



Parent Handbook

(for non-VPK students only)

Welcome

Thank you for choosing LOMS as early education and for allowing us to provide quality education and nurturing care for your child. Our main objective is to ensure that each child has a successful experience at LOMS and gets the most out of our program.

The following handbook is given to all parents at the time of enrollment and is designed to acquaint you with policies and guidelines that our school follows.

School's Philosophy

Based on the theory and method of Dr. Maria Montessori, we believe each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as individual personality, learning style and family background. We believe that children learn most effectively through active manipulation of the environment and through concrete experiences that contribute to the concept development. The early years in a child's education are a critical period that needs an adequate exposure to a well rounded enrichment, appropriate to the child's needs. Such exposure will ensure a firm foundation for all future educational experiences.

Position Statement

LOMS provides a safe, nurturing, and academically stimulating environment that promotes physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Our program is designed to enhance intellectual growth, social competence, creative expression and to build self-worth, independence and self-esteem in young children.

Parents Always Welcome

We believe parents are the most significant adults in a child's life. We do everything possible to ensure the parents' involvement in our program. Your input is important to us. Please feel free to discuss any concerns you may have with the Director at any time. You may consult with the Director or your child's Teacher should any questions arise regarding your child, whether at home or at school. We seek your active involvement at LOMS and encourage you to attend parents' nights, parent-teacher conferences, Field Trips and Open House events.

Special Needs Children

If your child has any special needs, please notify the Director in advance. We will make all necessary arrangements to provide for a special needs child whenever possible. We ask that you bring a written statement from the child's physician that states the needs and the care instructions for the child.

State Licensing Requirements

We believe that licensing and rigid enforcement of standards are in the best interest of all children. We comply with all applicable licensing regulations.

These standards relate to our facility, staff, nutrition, health and safety procedures, teacher/child ratios and record keeping.

Curriculum Guide

Our Montessori curriculum follows a developmental approach supported by recognized Montessori educational resources. Motivating and enriching activities, appropriate to each child's developmental stage are offered daily.

Programs:

Live Oak Montessori School is following carefully prepared Montessori curriculum which includes daily exposure to Practical Life skills, Sensorial, Cultural, Artistic, Math and Language.

Practical Life:

We, as adults, often assume that children are born with a set of skills that they use on as needed basis. In reality, children learn those skills either by watching their siblings/friends/parents/TV and such. The list just goes on... In LOMS we don't take these chances, we teach children basic skills first, and add more complex when the child's manual dexterity and emotional ability are at the right level. In this area children learn basic self help and room care skills, washing, dusting, wiping, food preparation and such. Also, exercises on maintaining balance, graceful walking, handling materials gently and positive social interactions.

Sensorial activities aid the child in the development of their senses and fine motor control through practical experiences with the textures, shapes, sizes, color, smells and sounds of objects. They prepare children for successful future and simultaneous learning of language and mathematics.

Language materials are presented visually, kinetically, and phonetically. The child is first provided a sensorial impression of the letter and then moves into writing and reading through prepared steps. By being keenly involved into study, children don't realize that it is actual work that they are doing daily, therefore, progression is steady and continuous.

Math materials provide the child with a concrete impression of the quantity being taught, along with the symbols. The child is able to master abstract mathematical processes after the experience of manipulating the actual objects. They are able to master each new concept by using materials of their choice. There no pressure from the teachers on what materials to use but a pure guidance to help children in selection and correct execution of a lesson.

Cultural materials constitute another large area of Montessori classroom. Children learn geography, zoology, botany and history. Much of the emphasis is on language development through an introduction to correct terminology and cognitive sensorial development for the things in the child's environment.

Discipline

On day to day basis, the students will develop a positive self-image through encouragement, accomplishment, and role modeling. Behavior can depend on the age, stage, and development of the child. All that and more is taken into the consideration when dealing with misbehavior, which is redirected and/or quiet times are provided for dealing with the situations.

Our program has been structured to encourage acceptable behavior. Discipline will be consistent and individualized for each child, as well as appropriate to the child's level of understanding. The method of discipline will not be humiliating, frightening or physically harmful to any child. It will not be associated with food, rest, toilet training or isolation. A child will not be labeled.

Physical punishment is not allowed on the premises, by staff or others.

Young children can present challenging behaviors as they learn how to interact appropriately in the school setting. We are committed to using positive guidance and discipline to promote safe learning environment for all. However, some children may exhibit severe behavior that can't be managed in a school setting.

In those situations the parents will be called to pick up the child from school.

Continuous behavior problems are recorded and a conference might be requested with the parents. However, should our efforts be unsuccessful and the child's behavior is of such a severe nature as to represent a threat to the safety of others and/or substantial disruption to the program continues the child will be removed from the program.

Parental Rights and Responsibilities

Your Have Rights to:

- * Be involved in your child's education and care
- * Receive information regarding your child's progress and development
- * Share in decisions about the care of your child
- * Have frequent contact with teachers about your child
- * Have access to the classroom through visitations
- * Be recognized as an "Expert" when it comes to your child
- * Be informed when a communicable disease or traumatic situation has arisen at the program
- * Be informed by the teacher when your child has a problem
- * Be informed about changes in fees and or/programming

Admission

We accept all children whose needs we are able to meet. The center is open for enrollment all year around provided there is space available. We accept children regardless of their nationality, sex, race, ethnic background, religious belief, economic background or physical disability. The Enrollment Application Form, one month tuition and

deposit fees, along with forms must be completed and returned prior to your child attendance in our program. One month of tuition deposit is equal to selected times/days of attendance on your personal contract or \$400, whichever is greater, and is applied to the last 12th month of attendance. If the child leaves the program prior to his year ending, the deposit is forfeit.

Confidentiality Policy

We emphasize the importance of protecting the rights and privacy of our children and their families, and the staff. The practice of maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written records is a basic ethical policy at Live Oak Montessori School.

The identity of children and their families may only be released in instances of professional necessity such as in child abuse or neglect, upon written request by parents to release school records to the third party, or upon verbal or written permission by parents to release information such as their phone numbers and home address to other parents.

Arrival and Departure Policies/Attendance

In the interest of safety, never drop your child off. Please escort your child to his/her class area at the time of arrival, and leave him/her in the care of a staff person before you leave each day. Please do not leave your motor running, as this can pose danger to others in the parking lot. Our arrival time is between 8:45am – 9:00am or could be earlier and is based on the option you have chosen on your contract. Please do your best to have your child in school during those times, so they can get the full benefit of the program offered. If you arrive prior to the time scheduled, we ask you to remain with your child for that extra time.

If your child has doctor's appointment and will be coming later, please let us know in advance, so we could be prepared to welcome him and at the same time not to disrupt working order of other children in school.

Personal Belongings

Your child will be provided with many exciting activities and learning tools, so please do not allow them to bring personal items such as toys from home. Small soft toy for use during the nap time is allowed for as long as the child is not using that toy to play during other times. For more items that are needed, depending on the age of your child, refer to the Enrollment Application Checklist" under Admission and Forms.

Not all children take naps and we will try to accommodate parent's wishes regarding napping accommodations. However, we will give the priority to the well being of the child and his individual developmental preferences and needs.

Clothing

LOMS has adapted a uniform code for all 3-year old children and older. Please check the selection at frenchtoast.com.

Parents must maintain at least one complete change of clothing (including underwear, socks, pants, and shirt) in school at all times. It is important for children to have a complete change in the event of accident, whether toilet, food or curriculum-related. Please replace the clothes the following day if it was used.

Remember, that as the children grow and weather changes, clothing should be updated as well. At LOMS we provide a home environment away from home. Children will often sit on the floors to do their daily assignments, and even though we can't prevent some outside debris from getting in, we will try to do our best to keep our carpets clean. Therefore, we ask parents to bring a second pair of shoes (or socks), to be worn inside the school only; very plain pair, as if not to become a point of interest and distract children from their work. Please do your best to label all your items, as children often have the same or similar looking footwear and clothing. Our teachers work hard to help the children mature and learn, solve daily situations and simply do not have the time to keep an eye on children's belongings. This is children's responsibility. However, in case of lost items, the school will do everything in its power to locate the missing piece, but, our teachers and the school will bear no responsibility for the outcome.

Nutrition

Our school offers parent provided snack/lunch program. Good nutrition is essential to student health. That means replacing junk food with more fruits, vegetables and meals prepared with nutritious ingredients.

Every family will be assigned a day for either snack or lunch prior to their child's first day of attendance. We ask parents to bring gluten free items of choice for all children on rotating basis. Some children eat more, some – less, some children like almost everything and some are picky eaters. Regardless in which category the child falls, we want to make sure that healthy and nutritious food is offered to all and a habit of eating healthy is established. As more children are added to the program, all involved families will be notified in advance to make necessary adjustments. After evaluating different lunch programs available, this was the program that we strongly believe would not only benefit children for their well-being but also would foster the feeling of belonging and being part of the community of friends. There is no opting out of this program.

Please send a labeled water bottle with your child in school; it will be refilled throughout the day as needed. We also strongly suggest to refrain from sending bottles that make noise, our goal is to establish and maintain children's focusing skills and don't want them to be disrupted by someone drinking water from the bottle.

Birthdays

Your child's birthday is a special day! Parents who wish to celebrate it in school are welcome to provide a special snack for the children in the classroom. We ask parents to notify us at least one week in advance about any special treats you would like to provide to make sure there no allergies. We encourage to bring healthy snacks to support healthy diet and avoid items with high sugar content such as cupcakes, cakes, chocolate/sugar cookies, ice cream and similar. All treats have to be age appropriate.

Party invitations may not be distributed at school unless all children from your child's classroom are invited. Selective invitations should be delivered outside the school.

Sick Child Policy

Children in school will be monitored on a daily basis for signs of communicable disease. Any child suspected of having such may not return to school without medical authorization, or until the signs and symptoms of the disease are no longer present.

Signs and symptoms of a suspected communicable disease include the following:

1. Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make whooping sound.
2. Difficult or rapid breathing.
3. Stiff neck.
4. Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period).
5. Temperature of 101 °F or higher in conjunction with any other sign of illness.
6. Pink eye.
7. Exposed, open skin lesions.
8. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool.
9. Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness.
10. A child identified as having head lice shall not be permitted to return until treatment has occurred and all eggs are gone from the hair. Verification of treatment may include a product box, box top, empty bottle, or signed statement by a parent that conducted the treatment.

In these cases, parents will be notified and will need to make all necessary arrangements to pick up their child from school shortly after.

Administration of Medication

To ensure safe and accurate administration of medication to students during school hours in compliance with the Florida Educational Code, legal mandates and school's safe practices, certain steps should be followed at all time while administering medications.

All medications, including prescription and over the counter medication, administered by us, require a signed "Authorization to give medication" parental consent. The use of all prescription medications, medications that need to be given for more than 10 (ten) calendar days or more than one time a day should be authorized in writing by a licensed prescriber, which includes physicians, dentists, physician assistants, or licensed nurse practitioners.

The written authorization should include the following information:

- * Student's name
- * Physician's name, phone number, signature
- * Name of the medication
- * The amount of medication should be given and the frequency
- * Length of treatment
- * Special handling instructions, if any

Any changes in the original medication authorization require a new written authorization and a corresponding change. Faxed authorizations may be acceptable as long as there is a signed parental consent for the medications authorized by fax.

Please be aware that when physicians prescribe drugs on an "as-needed" basis, it can be problematic since we have no health care professional available on site to assess the actual need. Any medication that can be given on a regular basis rather than "as needed" should be prescribed as such to avoid giving school staff members responsibility to determine the need. In a case when the "need" is not specified, and the parent brings such a note

in school, it will count as a parent's authorization to determine the need as we see it and the school and its staff will bear no responsibility.

All medications should be in original containers, be clearly labeled, before the expiration dead line, and has to be appropriate for the age of the child.

We will not be giving any medications to the child to control or reduce fever or any other disease, unless we have a clear note from a health professional stating that the child is not contagious to others.

Due to the complexity of medication policy, our teachers do not check the papers for being fill out, nor can they make any recommendations. Please see the Director if you have any questions.

Please note, that we are not required to administer any medications in school and taking this extra responsibility freely upon ourselves. Our first and main focus is to continue to provide safe and nurturing educational environment for children and if, at any moment, this extra responsibility will become a burden for the teachers or school functions, we keep the right to terminate this policy with at least one month notice in advance at any time.

Emergency Treatment

In the event of an injury or illness requiring emergency medical treatment, every effort will be made to locate one or both parents so you may pick up your child. Should you not be immediately located and treatment can not be delayed, your child will be taken to the local hospital by the ambulance. The authorization for emergency treatment form will accompany your child to the hospital so that treatment will not be delayed. If at all possible, a staff member will accompany your child to the hospital.

Prolonged Absence Due To Illness

We do not make adjustments in tuition for illnesses. Children, unfortunately, do get sick from time to time, and we will do everything possible to make sure that your baby is warmly welcomed by his peers and Teachers and caught up on anything that he has missed. He will greatly appreciate being a valuable member of a group and his natural desire to fight any sickness will grow. We don't ever underestimate the power and joy of being loved and accepted in a group of friends and encourage healthy friendships daily.

In a case, when the illness is severe, and the child is hospitalized for a month or so, please bring your hospital papers and/or doctors note and the Director will work with every situation independently.

Medical Records

In the interest of your child's health, and that of the other children in the school, parents must submit their current medical and immunization records prior to the enrollment. These records must be updated in accordance with the state law.

Come To Us If You Have a Problem

We try to meet your needs at all times; however, it is not always possible for us to see all your concerns. If you have a question about the school, program, staff member, or need help to solve a problem, please talk to the Director.

Sign In and Out Procedures

Parents are required to sign in and out their children as they come daily. Only those people authorized on the child's enrollment form, will be allowed to pick up the child, unless prior written notification has been given by the parent to the Director.

Releasing Children to People Other Than Parents

Children may only be released by our staff to persons authorized by you on your child registration form. In the event of unforeseen circumstances, a telephone authorization from you to release your child to another adult will be sufficient. Proper identification will be required. Our staff exercises considerable caution when releasing children, which is for the child's protection only.

Every person, picking up a child, must be 16 years or older for us to release your child.

In the event of divorce or separation that provides custody of the child with one parent and not the other, it is custodial parent responsibility to provide the school with the copy of the custody papers. Otherwise the school is required by law to release the child to either parent.

If You are Late Picking up Your Child

According to your contract, you have chosen set hours/days for bringing in your child to school. You can change your contract from one plan to another by giving us a written Notice of Change with at least one month in advance, provided there is a space available for the option desired. If you would like to add time to your daily attendance, you may do so on as needed basis.

The center closes at 6:00pm, if your child is still in school at that time; you will be billed \$1.00p/min p/child. Payment is required at the time of pick up.

If you have not picked up your child by the time the school has been closed for one full hour, and we are unable to contact either you or your emergency contacts, we will continue to take care of your child and make sure that he/she is OK but we will assume that an emergency has occurred and will act accordingly.

Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect

As childcare providers, we are required by law to report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect. Please do not be offended if we ask you about scratches, bruises or anything else that may be suspicious to determine what has happened. Should you suspect an incident of child abuse or neglect, please come to our Director immediately. We are required by law to report all suspicions to the Florida Abuse Hotline.

Contacting Parents in Case of an Emergency

If your child becomes ill while in school, we will make every attempt to contact one or both of the parents. If we are unable to reach either parent, we will attempt to call emergency contact people that you provided in your enrollment package. We will leave messages at all numbers.

In the case of a school wide emergency, such as fire, power outage, severe weather/tornadoes, or other emergency that may/will result in the evacuation and/or closure of the school we will ensure the safety of the children and contact parents or their emergency contacts. It is imperative that you inform the teachers and administration immediately of any changes to your contact information to ensure that we are able to promptly reach you in an emergency.

Hours of Operation

The center is open from 8:00am – 6:00pm, Monday thru Friday. The school will observe Thanksgiving, Spring and Winter Break in addition to being closed on Federal Holidays. A schedule of closings is posted in the front lobby and you can print new and updated copy from our website as well. Parents, that would like to bring their children during Winter or Spring Breaks will have that option for an additional fee, as long as the school is notified one week prior to the break. The tuition amount is calculated with all closings in mind and we only open the doors during Winter and Spring Breaks in consideration of working parents and parents, that would like to have uninterrupted learning cycle for their children for an additional fee.

During the summer the school runs as a Summer Camp and every child is invited to take part in our fantastic summer program.

The parents of VPK students follow VPK calendar, which they receive as soon as the calendar is available.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is structured on a yearly basis with all closings and holidays in mind. It can be paid in one easy payment (3% discount will apply to your payment) or in 12 monthly even installments that have been conveniently divided and are due by the 1st of every month. All payments are due in advance. There is no prorating for illnesses, vacations, late arrivals/early pick ups and no shows. Please make checks, cash and money orders payable to Live Oak Montessori School and hand them to the Teacher at drop in, write your child's name on checks/money orders clearly. To avoid the misplacement of payments, please do not put them into your child's lunch boxes or bags. \$50 charge will apply for all returned checks and we may ask you to pay with the different payment method next time.

\$50 fee is added to your account if we do not receive the payments by the 5th of the current month. In case your tuition becomes delinquent by one week, your child will be withdrawn from Live Oak Montessori School and your deposit will be forfeit. You would need to pay a current re-Enrollment fee to get reinstated.

Please keep your tuition current as we rely on your payments to meet our payroll and operating expenses.

Notice of Withdrawal

A two month written notice is required for withdrawal, if we do not receive it, you will be responsible for the two month of tuition.

We try to meet the special needs of each child. However, we reserve the right to terminate any child whose need for special attention becomes a

threat to the other children and/or staff.

A child may be terminated for the following reasons:

1. Lack of payment;
2. Persistent behavior problems;
3. Parent's refusal to comply with the state's guidelines and/or school's policies and philosophy.

We will make every effort to give 1 week's notice; however, we reserve the right to enforce immediate termination.

Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of LOMS to provide an environment that is free from unlawful discrimination of any type, including discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

As you read our Family Handbook, please remember that it is very important for you to understand and comply with all the policies and procedures of Live Oak Montessori School.

After reviewing our policies, please sign and return the agreement page to the school. Do not put it in your kid's lunch boxes or their cubbies, as it may get damaged or lost. This is your agreement with all the understanding to abide by the rules and regulations contained within.

Sincerely,

Live Oak Montessori School