

# Pioneer Academy PreK Montessori Parents Handbook



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# Message from the Head of School

## **Dear Pioneer Academy Community,**

Welcome to the 2025-2026 academic year! We're thrilled to have returning students and extend a warm welcome to new members of our Pioneer family. This year, we begin on a high note, with Pioneer School achieving recognition in the 2024 Niche "Best School" Rankings. We've secured the #7 position among K-12 Private Schools in New Jersey and maintain our #1 rank in Passaic County, a testament to our commitment to excellence.

## **Why This Handbook Matters**

This student-parent handbook is your essential guide for a successful academic year. It outlines the values, expectations, and resources that define our vibrant Pioneer Academy community. It serves as a roadmap to navigate your educational journey, ensuring that you make the most of your experience at our school. Please familiarize yourselves with its contents and use it as a reference throughout this year and all of the subsequent years of the student's enrollment at Pioneer Academy. All stakeholders, including students attending Pioneer Academy and their parents and guardians are required to abide by the rules contained within it.

## **A Positive Learning Community**

Pioneer Academy is more than a school; it's a positive learning community. We are proud of the great community we have built, one that embraces rules and regulations. It's a community that thrives on accountability, resulting in a high-quality environment where students flourish. This collaborative spirit enriches the educational experience and contributes to our shared success.

## **Our Commitment to Excellence**

Since our founding in 1999, Pioneer Academy has been dedicated to providing rigorous, ethics-driven college-preparatory education. Our commitment to excellence is reflected in our Niche and SAT rankings, showcasing our leadership in education. Our graduates consistently gain admission to prestigious universities, and our faculty and programs earn praise from parents and students alike.

At Pioneer Academy, we guide and support students on their path to success. Education is a partnership between family and school, and we deeply value the collaboration with our parents. We're committed to ensuring the best possible experiences for all students, making this year one of growth and achievement.

Welcome back to another exceptional year at Pioneer Academy. Wishing you a prosperous 2025-2026 school year.

With gratitude,

*Owen O. Akman,*

*Head of School*

## **Mission**

Pioneer Academy fosters an inclusive environment with state-of-the-art facilities for students to grow in knowledge through a rigorous curriculum grounded in ethical principles and multicultural awareness inspired by engaging faculty. Our primary responsibility is to prepare young people for exceptional lives of purpose and accomplishment as global citizens, devoted to personal excellence and the greater good.

## **Vision**

We aim to inspire curious, creative, compassionate, and committed global citizens through intellectual growth and personal excellence within an ethical framework. We celebrate the pursuit of knowledge as inseparable from the development of character.

## **Core Values: Four Pillars**

Our philosophy of education is enabled by curiosity, creativity, compassion, and commitment, empowered by empathy, ethics, and community, open to everyone, regardless of race, color, religion, gender identity, or national origin.

**Curiosity, Creativity, Compassion, and Commitment** — define the Pioneer Academy educational experience and community. They anchor our passion for learning excellence and guide our shared culture and identity as Pioneer Academy citizens. Fundamentally, they govern how we strive alone and together toward greater knowledge and a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable future.

## **Honor Code**

Pioneer Academy's scholastic community is defined by and built upon a foundation of mutual trust, honesty, and integrity, as expressed within the Honor Code, a pledge that students sign upon matriculation and periodically reaffirm each academic year.

*“As a member of Pioneer Academy: I will let my moral compass and conscience guide my daily participation and contributions at Pioneer.*

*I consider ethics and honesty as the foundation of our shared community: I hereby pledge my conscience and integrity to the Pioneer Academy community and similarly expect that my classmates do the same, in keeping with Pioneer's Four Pillars—Curiosity, Creativity, Compassion, and Commitment.*

*I shall neither give nor receive any unauthorized aid, assistance, or advantage, as defined by my teachers, faculty, and administration, both explicitly and implicitly, from any source, with respect to school work,*

*homework, exams, papers, or any other school matter or academic endeavor; whether scholarly, extracurricular or athletic.*

*I shall neither steal nor violate other persons or their property, whether in the academic setting or not, whether intellectual or material. On all my work, the signature of my name reaffirms my honor and continuous commitment to this pledge.*

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Pioneer Academy is wholly committed to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism—we consider this commitment not only a moral imperative that unites us but crucial to student success and fostering a learning community that empowers all its members. Guided by the Four Pillars of our core values and our Honor Code, we condemn and do not tolerate exclusion, bias, racism, prejudice, or bullying in any matter, shape, or form.

Pioneer Academy is a place where we honor and celebrate the inherent dignity and worth of every human being, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin—where we affirm the dignity of all people, embrace our common humanity, and one another’s differences and diverse perspectives.

### **Mission and Vision**

*“Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence.”*

-Dr. Maria Montessori

At Pioneer Montessori, we offer academic excellence which fosters a life-long love of learning. Children are prepared through Pioneer Montessori to develop self-confidence, a sense of personal responsibility, and an awareness of their local and global communities.

In the Pioneer Montessori classroom, children have the freedom of choice in a teacher guided setting. With Pioneer Montessori, your child will be given a strong academic foundation based on the proven Montessori methodology, and the excellence that Pioneer Academy has been providing families since 1999.

### **MARIA MONTESSORI: The Woman, The Educator**

The Montessori methodology is the result of the observations and genius of Dr. Maria Montessori (1870 – 1952). Dr. Montessori was the first woman medical doctor in Italy. She graduated from the University of Rome and specialized in pediatrics. Dr. Montessori became interested in the education and training of young children.

Dr. Montessori's observations of children convinced her that each child carries within himself or herself the person he or she will become. Each child's potential is reached through a process of striving, aided by a growing sense of order and self-discipline. Every child must be free to develop at his or her own rate. Montessori designed materials and techniques that allowed her students to work in a way previously considered beyond their capacity. She quickly saw a new and valuable relationship develop within the classroom. No longer was the student dependent on the teacher. The child was now free to use the environment and other children as tools in his or her learning.

In a Montessori classroom, the teacher, through the study and observation of children, prepares the environment to attract the child. As the child is drawn toward learning, the teacher is free to provide small lessons and observe each child. In turn, each child is free to choose enticing work and repeat it continuously, if desired, until he or she is satisfied. Thus, fostered at an early age, concentration and self-discipline become the cornerstones upon which the child's confidence as a learner are built. Montessori children grow learning to observe, to think and to be independent. Natural curiosity and tendencies toward learning become the roots from which the older child evolves and emerges as a socially confident and intellectually disciplined adolescent.

Dr. Montessori died in 1952. Today, after over 100 years of international application, the Montessori Method thrives in many countries. In the United States, more than 3,000 Montessori schools have been established since 1957. In addition to the national Montessori certification now available to ensure quality Montessori care and education, the National Independent Schools are preparing to include Montessori schools in their certification process.

## VALUES AND OBJECTIVES

Pioneer Montessori's program rests on these core values and objectives:

1. *Respect*: self-respect, respect for others, tolerance, honesty, integrity and responsibility
2. *Compassion*: concern for one another, for humanity, kindness, peacefulness, understanding, acceptance, and global awareness
3. *Love of Learning*: discovery, exploration, working together, curiosity, and igniting the burning desire to learn
4. *Service*: a lifelong commitment to give something back through service to others
5. *Independence*: doing for oneself, understanding one's own capabilities
6. *Interdependence*: responsibility to and healthy dependence upon one another, the love of

community

7. *Excellence*: quality in all that we do to serve the children, and the cultivation of the pursuit of excellence within our students
8. *Universal Understanding*: a global perspective, and an understanding of being part of something bigger than oneself

## 2. PROGRAMS

### Prekindergarten Curriculum (ages 3 and 4)

The Montessori preschool classroom is a “house” for children. Dr. Maria Montessori called her first Montessori classroom/school, “Cassia di Bambini” in Italian, which translates to “children’s house” in English.

Children choose their work from among the self-correcting materials displayed on open shelves, and they work in specific work areas. Over a period, the children develop into a “normalized community”, working with high concentration and few interruptions. Normalization is the process whereby a child moves from being undisciplined to self-disciplined, from disordered to ordered, from distracted to focused, through the work environment. The process occurs through repeated work with materials that captivate the child’s attention. For some children, this inner change may take place quite suddenly, leading to deep concentration. In the Montessori preschool, academic competency is a means to an end, and the manipulative materials are viewed as “materials for development.” There is little to no “paperwork” or “ditto sheets” for the children. The work they do is concrete and hands on.

In the Montessori preschool, five distinct areas constitute the prepared environment:

1. **Practical Life**: enhances the development of task organization and cognitive order through care of self, care of the environment, exercises in grace and courtesy, and coordination of physical movement; builds fine motor and pre-writing skills.
2. **Sensorial**: this area enables the child to order, classify, and describe sensory impressions in relation to length, width, temperature, mass, color, pitch, and more
3. **Mathematics**: make use of manipulative materials to enable the child to internalize concepts of number, symbol, sequence, operations, and memorization of basic facts
4. **Language**: includes oral language development, written expression, reading, the study of grammar, creative dramatics, and children’s literature. Basic skills in writing and reading are developed using sandpaper letters, alphabet cut out boxes, and various presentations allowing children to link sounds with letter symbols effortlessly and to express their thoughts through oral and written exercises. In Language, it develops from within the child themselves. The teacher follows and guides the child with the skills they present and at their own pace.
5. **Geography and Culture**: these lessons expose the child to basics in geography, history,

and life sciences. Music, art, and movement education are part of the integrated cultural curriculum

The preschool environment unifies the psychosocial, physical, and academic functioning of the child. The primary objective of the classroom is to provide students with an early and general foundation that includes a positive attitude toward school, inner security, a sense of order, pride in the physical environment, abiding curiosity, habit of concentration, habits of initiative and persistence, the ability to make decisions, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility to other members of the class, school, and community. This foundation will enable them to acquire more specialized knowledge and skills throughout their school career and up to university level.

In our Montessori preschool, the classroom environment is carefully prepared to support your child's development in five key areas:

### **Practical Life**

This area enhances the development of task organization and cognitive order through activities such as care of self, care of the environment, exercises in grace and courtesy, and coordination of physical movement. It builds fine motor skills and prepares children for writing.

### **Sensorial**

This area allows children to order, classify, and describe sensory impressions. Activities in this area help children understand concepts related to length, width, temperature, mass, color, pitch, and more.

### **Mathematics**

Using manipulative materials, children internalize concepts of number, symbol, sequence, operations, and memorization of basic facts. These hands-on activities help make abstract concepts concrete and understandable.

### **Language**

This area focuses on oral language development, written expression, reading, grammar, creative dramatics, and children's literature. Children develop basic writing and reading skills through the use of sandpaper letters, alphabet cut-out boxes, and various presentations. The teacher guides each child according to their individual pace and skills, fostering a natural development of language.

### **Geography and Culture**

Lessons in this area introduce children to the basics of geography, history, and life sciences. The integrated cultural curriculum includes music, art, and movement education, enriching the child's understanding of the world around them.

## Peace

Lessons in grace and courtesy, along with a designated peace area in the classroom, teach children conflict resolution tactics. These activities provide concrete ways for children to practice and model peace among themselves, promoting a harmonious classroom environment.

Each area of the Montessori classroom is designed to encourage independent learning and exploration, allowing your child to develop a strong foundation for future academic and social success.

## HOMEWORK

Montessori schools do not typically assign daily homework if any at all. Dr. Montessori believed that if we do not dictate the work of the child in the classroom, then it does not make sense to dictate the work they choose at home.

We will create a portfolio for each child where completed work will be kept and shared during parent conferences to compare academic progress.

## PIONEER MONTESSORI DAILY SCHEDULE

7:30 – 8:00 AM	Before Care
08:00 – 08:20 AM	Drop-off Time
08:20 – 09:00 AM	Independent Activities
09:00 – 9:30 AM	Morning Circle
09:30 – 9:50 AM	Morning Snack
9:50 – 10:40 AM	Outside and/or Inside Gross Motor Development
10:40 – 12:00 PM	Work Cycle & Group Circle Time
12:00 – 12:45 PM	Lunch Time
12:45 – 2:10 PM	Nap/ Rest Time
2:10 – 2:30PM	Afternoon Snack
2:30 – 2:50PM	Afternoon Work Cycle
2:50– 3:20 PM	Activities/ Clubs

3:20 – 3:30PM	Dismissal Preparation Time
3:30– 3:50 PM	Dismissal
3:50 – 6:00 PM	Extended Day Program

## **EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM**

The Pioneer Montessori extended day program is a service to parents who need care for their child/children before and after regular school hours.

The hours of this program are as follows:

Morning: 7:30 AM – 8:00 AM

Afternoon: 3:50 PM – 6:00 PM

Parents may contract for these programs during initial registration or use it when needed (see fee schedule for rates). All requests for drop-in morning care, after care, or full day stay for half day students, **MUST** be approved through the office. Your classroom teacher cannot approve these requests. Please call ahead or stop by the office to sign up for care. Your request will be granted if there is space available.

## **LATE PICKUP**

For parents' whose children attend the afternoon extended day program (3:50 PM – 6:00 PM), children **MUST** be picked up no later than 6:00 PM. **A charge of \$5.00 will be incurred after the first five minutes late; an additional \$1.00 per minute will be charged for each additional minute thereafter.**

**LATE PICK-UP PROCEDURE:** If you know you are running late, please contact your child's teacher through the procare app and let them know the anticipated time of pick-up. It is helpful for teachers to know in advance so they can help your child adjust to the late departure. It also helps the teacher plan for staff coverage during the minutes the child is remaining in the program. If a parent has not contacted the teacher by 6:00 PM, the teacher will follow the contact protocol below:

- 1. The parent/legal guardian will be called.*
- 2. If the parent/legal guardian cannot be reached, the authorized emergency contact for the child will be called. The school will continue attempting to contact the parent/legal guardian and/or the authorized emergency contacts until 6:00 pm.*
- 3. If by 6:00 pm the school is unable to contact the parent/legal guardian or an authorized emergency contact, the school is obligated to Child Protective Services and/or the local police department.*

***For late pickup, the following procedures will be followed:***

- Parents must sign out their child with the accurate time of pick-up on the 'Late Pick-up Form'. Pick-up time must be documented according to the school clocks.
- The teacher assigned to supervise the remaining children will complete the left side of the

Late-Pickup Report and the parent/guardian will be asked to sign it. The teacher will give the top portion (white copy) of the report to the parent/guardian and the other 2 portions (pink and yellow copies) of the report will go to our accounting department for processing.

- The Accounts Manager will include the late fee(s) in the next tuition billing cycle for the parent's account, when late fee payments are expected to be paid.
- If you are having consistent difficulties in picking up your child by 5:45 pm please talk to your child's teacher or Administration to help you find resources or assist to find solutions for prompt departure.
- Consistent late pick-ups without significant communication may lead to dismissal from the program.

### **III. ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT**

#### **Admissions**

Children ages 3 and 4 may be considered for admission. Admission shall be determined after the Admission process has been completed.

Families wishing to be considered for admission are requested to come in for an informal interview and tour our campus. Following the initial visit, a second appointment may be appropriate. To be considered for acceptance, each family must apply and pay a one time non-refundable application fee.

#### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Pioneer Montessori admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate based on race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-administered programs.

### **ENROLLMENT AND RE-ENROLLMENT**

#### **Enrollment:**

The following forms and fees are needed by Pioneer Montessori to complete enrollment:

1. Online Application
2. Signed Enrollment Agreement & Deposit
3. Enrollment Fee (for new families)
4. Application Packet
5. Child and Adolescent Universal Health Form

#### **Re-Enrollment:**

#### **Intent to Return**

Each spring, your family will receive an *Intent to Return Re-Enrollment Form/ Survey* to reserve your child's seat at our school for the next year. If the re-enrollment form along with a deposit is not completed by March 1, 2024, your child's seat may not be guaranteed and the seat may be given to another student. The date may be moved to an earlier date depending on the school's needs.

## **IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL POLICIES**

### **Enrollment & Tuition Responsibility**

While the school year runs from September through June, families are responsible for tuition only for the period in which the student is actively enrolled and attending. Responsibility for tuition is limited to the months of attendance. However, once tuition for a specific month is paid, it is non-refundable as the family is committed to that month of service. To withdraw from the program or modify enrollment status, a 30-day written notice must be submitted to the administration. Any cancellation or change in enrollment will become effective on the 1st of the month following the completion of the 30-day notice period. Example: If notice is given on October 15th, the 30-day period ends November 14th. The change or withdrawal becomes effective December 1st. No credits or refunds will be issued for partial months, illness, vacations, or incidental absences.

### **Tuition Payment Structure**

Monthly installments are due by the 25th of the month preceding the month of service (e.g., November's tuition is due October 25th). A late fee of \$40.00 will be assessed for any payments made after the due date. Parents are responsible for all applicable registration fees and credit card processing fees. All financial arrangements, including tuition rates and aid, are strictly confidential. Disclosure to third parties without school consent is prohibited.

### **PK Probationary Period**

All new students entering the Pre-Kindergarten (PK) program are subject to a 10-day probationary period. During this window, enrollment may be terminated by either the school or the family with or without cause, and the standard 30-day notice will be waived.

**Payment Plans**

For semi-annual and monthly payment plans you can plan with the school's financial office.

Payments may be made by check, credit card and cash.

If your family has special needs regarding tuition schedules and payments, please speak with our financial office.

**Late Payments**

In order for us to meet our financial obligations we depend upon prompt payment for tuition. A late fee of \$150.00 will be assessed for payments made after the due date.

If tuition becomes delinquent by 90 days or more, the school will consider any payment arrangement breached, and will declare the entire balance of charges immediately due and payable. In the event of default of payment of any installment provided for in the enrollment contract, the student may not be allowed to continue class. If the school is required to initiate legal proceedings to enforce this agreement, the parents or guardians will be held liable for the school's legal costs, including attorney fees as stated in the enrollment agreement.

Late payments will affect a family's eligibility to participate in installment plans and financial aid in the future.

Please see the business office for additional details on payment plans, accepted methods of payment, deadlines, and other protocols/requirements related to payment of fees.

**Tuition Rates**

Tuition and fees are adjusted annually by a percentage to meet increasing cost of living expenses. The school strives to maintain reasonable and affordable tuition rates in order that our school community can be reflective of our broader surrounding community.

**Withdrawal**

Any withdrawals from the school must be requested in writing 30 days in advance of the final date the child/children will attend.

**Enrollment Agreement**

Children are admitted for the duration of the academic school year and parents and/or guardians are obligated to make the tuition payment for the entire year. The student's withdrawal or absence for any cause, prior to or during the school year, will not reduce obligation for the full annual tuition. Obligation to pay the full annual tuition begins when a signed enrollment plus applicable deposit and registration fee is turned in and accepted by Pioneer Montessori. The school's budget and operations depend on fulfillment by all parents and/or guardians of their agreement to pay the tuition, and that if you have elected to pay yearly, monthly or weekly. This is for your convenience and does not limit the obligation to pay all installments in a timely manner.

**Business Transactions**

All business transactions should be conducted with the Director of Finance in the finance office.

Please call the school to schedule a time to meet.

## STUDENT RECORDS

All student records are confidential. Parents have the right to review them. Records are only released upon written parental consent and when all financial obligations have been met. Please give the office sufficient notice if records are to be transferred.

## V. DAILY SCHOOL PROCEDURES AND ROUTINES

### Arrival And Dismissal

**Arrival:** Drop off begins at 8:00 am and all students should arrive no later than 8:20 am. You may park your car in the North parking lot and use the North entrance to enter the school. This is the Elementary side.

The morning greeting and group circle are an important and valuable part of your child's day.

*Tardiness is very disruptive to the children and teachers. If your child will be tardy, please call the office so that teachers can be prepared for his/her arrival.*

During the morning arrival, parents or a parent-authorized person, may drop your child off at the entrance. A teacher will be waiting at the door to welcome and escort your child to the classroom during the drop off time.

*As a reminder, this is not the time to engage your child's teacher in a lengthy conversation. If you have a need to speak with your child's teacher please email or call the office to schedule an appointment.*

As the first month of school comes to an end your children may be dropped off in areas designated according to Pioneer Montessori as indicated in guidelines provided by the classroom teacher and/or administration.

**Dismissal:** Dismissal for the morning program is at 12:30 pm. Dismissal for the full day program is at 3:30 pm. Please call the school if you will be late for pick-up so that adequate staff will be available for supervision. If your child is not picked up by 3:50 PM, there will be a charge of \$5.00 per day, per child. After 4:00 PM, the FULL FEE for After School Care will be charged.

*No child will be allowed to leave the school with someone other than the individuals authorized on the designated pickup forms which must be completed by parents. In cases of emergency, written permission or a phone call from the parents on the day of the pick-up is required along with a photograph of the individual who will pick up the child. Please inform the authorized person that she/he must bring a government-issued photo ID that must be checked before the child is released.*

We appreciate your understanding of this policy; in order to protect the safety of our students, no exceptions to this rule will be allowed.

### Early Dismissal

Parents are requested to inform the headteacher through procare in advance if they plan to pick up their child prior to his or her scheduled dismissal time. This will help the teacher to prepare the child in a timely manner without disturbing the class.

### **Attendance And Tardiness**

Regular and punctual attendance is critical to ensuring a positive experience for your child. Consistency and routine are essential elements in a child's Montessori experience. Erratic attendance can lead to missed lessons and interruptions in the child's natural learning process. A sense of alienation from the classroom activities and routine as well as a feeling of social isolation. Please notify both your child's teacher and the Main Office of extended absences which are expected to last over 2 days.

### **Vacations**

Pioneer Montessori asks that parents plan vacations around the school calendar. By attending school each day, students stay current with lessons and participate fully in the social life of the class.

### **Safety Procedures**

To control adult traffic within the school, all doors will remain locked during the school day. All doors that have access to the outside have fire safe handles, which allow them to be opened from the inside when locked from the outside. There will be a teacher or staff member who will be in the front lobby for drop off in the mornings.

1. If you are arriving late to school in the morning or afternoon, please bring your child to the South entrance front office and someone will come and escort your child to their classroom. This reduces instances of disruption for the other children already in the classrooms.
2. All visitors will be required to wear a pass while on the premises, PA reserves the right to limit visitors from coming on school premises.
3. Reminder: no child will be allowed to be picked up from school without prior written (unless on the child's emergency form) consent or a phone call to the office. If a staff member or the teacher does not know the authorized person picking the child, the child will not be released.
4. Please advise whomever you have authorized to pick your child up that they will need to bring a photo ID with them. No child will be released to anyone without a proper government-issued photo ID.
5. If there is a court order regarding custody or visitation rights regarding a student and a parent, we need to be notified immediately and have a copy on hand for the child's file. Upon receiving the order, the school may require the primary caregiver to fill out a new emergency card and pick up authorization forms if there is any change

### **Parking**

If you need to park a car to walk your child into school please use the North Entrance via the driveway at the front of the building. Students are not allowed to enter or leave the school building without a parent, a parent-authorized person (as indicated on the student information/emergency sheet), or designated school personnel.

### **Outside Recess & P.E. Policy**

If the temperature or wind chill is:

Above +32 degrees Fahrenheit, children will be allowed to go outside.

At or Below +32 degrees Fahrenheit, NO OPTION. All children will remain inside.

Staff must use good judgment on days when the temperature or wind chill is in this range  
(example: shortened outside time)

Cold/Snow: Children must be properly dressed to go outside in cold weather. Coats, hats, and mittens/gloves must be worn at all times when the temperature is below 36 degrees Fahrenheit.

Heat: If the heat index is excessively high, staff will shorten or eliminate outside time. This includes heat, humidity, and air quality factors. On these days, it is best for outside time to occur prior to 11:00 am.

Lightning/Severe Weather: At the first sign of threatening weather or lightning, staff will bring all children indoors into a safe area. Staff will need to monitor the situation.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

#### **Closings Or Delays Due To Inclement Weather:**

School may be canceled due to weather conditions. There are many factors that are taken into consideration when making the decision to close. First and foremost is *safety*, the ability to remove snow and/or ice at the school, or other conditions that could pose a danger to the children, staff, or facility. In the event that Pioneer Montessori is closed or delays its opening, the school will place the notice on the *local television* and *radio stations*. Information about school closings may also be found on the Wayne Public Schools website as *Pioneer Academy*. Pioneer Montessori will follow the same policy for closing due to inclement weather.

If school is closed due to weather conditions, the decision will usually be made by the Pioneer Academy Administration and communicated as early as possible, preferably *before 6:30 A.M.* and announced via the school emergency announcement system via email. Notifications for parents who opted in for the text alerts will also be sent out.

For students who are enrolled 2 or 3 days a week if a snow day happens on one of their school days, Pioneer Montessori allows the child to attend school on another day of the same week. If school is closed due to a scheduled holiday on one of the students' school days, Pioneer Montessori does not allow the child to make up that day under any circumstances.

Pioneer Montessori's first concern is for the safety of our students. We understand that our students live in a wide range of areas. Although Pioneer Montessori may be open during inclement weather, it may be unsafe for some of our students to attend. Please note that under these circumstances tardiness and absences may be excused due to inclement weather even when school is in session.

#### **School Closings Announced During The School Day:**

If Pioneer Montessori is forced to have an early dismissal due to weather conditions during the school day, Pioneer Montessori will call, email and/or send a procare message to all parents to pick their child up. We will announce this at Pioneer Montessori, via email message. Pioneer Montessori administration will remain at the school until all students are safely picked up or other arrangements are made with the parents.

*For all weather-related issues, periodically check the news for weather related closings/delays or call and speak with the Front Office. If possible, Pioneer Academy will attempt to email all parents. We also urge all parents to activate their Alma accounts and keep their information up*

*to date for PreK –12 students so that you may be notified of the most current school information.*

## **VI. CLASSROOM PROCEDURES AND ROUTINES**

### **Discipline**

Pioneer Montessori uses positive discipline, which is implemented in a developmentally or age-appropriate fashion to meet the needs of the individual child. Our focus is on how to help children resolve problems and empower them to have a successful experience in the classroom and school community. The goal of our discipline policy is to provide an environment that promotes respect and safety for each person as well as the space we share.

The need for discipline within a Montessori classroom is greatly reduced by the prepared environment. The teachers make a point of keeping engaging activities available for the children so there is never a lack of something interesting for each student to do. The teacher may also redesign the work areas, jobs available, the number of children allowed in a work area, etc. in response to classroom behavior.

For younger children, the primary method in a Montessori classroom is redirection – moving the child from a disruptive activity and engaging him or her in something more productive. Emphasis is put on directing a child to what they may do (make appropriate choices) rather than telling them what they may not do. All this may be done by using mini-conferences between teacher and child, reflective listening and questioning, giving limited choices, making agreements, and helping to resolve conflict.

The classroom also uses a peace area. This is a comfortable area in which the child may relax and calm down, or to try to resolve conflict with another child. The child may choose to go to the peace area by him, herself, or may be requested to visit the area by the teacher. In the event of unsafe physical or verbal behavior, or a persistent problem, a child may be removed from the classroom for a period of time to collect him/herself and to give the staff an opportunity to help resolve the situation.

Parents will be notified of significant or persistent disciplinary problems at school in a timely manner. If it is necessary to involve parents in the resolution of a problem at school, it will be done with a spirit of cooperation and with the aim of helping the child. Parental support during that time is very much appreciated. Through conferences, goals will be mutually agreed upon. If the goals are not able to be met within an allotted time, further professional help or other school placement will be considered for the child. Parents or faculty may call upon the Principal to act as facilitator at any time. Should it become apparent that a family cannot be supportive of the school's mission or goals, it may be necessary for the Principal to consider whether it is in the best interest of the school to keep the child enrolled at Pioneer Montessori.

To provide an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for all children, suspension or expulsion procedures may be executed in the event of a serious and/or persistent behavior problem. Such behaviors include, but not limited to, defacing or damaging property (school or other), triggering a fire alarm, violence, threats of violence, blatant disrespect, disorderly conduct, and endangering safety of self or others. This kind of disciplinary action will be determined by the Principal upon consultation with the faculty. The school Board will be notified

if such disciplinary action is taken.

### **Discipline Policy**

Pioneer Montessori has a strong commitment to implementing the discipline of students in a respectful, firm manner. One of the ultimate goals of Montessori Education is to develop a self-disciplined individual. We have established clear limits, and provide consistency in maintaining these limits.

Every child has the right to express their feelings; anger, hurt, frustration, etc. When aggressive behavior occurs, the children involved are taken aside by a teacher. The teacher will try to help them express their feelings verbally. With younger children, a teacher assists by giving them the language to communicate their feelings. At no time will excessive discipline measures ever be used, such as corporal punishment or verbal abuse.

In the event of a recurrent problem with aggressive behavior, such that the safety of other children and/or teachers is a concern, the following steps are taken:

1. The Lead Teacher will schedule a conference with the child's parents to discuss the situation, concerns, suggestions and next steps. The Principal and Director will be informed about the situation and subsequent status.
2. If the aggressive behavior (including, but not limited to: biting, hitting, scratching and spitting) continues after a reasonable amount of time and effort, and the teachers are unable to assist the other students as needed due to the disruption, the Lead Teacher will schedule a second conference with the parents. This conference will include the Lead Teacher, and the Principal and the Director.

### **Observation Of The Classroom\***

If you would like to come and observe in your child's classroom you may do so after the first month of school. One observer is welcome at a time and requests must be made in advance. Be aware that impromptu class visits will not be possible. Please schedule a day and time to visit through your child's teacher. During class observations, we ask that parents refrain from interacting with the children to avoid disruption to the class environment. This is your time to sit in an area of the classroom and observe. You may take notes and if you have questions the teacher will be more than happy to address them when class is not in session.

**\*At this time all in class visits are suspended due to COVID-19 pandemic, any requests must be provided in writing and pre-approved by PA administration. We reserve the right to refuse any visitors in the class until further notice.**

### **Volunteering\***

At Pioneer Montessori, we welcome parents and family members to come and help when we have the need. The teacher will ask for volunteers and at times have a sheet to sign up on the day and time volunteers are needed. It must be pre-approved by the school administration at full discretion of Pioneer Academy.

Other ways parents or family members can volunteer is by coming to the classroom\* and

reading a children's book at our group circle. If any of our parents have a career they would like to share with us then we can have you come in and share with the class about your job or type of work you do.

Montessori began in Europe and has a vast global recognition. We love to have parents or family members volunteer to spend time in the classroom sharing a group circle about your culture and any customs or traditions or holidays you celebrate. Please speak with your child's teacher if you would like to do this during the school year.

### **Referral Process For Special Needs Students**

Pioneer Montessori is not staffed with a special education department and cannot design or implement an IEP or 504 plan needed for the children who may require it. The school does not diagnose or evaluate students for learning differences or special needs.

Pioneer Montessori recognizes and values the academic potential of students of diverse learning abilities. Although our program is not designed specifically to students with learning disabilities or attention difficulties, if the teacher observes that a child has special needs she will consult with the Principal and parents. Pioneer Montessori encourages all teachers to solicit advice from colleagues concerning classroom situations or learning needs that present special challenges. If a child is exhibiting learning challenges or behavior patterns that interfere with a normal learning pattern, the teacher will document the patterns observed and begin the referral process. This may include the decision to have the child leave Pioneer Montessori so they can have academic success in a program suited for their needs.

### **Snack Program**

Pioneer Montessori will provide all snacks throughout the day. There will be one snack in the morning and a second snack in the afternoon. Food that is wholesome, nut and nut oil free, sugar and trans-fat free and as little as processed will be served. If your child has any food allergies please let your teacher know. There will be a list posted in the classroom of all students who have known allergies. Parents will provide snacks from home for children with allergies and label with their child's name.

### **Lunches**

Children have the choice to bring a full lunch from home in a lunch box or bag, or to purchase lunch from the school lunch program. If you choose to bring your child's lunch from home then it needs to be in a lunch box or bag with your child's name on it. You may pack a water bottle if you choose or your child can use water that we provide. We trust that you will send a nutritious, balanced lunch for your child each day. Teachers will call or email parents if they notice a pattern of eating which they feel does not support the student's learning and physical activity through the course of the day.

***Please remember no nuts or foods processed in nut oils are allowed. Please read packages for foods that are processed in plants that ALSO process peanuts or tree nuts. These items are also not allowed, as they can trigger a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction. If you still are not sure, feel free to bring the food in with the package still wrapped or boxed around it. The teachers will know if it is safe to enjoy in the classroom.***

If your child has difficulty giving up peanut butter sandwiches, given Pioneer Montessori's policy, we recommend you try "Sun butter" or "Soy butter" products. Most times they are made with sunflower seeds and/or soybeans. Tahini can also be used as it contains sesame seeds.

If you choose to use the school lunch program you may do so by contacting New Line Catering at <https://newlinecatering.com/> or you may email them at [info@newlinecatering.org](mailto:info@newlinecatering.org). This program has an additional fee from the tuition. You may sign up for the school lunch program on a yearly, monthly, or weekly basis. Day by day is not an option for the school lunch program. If by mistake you forgot to bring your child's lunch box from home one day, the school will provide your child with the school hot lunch. You will be billed accordingly. If this becomes a habit then your child's teacher will suggest that you sign up for the school lunch program.

1. Lunches that contain high sugary foods will be returned home for your child to enjoy after school
2. Foods that need to be served warm should be sent in thermoses or insulated containers or containers that can be put in the microwave
3. To respect individual family food choices, children may not share or trade food
4. Most children prefer small quantities of a variety of foods rather than a large quantity of only one or two items
5. If your child can not finish his or her lunch, the remaining food will be sent home in the lunch box. This will help you better gauge the amount needed for your child's lunch
6. **Candy and gum are not allowed at school. These snacks will be sent home for your child to enjoy once school is over. No gum is allowed at school at any time**

Thank you for adhering to Pioneer Montessori's Lunch guidelines. We instill the above information for your child's safety and nutritional growth and well-being.

### **Holidays**

Holidays and celebrations can be a challenge for young children. All the distractions, noise, and pressures can leave a child feeling out of sorts. Dr. Montessori's approach to holidays is to honor and respect the celebrations of all cultures but to keep holiday activities to a minimum within the classroom. While it is appropriate to study religious and cultural events from a historical and cultural perspective, the school discourages celebrations that cannot be enjoyed by the whole school/class community.

### **Birthdays\***

In Montessori, we encourage students to celebrate their birthday with their friends. It can be on the exact day they were born or a few days before or after. Birthdays are a fantastic way for your child to understand their place in our community both at home and in school. They know they are growing and getting older. Thus, they understand that the older they get the more independent they can be. In keeping with the Montessori curriculum, Dr. Montessori called birthday celebrations, "A Walk Around the Sun". In the classroom, we celebrate birthdays in a group circle. The child will set up the "Sun" and place the months of the year around the sun. Next, the child will hold the "Earth" (our class globe) and stand next to the month they were born. The class sings a special song as the child walks around the Sun holding the Earth. It takes one whole year, 365 days, 12 months, 52 weeks, for a child to turn another year older. If a child is

turning 4 then they walk 4 times around the Sun. Parents are asked to bring in pictures of their child from birth to the age they are now. You may choose to have them in hand and the child can show each picture as he or she walks around the Sun. You may also choose to glue them on a big poster board and add colors or stickers or decorations as you feel fit. This is a great project to work on with your child as well. Please feel free to speak with your child's teacher for more details.

We do not permit parents and other family members to come into the classroom that day however, we do permit parents to bring an individually served special birthday snack. This is the one day that we make the exception to have cupcakes or cake. A healthier snack is also accepted such as fruit and/or muffins.

*As with our lunch program, birthday snacks also must have no peanuts, tree nuts, or be made with nut oils. If the snack is in a package please make sure to read the labels to see if it was made in a plant that processed peanuts or tree nuts. These are also not allowed. For birthday and/or celebration snacks we also ask that there are no animal products in them. This includes gelatin.*

Families are also encouraged to donate a book to the class library on the day your child has his or her Walk Around the Sun. You can pick a children's book that is a favorite in your house and read it after our birthday snack at group circle. This has proved to be a wonderful way for the children to leave their own legacy at the school and to build the classroom library.

### **Birthday Party Protocol And Social Arrangements**

As a community, we must be sensitive to each of the children's feelings, putting our own convenience aside. Please do not send party favors or gifts to school. We also ask that sleepover gear, luggage, overnight bags, or other non-school-related items be left home. We do not have the facilities to hold and transfer sleepover party gear and paraphernalia. These items should not come into school with the students. If you would like to invite children from your child's class to your child's birthday party outside school, please use the emails of the parents from our authorized class list. To avoid hurt feelings, we encourage parents to invite all students in the class to any parties being hosted

### **Toys**

**Toys are not permitted in school.** Such items can be easily lost or broken. Parents are asked to carefully monitor what their child is bringing to school. What is permitted in school are objects from nature or educational items that can be shared by the child in a group circle. Beginning at the end of October/November, we will start our class "Presentations/Sharing". This is a type of "show and tell" that is part of the Montessori Language curriculum. Each week on Fridays your child may bring in one object from home that has the beginning sound of the letter we are learning that week. For example, if the sound we are learning is "s" then you can help your child look for something that begins with the letter "s". Maybe you find "socks" or a toy "snake" or even a real "strawberry". As your child enters the classroom on Fridays they will place their sharing object in a special basket by the front door. Toys are permitted on this day only, but will stay in the sharing basket for the entire day until it is time for the child to share it in a group circle.

During the first week or weeks of school (September) we understand that your child may need to bring a favorite stuffed animal or small hand size blanket with them. This is fine as it can sooth

your child and help them get through the day. The teachers will observe and if it is becoming a problem rather than a helpful tool, they will ask your child to place it in their cubby or sharing basket until it is time to go home. For most children, knowing that it is in the classroom is comfort enough.

Your child will also be able to take their comfort item to nap/rest time on their cot. As a reminder, this comfort item may only be soft. Anything that is hard or plastic will be kept in their cubby or sharing basket.

### **Transfer of Belongings**

Please be sensitive to your child and to the faculty. If your child is involved in a regular transitional schedule between homes please remember that how and when items are transferred can make a big difference in a child's day. Items should be carefully packed and contained to minimize bulk and confusion. If possible, changes of clothing and toys should take place outside of school and the classroom. This avoids loss and confusion of precious items. Parents should not expect teachers to handle the exchanges of toys and clothing that have been misplaced during social engagements or when a child is transitioning from one parent's home to the other parent's home.

### **Marking of All Belongings**

We as parents mark clearly all their child's belongings including, sweaters, jackets, extra clothing, educational items brought in to share, books and personal supplies. With the teacher's help all children must keep track of his or her own possessions. Pioneer Montessori is NOT responsible for lost items.

A "lost and found" basket will be in the classroom during the year. In this basket will be unmarked clothing items, comfort items, Friday sharing items, lunch containers that are un-marked as well. They will be cleared out bi-weekly and anything left will be given to charity.

### **Change Of Clothing**

Each child is required to bring in a complete change of clothing. The change of clothing will be kept in your child's cubby. If your child uses his or her extra clothing, their wet or dirty clothing will be sent home in a plastic bag. We ask that you return a new set of extra clothes the following school day. Teachers will remind parents as well.

**School Dress Code** Clothing worn should allow for independence and movement. In the Art area, we will provide aprons for the children to put on over their clothes, yet stains cannot be avoided without limiting your child's participation. Keep in mind we do use washable paints and markers.

To enable all children to participate in outdoor activities, appropriate outdoor shoes for running, climbing and playing should be worn.

Please make sure that during the winter months and on rainy days your child has appropriate outerwear for outdoor activities. It is not unheard of to take a nature walk in the rain or to build a snowman on a nice winter day. For your child's protection, winter clothing must include a coat, hat or hood, mittens or gloves, snow pants, and boots.

### **School Supplies**

The school will provide MOST school supplies for the children. Please do not send in special

notebooks, workbooks, pencils, or pens. At times during the school year we may ask families to bring some supplies such as, tissue boxes, paper towels, Clorox Wipes, and latex gloves without powder in them. This will be made known through email or verbal communication from your child's teacher. You may bring a backpack along with your child's lunchbox or lunch bag. Backpacks are used to bring extra change of clothes from home to school or if clothes are wet then we will put them in your child's backpack to take home.

### **Field Trips**

The Montessori educational program at Pioneer Montessori may be expanded by participation in purposeful, informative field trips. All field trips are organized by the teacher and are supervised by at least the regular ratio of students to staff. Parents are often requested to accompany the class to provide additional supervision, depending on the type of field trip. If a parent volunteers to help, that parent must be prepared to assume the responsibility of supervising several children just as if they were another staff member of Pioneer Montessori.

Field trips will be scheduled as far in advance as possible and notices will be sent home. Field trip expenses are covered by the Activity Fee paid by families upon enrollment.

## **VII. COMMUNICATION**

### **TO FAMILIES FROM SCHOOL**

#### **Web Site**

Pioneer Montessori's web page is the place for information about all school activities. The school calendar, classroom web pages, and parent forms can be found by checking the *Parent Information* page on the school's web site: [www.pioneeracademy.org](http://www.pioneeracademy.org). All written notices will be sent via email. Please let the school know if you do not have email. We can send a hard copy home with your child.

Classroom web pages are updated frequently and include a monthly *Newsletter*. In the monthly newsletter, you will find the activities of the week, photos, and upcoming events. There will also be reminders about school closings, holidays and other parents needing to know information. Again, if you do not have email, please let us know and we can send home a hard copy of the newsletter each week. Please be sure to read through each newsletter as there will be vital information included.

#### **Public Relations and Advertising**

There may be occasions when students will be photographed or recorded on video participating in various school functions. These photographs and videos may be used for public relations and/or school advertisement purposes. If students **DO NOT WISH FOR THEIR IMAGES TO BE USED BY THE SCHOOL**, parents must notify the Dean of Students in writing within the first week of attendance.

#### **Backpacks**

As was mentioned in this handbook in the lunch section, each child should bring a backpack along with their lunch box/bag to school. It will be kept in their cubbies throughout the day. Communications that cannot be sent through email, will be sent home with the children in their backpack. Please check your child's backpack each night for communications from school. As well, please be sure to check the Procure and email for announcements and communications

from the school and classroom. For greater access to school information, please provide your email address on your emergency card and check your email regularly for messages from the school.

## **TO SCHOOL FROM FAMILIES**

### Office

Of course, feel free to bring written communication, payments, forms, etc. directly to the front office. They will make sure it goes to the right person.

### Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents and teachers should maintain a good working relationship to help students get the best possible education. Conferences are good communication tools. Our most important form of communication is the parent-teacher conference.

Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice a year. They are scheduled as part of the school calendar in the fall and spring. The fall conference is held in October. Pioneer Montessori is *closed for students all day*. Please plan for your child to stay at home. If you have an emergency on conference day and cannot make your scheduled time, please call or email to schedule a different time or even in exception, a different day. On conference day, the children do not attend school. It is a day off for them. Please make sure to set up a person or place for them to be as we do like both parents in attendance. If one parent is away on a business trip or out of the country/state, we can add them on Skype or conference them in by phone. Aside from the two scheduled conferences during the school year, if you wish to meet with your child's teacher you may do so by setting up a time and day to meet in person. Usually the best times for this would be early in the morning before the children arrive, or after school when the children have been dismissed.

Please be respectful of the fact that the teachers' responsibility during the school hours is to be with the children. Please understand that teachers will excuse themselves from parent conversations to rejoin classroom activities and lessons. As mentioned above, teachers will be glad to speak with you by phone or in person. You may leave a request for them to set an appointment by email or ask the teacher quickly at drop off or dismissal.

## **VIII. HEALTH, SAFETY AND MEDICATION POLICIES**

### Emergency Care

In the event of an accident or sudden onset of illness, the school will not hesitate to seek proper care for a child. The child's individual emergency instructions on file in the classroom and school office, will be consulted immediately and the parents will be called. If necessary the child will be transported to the hospital by ambulance or emergency vehicle. The consent statement, signed by parents upon enrollment, will accompany the child so that treatment can be given immediately in the absence of the parent. It is *imperative* that you keep the emergency contact and insurance card information in the office and classroom up to date!

### Illness

For the sake of others as well as the child, parents must keep children at home who have a

fever (or requires medication to control a fever) or other symptoms of illness. With a fever, the child cannot return to school until they have been fever free for a full 24 hours. The same is in effect if a child has been throwing up or diarrhea. Parents (not the child) should make the decision on when a child should go to school and when the child should stay at home. If the child is at school the teacher and/or the school nurse will make the decision to send a child home due to their illness. We ask that parents or someone on your authorized pick up list comes as soon as possible to school.

If your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness such as strep throat, conjunctivitis (pink eye), chicken pox, or any other contagious disease, please tell the school, especially your child's teacher. By doing this we can inform parents of illnesses their child may be exposed to. This also helps parents and their medical professionals target treatment and save office visits and costs. The staff at Pioneer Montessori cannot adequately inform parents of what is going around unless the parents take time to let the school know.

Should a child become ill at school, he or she will be isolated (in the nurse's office) and will plan to pick the child up.

Those parents whose children are exempted from immunization due to medical or religious belief will be notified when communicable illness is present in the school. The children must be kept home until officially notified to return. To maintain a state of wellness in the school community, the school may exercise the option to exempt any child from attendance due to illness.

### ***Guidelines For Determining When To Keep Your Child Home from School***

1. Temperature of 100.4 degrees F orally, or 99 degrees F axillaries, or higher. Child may return to school after being free of fever for 24 hours without the aid of medication.
2. Temperature is 101 degrees F orally, or 99 degrees F auxiliary or higher, plus one of the following: (a) severe cold with yellow-green nasal discharge (b) cough (c) sore throat (d) sneezing (e) swollen glands, or (f) skin rash. Child may return to school if they are fever free for 24 hours and a note is required from a physician or nurse practitioner stating that the child's infection is not communicable.
3. Red, watery or draining eye (s). Child may return to school when all discharge has ceased.
4. Discharge from the ear(s). Child may return to school if (a) all drainage from the ear(s) has ceased, or (b) a note is required from a physician or nurse practitioner stating that the child's infection is not communicable.
5. Lice. Child may return to school after treatment, when completely free of lice and nits.  
*Please read our Lice policy.*
6. Skin lesions, i.e., impetigo, ringworm, and scabies. Child may return to school if (a) skin sores are healed, or (b) note is required from a physician or nurse practitioner stating that the condition is not communicable.
7. Vomiting; Child may return to school if they are free of an upset stomach and vomiting for 24 hours.
8. Diarrhea (2 or more loose, watery stools per day). Child may return to school if they are diarrhea free for 24 hours.

9. Fainting, seizures, or general signs of listlessness, weakness drowsiness, flushed face, headache, or stiff neck. Child may return to school if (a) free of symptoms, or (b) note is required from a physician or nurse practitioner stating that the child is not communicable.
10. Fever with any signs and symptoms of a communicable disease to which the child has been exposed. Child may return to school if they have been free of fever for 24 hours.
11. Any combination of symptoms for consecutive days of attendance. Child may return to school if they are free of symptoms.
12. Pioneer Montessori reserves the right to determine whether a student should remain at home or is okay to stay at home or return to school when illness is a consideration. A doctor's note giving permission for a student to return to school may be requested.

### Head Lice Policy

This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Pioneer Montessori staff should a case of head lice occur. All members of Pioneer Montessori will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist families to manage head lice effectively.

*At Pioneer Montessori, there is a commitment to do this in the following ways:*

- Where an active case is detected, the school encourages immediate treatment and students may return to school after appropriate treatment was commenced and the head lice issue is resolved.
- The principal or their nominee will contact the family to ask that a student be checked and receive treatment if necessary.
- Parents/caregivers will notify the school if their child is found to have live lice or nits (eggs) and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced.
- The school will notify parents/caregivers of children in a classroom when a case of head lice is detected, to alert these families of the need to check their children.
- Once notified of the possibility of head lice exposure, all families will check at home the hair of all household members for live lice or nits. They will aim to use a head lice comb, for greater accuracy, and they will use an effective treatment if necessary.
- Families should notify the parents/caregivers of their child's friends where appropriate, so they have an early opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.
- Afflicted students will either bring a certificate or note from their doctor/head lice removal specialist stating that the condition has been resolved and/or the students head may be checked by an Pioneer Montessori staff member prior to their returning to the classroom to ensure that the matter has been resolved.
- A sympathetic attitude will be maintained by the entire school community to avoid stigmatizing/blaming families who are having trouble with control measures.

*To support parents/caregivers and the broader school community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management, Pioneer Montessori will undertake to:*

- Distribute up to date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of headlice to students, staff, and their families at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required.
- Provide practical advice, maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatizing/blaming

families who are having trouble with control measures.

- Access community educational resources and support, such as community health centers.
- Encourage children to learn about headlice to help remove any stigma or other negative experiences associated with the issue.
- Be aware of real difficulties, such as treatment failure, that some parents/caregivers may encounter and seek extra support from community health centers if required.
- Continue to seek opportunities to increase our understanding of and response to managing head lice.

*Note: If multiple head lice cases are found in a short timeframe, an entire classroom may have a blanket head inspection or head lice screening by school staff. If this were to become necessary, Pioneer Montessori staff would take precautions to respect privacy and maintain confidentiality for each student.*

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

### **Over-The-Counter Medications**

Aspirin, Tylenol, Neosporin, and other patient over-the-counter drugs are not available through Pioneer Montessori. Should you wish for your child to have access to these medications, your child's pediatrician must complete an "Authorization to Administer Medication Form" and submit it to the nurse's office - [nurse@pioneeracademy.org](mailto:nurse@pioneeracademy.org). You may contact the school nurse at 973-405-5169x250.

### **Prescription Medications**

The medication to be administered by designated school personnel must be sent directly from the pharmacy or physician's office or brought to school by the student's parent/guardian. The school must receive an "Authorization to Administer Medication Form" signed by the student's physician and/or parent/guardian.

The following information must be printed clearly on the medication container:

Student's Name

- Name of medication
- Dosage
- Time the medication must be taken

Bring in only the amount of medication that is needed for a school day. In the case of prolonged need, send in the amount for a clearly specified period. Written authorization to dispense medications shall be limited to two weeks unless otherwise prescribed by a physician. Medication shall only be dispensed out of its original container, which must be labeled with the child's name. Extra medication will not be sent home with a student. All medication will be kept in a secure location in the clinic and/or front office.

### **Medication Storage And Administration**

Medication should not be brought to school unless it is essential to the health of the student. If a student must take medicine at school, these procedures must be followed:

Pioneer Montessori requests that all medication be delivered directly to the front office staff and that proper documentation is completed. Pioneer Montessori will not store nor administer any medication that has not been delivered by the parent/guardian with properly completed accompanying documentation.

Expired medication will not be kept on site. All expired medication will be returned directly to a parent/guardian. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to supply Pioneer Montessori with non-expired medication and properly completed accompanying documentation to administer any prescription or non-prescription medication on site.

### **Delivery Of Medication**

Any Pioneer Montessori staff that gives or applies medication shall do so in accordance with the following:

1. The right drug;
2. The right recipient;
3. The right dose;
4. By the right route;
5. At the right time;

### **Parent Responsibility**

Parents or any licensed health care professional shall determine if Pioneer Montessori staff are competent to give or apply medication. The administration has the responsibility to assess the ability of staff to give or apply medication safely.

### **Confidentiality**

Any Pioneer Montessori staff who gives or applies medication shall not disclose information about that child's medication unless such information is needed to protect the health of other children or staff.

### **Written Permission And Instructions**

Pioneer Montessori staff shall give or apply medication, both prescription and non-prescription, only with prior written permission and written instructions from a parent/guardian. Pioneer Montessori staff shall comply with the instructions provided by the parent. Medication shall be in the original container, stored according to instructions, clearly labeled for a named child, and returned to the parent when no longer needed. The dosage will not exceed that which is printed on the label. Expired medication shall not be given or applied to a child and shall be returned to the parent.

### **Report To Parents**

Any error in the giving or applying of medication shall be reported to the parent.

### **Unusual Circumstances**

There must be a written statement from the licensed health care professional who prescribed medication allowing the provider to give the medication when:

1. Any prescription medication is given or applied as needed (PRN); or
2. By route other than oral, topical, inhalant, or installation.

### **Hand Washing**

All Pioneer Montessori staff shall wash hands before giving or applying any medication. If handling any bodily fluids is involved, Pioneer Montessori staff must also wear gloves and wash hands after giving or applying medication.

### **Medication Log**

Pioneer Montessori has a designated medication binder in the front office for all children enrolled receiving medication. The information within the binder is kept confidential. For each child receiving medication there must be an “*Authorization for Medication*” form completed in its entirety signed by a parent or guardian. The log recording the administration of medication will be located on the back of this form. A notation on the log will be made if an adverse reaction to over the counter and/or prescribed medication occurs. Parents will be contacted immediately via phone regarding a major adverse reaction to medication requiring professional medical attention. Minor adverse reactions, such as light redness will be reported on the minor adverse medication reporting form sent home with the student for a parent signature.

If a prescription medication is to be given on an “as needed” basis, a note from a licensed healthcare professional indicating that Pioneer Montessori can administer the medication on an “as needed” basis is required. Medication log forms are required to be updated with each medication (type, dose, route, and/or time of administration is modified).

### **Medical Storage And First Aid Kit**

Medications are kept in the front office in an area that can be locked always. An additional locked box is provided for medications in the front office that may need to be refrigerated. First Aid supplies are located in both the front office and in each classroom and are stored in areas that can be locked always. The following first aid supplies are available at all times: scissors, tweezers, thermometer, bandages, sterile gauze pads, medical tape, protective eye wear, protective mask, insect sting preparation, antibacterial ointment, antiseptic cleaning solution, cold packs, triangular bandages, and gloves.

### **Epi-Pen**

If your child has an allergy that may require the use of an Epi-pen, Pioneer Montessori will require their own Epi-pen kept on site, which will be provided by the parent or guardian. If your child would require the use of the Epi-pen while in attendance the following steps will be taken:

1. The Epi-pen would be injected by a trained staff member
2. 911 would be called after the Epi-pen is injected
3. The parent or guardian would then be contacted and given further information

### **Inhalers**

As with Epi-pens, if the child has a condition requiring the use of an inhaler, parents must notify the school nurse so that Pioneer Montessori can ensure that the inhaler will be kept on available and on premises. If the student's condition is such that he/she must keep the inhaler on his/her person, this must also be kept on record at the nurse's office; otherwise, the inhaler will be kept in the nurse's office. Notifications may be completed by filling out a form provided by Pioneer Montessori, signing it, and submitting it to the nurse for records.

### **Latex Gloves**

Latex gloves are worn by staff when administering first aid. Please inform the front office staff and your child's teacher and indicate on your child's registration form if your child has a latex allergy.

### **Physical And Immunization Information**

#### **Pre-K Montessori Vaccines:**

1. DTAP, must have one vaccine after 1 year of age
2. Polio
3. MMR, after 1 year of age
4. Varicella, after 1 year of age
5. HIB, after 1 year of age
6. PCV (Pneumococcal), after 1 year of age
7. Hepatitis B
8. Flu Vaccination between September until December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year
9. PPD required for all students born outside of the United States

A physical is needed and the doctor must fill out the *Universal Child Health Form*, with doctor signature. Please note that Pioneer Academy does not accept requests for religious exemptions from vaccination requirements. Students who may have health or medical conditions which may preclude vaccination must provide a note from a board-certified physician indicating the full list of vaccinations which may cause a health crisis for the child. All required vaccinations not listed as health hazards to the child must be completed prior to the first day of school.

Pioneer Academy may, at any time, restrict or prohibit a student's presence on school grounds to protect the health, safety, and well-being of other students, teachers, guests, and other Pioneer Academy community members.

### **Potty Training And Bathroom Accident Policy**

The age requirement for enrollment at Pioneer Montessori is 3 and 4 years old. If your child is enrolled and not yet 3, we recommend full potty training. A child who is fully potty trained can do the following:

- Inform adults of the need to go to the bathroom;
  - Go to the bathroom on their own without any adult help;
  - Can pull down their own pants and underpants without any adult help; ●
- Wipe themselves sufficiently with toilet paper both front and back;
- Pull up their underpants and pants again without assistance from an adult

During the first 2 months of school, September and October, if your child has potty accidents

and is not able to do any of the above on his/her own, then the teachers in the classroom will assist the child until they can do them on their own.

After the month of October if the child still is having accidents, then a conference will be set up with the parents to assess his/her ability to continue in the classroom at Pioneer Montessori at the current time. The reason for this is in following the Montessori Philosophy of education. In Montessori, we strive to create a complete independent child who can go about his/her day taking care of everyday *Practical Life* tasks. Going to the bathroom by oneself is such a task.

### **Biting Policy**

EXPLANATIONS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES REGARDING BITING AT PIONEER MONTESSORI ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Children biting other children are one of the most common and most difficult behaviors in young students. It can occur without warning, is difficult to defend against, and provokes strong emotional responses in the biter, the victim, and the parents, and the Pioneer Montessori staff involved.

For many young students, the biting stage is just a passing problem, usually corrected during the toddler years. For other students, biting is a persistent and chronic problem. They may bite for a variety of reasons: frustration, boredom, inadequate language skills, stress or change in the environment, feeling threatened, or to feel a sense of power.

No matter what the cause, biting in a group situation causes strong feelings among all parties involved. It does help, however, to be aware of the potential problem before it happens, and to form a plan of action if it does occur. The staff of Pioneer Montessori, after consulting child care experts and manuals, has developed the following plan of action to be used if and when biting occurs in the classroom.

### **When a student is bitten:**

#### **For the biter:**

1. The biter is immediately removed with no emotion, using words such as, "biting is not okay-it hurts". Avoid any immediate response that reinforces the biting or calls attention to the biter. The caring attention is focused on the victim.
2. The biter is not allowed to return to play and is talked to on a level that the student can understand. "I can see that you want that truck, but I can't let you hurt him. We don't put our teeth on people". Or "that hurt Johnny when you bit him, he is sad".
3. Redirect the child to another play or work area.
4. Write an accident report and notify the parents of the biter.

#### **For the victim:**

1. Separate the victim from the biter.
2. Comfort the student.
3. Administer First Aid.
4. Write an accident report and notify parents of the victim (in writing).

### **If biting continues:**

1. Classroom staff meets with the administration on a routine basis for advice, support and strategy planning.
2. Chart every occurrence, including attempted bites, and indicate location, time, participants, behaviors, staff present, and circumstances.
3. Let all classroom parents know that there is a problem and the procedures that will be followed to deal with it.
4. 'Shadow' the student who indicates a tendency to bite, i.e., head off biting situations before they occur, teach non-biting responses to situations and reinforce appropriate behavior, adapt the program to better fit the individual student's needs.
5. 'Shadow' students who tend to be bitten, i.e., head off biting situations, teach potential responses to being bitten like 'no' and 'don't hurt me'.
6. Work together as partners with the parents of both biting children and frequent victims to keep all informed and develop a joint strategy for change.
7. Prepare the parents of the biting student for the possibility that the child may have to be removed from Pioneer Montessori and help them to make contingency plans.
8. If it is deemed in the best interest of the student, Pioneer Montessori, and other students, termination of the child from Pioneer Montessori for the duration of the biting stage may occur. Written warning will be given to the parents before this action will be taken.

### **Injuries**

In the event of a minor injury, first aid will be administered by a qualified staff member (teachers and staff are certified in first aid) and the child will be brought to the nurse's office or the nurse will come to them. A written accident or incident report will be filled out for any injury requiring first aid and the report will be given to the parent at the end of the school day. On occasion, parents will be called regarding accidents or injuries that do not require emergency care, but may require a parent's further attention, or for which a parent may want to seek non-emergency medical care.

Please note that while every effort is made to give parents an accident or incident report in a timely manner, there may be situations when an accident or incident is communicated verbally before the report is completed. An example of this is a minor injury occurring on the playground or classroom just before dismissal time.

### **Emergency Plan**

Pioneer Montessori maintains an emergency preparedness plan for emergencies that may affect the school. The plan is reviewed annually and submitted to the local emergency management agency. The emergency plan is kept in the school office and can be viewed by any member of the school community.

### **Requirement To Report Abuse Or Neglect**

The staff at Pioneer Montessori is required by law to report immediately to the police or Department of Human Services any instance when there is a reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or child neglect or exploitation.

The staff may not be able to notify parents when the police or Department of Human Services are called about possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. This depends on the recommendation of the Department of Human Services and the state.

## **IX. TERMINATION OF SERVICES**

Pioneer Academy is a private school and therefore may not be subject to the same laws as the public school systems. As such, please note that the school may choose to discontinue services to anyone at any time for any reason (with the exception of discrimination against protected groups). Termination of services may result from situations including but not limited to the following:

- 1 Consistent or repeated failure by student or parent/guardian to adhere to school policy and/or rules, and/or applicable law;*
- 2 Consistent, repeated, or egregiously disruptive and/or inappropriate behavior by the student;*
- 3 Consistent, repeated, or egregiously disruptive and/or inappropriate behavior by parents/guardians;*
- 4 False or incomplete information on application, enrollment forms, and/or other forms requested by the school;*
- 5 Failure to disclose information critical to the well-being and/or educational needs of the student;*
- 6 Non-Payment of tuition fees*

We encourage all parents/guardians to contact the school immediately to discuss any concerns, problems, or inquiries as soon as they arise. It is to the benefit of all involved, especially the student, to address, determine, and implement the best solutions possible.

**IMPORTANT:** All students are in a probationary period for the first 10 days of enrollment, Pioneer Academy reserves the right to unenroll the student with or without a reason at full discretion of Pioneer Academy.

## **X. PARENT/ GUARDIAN AUTHORIZATION & CONSENT FORM**

As parents/ guardians, we give our full authorization and permission for our child to participate in all clubs and activities at Pioneer Academy's (hereinafter referred to as the "School") facilities on and off school premises and further give our consent to school administrators to provide transportation and participate in clubs, trips, and activities for our child.

We give school administrators our permission to act on behalf of us in making decisions pertaining to our child's education, including permission to participate in co-curricular activities. We understand that participation in the clubs, trips, co-curricular and other School activities involve risks, injuries, hazards, accidents, and dangers, including, but not limited to, risks of travel by ground transportation and all other types of transportation. We understand and acknowledge that these risks, injuries, hazards, accidents, and dangers may impact our child's health and personal safety, including loss of personal property, personal injury, or death. We give our consent for medical treatment to be provided by the school nurse or by medical institutions under the sole supervision of the School. We understand that school cannot and does not

assume responsibility for any such personal injuries, death, or property damage.

We hereby assume full responsibility and liability for any expenses, damages, or medical expenses to our child or his/her personal property resulting from his/her participation or involvement in any clubs, curricular or extracurricular activities. We further agree to agree to release, defend, hold harmless and indemnify, defend, hold harmless and indemnify the School from any liability for any such actions.

We remain financially responsible for all personal expenses of our child such as traveling expenses, living expenses (in case of boarding students), or any medical expenses such as accidents, illnesses, injuries, immunizations, etc. provided to the minor. We hereby agree and understand that we will promptly pay any invoice for the cost of such care.

We hereby agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the School, collectively and individually and its Board of Trustees, employees, officers, directors, agents, successors, volunteers, and assignees from any and all liability, loss, damage, or expense, including attorney's fees which arise out of, occur during, or are in any way connected with our child's acts or participation in all co-curricular and other school activities, any related or independent travel, any activities or field trips, irrespective of whether they are sponsored, supervised or controlled by the School.

We agree that this form is to be construed and governed under the laws of the State of New Jersey, U.S.A. without reference to its choice of law rules. Our signature of the Student/ Parent Handbook indicates that we have read and understood this form and that we agree to everything stated in the statement above. We further state the school has made that no representations, statements, or inducements, oral or written, apart from the foregoing written statement, to us.

## **XI. IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION**

Pioneer Montessori  
164 Totowa Road  
Wayne, New Jersey 07470-3118

Website: [www.pioneeracademy.org](http://www.pioneeracademy.org)

Main E-Mail address: [info@pioneeracademy.org](mailto:info@pioneeracademy.org)

Pioneer Montessori Main Number: **(973) 405-5169**

*Use this number to request general information, to notify Pioneer Montessori of student lateness or absence, to make appointments, and to contact faculty and staff.*

Pioneer Montessori Main Fax Number: (973) 405-5176

### **Administrative Staff:**

- Head of School Mr. Owen O. Akman [owen.akman@pioneeracademy.org](mailto:owen.akman@pioneeracademy.org)
- Head of PreK-8 : Dr. Mevla Gavaz x 133 [mevla.gavaz@pioneeracademy.org](mailto:mevla.gavaz@pioneeracademy.org)
- Assistant Head of School: Mrs. Monica Bajraktarevic x 120 [monica@pioneeracademy.org](mailto:monica@pioneeracademy.org)
- PreK-4 Dean of Students & DoO:Mrs. Oznur Duzgun x180  
[oznur.duzgun@pioneeracademy.org](mailto:oznur.duzgun@pioneeracademy.org)
- PreK Montessori Lead Teacher: Ms. Aybercin Ahmedi x 190  
[aybercin.ahmedi@pioneeracademy.org](mailto:aybercin.ahmedi@pioneeracademy.org)
- PreK Montessori Teacher: Ms.
- School Nurse: Mrs.Turkan Cal x 250 [nurse@pioneeracademy.org](mailto:nurse@pioneeracademy.org)
- Accounting Manager: Mr. Fatih Bulungiray x 132 [bm@pioneeracademy.org](mailto:bm@pioneeracademy.org)
- Admissions Office/ Reenrollment: x 175 [admissions@pioneeracademy.org](mailto:admissions@pioneeracademy.org)

### **Social Media Contact:**

Facebook: PioAcademy

Twitter: PioAcademy Fi

Instagram: PioAcademy

Google Plus: PioAcademy

**Notice:** *It is understood that this handbook cannot cover every aspect relating to the functions, procedures, and policies at Pioneer Montessori. Therefore, any situation not specifically referred to in this handbook will fall under the discretion of the Pioneer Montessori Administration and Governing Board.*

## **XII. PARENT – SCHOOL AGREEMENT**

I understand that PIONEER MONTESSORI is committed to reviewing its policies, practices, and benefits continually. Accordingly, I understand that the policies, practices, and benefits outlined in this student handbook are subject to change at any time in order to improve the school environment. I recognize and accept that the PIONEER MONTESSORI Administration reserves the right to enforce all current or future policies based upon examination of such policies and investigation of any situations to which they may apply. In the event of an incident or situation for which no clear policy has been established or to which current policies cannot reasonably be applied, I understand and accept that the PIONEER MONTESSORI Administration reserves the right to determine, at its own discretion, which actions will be appropriate to rectify or resolve any outstanding issues, and to execute such actions.

Furthermore, I understand and consent to my student responsibilities as outlined in this Pioneer Montessori Parent/Student Handbook. I understand and agree that I will be held accountable for my behavior and must accept and adhere to the policies as outlined in this document. Additionally, I understand that these policies will be upheld at school, at school-sponsored and school-related activities, including school-sponsored travel, and at events in which the school participates. I understand that any student who violates the code of conduct is subject to disciplinary action as outlined in this Parent Handbook, and that in extreme cases when local, state, or federal law is violated, disciplinary action may include referral for criminal prosecution.

No handbook can cover every aspect relating to the functions, procedures, and policies in place within a dynamic institution such as Pioneer Montessori. Therefore, any situation not specifically referred to in this handbook will fall under the jurisdiction of PA Administration and the Board of Directors. Pioneer Montessori reserves the right to update it as needed with or without prior notification. The latest copy will be posted on the website and a hard copy will be available upon request.

**I HEREBY RECOGNIZE AND AGREE WITH MY OBLIGATIONS TO ADHERE TO PIONEER MONTESSORI SCHOOL POLICY.**

Student name (PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

I HEREBY RECOGNIZE AND AGREE WITH MY OBLIGATIONS TO ADHERE TO PIONEER MONTESSORI SCHOOL POLICY.

Parent name (PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

*Parent Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date* \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*Please sign and return to the Pioneer Academy Montessori Teacher\*\*\***

Any student attending Pioneer Montessori, their parents and guardians are required and agree to abide by the enclosed handbook. Their continued attendance is an agreement to all rules and protocols as outlined.