

LIGHTHOUSE MONTESSORI CANADA

ESTABLISHED IN 2020

PARENT HANDBOOK

Lighthouse Montessori Canada (“LMC”) is a non-denominational organization. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion, national or ethnic origin in hiring, promotion, or training of employees, nor in the admissions, rights, privileges, programs and activities of its students.

The Parent Handbook is designed to be a convenient reference for parents and/or legal guardians of all Lighthouse Montessori Canada students.

If you have any suggestions regarding content, please send them in writing to the childcare facility via e-mail or contact the Director and the Supervisor directly.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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www.lighthousemontessoricanada.ca





Dear Families,

'Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC)' program, aims to reduce parent fees over the next years. From November 1, 2023 we are enrolled in the CWELCC program.

This means that our tuition fees moving forward will be discounted.

The CWELCC is an optional program, which Lighthouse Montessori Canada can opt out at any time. If Lighthouse Montessori Canada opting out from the CWELCC program, we will provide families with the notice in accordance with the CWELCC agreement.

Lighthouse Montessori Canada is proud to be an officially accredited Montessori school through the Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators (CCMA). This accreditation recognizes our commitment to maintaining high standards of Montessori education, professional practice, and continuous improvement.

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ABOUT LMC

HISTORY

Lighthouse Montessori Canada was established in 2020 to provide young children and their families with exceptional learning aimed to discover the child's personality potential in the course of its formation.

MISSION

LMC aims to deliver authentic Montessori education in meaningful contexts beneficial for well-rounded children's development.

VISION

To become an outstanding educational institution that inspires each related individual to be better and thrive in all spheres of life.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

LMC sets the following goals:

1. Transform learning into an inspiring activity so that schooling is looked on with joy;
2. Strengthen resilience, self-discipline, and a sense of order through daily tasks and activities;
3. Promote care, respect and empathy towards human beings and creatures;
4. Develop concentration skills for life-long learning;
5. Encourage healthy choices and positive attitudes to excel in life academically, physically, emotionally and mentally;
6. Create nurturing environments where each child will fully develop their potential and intelligence.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

"In Canada today, families come from many different backgrounds and reflect a wide variety of cultures, languages, life experiences and lifestyles. Diversity is a key dimension of our past, present and future. Given this reality, children are likely to live and learn who may be very different from them. To prepare children for life in a diverse society, and help protect them from bias and discrimination, families and teachers can encourage children's positive feelings about themselves while fostering understanding and acceptance of differing beliefs, values and traditions." (The Canadian Childcare Federation).

LMC shares a vision where everyone belongs and deserves to be supported in reaching their dreams and fullest potential. In order to meet this vision, LMC settings are committed to supporting diverse populations, attracting and retaining a diverse workforce, building and strengthening partnerships, and fostering an equitable environment, free of discrimination and harassment in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

SERVICES AND AGE CATEGORIES

LMC offers programs for children aged 18 months through 6 years. LMC students are united into groups in line with Montessori approach to education. The curriculum is delivered to students according to their age and level:

- 18 months – 30 months;
- 30 months - 6 years.

PROGRAM STATEMENT

LMC holds the view that all the children are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential.

Four major foundations of early learning such as **Belonging, Well-being, Engagement** and **Expression** allow us to create an environment that inspires, motivates and empowers children to reach their full potential. The mentioned above foundational conditions are also found in Montessori education as: “these ways of being are a vision for all children’s future potential and a view of what they should experience each and every day. These four foundations apply regardless of age, ability, culture, language, geography or setting” (HDLH p.7).

Belonging refers to a sense of being connected to others, being valued and forming relationships.

Well-being addresses the importance of physical and mental health, self-care and self-regulation.

Engagement occurs when children are involved, focused and eager to explore their surroundings.

Expression means that a child is capable of communication using different forms such as words, body language, use of materials etc., and they feel supported in being themselves.

The Ministry Program Statement and Ontario’s Pedagogy for Early Years, How Does Learning Happen? **will be reviewed** by LMC staff **annually** or whenever an amendment is made to better understand the

needs of young children and their families. Being enrolled into LMC children and their families will develop a strong sense of belonging.

All the children and their families are greeted daily either on the playground or in their classrooms by the teachers and/or Director.

Dedicated, qualified and well-trained educators take care and guide their young learners throughout the day. Teachers and support staff provide safe environments for creative learning and exploration by preparing materials, activities, crafts for individuals and group learning. Educators encourage children to take care of the classroom, keep materials neat and tidy, water plants, etc.

Mutual respect and support are also important: older children are encouraged to help younger students completing their assignments, get dressed or clean up after meals, etc. Children are invited to participate in daily circle time, exchange ideas and thoughts about monthly themes, celebrate birthdays and holidays, etc.

All the students of Lighthouse Montessori Canada are expected to wear school uniforms to enhance school pride, unity and community spirit.

Based on numerous studies an increasing number of schools opt for wearing uniforms in order to: prevent socioeconomic disparities; promote favourable learning environments and discipline as children are settled and not distracted by discussing each other's outfits; increase attendance and punctuality as parents and students do not spend time on choosing outfit for the school day; reduce peer pressure and bullying as a result of competition over clothing choices; and improve safety by eliminating hazardous accessories.

We promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children in our care by diligently meeting all the requirements of Ontario Regulation 137/15; local building, local health and local fire departments codes and guidelines.

LMC staff the promotes health, safety and **Well-being** of the children by:

- Using a school security and communication system with key-pad doors, exterior cameras and intercom.
- Observing physiological needs and acting accordingly.
- Being aware of child's behaviour and physical appearance to identify any changes.
- Executing policies and procedures as directed.
- Doing a 'Health Check' upon arrival.
- Maintaining an accurate 'Attendance Sheet'.



- Supporting safe and healthy eating habits by: offering a well-balanced menu and encouraging nutritious eating at snack and mealtimes (three snacks and one hot lunch), in accordance with Canada's food Guide; serving meals in accordance with the children's allergy and dietary restrictions; offering tableware and utensils appropriate for the children's size and abilities.
- Making water available at all times.
- Offering a place to rest/sleep.
- Providing furniture and equipment appropriate for age and size.
- Offering appropriate versatile curriculum and materials.
- Implementing 'Individualized Support Plan', if necessary.
- Teaching the importance of personal hygiene.
- Maintaining clean and sanitized environments.
- Enforcing public health guidelines around quarantines for various illnesses.
- Administering required medication as instructed.
- Introducing sensible, solution-based rules and guidelines regarding outdoor play.
- Keeping record and update of LMC staff, CPR and First Aid training.
- Role modelling good manners, safe and healthy habits.

At Lighthouse Montessori Canada, we support positive and responsive interaction and communication among children, families, childcare providers and staff by promoting and adhering to our "Mission". We also support the child's ability to self-regulate by having mixed-aged Montessori communities, where children remain with the same teacher for three years. By doing so, we provide children with a wonderful opportunity to learn to interact and build up relationships with children both older and younger than themselves.

We foster children's **Engagement** through exploration, play and inquiry by:

- Having fully equipped Montessori play and learning environments in which activities are available to assist children becoming independent in the care of the self, care of the environment and care for others (grace and courtesy).
- Offering activities to explore and refine all the senses as well as discover sequencing and order.
- Incorporating activities to increase vocabulary, encourage discussion, explore sounds and begin to develop the process of writing and reading; Activities to develop number sense,



numeracy, sequencing and order, understanding large quantities, mathematical operations, geometry and even rudimentary algebraic concepts; Activities to introduce all the wonderful things of our world.

- Preparing activities for ‘Practical Life and Creativity’ such as cutting, coloring, painting, exploring color, shape and texture, pasting, craft making and so on. The children will understand where everything is kept, and they are able to choose what they like and subsequently return those things independently.
- Providing child-initiated and adult-supported experiences. All Montessori materials are introduced to a child by an adult or by another child, and while the Montessori adults are always observing children to see what support each child may need, they are very sensitive to allowing children their own initiative, as this most often results in children being deeply engaged and peaceful in what they are doing. Adults are always trying to find the right moment to introduce a child to something new to practice and be gently challenged. Choice, respect, and responsibility are foundations of which all our classrooms are built.
- Planning for and creating positive learning environments and experiences in which each child’s learning and development is supported by using the international Montessori curriculum and materials that have been proven through research to be effective with children from all socio-economic and cultural groups.
- Introducing discipline in a positive manner at a level that is appropriate to the children’s actions and ages to promote self-discipline, ensure health and safety; respect the rights of others and maintain equipment. Methods of discipline are discussed at staff meetings, and consistent disciplinary measures are agreed upon. The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal at LMC. Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly and logical manner. Children choose ‘work’ that they are capable of doing and are free to use materials as long as they wish, without interference from others. This approach alleviates many problems of discipline that might arise in another kind of environment. In addition, the mixed age group gives the younger children an opportunity to emulate the more mature behaviour of the older children.
- Incorporating indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day. We consider the individual needs of the children by allowing the children to manage the majority of their day. Children can choose to move about the class as they like, whether it be

carrying things, building things with others, or sitting quietly at a table with their own activity. Children can choose to have snack or a drink when they are hungry or thirsty; they do not have to wait for the whole group. We have a well-maintained outdoor playground that children access in groups twice or three times each day.

- Adding extracurricular activities such as Music and Movement, Yoga, Lego Clubs along with Arts and Crafts workshops enhances the children's well-rounded development.

We highly encourage **Families' Engagement** as much as possible by:

- Observing their children during classroom activities.
- Participating in school charitable initiatives.
- Attending school events.
- Using LMC school management software to download updates on the Academic School Year Calendar, Policies and Procedures, Newsletters, Permission forms, etc.

We represent the Montessori community and take support from local professional organizations like CCMA. We are connected with local resource organizations (Here4Kids, CMHA for SLP, RC, OT) to provide our families with supports when needed, such as speech therapies, OT, developmental support, etc.

LMC continuously work on families' engagement by organizing Family Day socials, Mother's Day tea party, Father's Day, annual BBQs, Cultural Days. We regularly provide updates on available parenting webinars; providing daily photos and documentations, classroom programming, family suggestion box. Our classrooms are filled with different cultural artefacts from all over the world to create cozy and welcoming environment.

At LMC we focus on staff **Engagement**. We support our staff a by offering opportunities to attend conferences or visit other Montessori or non-Montessori environments for observations. At the beginning of the school year, we spend one week to review and complete all necessary documentation required by CCEYA. Our staff set goals for themselves in discussion with administration and together plan for how to support them in the achievement of those goals. We have a budget for Professional Development ("PD") that any staff member can access depending on their needs. We have PD days set aside each year. Each staff member also has time at least once a year to observe in another class. We have regular staff meetings to encourage strong communication between staff members.

We support the staff who interact with the children by offering mentorship, respect, trust and support. We use Montessori principles that nurture excellence and support.

As the concept of **Expression** is also fundamental during early years, LMC provides children with the opportunity to express themselves by:

- Listening to the children's needs, wishes, stories etc. during various daily activities.
- Having the freedom to choose curriculum, materials and activities from the shelves.
- Interacting at a child's pace and setting realistic goals according to the children's age and abilities.
- Using the 'Peace Table' to share feelings and solve issues with classmates.
- Practicing 'Grace and Courtesy' to develop good manners.
- Offering encouragement and feedback.

Families are highly encouraged to express their concerns, voice their expectations and provide feedback through parent surveys, parent-teacher interviews, one-on-one communication and social medias. LMC educators prepare report cards, fill classroom logs, organize curriculum presentations and annual orientation sessions. We issue newsletters monthly to inform families of upcoming themes and topics, changes or updates and keep up-to-date Facebook and Instagram pages to provide parents and guardians with photos of our classroom materials rotated on a monthly basis, children's work and projects throughout the school year; We also download information to the Parent Portal - School Cues.

At Lighthouse Montessori Canada, we are all about community. We give Families the opportunity to engage socially with the staff and students during Social Events as well as get involved in the local community. During the school year, parent teacher interviews are arranged with the child's teacher. However, at the parent's request, the teacher will gladly set up a time to meet with them whenever there is a need. Progress reports are created at the end of each year. Annually we look forward to participating in such fundraising events such as the **Food bank "Drive for the Guelph Food Bank" and the "Hats and Mitts" collection for the Women's Shelter**. We invite guest speakers from our community such as librarians, police officers, firefighters, authors, etc.

We document and review the impact of our strategies on the children and their families. We are continuously assessing our program and ensuring that we are following Montessori Pedagogy and the strategies from Ontario's Pedagogy for Early Years' through observations, meetings, parent surveys and feedback from our Program Advisor through the Ministry of Education.

Staff will sign-off that they have reviewed the Program Statement each year as a requirement of employment. This signed document will be kept in the physical staff members' profiles. Staff are monitored each year to ensure that they are following the approaches set out in our Program Statement. If any staff is not in compliance*, this will be noted on the staff monitoring form. This will be discussed with staff and they will be given the opportunity to comply. They will be monitored shortly thereafter to ensure compliance. Should they still not be in non-compliance, a meeting will occur with the Director and/or the Supervisor to discuss. It will be up to the Director to determine the employee's eligibility to continue at LMC. Copies of staff monitoring will be kept secure in the staff file for no less than three (3) years.

***Not in compliance, or prohibited practices include, but are not limited to:**

- (a) corporal punishment of the child;
- (b) physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a highchair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting themselves or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- (c) locking the exits of the childcare centre premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- (d) use of harsh, degrading measures or threats, or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child, or undermine their self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- (e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing, or bedding;
- or
- (f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will. O. Reg.126/16, s. 34.

Should any staff engage in any of the above behaviours, they will be immediately addressed by Administration. An 'Employee Incident' form will be filled out and kept on record. Should the behaviour happen again, staff will meet with the Director. It will be up to the Director to decide on the appropriate action.

Lighthouse Montessori Canada supports the CCEYA initiatives in creating evidence based, developmentally rich learning environments for the children of Ontario. At LMC, we establish an excellent foundation for students to become capable, life-long learners.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

LMC Curriculum is based on the core concepts of Montessori education: that children have a strong urge to drive their own learning. Using materials and processes that make abstract ideas concrete, students initiate their learning and can assess their own progress. This balance between the freedom and responsibility of a child produces highly competent learners who are self-reliant and self-disciplined. We follow Dr. Maria Montessori's developmental view of education: each stage of a child's life requires a particular focus and learning approach based on windows of opportunity called Sensitive Periods. The first stage from birth to six years is a time of tremendous active growth. It is the period of the Absorbent Mind when the child absorbs their environment in order to become a citizen of their culture and society.

TEACHERS QUALIFICATIONS

According to "How Does Learning Happen?", the role of the educator is multidimensional. The best educators use a warm, responsive, and inclusive approach, building positive relationships with children, families, colleagues, and communities. All LMC staff members make an effort to be a positive model for children to follow. LMC lead teachers are MACTE/AMI certified and/or have their RECE diploma registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators.

Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) respond to the uniqueness of individuals and groups of children. They identify appropriate strategies, access the necessary resources and design curriculum to ensure full participation of all children, taking into account ability, cultural and linguistic diversity and engagement, exploration and expression. ("Standard 2: C.4, Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, 20217), CECE.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Professional preparation and ongoing professional development (PD) for the ECE workforce is essential to providing high-quality services to children and families. At our school we support our staff in relation to continuous professional learning.

All staff members are eligible for mandatory and optional trainings offered by LMC. Full-time staff are eligible to apply for external conferences, trainings or educational opportunities.

All staff are required to complete the mandatory courses and orientation set out for their jobs. In addition, full-time staff are expected to participate in a minimum of 12 hours of PD annually.

All full-time and part-time staff who work at our school must complete and maintain Standard First Aid with level C – CPR (infant, child and adult).

ADMISSION PROCESS

Call the LMC Administration office (519-820-7840), send your inquiry to LMC's email (info@lighthousemontessoricanada.ca) or use LMC's website to schedule a Parent Information Session/Tour.

www.lighthousemontessoricanada.ca

At that time, you will be given all enrollment information.

Submit your completed admission form online and Wellington-Guelph Child Care Application and Waitlist using below links:

[SchoolCues](#)

[Wellington-Guelph Child Care Application and Waitlist | Child Care Waitlist](#)

Your child's application will be placed on a waiting list until the next available opening.

Applications for our Toddler and CASA Programs are accepted throughout the year, space permitting.

TERMS OF ADMISSION

- Children are accepted into our Toddler Program at 18 months.
- Children are accepted into the Children's House (CASA) Program at the age 30 months (2.5 years) and **should be toilet trained.**
- All forms and contracts relating to registration must be completed and signed in full before the student begins class.
- A deposit is required to reserve the student's placement.

PRIORITY OF PLACEMENT

Re-enrolling students will be offered the opportunity to make first choice in program and enrollment. After that, priority will go to siblings, alumni and students on the waitlist. The waitlist is managed in a fair and transparent manner.

CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

The final decision regarding classroom placement is made in the best interest of a child.

Future possible transfers between classes are also made upon teachers' recommendation.

TERMS OF PAYMENT

Base fees include: a full day program fee.

Non-base fees include optional services (such as music lesson fee, art classes, yoga classes etc.) and late payment charges.

For parents/guardians of prospective new students, the Fee Schedule is included in the Enrollment Package.

New students are also required to submit a \$350 non-refundable Initial Registration Fee upon acceptance, which is to be spread ("amortized") over the calendar year in which they are enrolled to the program.

This is a one-time fee.

For parents of existing students, the Fee Schedule is included in the Re-Enrollment Package which is distributed in February/March of each year.

The tuition is based on an annual rate. For your convenience, the annual tuition will be paid over twelve months from July to June.

A tuition deposit is a one-month fee which is due upon acceptance, and is non-refundable and will be applied towards the last month of the program. A tuition deposit cannot be transferred to another student.

Should fees remain outstanding after the due date, the school reserves the right to cancel enrolment and/or take whatever action is deemed necessary to collect its fees.

Enrollment is accepted only after the school's receipt of a completed Enrollment Form and the deposit.

Payment of the deposit can be made by a credit or debit card, or e-transfer to info@lighthousemontessoricanada.ca. For a credit or debit card payment, an additional 3% processing fee will be applied at the top of the invoice amount.

Payment of monthly fees are to be made by Pre-Authorized Debits on the first day of the month. If the first day of the month falls on a statutory (bank) holiday, the monthly payment withdrawal will be processed

on the preceding business day. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that sufficient funds are available in their account on that earlier date to avoid any payment issues or applicable fees.

There is a charge of 1% per month (20% per annum) on late payments and a charge of \$50 for payments declined for insufficient funds available on a bank account.

TUITION PAYMENT PLAN

One-month deposit (last month) and eleven equal payments:

For New Students:

Program	Annual Tuition	Enrollment registration fee and deposit	Balance due
Toddler – Full Day Program	\$5,742.00	\$828.50	\$4,913.50
CASA - Full Day Program	\$5,742.00	\$828.50	\$4,913.50

For Existing Students:

Program	Annual Tuition	Enrollment deposit	Balance due
Toddler – Full Day Program	\$5,742.00	\$478.50	\$5,263.50
CASA - Full Day Program	\$5,742.00	\$478.50	\$5,263.50

LMC provide optional additional services for music lessons - the annual fee of \$350 is charged at the enrollment if selected (non-base fee).

LMC offers optional additional Enrichment Curriculum including Weekly Art Classes, Yoga Class, Stem Class and Lego Class for children enrolled to the full day programs (non-base fees). LMC determines the schedule of extra curriculum activities depending on availability of external instructors and LMC's staff shifts.

The fee for these optional activities is:

- Morning optional enrichment activities - \$15 per occasion or \$150 per month;
- Afternoon optional enrichment activities - \$27.5 per occasion or \$295 per month;
- A combined monthly rate to cover morning and afternoon activities - \$395 per month.

Children who choose not to receive additional optional services will be provided with the supervision by LMC's staff during the operating hours.

In case of late pick-ups after 5:30pm the charge will be \$5 per minute.

ENROLLMENT DEADLINES

Enrollment forms for parents of prospective students are included in the Enrollment package which is distributed upon request.

Re-Enrollment forms for continuing students are included in the Re-Enrollment Package distributed first week of February and must be submitted prior mid-March (the submission due date is indicated in the contract and a notification will be sent to families) to secure the child's spot.

WITHDRAWAL/DISMISSAL FROM THE SCHOOL

LMC reserves the right to accept or reject the application or to request the withdrawal of any child or for the benefit of the child for the benefit of the class as a whole.

There is no refund or reduction of fees in case of withdrawal, dismissal, or absence, cancellation of attendance.

The following may be grounds for your child's dismissal from the program:

- A. Inability to function in a Montessori classroom; In case of the behaviour challenges, parents will be informed right away in-person and in-written form; LMC will provide the recommendations for improvements with engagement of professional support (eg "Here4kids") and exhausting other techniques to support the child in the program; LMC will monitor child's behaviour and if in case of no improvement LMC will make a decision to exclude the child from the program.
- B. Overdue tuition payment; The school aims to keep out tuition costs down and to provide the best possible for children. In case of financial difficulties, please contact the school to make certain arrangements.

TUITION FEES AND POSSIBLE REFUNDS

The Parent/Guardian is required to pay the Registration and base/non-base fees as stated in the Program paragraph of the contract for the full academic year stating the first working day of July or the first day attending the school.

Non-school time such as week-ends, statutory holidays, bad weather closings, professional development days, the Winter Break and the March Break are all part of the academic year.

LMC reserves the right but is not obligated to refund tuition should the administrator decide, it would be inadvisable for the child to continue in the program. All circumstances from pre-registration meetings to the time of the school's termination shall be considered with regard to any possible rebate. The decision of the LMC's administration regarding possible refund or partial refund of tuition shall be final and not negotiable.

The Parent/Guardian who finds it necessary to withdraw their child/children from the program may do so. However, there will be no refund of paid fees from LMC.

The Parent/Guardian agrees to pay LMC the tuition charges for the school year as stated in the Program paragraph of a contract.

COMMUNICATION

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

- **Your child's teacher** is the first person to address any request or concern. Please note upon arrival teachers prepare to give their all effort to students and can only casually chat or greet parents. Similarly, during dismissal, teachers prioritize the wellbeing of students ready for dismissal. If your request or concern remains unsolved, please contact the Director/Supervisor by phone, e-mail, message through the SchoolCues application or arrange a face-to-face meeting.
- **Teacher – Parent Interviews** to discuss your child's progress throughout the school year are scheduled in November/December and again in April.
- **Report Cards** – to summarize your child's progress during the school year are issued in June.
- **Parents letters** – to inform parents about school activities, including any notices.
- **Monthly newsletters** – to inform parents about monthly themes, crafts, extracurricular activities, etc.



- **Parent Education Evenings** – to discuss the Montessori Academic Program, introduce materials and activities.
- **Observations** – parents are welcomed to arrange outside classroom observations to see the child's interaction and work during the day. We discourage in-class observations as they are disruptive.
- **School Calendar** – is sent via e-mail at the beginning of the school year, highlighting important dates and events.
- **School website and social medias accounts** – are regularly updated and provide the latest information about the school's operation.
- **School Cues** – the online parent and staff members portal.
- **Parent Suggestion Box** located in the reception.
- **Parent Information Board** located in the reception.
- **Email and/or phone call to Supervisor** daily Monday to Friday from 8:30 am - 5:30pm

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every concern is addressed confidentially. LMC aims to protect the privacy of families, children, staff members, student teachers and volunteers. The exemptions happen in case of disclosure requests from the following institutions: The Ministry of Education, Law Enforcement Authorities, Children's Aid Society etc.

CONDUCT

LMC makes a tremendous effort to create warm and welcoming atmospheres for children and their families. We promote empathy, care and mutual respect to build peaceful environments where each member will feel safe and accepted. Thus, harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any part.

Through 'Grace and Courtesy' practices, our staff members will do their best to become the role models for children to follow.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT IN A MONTESSORI CLASSROOM

Maria Montessori believed that positive behavior originates in the child's environment, circumstances, surroundings and 'normalizing the conditions' under which the child lives (Maria Montessori, *Discovery of a Child*, 1950). As a result, the "process of normalization" (the term borrowed from anthropology) starts with creating the environments which promote positive behavior. This is an essential part of the

Montessori curriculum, as it includes such important components as **love of work**, **concentration**, **self-discipline** and **sociability**, which are fostered by children from the first day in a Montessori school:

- **Love of work** is the first characteristic of the ‘normalization process’. Love of work includes the ability to choose freely what activity to complete. Freedom of choice is fundamental, as it lets the child work with the task, that is interesting, useful for them, satisfying natural curiosity, and creating the urge to learn in the moment. Carefully organized environments with the space for free movement, filled with thoroughly designed materials provide the child with the opportunity to use all senses to explore the surrounding space, develop and perfect skills and increase the child’s interest leaving no time for misbehavior.
- **Concentration** is another important point to mention, as it is reached through the purposeful and enjoyable activities that are not imposed, but chosen by the child. All the materials are easily accessible and child-size, so that they can handle them independently. In the situations when the child is focused on an exercise, the teacher has the role of an observer and a guide, trying not to interfere with the child’s work, but to be there in case their help is needed. Dr. Montessori proved with her research that children can work uninterruptedly for a long period of time, if the favorable conditions are created.
- Once the child learns to focus on a task, he/she works with, **self-discipline** begins to form, as the child develops the ability to carry through what he/she has begun.
- **Sociability** is important as well. The children learn to interact with each other, teachers, and other adults, modelling behavior and actions that they see. At this point, teachers show the children, how to voice loud their emotions, thoughts and describe their feelings. Grace and courtesy exercises help a great deal in creating mutually respectful, peaceful and comfortable environments where each person is listened and heard.

Considering all mentioned above, it may be concluded that there is no misbehavior in a Montessori classroom. As in any other environment this is inaccurate, as the classroom unites people of different tempers, personalities, and habits. When a misunderstanding or disagreement happens, teachers seek to

use the technique known as **gluing**. Essentially ‘gluing’ refers to keeping a child who is behaving in a disruptive manner close by the educator’s side, before inviting them to choose a more suitable activity. Another important strategy to use is **redirecting**, by creating conditions where the child does not feel punished, but has a possibility to gain or regain focus on a purposeful activity.

To learn more about positive discipline, parenting and children provide us with an amazing opportunity to enjoy each moment with the child. Among modern approaches to form positive behavior, the one developed by Jane Nelson is worth considering. Jane Nelson, distinguished psychologist, educator and mother of seven children has written a lot of articles about parenting. One of her books, entitled ‘Positive Discipline (2006)’, Dr. Nelson explains that the key to positive discipline is not a punishment, but mutual respect. Nelson instructs parents and teachers to be both firm and kind, so that any child from an early age can learn creative cooperation and self-discipline with no loss of dignity. The book highlights important concepts such as to bridging communication gaps; avoiding the dangers of praise; enforcing the message of love for the child; building on strengths and not weaknesses; teaching children not what to think but how to think and so on.

Jane Nelson created a website where she shares her ideas regarding parenting and children, providing resources, books, articles, workshops and seminars.

The Absorbent Mind, Maria Montessori, 1950

Discovery of the Child, Maria Montessori, 1909

Positive Discipline, Jane Nelson, 2006

<https://www.positivediscipline.com/dr-jane-nelsen> - Jane Nelson, psychologist

DAILY PROCEDURES

SCHOOL HOURS

Full day Program

7:30am – 5:30pm

HOLIDAY AND SCHOOL CLOSURES

LMC is closed on all Statutory Holidays.

Winter Break (2 weeks)

March Break (1 week)

Family Day
Good Friday
Victoria Day
Canada Day
Labour Day
Thanksgiving Day

LMC hours for Easter Monday and Civic Day are 8:30am - 3:30pm (Toddler Program) and 8.30am-3.30pm-3:45pm (Casa Program).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS

PD days (no school) will be announced at the beginning of each school year so that parents can make necessary arrangements.

WEATHER CLOSURES

During the winter months, inclement weather may cause the disruption of bus transportation and regular school operations. If the decision is made to close the childcare setting an email and a text message will be sent to all parents/guardians and staff members beginning at 6:30am and information will be recorded on the school telephone line. LMC follows the Upper Grand District School Board for weather related closures.

In bad weather, absences and lateness will be excused if severe weather makes it difficult for a family to travel.

It is always a parent's decision whether to send their child to school on inclement weather days. Parents who keep their children at home when school is open, must report this absence before the school day starts at 7:30am through the SchoolCues application by submitting the template form.

SAFE ARRIVAL

Parents are required to drop their children off at the outside area in front of classrooms #1 and #2 and by the playground gate for classrooms #3 and #4, or other areas where they will be greeted by the staff members.

Lighthouse Montessori Canada will ensure that any child receiving child care at the child care centre is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization the child care centre may release the child to.

Lighthouse Montessori Canada will only dismiss children into the care of their parent/guardian or another authorized individual. The centre will not release any children from care without supervision.

Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

Accepting a child into care

When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, program staff in the room must:

- Greet the parent/guardian and child.
- Ask the parent/guardian how the child's evening/morning has been and if there are any changes to the child's pick-up procedure (i.e., someone other than the parent/guardian picking up). Where the parent/guardian has indicated that someone other than the child's parent/guardians will be picking up, the staff must confirm that the person is listed on the list of authorized people or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up via e-mail not later than 1-hour prior to pick-up.
- Ensure the other person brings photo ID, which the staff will use to cross reference with parental written authorization.
- Document the change in pick-up procedure in the daily written record.
- Sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

All absences must be reported no later than 9:30am via SchoolCues notification form or/and via email/call the school directly.

Where a child does not arrive at the child care centre and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off the following steps will be followed:

- Inform the Supervisor/Director and they must commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than 10:00am via a phone call to the parents/guardians.
- If parents/guardians cannot be reached by phone an email will be sent to both parents/guardians.
- The Supervisor/Director will wait until 10:30 am, if no response is received, the Supervisor/Director will call the Emergency Contacts listed on your child's enrollment forms. If the Supervisor/Director cannot get a hold of them or they are not able to provide information

regarding the child's absence, the Supervisor/Director leaves a second voice mail and email stating that if we cannot reach them by 11:00am CAS will be contacted.

- Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.

SAFE DISMISSAL

Toddler Students will be dismissed from the playground at 3:30pm, unless parents provide 24h notice that a child stays in the afternoon program.

CASA Students will be dismissed from the playground (weather permitting) between 3:30pm – 3:45pm, unless parents provide 24h notice that a child stays in the afternoon program.

Releasing a child from care:

- The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that the child care may release the child to. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual).
- Confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
- Where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization. If needed, call parent/guardian for further clarification.

Where a child has not been picked up as expected (before centre closes)

- Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or timeframe that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up by/at 5:30pm the Supervisor/Director calls the Parent/Guardian and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.
- Where the Supervisor/Director is unable to reach the parent/guardian, the Supervisor/Director calls the Emergency Contacts listed on your child's enrollment forms. If the Supervisor/Director cannot get a hold of them or they are not able to provide information regarding the child's pick-

up time, the Supervisor/Director leaves a voice mail stating that if we cannot reach them within the hour after closing (until 6:30pm), CAS will be contacted.

LATENESS AND ABSENCES

Parents are asked to arrive at school on time as lateness interrupts the learning of other classmates and has a negative impact on the child's transition and settling during the day. In case of the absence, inform the school through the SchoolCues application by submitting the template form. When possible, notify the school in advance if your child will be absent for more than two days.

LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY

If a student must leave school early, a telephone call or an email from the student's parent/guardian is required indicating the time and reason for early dismissal.

PICK UP AUTHORIZATION

Students are released to authorized persons as indicated on their Enrollment Forms. If you know in advance that a person not indicated on the form will be picking up a student an email or a note of authorization is required. In an emergency, a phone call will be sufficient. That person must provide a photo identification to the staff member to release the child(ren).

VISITORS

In accordance with our Safe School Policy and to protect our students and staff, parents/guardians are provided with an LMC identification badge and are asked to wear it at all times while on school property. All visitors are required to sign in at the reception desk and will be provided with a visitor's badge, which must be worn while in the childcare setting.

MEALS

Parents and students are not allowed to bring outside food into LMC' premises. When a child has not yet finished a snack/meal prior to entering LMC, he/she will be asked to discard the food prior to entering the facility and asked to immediately wash hands and mouth. Parents are asked to refrain from sending food for birthday celebrations.

Full day students in the Toddler and Children's House Programs receive two snacks and a hot lunch from Wholesome Kids Catering ("WKC"). A special menu is prepared, and meals are provided by WKC for children with food allergies/restrictions.

Menus are posted in all classrooms. These menus meet the recommendations set out in the Health Canada document “Eating well with Canada’s Food Guide”.

Staying hydrated is important for good health. The Toddler and Children’s House Program students are required to bring their own water bottle, clearly labelled with their names.

PIZZA LUNCHES

LMC offers a Pizza Lunch to all students on the last Friday of each month (which is also a dress-down day).

CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS AND BIRTHDAYS

LMC is non-discriminatory and non-sectarian. Cultural diversity and religious events are represented from the historical and cultural perspective.

- As for Birthday Celebrations (a.k.a. the Celebration of Life), children **love to hear about their lives from where they are born to the present day**. They usually want to hear stories, look at photos, and remember wonderful memories. They appreciate knowing how cherished they are, and how life and the world is better because they were born into other families and now belong to our class. The Montessori Celebration of Life is the perfect way to do this in a childcare setting.
- On September 30th, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation children are welcome to come dressed in orange shirts.
- On Halloween, children are asked not to wear costumes to school as they often become uncomfortable throughout the day. Instead, children are welcome to wear black and orange.
- On Valentine’s Day, children are welcome to come dressed in red, pink and white. They can also prepare Valentine’s cards for their friends.

If you decide to prepare goody bags for classmates, ensure they **do not** contain any food products (sweets, gums, cookies, etc.).

RECESS AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Outdoor activities are viewed as an important part of the school day.

- a) All students are expected to participate outdoors.
- b) Full day Toddler and Children’s House Programs go outside every day (weather permitting) for approximately 2 hours.
- c) Any student who is too ill to go outside for recess is considered too ill to attend the school.

ACTIVITIES OFF THE PREMISES

At Lighthouse Montessori Canada, we do not currently offer any off-premise activities. Should we decide to organize nature walks or field trips in the future, families will be notified in advance via email with full details and consent requirements.

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Toddler and Children's House programs' outdoor time depends on local conditions such as air quality, temperature, wind gusts, and wind chill.

If the temperature (including wind chill) falls below **-15°C for Toddlers** and **-18°C for Children's House**, students will remain indoors.

Lighthouse Montessori Canada follows Weather Alerts and Advisories issued by Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (including heat, wind, cold, and other conditions).

PERSONAL BELONGINGS AT SCHOOL

Students are encouraged to leave items, such as stuffies/toys, that are not required for learning at home. Personal belongings may be confiscated if they interfere with teaching and learning. Personal cell phones are not allowed in the school either for children or staff members. Students are allowed to bring a small blanket/pillow for their nap time.

LOST AND FOUND

Parents are required to label all clothing and belongings to assist children in finding their items without difficulty. LMC is not responsible for any lost items. LMC will attempt to return any found items to families.

SLEEP SUPERVISION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Sleep and rest are an integral part in a child's development. It is vital for children's growth to ensure positive physical, social and emotional well-being.

The purpose of this policy and procedures described within is to provide supporting staff, students and teachers with rules and procedures to safeguard children from harm, injury, or death while sleeping.

PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN FOR SLEEP

Children are placed for sleep in a manner consistent with the recommendations set out in the document entitled “Joint Statement on Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden Infant Deaths in Canada”, published by the Public Health Agency of Canada, as amended from time to time, unless the child’s physician recommends otherwise in writing.

Full day students in the Toddler and Children’s House Programs will be provided time to sleep for no more than two hours a day, and are provided with a cot and sheet, labelled with the child’s name. The cots are sanitized and linens are washed by LMC. Bedding will be sent home each Friday for washing.

CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS

Consultation with parents with respect to a child’s sleeping arrangements will occur before the program starts, throughout the school year and at periods of transition to another class or program during personal meeting, phone calls or email.

Staff will document their observations of changes in a child’s sleep behaviors in the daily report and anecdotal notes.

Parents will be informed by the supervising staff of any significant changes in their child’s behaviors and sleeping patterns by personal meetings, phone calls or email.

DIRECT VISUAL CHECKS

Direct visual checks are conducted every 20 minutes in the Toddler and every 30 minutes in Children’s House Programs during the sleep period. Staff verbally confirm that they perform periodic direct visual checks of each sleeping child by being physically present beside the child while the child is sleeping and looking for indicators of distress or unusual behaviour. Staff will fill the child’s Nap Log each time the visual check takes place.

Staff verbally confirm there is sufficient light in the sleeping area or room to conduct direct visual checks.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Electronic Monitoring Devices are not used in LMC.

PROCEDURES

Procedures for completing visual direct checks
• Staff must: - be physically present beside the child; - check each child's general well-being by looking for signs of distress or discomfort including, at a minimum: • laboured breathing; • changes in skin temperature; • changes in lip and/or skin colour; • whimpering or crying; and • lack of response to touch or voice. • Where signs of distress or discomfort are observed, the staff who conducted the direct visual check must attempt to wake the child up. Where no signs of distress or discomfort are observed, proceed to step 3. • Where the child wakes up, staff must: - attend to the child's needs; - separate the child from other children if the child appears to be ill; - document the incident in the Sleep Supervision Checklist form and in the child's symptoms of ill health record, where applicable. • Where the child does not wake up, staff must immediately: - perform appropriate first aid and CPR, if required; - inform other staff, students and volunteers in the room of the situation;



- contact emergency services or, where possible, direct another individual to contact emergency services;
- separate the child from other children or vice versa if the child appears to be ill;
- inform the supervisor/designate of the situation; and
- contact the child's parent;
- **Where the child must be taken home or to the hospital, the Director and/or Supervisor must immediately:**
 - contact the child's parent to inform them of the situation and next steps.
- **Where the child's condition has stabilized, and/or after the child has been taken home and/or to the hospital, the staff who conducted the direct visual check and any staff who assisted with responding to the incident must:**
 - follow the Serious Occurrence Policies and Procedures, where applicable;
 - document the incident in the daily written record; and
 - document the child's symptoms of illness in the child's records.
- **Staff must:**
 - adjust blankets as needed;
 - ensure the child's head is not covered;
 - ensure there are no other risks of suffocation present;
 - document the date, time and initial each direct visual check on the room's Sleep Supervision Checklist Form; and
 - verbally inform other staff in the room that the check has been completed, where applicable and possible.

DROP-OFF, PICK-UP AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

Student safety is the first and foremost consideration in determining how students are dropped off and picked up at our school. LMC staff and families must ensure that these guidelines are followed by all students, parents and staff with no exception to the rules.

DROP-OFF

There is a sufficient number of parking spots next the childcare facility and near by area.

Students in the Toddler Program must be escorted to their assigned classes where the teacher greets and signs them in in the morning.

Students in the Children's House Program must be escorted either to their classroom or playground.

In both Toddlers and Children's House classroom, Parents/Guardians initials are not required as one staff member is dedicated to conduct direct visual checks and verbally inform other staff in the room that the check has been completed.

PICK-UP

Toddler's and Children's House students must be picked up at their classrooms or playground between 3:30pm and 3:45pm, unless parents provide 24h notice that a child stays in the afternoon program.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

Please read and obey all traffic signs and respect posted parking markings. The maximum speed on the premises is **15 km/h**.

Parking is **not permitted** in adjacent parking lots belonging to other building tenants.

Parking, even for short periods, is **not allowed in front of the main entrance**, as this creates safety concerns in the event of an emergency evacuation.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

ILLNESS

Children's health and well-being is a top school priority. In case of illness students should stay home. Parents are asked to inform the school regarding the child's absence due to a legitimate illness. Parents are also asked to assist our school in preventing the transfer of communicable diseases by keeping children home when they are ill.

High temperature – your child must stay home if he/she has a temperature over 38 degrees Celsius (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit). Do not bring your child to school until he/she is fever free within the past 24 hours with no medication given.

Ear infection – if you child has an ear infection, do not bring your child back to school until he/she has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.

Stomach ache – if your child has a stomach ache, keep your child home until he/she regains his/her appetite and has normal bowel movement.

Vomiting/Diarrhea – your child may return to school when he/she has not vomited or had diarrhea for 24 hours under normal circumstances and 48 hours during outbreaks.

If your child has any symptoms of chicken pox, scarlet fever, severe rash, pink eyes with secretions, head lice or nits (or any other contagious disease) he/she must stay home. The child is allowed to go back to the school once he/she has been symptoms free for 24 hours.

If the symptoms listed above occur during school, the child will be isolated and provided with temporary care while parents will be contacted for a pick-up. If we are unable to contact parents, we will contact the persons listed as the Child's Emergency Contacts.

In all circumstances of absence for medical reason, seek the advice of your child's doctor to determine when it is time to go back to the school.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND CONDITIONS

If your child has not been immunized, the parent/guardian must to submit one of the following: a 'CCEYA Statement of Medical Exemption Form' completed by a qualified medical practitioner, or complete the 'Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief Form' signed by a commissioner.

Please note, the children with an exemption of immunization for medical, conscious or religious reasons will be excluded from school in case of outbreaks of a disease the child is not immune to.

If the child contracts a communicable disease, you must keep your child home and report this immediately to the LMC main office.

LMC will send out an email to parents when there is a health requirement to inform regarding an illness in a class or the school.

STUDENT MEDICATION AND MEDICAL FORMS

All prescribed medication will be administered by a staff member in accordance with provincial legislation. Parents are required to provide the following:

- A completed Medication Treatment Form indicating the dosage and times to administer any drug.
- A signed Epi-Pen Administration Consent and an Individual Plan for children with allergies. Parents must bring two Epi-Pens (if needed). One Epi-Pen is stored in the office and the second one is kept in the classroom backpack and follows the child wherever he/she goes.
- Medication in the original container, clearly labelled with the child's name, date, name of drug, instructions for storage and administration of the drug. Parents must hand in any necessary medication directly to the staff member. No over-the-counter medications can be administered.

ALLERGIES AND ACCIDENTS

LIFE THREATENING ALLERGY ALERT

Some students and adults at LMC have life threatening allergies to various substances. It is the responsibility of all parents to respond cooperatively to requests from the childcare facility to eliminate allergens. Parents are also asked to encourage children to respect anaphylactic children and the LMC policies. All allergies must be listed on the student's medical form in order to allow the LMC staff to properly assist when an individual in a given class has a life-threatening allergy.

NUT SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Peanut/nut products are a common fatal allergen for many individuals. Even the residue of nut oil left on furniture or utensils can cause a life-threatening reaction. As a result, LMC works to be nut safe. No peanut or nut containing products are to be brought to LMC.

SCENT-FREE ENVIRONMENT

LMC staff and visitors recognize that students, administration and/or visitors to the facility may have sensitivity or allergic reactions to various scented products. All students, faculty and visitors are asked to refrain from using, wearing, and bringing scented products and materials into the childcare facility.

SMOKING AND VAPING POLICY

LMC is a Smoke Free Environment and complies with the requirements under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017. Smoking and vaping are strictly prohibited on the property of LMC.

WELLINGTON, DUFFERIN AND GUELPH PUBLIC HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

LMC complies with all rules, regulations, directions or orders of Wellington, Dufferin and Guelph Public Health (the “Health Department”) and follows any direction or order of the Wellington, Dufferin and Guelph Regional Medical Officer of Health that may affect the provision of child care. The staff, students teachers and volunteers read and understand the ‘Sanitary Practices Policies and Procedures’ each August or prior to volunteering or to their employment commencing at LMC. These Policies and Procedures are reviewed annually (every July-August) or when changes occur, by each staff member, student teacher and volunteer.

ACCIDENTS AT SCHOOL

LMC works to prevent student injuries by carefully selecting and monitoring student activities. Thoughtful and caring attention will be provided for any student injured during school hours. This includes the administration of first aid, and contacting 911 (if needed). Every attempt will be made to notify parents at home or work for any child receiving a head injury or other serious injuries requiring further medical attention. For the Toddler and Children’s House Programs, all accidents during school activities are reported to the Main Office. An accident report must be made describing the circumstances of the injury and any first aid administered; Parents/guardians are given a copy of the report via email and in person. The Director and/or Supervisor will review accident reports at the end of day to ensure appropriate preventative measures were in place and the follow up has been handled correctly. Parents with questions about any incident leading to injury are encouraged to contact the teacher and/or Director and/or Supervisor.

SERIOUS ACCIDENTS OR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In case of a serious accident or medical emergency, parents are notified. The school will also contact the physician listed on the child’s ‘Enrollment Form for recommendation. For serious injuries, the Director and/or Supervisor will call 911 and afterwards parents/guardians. If the child needs to go to the hospital and parents cannot be reached, the child will be transported to the hospital. A staff member will

accompany the child to the hospital and take their file folder with them in case emergency care is needed. It is important that parents/guardians keep all contact information up-to-date.

FIRE DRILLS AND LOCKDOWNS

As part of our commitment to safety, LMC has a detailed plan for fire and lockdown procedures. We regularly practice fire and lockdown drill. Parents in the building during either event are asked to follow staff direction. Parents who arrive when a fire drill is underway are asked to stay out of the building. Parents/Guardians are notified via the SchoolCues application after each lockdown drill has taken place.

OTHER EMERGENCIES

An emergency at LMC means an urgent or pressing situation in which immediate action is required to ensure the safety of children and adults at the school. For example, an evacuation of the building. All faculty, staff, student teachers, and volunteers are required to read the Emergency Management Policy and Procedures Plan prior to working with the children. These policies and procedures indicate the roles and responsibilities of staff in case of an emergency, the requirement for additional support, a safe and appropriate off site meeting place, how to ensure the children are safe and appropriate levels of supervision are maintained; requirements for communication with parents; requirements for contacting appropriate local emergency response agencies, and the recovery from an emergency, including debriefing of all parties involved, how to resume normal operations and how to support children and staff who may have experienced distress during the emergency. In the event of any emergency the Director or Designate will notify parents/guardians of the emergency.

SERIOUS OCCURRENCE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that LMC is in compliance with the protocols recommended by the Ontario Ministry of Education, related to any serious occurrence that can affect the health, safety and welfare of the children attending LMC; This includes a situation where a child is missing; fire; power outage; gas leak; complaint about service standard, etc. LMC is required by the Ministry of Education to submit reports for 'Serious Occurrences' within 24 hours of said occurrence. Serious occurrences will also be posted at both entrances used by parents for a minimum of 10 business days. The 'Serious Occurrence' reporting provides greater transparency for parents about serious occurrences that happen in the school.

DRESS CODE AND STUDENTS' UNIFORMS

All the students of the LMC are encouraged to wear school uniforms to enhance school pride, unity and community spirit.

Based on numerous studies an increasing number of schools opt for wearing uniforms in order to:

- Prevent socioeconomic disparities;
- Promote favourable learning environments and discipline as children are settled and not distracted by discussing each other's outfit;
- Increase attendance and punctuality as parents and students do not spend time on choosing outfit for the school day;
- Improve safety by eliminating hazardous accessories;
- Reduce peer pressure and bullying as a result of competition over clothing choices

All staff members understand the importance of acting as role models when it comes to how they present themselves.

CLOTHING AND UNIFORM

Girls

Blue tunic, blue skirt or grey pants

White or blue golf shirt

Blue cardigan or blue sweater or vest

Navy tights or socks

Black dress shoes

Boys

Grey pants or grey shorts

White or blue golf shirt

Blue sweater or grey vest

Plain navy socks are to be worn with the shorts and plain grey/black or white with the grey pants

Black dress shoes

CIVVIES DAYS

Parents and students will be notified of designated days when students do not need to wear the uniform (dress down days).

For school uniform, please visit the website Uniform Basics. For in person visits check the store hours on the following website: [UNIFORM BASICS](#) (under Lighthouse Montessori Canada).

CODE OF CONDUCT

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

By enrolling at LMC, students and families automatically assume the obligation to comply with the provisions of the Code of Conduct. Central to the Code of Conduct is the understanding that each student and family will follow certain standards of behaviour. Self-discipline and a willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions and conduct are fundamental to the Code of Conduct.

BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

All members of LMC community must:

- Respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws; demonstrate honesty and integrity;
- Respect differences in people, their ideas, and their opinions;
- Treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement;
- Respect and treat others fairly, regardless of, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc.
- Respect the rights of others;
- Show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others;
- Take appropriate measures to help those in need;
- Seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully;
- Respect all members of the school community, especially persons in positions of authority;
- Respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching; and
- Use respectful language.



PROHIBITED PRACTICES

In accordance with the CCEYA and Ontario Regulation 137/15 ss. 48(1) and the philosophy of LMC, no employee, volunteer, or student on educational placement shall engage in any of the prohibited practices as follows:

- Corporal punishment of the child;
- Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a highchair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting themselves or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- Locking the exits of the childcare centre premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine their self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will. O. Reg.126/16, s. 34

Should any staff engage in any of the above behaviours, they will immediately be addressed by the LMC's Administration. An 'Employee Incident' form will be filled out and kept on record. Should the behaviour happen again, staff will meet with the Director. It will be up to the LMC's Administration to decide on the appropriate action.

VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENT TEACHERS

LMC ensures that all student teachers and volunteers follow the “Supervision Policy for Volunteers and Student Teachers” as well as:

- Ensure that direct unsupervised access (i.e., when the adult is alone with a child) is not permitted for persons who are not employees of LMC.
- Placement students and volunteers may not be counted in the staffing ratios.
- No child is supervised by a person under 18 years of age.
- Review Monitoring Compliance and Convention policies and procedures with volunteers/students before starting help at LMC.
- Review Monitoring Compliance and Convention policies and procedures with volunteers/students annually.
- Fill out the ‘Compliance and Contravention’ form twice a year.
- Ensure volunteers/students review any plan for a child with anaphylaxis, medical needs plan and the emergency procedures every year.
- Require Police Vulnerable Sector Check (“PVSC”) for all the volunteers/students having direct contact with the children at LMC. The PVSC policy does not apply to students placed in the childcare program by an educational institution. However, PVSC is routinely required by community colleges and universities prior to students begin their placement at LMC.
- Assign the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the volunteers/ students prior to the start date.
- Require a Pre-Employment Medical Certificate.

MONITORING COMPLIANCE AND CONTRAVENTIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

At LMC, the policies and procedures put in place are to strengthen the delivery of our programs. LMC staff must review and adhere to all policies, procedures and individual plans before they begin their employment, and student teachers and volunteers before they begin their placement or volunteer time. All parties will review these documents annually and at any other time when changes are made to a policy, procedure or individualized plan.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Required Under the Child Care And Early Years Act, 2014:

- Parent Handbook
- Program Statement Implementation Policy
- Parent Issues and Concerns Policies and Procedures
- Policies and Procedures for Monitoring Compliance and Contraventions
- Anaphylactic Policy
- Criminal Reference Check/Vulnerable Sector Check Policy
- Emergency Management Policies and Procedures
- Fire Safety/Evacuation Procedures
- Medication Policy
- Sanitary Practices Policy
- Serious Occurrence Policy
- Sleep Supervision Policy
- Supervision of Volunteers and Students Policy
- Playground Safety Policy
- Staff Training and Development Policy
- Waiting list Policy
- Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy
- Sick Staff Policy
- Technological Use Policy
- Family involvement Policy
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Food Safety and Handling Policy
- LMC Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

Individualized Plans Required under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014:

- Anaphylaxis
- Medical Need
- Individualized Plan for Children with Medical Needs
- Febrile Seizure Policy and Procedure

Other policies and procedures developed by LMC:

- Child Abuse Policy
- No Smoking/ Vaping Policy
- Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy

MONITORING AND OBSERVATIONS

The Supervisor (Academic Head) and/or designate (CCEYA Officer) will monitor each faculty, staff, student teacher and volunteer to assess whether policies, procedures and individualized plans are being implemented and followed accordingly.

Monitoring and observations will be conducted on an ongoing basis through various means including, but not limited to:

1. participating in formal and casual observations;
2. collecting feedback provided from parents and families;
3. through meetings to review goals;
4. observations by colleagues;
5. reviewing written documentation (e.g., daily written record, attendance records, accident reports, etc.).

Monitoring will be conducted at different times of the day (e.g., morning, afternoon, periods of arrival/departure, rest periods, mealtimes, outdoor play periods, transitions, etc.) to observe that policies, procedures, and individualized plans are being implemented as required for different parts of the program and daily routines.

DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDS

Monitoring and documentation of observations will be recorded by using the “Lighthouse Montessori Canada Policy Compliance Form”; staff will receive this formal evaluation two times per academic year by the Supervisor; Students and volunteers will receive the evaluation on an as needed basis as these positions are not consistent. All records will be stored in our office (in individual staff files that are locked in a cabinet) for at least three years from the date they are created.

Any areas of concern with an individual's ability to comply with policies, procedures and individualized plans will be brought forward to the Supervisor or designate staff member. The Supervisor will address their observations through a review and discussions with the individual(s) observed every time a contravention has occurred and will seek to or provide them with appropriate supports to achieve and maintain compliance (e.g., additional training). 'Corrective Action Plan for Observed Contraventions' form must be filled out with further follow-up.

DEALING WITH CONTRAVENTIONS OF POLICIES, PROCEDURES OR INDIVIDUALIZED PLANS

LMC will make every effort to clarify expectations and encourage faculty, staff, students and volunteers to raise their questions and concerns about implementing policies, procedures and individual plans on an ongoing basis to support clarity, learning, development and ongoing compliance. Progressive discipline may be used to address observed non-compliances with policies, procedures and individualized plans, taking into consideration the nature and severity of the incident, and the individual's history of previous non-compliances

Where a school's staff member, student or volunteer is observed to be non-compliant, the licensee, Supervisor or Designate will take one or more of the following actions:

- Inform the individual that a non-compliance was observed, including the review of any pertinent records or documentation that provide evidence of the non-compliance;
- Re-review the relevant policies, procedures, and/or individualized plans with the individual;
- Issue a verbal warning;
- Issue a written warning;
- Temporarily suspend the individual from their position at LMC;
- Terminate the individual from their position;
- Inform any relevant parties (e.g., College of Early Childhood Educators, College of Teachers, College of Social Work and Social Services, the contact person for the program from which a student has been placed, CAS, police, etc.);
- Report violations with the College of Early Childhood Educators' Code of Ethics to the College.

Where an observed non-compliance meets the criteria for a reportable serious occurrence (e.g. an allegation of abuse or neglect), the serious occurrence policy and procedures will be followed.

Where appropriate, the supervisor or designate will follow up with the family of a child in accordance with our policies and procedures on parent issues and concerns.

OTHER LMC POLICIES

PARENTS ISSUES AND CONCERNS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the childcare licensee and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our childcare centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing within our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with Parents/Guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by Parents/Guardians are taken seriously by LMC and will be addressed as quickly as possible to satisfy all parties.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to Parents/Guardians within 24 hours. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

Parent concerns can be brought directly to the Director and/or Supervisor and/or a teacher; or they may call in their concern and/or email the concern to the school email address

(info@lighthousemontessoricanada.ca).

Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g., to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society, etc.).

Conduct

Our setting maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff member feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the Supervisor and/or licensee.

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child.

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, are required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. If a parent/guardian expresses concern that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly. Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the Child and Family Services Act.

For reference <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/>

Procedures

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in Responding to the Issues/Concerns
Program-related concern (Classroom or playground issue)	Parent/Guardian to contact classroom teacher or Director/Supervisor (Olga Perstok) directly, via telephone or email.	Classroom teacher must share parent/guardian concern with Director/Supervisor. A response will be provided to parents as soon as possible and within 24 hours either directly, via telephone or email.
Operational concern	Parent/Guardian to contact classroom teacher or Director (Olga Perstok) directly, via telephone or email.	Classroom teacher must share parent/guardian concern with Director. A response will be provided to parents as soon as possible and within 24 hours either directly, via telephone or email.

Staff-related concern	Parent/Guardian to contact Director (Olga Perstok) directly, via telephone or email	A response will be provided to parents as soon as possible and within 24 hours either directly, via telephone or email
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WAITING LIST POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Purpose

This policy and the procedures within allow a waitlist to be administered in a transparent manner. It supports the availability of information about the waiting list for prospective parents in a way that maintains the privacy and confidentiality of children.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for a childcare centre that maintains a waiting list to have related policies and procedures.

General

LMC will strive to accommodate all requests for the registration of a child at the childcare centre.

Where the maximum capacity of a program has been reached and spaces are unavailable for new children to be enrolled, the waiting list procedures set out below will be followed.

No fee will be charged to parents for placing a child on the waiting list.

Procedures

Receiving a Request to Place a Child on the Waiting List

LMC will receive parental requests to place children on a waiting list via online form placed on LMC's website and Wellington-Guelph Child Care Application and Waitlist portal. In case of any questions or issues filling out the form parents can call the school or apply in-person.

Placing a Child on the Waiting List

LMC will place a child on the waiting list in chronological order, based on the date and time that the request was received, requested start date and priority applications (eg siblings of children enrolled to the Program).

Once a child has been placed on the waiting list, LMC will inform parents of their child's position on the list upon request.

Determining Placement Priority when a Space Becomes Available

When space becomes available in the program, priority will be given to children who are currently enrolled and need to move to the next age grouping, siblings of children currently enrolled, or children of staff.

Once these children have been placed, other children on the waiting list will be prioritized based on program room availability and the chronology in which the child was placed on the waiting list.

Offering an Available Space

Parents of children on the waiting list will be notified via email that a space has become available in their requested program.

Parents will be provided a timeframe of 24 hours in which a response is required before the next child on the waiting list will be offered the space.

Where a parent has not responded within the given timeframe, LMC will contact the parent of the next child on the waiting list to offer them the space.

Responding to Parents who inquire about their Child's Placement on the Waiting List

The Supervisor/Administrator will be the contact person for parents who wish to inquire about the status of their child's place on the waiting list.

The Supervisor/Administrator will respond to parent inquiries and provide the child's current position on the list.

Maintaining Privacy and Confidentiality

The waiting list will be maintained in a manner that protects the privacy and confidentiality of the children and families on the list and therefore only the child's position on the waiting list will be provided to parents.

Names of other children or families and/or their placement on the waiting list will not be shared with other individuals.

LMC's wait list refers to COW One List for transparency.

MONTESSORI TERMINOLOGY

Absorbent mind

Being a parent or guardian of a child from birth to six years of age offers a unique opportunity to witness one of the most important and creative periods in human development. During this time, the child enters the world equipped with vital reflexes and an innate drive to learn. Adults play a crucial role in supporting this development by thoughtfully preparing environments and offering materials that align with each stage of the child's growth.

A central principle of Maria Montessori's philosophy is to equip the child with skills for life. This is achieved by providing meaningful, purposeful, and appropriately challenging activities that help children develop independence and problem-solving abilities. Equally important is the understanding that adults should not interfere unnecessarily in the child's learning process. Children learn most effectively through exploration, experimentation, and even errors during spontaneous activity. When engaged in meaningful work, children naturally sustain their interest and concentration.

Once a child has acquired a skill, they are often motivated to repeat the activity, refining and mastering it through practice. In this process, the role of the educator is to step back and observe, allowing the child to utilize their natural ability to teach themselves, strengthen their skills, and expand their understanding of the world. While it can be tempting for adults to intervene or offer guidance based on their own experiences, support should be offered only when the child seeks it.

Montessori lessons follow a natural rhythm and flow within the prepared environment. Children are given the freedom to choose activities based on their interests and readiness at any given moment. Each activity is purposeful and supports the development of specific skills. For example, spooning activities help young children develop coordination and independence in serving food, while folding cloths fosters order, concentration, and care for their environment.

The Montessori classroom offers a rich variety of activities designed to support the whole child. Through these experiences, children develop coordination, concentration, fine motor skills, critical thinking, decision-making, and self-reflection. Ultimately, a Montessori education nurtures independent, capable,

and confident individuals—children who grow into adaptable, thoughtful, and responsible adults, able to make sound decisions while respecting themselves, others, and the world around them.

Sensitive periods

Sensitive periods are “the pattern the child follows in gaining knowledge of his environment” (*Montessori: A Modern Approach*, 1988). During these periods, the child is uniquely guided by an inner drive, knowing intuitively how to acquire the skills and knowledge they need. The role of the adult, therefore, is not to direct, but to observe patiently and provide thoughtful support as each sensitive period unfolds.

This is a time when the child experiences profound joy in learning, driven by intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and deep interest. The child is naturally inclined to repeat, imitate, and concentrate—often without any external instruction. It is truly remarkable to observe a child constructing their understanding of the world, gradually building from small details into a complete and meaningful whole, much like assembling a complex puzzle.

A Montessori classroom offers a rich environment designed to support this process. It provides countless opportunities for exploration through materials that vary in size, shape, texture, smell, taste, and sound. As children move freely within the environment, they refine their coordination, balance, and precision in handling materials. Their innate sense of order encourages repetition—children will engage in the same activity with focus and enthusiasm, free from fatigue or boredom, until mastery is achieved.

The prepared environment invites children to engage all their senses, helping them feel secure, confident, and connected to their surroundings. Through this purposeful work, children gradually develop one of the most significant human abilities—language. Over time, they begin to transform their experiences into words, expressing thoughts with increasing clarity, structure, and meaning, including phonetic awareness and emerging grammar.

As Montessori educators, we are privileged to observe children in this process of discovery. As they complete activities, children build upon previously acquired knowledge, scaffolding their understanding to engage in more complex tasks. For example, during a lesson on healthy eating, “A Rainbow Plate,” children explored fruits and vegetables through their senses—discussing shapes, sizes, smells, and tastes. As the lesson progressed, they drew upon imagination, personal experiences, and preferences, expressing their ideas confidently in front of their peers.

The educator's essential role is to recognize the emergence of each sensitive period and to support the child's natural inclination toward purposeful activity. Guided by their inner drive, children make choices, practice, and refine their abilities through hands-on work. According to the laws of development, each sensitive period eventually comes to an end—often quite suddenly—when the child's intense interest fades. However, the skills and knowledge acquired during this time remain deeply embedded and continue to serve the child throughout their life.

Work cycle

There is no doubt that daily routines play an essential role in the lives of all human beings. Each of us follows natural biological rhythms, with peak periods of activity and times for rest. We rely on personal habits and rituals—whether it is a morning jog, a quiet breakfast, or a cup of coffee—to prepare ourselves for a productive day. Focus and concentration cannot simply be turned on and off; they are cultivated through consistency and intentional preparation. Children, in the same way, benefit from a structured and predictable routine that supports a day that is efficient, joyful, and meaningful. At the heart of this is concentration, a key element in completing purposeful work, acquiring knowledge, and developing skills. Through her observations, Maria Montessori discovered that children are capable of working for extended periods of time without interruption when given the appropriate conditions. By following their natural curiosity and inner drive to explore, children gradually build deeper levels of concentration. Based on years of research, Montessori identified what is known as the *three-hour work cycle*—a continuous, uninterrupted period during which children engage in meaningful activity. This period represents a time when children are most ready to make significant discoveries and experience those powerful “Aha!” moments.

The concept of the three-hour work cycle remains fundamental in Montessori education. At the same time, modern society presents new expectations and requirements. In Canada, Ministry of Education guidelines emphasize nutrition, outdoor time, and well-being, while families value a well-rounded program that may include languages, arts, and physical education. As a result, Montessori environments often incorporate complementary activities such as French, art, music, and movement.

Despite these additions, Montessori educators remain deeply committed to preserving the integrity of the uninterrupted work cycle. Careful planning ensures that transitions are smooth and that, following any scheduled activity, children are gently guided back into purposeful, independent work. Protecting this

uninterrupted time allows children to reconnect with their concentration and continue their exploration without disruption.

A clear understanding of the three-hour work cycle enables educators to design environments and daily rhythms that are both responsive and effective. Within this structure, children are free to engage with meaningful materials, follow their interests, and develop independence. They learn to listen to their inner motivation, persist in their work, and take pride in their accomplishments.

There is nothing more rewarding for an educator than to hear a child joyfully say, “Look, I did it by myself!”

Freedom and discipline

Freedom and discipline are deeply interconnected and cannot exist independently of one another. Freedom is an essential element of an individual’s social, emotional, and intellectual development. It provides the opportunity to explore, imagine, work, and strive toward meaningful goals. In a world full of possibilities, the ability to make choices shapes one’s path in life. At times, decision-making can be challenging, bringing uncertainty, frustration, and doubt. However, it is through discipline that individuals are able to navigate these choices responsibly, ensuring their own well-being and the well-being of others. Discipline helps us develop an understanding of what is appropriate, respectful, and safe within the society we live in.

In a Montessori classroom, children are given the freedom to choose their activities based on their interests and readiness. However, it is important to understand that freedom in Montessori education does not mean permissiveness or a lack of boundaries. The environment is carefully prepared, structured, and intentional—filled with purposeful materials that respond to the child’s developmental needs, stimulate their senses, and nurture their natural curiosity.

Consistent routines and clear expectations help children develop a sense of order in both space and time, enabling them to function confidently within the classroom community. Grace and Courtesy lessons play a vital role in establishing a respectful, safe, and collaborative environment. Through these experiences, children learn how to interact with others, share, take turns, and resolve conflicts thoughtfully.

As children engage in meaningful work, respect their environment, and collaborate with peers and educators, they gradually develop *inner discipline*. This form of discipline is not imposed externally, but emerges naturally as the child gains independence, self-control, and responsibility.

Montessori lessons are designed to support both freedom and discipline simultaneously. The educator assumes the role of a careful observer—present, attentive, and ready to guide when needed, but mindful

not to interrupt the child's concentration unnecessarily. In doing so, the educator demonstrates respect for the child's choices, abilities, and voice, while expressing trust in their capacity to succeed.

When children experience this level of respect and trust, they develop a strong sense of confidence and self-worth. They feel capable, valued, and motivated to take ownership of their learning. In turn, this nurtures both independence and inner discipline—foundations that will support them throughout their lives.

Imagination

In Montessori education, imagination serves a distinct and purposeful role—it supports the child in understanding the realities of the universe. Imagination is closely connected to the development of intelligence. Between the ages of three and six, children are capable of forming increasingly complex and realistic ideas about the world. Drawing on information from their environment, they begin to construct mental representations of events, cultures, and places they may never directly experience, yet come to understand through knowledge and exploration.

Through imagination, children can extend beyond what their senses alone can provide. Stories, in particular, hold great appeal, as they invite children to mentally reconstruct events and visualize experiences described through words. This process requires effort and concentration, yet children engage in it with curiosity, joy, and enthusiasm. It is therefore essential that adults prepare environments that nurture imagination grounded in reality. In Montessori education, activities are intentionally reality-based, supporting the child in building an accurate and meaningful understanding of the world rather than engaging in fantasy or pretend scenarios.

Within the Montessori classroom, imagination is continuously supported through purposeful experiences. During group gatherings, children listen to stories that reflect real-life experiences, historical events, or explorations of the natural world. As they grow, they are introduced to broader narratives—such as the Great Lessons—which inspire them to imagine the past, understand the present, and consider the future. Children are then encouraged to express their understanding by creating their own stories, often drawing from personal experiences such as visits to farms, walks in nature, or observations of everyday life.

Creative thinking is further developed through hands-on materials. Activities such as working with metal insets, shading, coloring, and design allow children to express ideas visually. Constructive imagination is strengthened through materials like the Pink Tower, Brown Stairs, and Cylinder Blocks, where children

recreate and reinterpret structures they observe in the world around them—such as buildings, roads, and landscapes.

The Practical Life area offers additional opportunities for imagination grounded in reality. Through imitation of real-world activities, children refine movement, coordination, and independence while also absorbing language and social patterns. A carefully prepared environment, where each object has a clear purpose and place, supports vocabulary development and logical thinking. The structured sequence of activities strengthens memory, reasoning, and the ability to carry out purposeful actions.

Grace and Courtesy lessons further support the child's social imagination, helping them find language to express thoughts, emotions, and ideas appropriately. Through role-playing and guided interactions, children develop frameworks they can apply in real-life social situations. Cultural studies expand the child's awareness of the world, offering insight into places, people, and traditions beyond their immediate environment.

These experiences illustrate how a thoughtfully prepared Montessori environment enables children to use their imagination not as an escape from reality, but as a powerful tool to understand and engage with it. In doing so, children develop strong cognitive abilities, a rich curiosity, and a meaningful connection to the world around them.

Peace education

According to Maria Montessori, each child enters the world with limitless potential. The role of education is to support the child in becoming an individual with their own understanding of the universe, their place within it, and a growing sense of purpose and direction for their future.

Montessori's concept of *peace education* begins within the family and continues into the classroom from the earliest years. It is grounded in environments built on mutual respect, acceptance, and meaningful connection. The goal of peace education is to guide the child toward becoming a "global citizen"—a person who embodies empathy, compassion, and respect for all living and non-living things.

In the Montessori classroom, educators intentionally nurture these values through daily practice. Teachers serve as role models, demonstrating kindness, thoughtful decision-making, and respectful communication. Learning is guided through encouragement and intrinsic motivation rather than command or control. Alongside academic skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics, children are supported in developing patience, grace, and social responsibility. They learn to communicate respectfully with peers and adults, resolve conflicts peacefully, and seek compromise and understanding.

While family and school may appear to be small social units, they form the foundation of a child's experience within society. These early environments shape how children understand relationships, cooperation, and belonging. When rooted in respect and empathy, they contribute to a broader society grounded in tolerance and harmony. Peace education must therefore begin at home and continue consistently in school, as these are the first communities in which a child learns to live, adapt, and feel valued.

At Lighthouse Montessori Canada, we believe that children who are raised with strong values of empathy, respect, and understanding will carry these principles throughout their lives. As they grow, they may become leaders, thinkers, and contributors who positively influence the world around them. While we hope that future generations may be spared from conflict and hardship, our role is to equip children with the tools to navigate challenges through dialogue, compassion, and cooperation.

As Maria Montessori beautifully stated, *"Averting war is the work of politicians; establishing peace is the work of educators"* (*Education and Peace*, 1943).