Incident report(s) will be documented and sent home.
3. Parent/Teacher conference will be arranged.
4. Dismissal of student.

**Unsafe behavior cannot be tolerated and is grounds for termination.** The Schools reserve the right to dismiss any child from school for serious or continued misbehavior. In a case of dismissal from the school, neither the current month's tuition nor the registration fee will be refunded.

Children are encouraged to develop language skills that help them to communicate their needs and feelings to others. They are encouraged to solve their differences with their peers through cooperation and empathy. Parent observations may be scheduled with the Director.

### **Emergency Procedures and Notifications**

In case of an emergency requiring evacuation, our children and staff will walk to the evacuation sites established at Lithia Springs Elementary for the Brandon Montessori School, Terrell Sessums Elementary for the Riverview Montessori School, and the Waterset Community Center for the SouthShore Montessori School. Fire safety drills are conducted monthly. Evacuation signs are posted in each classroom. Each classroom is equipped with an outside emergency exit, and the school fire alarm system is linked directly to the local fire station.

In cases of unforeseen/rare emergencies, if need be, the school will lock down for the safety and security of our students and teachers.

We live in an area that experiences various forms of severe weather. Bad weather necessitating school cancellation will be announced via the local radio or television. **Our schools follow the Hillsborough County school closure procedures.** There will be no tuition credit for school closure due to emergency conditions.

### **Homework**

Kindergarten and Elementary students are given homework on a weekly basis. A Homework Policy Form must be signed for all students. Parents are encouraged to sit down with their child and complete the homework together. On occasion, students may be asked to bring in an item for a special project.

### **Late Arrivals**

In order to receive the full benefit of the Montessori curriculum, it is imperative that children arrive to school on time. The morning provides crucial information and lessons that the child will use throughout the day and year. Late arrivals and tardiness are

disruptive to the classroom and negatively impact your child’s school experience. Art, music and special events also take place in the early hours of the day.

### **Late Pick Up**

If you are going to be late, please call the school. A late payment charge of **\$1.00 per minute** will apply to all children who are picked up late. This fee is to be paid in cash the following day to the Director.

### **Lunch and Snack Program**

Lunches are eaten outside in the patio area. In cases of inclement weather conditions, the children will eat their lunch inside the building. Each child will need to be responsible for their own lunch. Please pack a well-balanced and nutritious meal for your child. Note that small portions minimize waste and a variety in their meal helps their appetites. The older children enjoy packing their own lunches. To foster independence, please make lunch boxes manageable for your child and easy to open. Names should be clearly marked on all lunch boxes and accessories. Please include a spoon or fork if needed and a napkin. A drink must be provided in the lunch box (do not freeze drinks). Do not send toys, glass containers or cans of any kind. Lids on canned fruits etc. are extremely dangerous. Due to the nature of our lunch period, we are unable to refrigerate or warm-up lunches. Please use ice packs to cool food, and a thermos to keep food warm. Due to allergies, please remind your child not to share their lunch with any other child.

Fridays are optional “Pizza Days”. Children will be served fresh, cheese pizza, a drink and dessert for \$3. Send payment of \$3 cash in an envelope or you may include a monthly check with your tuition payment. Please do not send your child’s lunchbox if they are having pizza.

The school will provide nutritious mid-morning and afternoon snacks. Natural fruit juices, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads, muffins and crackers are served for snacks.

## **Medication and Illness**

Parents are requested to notify the school when a child is going to be absent due to an illness. Communicable diseases must be reported to the school immediately.

If your child exhibits any of the following conditions in the past 24 hours, your child must be kept home. Also, children will be sent home if they exhibit any signs of the following:

1. Severe coughing
2. Excessive yellow/ green mucus discharge from the nose
3. Difficulty breathing
4. Stiff neck or headache
5. Diarrhea/Vomiting
6. Fever
7. Pink eye
8. Irritated skin patches/rashes
9. Lice

**Your child may only return to school if they are no longer contagious as documented by a physician.** For children to attend school, they must be symptom-free for over 24 hours. The Director will only dispense medicine if prescribed by a physician. The state requires an “Authorization of Medication Dispensing” form to be filled out by the parent in order for medicine to be dispensed at the school. However, we strongly recommend that you request from your child’s physician a medication that can be administered at home in the morning or evening.

Do not send cough drops, sun screen or any over the counter medication unless accompanied by a doctor’s prescription. Do not send any medication in the lunch box. All medicine must be handed to the Director. In the event that any side effect is noticed from any doctor-prescribed medications, parents will be notified immediately.

Parents are asked to use extreme caution when returning their child to school. A child with a fever must be fever-free for a minimum of 24 hours. Children diagnosed with Strep Throat or other contagious illnesses must be on antibiotics for a minimum of 48 hours before returning. Severe coughing and runny noses that are thick with mucus are conditions that require at-home care.

### **Outdoor Activities**

A Florida state requirement is that all children at school are provided with outside play/physical activities each school day unless rain, extreme heat, or cold temperatures are a prohibiting factor. Parents should be aware of this fact and provide their children with appropriate shoes, seasonal clothing and outerwear. Please ensure that outerwear clothing is easy for your child to manage. The amount of outdoor playtime will be based on the discretion of the Director and weather conditions. The school cannot accommodate sick children who cannot go outdoors with his/her class, as this would take a staff member away from their outdoor supervisory activities. It is recommended that if a child is too sick to go outside for a short period of time during the day, the child should not attend school that day.

### **Parent Education**

An Orientation Session is scheduled at the beginning of each school year. Positive parenting seminars and workshops may be held periodically for parents to attend. Parents are encouraged to be involved in school activities, as it fosters the nurturing environment that is critical to the success of your child.

### **Parking and Drop Off/Pick Up Instructions**

We request parents use the school drive through for both arrivals and departures. **Punctual arrivals and pickups are required.** If you plan to come into the school, please park in the spaces provided to facilitate the flow of traffic. Parking is available to the side of the building. Should you choose to come in, please leave your child at the door of the classroom rather than walking them into the classroom, as this makes separation more difficult for the child and contributes to their anxiety and fears.

For quick drop offs, please use the drive through car line, ***do not park and get out of your car.*** Please adhere to the following safety rules and guidelines as you drop off and pick up your child:

1. Pull into the driveway slowly and carefully at all times.
2. Children will be escorted out of the car by a staff member.

3. Have your children unbuckled and ready to be taken out of the car.
4. At the time of departure, parents/guardians (not a staff member) must make sure that your child is safely buckled in their car seat before you move out of the driveway.

Remember to use extreme caution when entering/exiting the school driveway and parking lot. Yield to give the right of way to children and pedestrians. Be cautious when backing your vehicle out and follow the flow of traffic.

### **Payment of Tuition**

**Tuition is an annual fee for the entire academic school year.** Payments under the monthly installment plan are due on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of school for each month of the School Year from August 2017 through May 2018. A late fee of \$10 per day will apply for all tuition received after the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the month. A \$35 fee will apply on all returned checks. The receipt of two “Insufficient Funds” checks will require that all future tuition payments and penalty fees be paid by money order, cashier’s check or cash.

Tuition is monthly, based on a 10-month academic year regardless of how many days your child is absent due to sickness, family vacations or official holidays observed by the school. Tuition may be paid by check, cashier’s check, money order, cash or credit card. Please note that all credit card payments will be charged a 2.75% processing fee. Any cash must be given to the Director in person. Receipts will be given upon cash payment only. *Please use your cancelled check and/or monthly invoice in lieu of receipts.*

**The Tax I.D. number for the Brandon School is 59-3686667**

**The Tax I.D. number for the Riverview School is 74-3081152**

**The Tax I.D. number for the SouthShore School is 45-4416210**

In the event of an overdue account of more than five school days, the child will not be permitted to attend school until full payment has been made or permission has been obtained from the Director. Please place your payment in the tuition box in the reception area.

### **Personal Belongings**

Please clearly label EVERYTHING. The school requires that each child bring a complete change of clothing (this does not need to be a uniform) including top, bottom, underwear, socks and shoes each semester. The clothing should be packed in a zip-lock bag with your child's name written on it clearly. Replace clothes as needed. It is necessary that each clothing article worn or brought to school have a label with the child's name on it. **The schools are not responsible for personal belongings that are lost or damaged.**

### **Rest/Nap Time**

Rest time generally follows lunch. Childcare licensing requires young children who stay in school during the afternoon to have a rest period. Mats are available for purchase through the school. Sheets and bedding are sent home as needed to be laundered and returned the next school day. Please clearly label all bedding. Please do not bring backpacks, large stuffed animals or pillows as they do not fit in your child's cubby.

### **Safety and Security**

The school takes precautionary measures to protect the health and safety of our children. The safety of the children is our first concern. Staff members are required to take a course on Child CPR, First Aid, and emergency procedures. A first aid kit is available in all work areas at all times in case of minor injuries.

Our playground equipment meets the highest safety standards for quality and design. The front doors of The Schools are electronically locked at all times. Entry cannot be obtained without ringing the doorbell. All other entry points at the back and sides of the building are secured by a locked 6 ft. fence. If an unknown person arrives at the front doors, the Director or other staff member will ask for proper identification.

### **Smoking Policy**

Smoking is not allowed anywhere in the building or on the premises of the school.

### **Special Events/Extra Curricular Activities**

For security purposes, the school does not provide field trips. We prefer to bring the world to our children. Throughout the year, special events are planned in coordination with the month's curriculum.

Extracurricular activities are available after school. Such activities include, but are not limited to Tae Kwon Do, Ballet and Art. These activities are hosted by The Schools for an additional cost. The fees and materials are determined by the individual instructors, and approved by the school.

### **Special Needs Students**

The School strives to provide an exceptional academic experience for all of its students and therefore all students must meet certain minimum standards. The School will make reasonable accommodations to allow students with special needs who are otherwise qualified to attend the School; however, the School cannot make substantial modifications to its programs, staffing, or curriculum to accommodate a student with special needs without diminishing the School's ability to provide the exceptional academic experience that all of the School's students deserve. Accordingly, if the School determines that a student with special needs cannot meet the minimum academic and technical standards required of all students in spite of his or her handicap, the School may not be able to admit the student with special needs, and will not be able to do so if the School determines that admitting the student will diminish the School's ability to provide an exceptional academic experience to all of its students. Additionally, if the School admits a student with special needs and later determines that the student cannot satisfy the requirements expected of all students after making reasonable attempts to accommodate the student's disability, the School may determine that it cannot readmit the student in subsequent years, or suspend or expel the student if his or her behavior is causing distractions or otherwise interfering with the School's ability to educate all of its students.

### **Student Records**

Information in each student file is considered highly confidential. Please notify the Director of any changes as soon as possible (i.e., cell phone numbers, authorized pick-up individuals, address, etc.). The only person with access to student files is the Director. Staff members are instructed to keep all information regarding students confidential. Parents may, at any time review, their child's file with the Directors. Should a child withdraw from the school, parents may elect to take their child's records. Information in student files will be released to the parent only. Student information will not be forwarded to other schools without a written request from the parent.

***Important:*** Should a student be involved in child custody issues, we require a copy of the legal document specifying the custody arrangement. In cases of unauthorized pick up situations, teachers are instructed to maintain the safety of the child and themselves as a priority. In case of such events, the other parent will immediately be called and notified.

### **Summer Program**

The Schools also offer a Summer Program in which children participate in arts and crafts, music, gardening, and learning about different cultures. The Summer Program is a relaxed extension of our academic year. The focus is to enrich the child's experiences with nature and the world at large.

### **Testing, Accelerated Reader (AR) and SRA Lab Program**

Standardized Testing, AR and SRA Programs will be for those children enrolled in the Kindergarten and Elementary programs. SAT 10 (Stanford Achievement Test 10) is an un-timed multiple choice test which measures student knowledge on state content standards rather than testing speediness. These tests will be evaluated by an independent educational scoring company.

The Accelerated Reader and SRA Programs allow students to challenge and push themselves to the next level of reading. Students will be tested after reading each book.

The AR Computer Software asks students 5 to 20 questions about the book's characters, story, and details. The SRA curriculum focuses on reading comprehension and literacy fundamentals.

Children in the Kindergarten and Elementary programs are tested weekly in the areas of reading and spelling.

### **Toys and Jewelry**

**Bringing toys to school is prohibited.** Although children are often excited about their special toys, they become a distraction to the learning environment. Children are not permitted to bring jewelry for safety reasons as it can pose a serious choking hazard. **The school is not responsible for the loss of any such items.** Toys and gum are strictly prohibited.

### **Withdrawal from School**

The Schools require a 30-school day written notice when withdrawing a child from the school. Children who do not return to school for any reason will be automatically withdrawn from the school and the parents will be accountable for the current month's tuition. **Registration fees will not be refundable under any circumstances.**

**Thank you for your support of our Montessori Schools.  
We look forward to you being a part of our Montessori family.**

*All of us at*

*The Brandon Montessori School,*

*The Riverview Montessori School &*

*The SouthShore Montessori School*

*are committed to creating a professional  
and safe learning environment for your child to thrive.*

## Tuition Rates for 2018-2019 Academic School Year

**Tuition is an annual fee for the entire academic school year.** Payments under the monthly installment plan are due on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of school for each month.

### **Young Children's Montessori Program \* (2 ½ to 3 years)**

(\*Available ONLY at The Riverview School and The SouthShore Montessori School)

<b>Registration Fee (non-refundable)</b>		<b>\$350 per school year*</b>
<b>Program</b>	<b>Program Hours</b>	<b>Tuition</b>
Two Half Days	(7:00 am to 11:45 am)	\$425 monthly
Two Full Days	(7:00 am to 2:45 pm)	\$465 monthly
Two Ext Days	(7:00 am to 6:00 pm)	\$555 monthly
Three Half Days	(7:00 am to 11:45 am)	\$555 monthly
Three Full Days	(7:00 am to 2:45 pm)	\$645 monthly
Three Ext Days	(7:00 am to 6:00 pm)	\$725 monthly
Five Half Days	(7:00 am to 11:45 am)	\$645 monthly
Five Full Days	(7:00 am to 2:45 pm)	\$725 monthly
Five Extended Days	(7:00 am to 6:00 pm)	\$765 monthly

### **Pre-Primary Montessori Program (3 to 5 years)**

<b>Registration Fee (non-refundable)</b>		<b>\$350 per school year*</b>
<b>Program</b>	<b>Program Hours</b>	<b>Tuition**</b>
Two Half Days	(7:00 am to 11:45 am)	\$355 monthly
Two Full Days	(7:00 am to 2:45 pm)	\$405 monthly
Two Ext Days	(7:00 am to 6:00 pm)	\$515 monthly
Three Half Days	(7:00 am to 11:45 am)	\$515 monthly
Three Full Days	(7:00 am to 2:45 pm)	\$595 monthly
Three Ext Days	(7:00 am to 6:00 pm)	\$615 monthly
Five Half Days	(7:00 am to 11:45 am)	\$595 monthly
Five Full Days	(7:00 am to 2:45 pm)	\$675 monthly
Five Extended Days	(7:00 am to 6:00 pm)	\$725 monthly
Kindergarten	(7:00 am to 2:45 pm)	\$675 monthly

### **Kindergarten and Elementary Montessori Prgms (5 to 9 years)**

<b>Registration Fee (non-refundable)</b>		<b>\$350 per school year*</b>
<b>Program</b>	<b>Program Hours</b>	<b>Tuition**</b>
Five Full Days	(7:00 am to 2:45 pm)	\$675 monthly
Five Extended Days	(7:00 am to 6:00 pm)	\$725 monthly

*\*Sibling Registration is discounted to \$175*

*\* Returning Families Registration is discounted to \$250 through Feb 15, 2018*

## **VPK- Plus Program (School Year Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Plus Morning Montessori Program)**

<b>Registration Fee (non-refundable)</b>		<b>\$350 per school year*</b>
Program	Program Hours	Tuition**
VPK Plus Five Full Days	(7:00 am to 2:30 pm)	\$545 monthly
VPK Plus Five Extended Days	(7:00 am to 6:00 pm)	\$595 monthly

\*See handbook pg. 10 for details on VPK eligibility

***Student attendance is strictly monitored. Children may not miss more than 20% of the VPK days per month. Student absence over 20% per month is grounds for dismissal from the program.***

Each child is responsible for bringing his or her own lunch. The school serves nutritious morning and afternoon snacks.

## **After School Care Programs for Public School Children**

<b>Registration Fee (non-refundable)</b>		<b>\$50 per school year</b>
Program	Program Hours	Tuition
Full Time	(2:30 pm to 6:00 pm)	\$275 monthly
Part Time	(any 2 or 3 days)	\$195 monthly

(Early release days for Hillsborough County Schools are also included).

## **Tuition Payment Plans**

**Plan A: One Full Annual Payment**

A 4% discount will be applied to one full year's tuition payment.

**Plan B: Two Semi-Annual Payments**

A 1.5% total discount will be applied to the semi-annual tuition payments.

**Plan C: Ten Monthly Payments**

Due on the first day of each month, beginning August, 2018.

**A 5% tuition discount will apply for multiple siblings enrolled in the program at the same time. Discount applies to the smaller tuition rate.**

**A 4% tuition discount will apply for Active Duty Military Families and Educators. Families are eligible for ONLY ONE DISCOUNT**

## **Montessori Classroom Schedule for Young Children, Pre-Primary and Kindergarten Programs\***

- 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. ARRIVALS AND INDEPENDENT MONTESSORI WORK
- 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. CIRCLE TIME, MONTESSORI PRESENTATIONS, AND INDEPENDENT MONTESSORI WORK CYCLE
- Practical Life, Sensorial, Math, Language, Science, Geography, Foreign Language, Music and Movement, Art, and Story Time.
  - Children have 30 minutes during the morning for snack and/or outdoor playtime.
- 11:00 to 12:00 p.m. SUPERVISED LUNCH and OUTDOOR PLAY
- 11:30 to 11:45 a.m. HALF DAY DISMISSAL
- 11:30 a.m. VPK CLASS BEGINS
- 11:30 to 2:00 p.m. AFTERNOON WORK CYCLE FOR VPK, OLDER CHILDREN AND KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN
- VPK, Older Children and Kindergarten children have a 15-minute story/quiet time and continue their afternoon work cycle until 2:00 p.m., when we prepare for snack and dismissal.
- 12:00 to 1:45 p.m. NAP TIME FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN
- Younger children lie down on their mats and rest while listening to soft, classical music and stories.
- 2:00 to 2:30 p.m. SNACK, OUTDOOR ACTIVITY, MUSIC AND MOVEMENT
- 2:30 to 2:45 p.m. VPK & FULL DAY DISMISSAL
- 2:45 to 3:00 p.m. AFTER SCHOOL SNACK
- 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. AFTER SCHOOL CARE ACTIVITIES
- Music and movement, songs, games, puzzles, reading, educational videos & extracurricular activities.
  - Includes homework completion with staff assistance if applicable.
- 6:00 p.m. SCHOOL CLOSED.

**A late payment charge of \$1.00 per minute will apply to all children who are picked up late. This fee is to be paid in cash the following day to the Director.**

*\*Schedule is subject to change depending on the needs of the children or inclement weather.*

## **Montessori Classroom Schedule for Elementary Program\***

- 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. ARRIVALS AND INDEPENDENT MONTESSORI WORK
- 8:00 to 11:30 a.m. CIRCLE TIME, MONTESSORI PRESENTATIONS, AND INDEPENDENT MONTESSORI WORK CYCLE
- History, Geography, Math, Language, Life Sciences, Foreign Language, Computers Music and Movement, and Art.
- 11:30 to 12:30 p.m. SUPERVISED LUNCH and OUTDOOR PLAY
- 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. MONTESSORI PRESENTATIONS
- Children will continue their afternoon work cycle until 2:00 p.m., when we prepare for snack and dismissal.
- 2:00 to 2:30 p.m. FREE PLAY, OUTDOOR ACTIVITY, MUSIC AND MOVEMENT
- 2:30 to 2:45 p.m. FULL DAY DISMISSAL
- 2:45 to 3:00 p.m. AFTER SCHOOL SNACK
- 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. AFTER SCHOOL CARE ACTIVITIES
- Music and movement, songs, games, puzzles, reading, educational videos & extracurricular activities.
  - Includes homework completion with staff assistance
- 6:00 p.m. SCHOOL CLOSED.

**If you are going to be late, please call the school. A late payment charge of \$1.00 per minute will apply to all children who are picked up late. This fee is to be paid in cash the following day to the Director.**

*\*Schedule is subject to change depending on the needs of the children or inclement weather.*