



## VPK Parent Handbook

### **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 for all VPK parents 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 need 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, and 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 concerns 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, 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

18m – 6 years

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 and handling materials gently.

**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 praise, encouragement, accomplishment, and role modeling. Behavior can depend on the age, stage, family lifestyle 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 the "Expert" when it comes to your child
- Be informed when a communicable disease or traumatic situation have arisen at the program
- Be informed by the teacher when your child has a problem
- Be informed about changes in fees and/or programming

Your Responsibilities are to:

- Be involved in your child's education and learning
- Let the teacher know you are concerned and interested in your child's progress
- Set goals with the teacher and share in decisions about your child's care
- Share information about the child and home that may affect behavior
- Discuss problems and concerns with the teacher first
- Show appreciation for the teachers
- Continually upgrade your parenting skills and understanding of children
- Volunteer to assist the teacher in some way
- Follow LOMS program's policies
- Keep your child home when sick

### **If you would like to volunteer**

Parents are the kid's first and most important teachers. The parent involvement in a program is both valuable to the child and school. Every person, who remains on premises of the school, whether it's a

teacher or a volunteer, is required to have background checked and provide the school with the current copy of the results. You will also need:

- an interest in volunteering with your child in school
- time that you can give on occasion
- enjoyment of working with kids other than your own
- patience
- willingness to work on simple projects and take directions from others
- ability to attend special events or chaperone at outings
- reliability and commitment to being there when you say you will

Ask your class teacher for what is needed if you would like to volunteer some of your time.

### **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.

### **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 Policies**

Our school opens at 8:45am every morning with the exception of holidays and breaks. In the interest of safety, never just drop your child off but escort 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. If you are “VPK only” family, your time to arrive and pick up your child is between 8:45am and 12:30pm Monday – Thursday. Please make sure that your child is in school during that time to get the full benefit of the program offered.

Even though our teachers are in school prior to 8:45am, they are busy preparing the classrooms for today’s work and we ask parents to remain with their children if you arrive prior to 8:45am. Please sign in and out promptly in your VPK Parent book; it is a mandatory VPK regulation.

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

### **Departure**

Our VPK program runs Monday – Friday from 8:45am – 12:30pm. There is no payment required if you enroll your child in VPK program only and attend during the hours specified, meaning that you drop your child off at or after 8:45am and pick up before or at 12:30pm. Any and all additional time for before and after VPK hours will require a payment. If you need any additional hours/days of care, please contact the Center Director to give you a quote based on your needs.

However, emergency do take place and we are here to help. If for any reason, you need to pick up your child after scheduled pick-up time or bring earlier, please let us know as soon as you can, so that we can

make all the necessary arrangements. There is an extra charge for before and after VPK hours. Please have your payment ready in cash or check in the amount of \$5.00 for **any time** after 12:30pm but before 1:00pm for that extra time and so on. Calling ahead letting us know that you will be late doesn't take the fact that your child is still in school, but only lets us know not to expect you at the usual time. The payment for the extra time is required at the time of pick up. Please do not conduct any teacher/parent conferences during pick-up/drop off times, but call to schedule one, if needed.

### **Attendance/ Sign In and Out Procedures**

Signing in and out is a mandatory requirement for all VPK families. You will not be able to modify your attendance once it is uploaded to the VPK portal. All the days that were not signed for, will be considered non-attendance days and the child, once reached the certain limit, will be excluded from the VPK program.

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.

### **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.

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

### **Clothing**

Parents must maintain at least one complete change of clothing in a large zip-lock bag (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 do grow and weather changes occur frequently and unexpectedly, 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.

We do ask parents to invest in the uniforms that is great way to eliminate unnecessary comparing and be focused on the lessons instead. In addition, school uniforms can get dirty; withstand even abusive treatment and still give children professional look. Children seem to work and focus better when they are dressed accordingly. Our uniforms can be conveniently ordered on-line at [Frenchtoast.com](http://Frenchtoast.com)

### **Nutrition**

VPK children will have snack once a day at 10:00am. We ask all enrolled families to provide healthy gluten and peanut butter free food on the rotating basis, once a week for everyone. We ask parents to bring two items of choice like: chips and fruit. If you would like to add a dip, hummus, cream cheese and such, these are great additions that contribute to the taste; however, they can't count toward one item of choice but a condiment, make sure to keep that in mind. Prior to the beginning, you will be given the snack schedule, it is always better to bring more than less. This way you will rest assured that your child has sufficient amount to eat every day of the week and will not be hungry while in school. Hungry children – unproductive children. If, after you have brought the snack, nothing is coming back home, it maybe that there was not enough and the quantity should be upgraded.

We will let you know if there any additional allergies to be aware of.

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 bringing healthy snacks to support healthy diet and avoid items with high sugar content such as cupcakes, cakes, chocolate/sugar cookies, ice cream and similar.

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 a 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 degrees of Fahrenheit or higher in conjunction with any other signs 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.
11. 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 prescribe, which includes physicians, dentists, physician assistants, or licensed nurse practitioners. The written authorization should include the following information:

- \* Students name.
- \* Licensed prescribe name, telephone number, and signature. (We will call the person prescribing medicine for your child if we have any questions)
- \* Date prescription written.
- \* Name of the medication.
- \* Dosage.
- \* Time of day to be given.
- \* Length of treatment.
- \* Diagnosis or reason the medication is needed (unless reason should remain confidential).
- \* Special handling instructions.

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 it's 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**

VPK office will look at every absence on a case by case scenario. Make sure you have all your supporting documentation ready to be reviewed. The doctor's note is required for any and all absences that are 3 days or more during any particular month.

### **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.

### **Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect**

As childcare providers, we 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 7:00am – 6:00pm, Monday thru Friday. The school will observe Fall, Spring and Winter Break in addition to being closed on Federal Holidays.

VPK students follow VPK calendar, which can be downloaded and printed from our website at any time. Parents that would like to bring their children during non-VPK days or stay longer after/before VPK program, will have that option 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.

### **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 of the other children and/or the staff.

A child may be terminated for the following reasons:

- a) lack of payment
- b) persistent behavior problems
- c) parent's refusal to comply with the state's guidelines and/or center'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.

## VPK Parent Handbook Receipt Acknowledgment

Dear Parents,

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, which are carefully prepared to serve the needs of your family and the school.

After reviewing our policies, please sign and return this 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 commitment and agreement with all the understanding to abide by the rules and regulations contained within.

Sincerely,

Live Oak Montessori School

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Parent's Name

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Date

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Parent's Name

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Date