



Parent/Student Handbook

The child is truly a miraculous being, and this should be felt deeply by the educator.

–Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind

School Locations:

Manila Campus (TK-8)
1611 Peninsula Drive
Arcata, CA 95521
707-832-4194

Arcata Campus (7-12)
2610 Wyatt Lane
Arcata, CA 95521
707-630-5018

P. O. Box 6103, Eureka, CA 95501
707-832-4194

info@redwoodmontessori.org
www.redwoodcoastmontessori.org

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Welcome to Redwood Coast Montessori!

Redwood Coast Montessori (RCM) is the only public charter Montessori school in Humboldt County. RCM’s program works on a three-year cycle where children ideally enter as transitional kindergarteners or first graders from a Montessori primary program. They continue through lower elementary (1st-3rd), upper elementary (4th-6th), adolescent (7th and 8th), and high school (9-12). For each child to gain the most from our offerings, our expectation is that our families commit to supporting their child in the Montessori learning approach in the classroom and at home. We are glad that you are here!

Mission Statement

The mission of Redwood Coast Montessori is to serve a diverse population of school children (TK-12) in the Humboldt County area by providing a high quality educational option based on the Montessori methodology and philosophy.

Values and Standards of Community Behavior

Redwood Coast Montessori maintains a commitment to a specific vision that emphasizes the needs of the child, the community, and the Earth. Although each of our vision statements are interwoven to form the foundation of our core philosophy, our vision for each child is based on key educational goals.

For the Child

- Create a positive attitude toward school and learning
- Build habits of concentration and organization for lifelong study skills
- Foster an abiding curiosity and a sense of high self-esteem
- Encourage habits of initiative and persistence
- Instill an inner discipline and sense of order
- Develop sensory motor skills to sharpen the ability to discriminate
- Cultivate peaceful interactions, empathy, and compassion
- Honor the child’s natural desire to learn, to be helpful, and to contribute
- Nourish the child’s spirit, imagination, creativity, and intellect to achieve their highest level of academic achievement
- Enable students to become self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners.

For the Community

- Build a cohesive school community

- Cultivate an understanding of our connectedness to each other
- Reach out to the broader community to provide opportunities for connection.

For the Earth

- Connect with nature and encourage respect for our environment
- Honor our environment and our place in the global community.

General Information

Board of Directors

The RCM Board of Directors has oversight responsibilities for Redwood Coast Montessori with respect to hiring of school employees, setting school policy, managing school finances, and promoting the overall mission of RCM. The Board meets one day per month, with board directors serving two-year terms.

School Hours

School hours are based on the following schedule

Campus	Grade	Start Time	Dismissal Time
Manila	TK – 3 rd	8:30 a.m.	2:30 p.m.
	4 th – 8 th	8:30 a.m.	3:00 p.m.
Arcata	7 th – 12 th	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
After care is available for all grades at the Manila Campus until 5:30 p.m. (including minimum days)			
Dismissal times for TK – 12 th on minimum days is 12:30 p.m.			

Daily Schedule

Manila Campus

TK – 3rd grade

- 8:30 – 11:30 Work Period
- 11:30 – 12:00 Recess
- 12:00 – 12:30 Lunch
- 12:30 – 2:30 Work Period

4th – 8th grade

- 8:30 – 12:00 Work Period
- 12:00 – 12:30 Recess
- 12:30 – 1:00 Lunch
- 1:00 – 3:00 Work Period

Arcata Campus

7th – 12th grade

- 9:00 – 12:00 Work Period
- 12:00 – 12:30 Lunch
- 12:30 – 3:30 Work Period

School Policies

Attendance

Arriving on time, and being in school every day, helps children get the most out of their education and establishes a life-long habit of responsibility. If your child will be late or absent, please call and leave a message on our main line at 707.832.4194. If you plan to be away on vacation, please let us know ahead of time so we can plan school lessons related to your trip and complete the necessary Independent Study paperwork.

Drop-off and Pick-up

- Please remember that our school is nestled in a quiet residential community. Our neighbors are noticing how we drive to and from school *everyday!* Please adhere to the posted speed limit of 25 mph (15 mph w/in school zone) on Peninsula Drive. We want Manila residents to welcome us as peaceful members in the community. The safety of your child and our neighbors is more important than the risk of being a few minutes late.
- Before school care begins daily at 7:45.
- Please be sure to check in with your child's teacher or aftercare provider before taking your child off campus.

Wellness Policy

If your child is truly sick (bad cough, very runny nose, fever, or vomiting in past 24 hours) she or he *must* stay home to get better and to decrease the likelihood of spreading the illness within our school community. Otherwise, please do all you can to ensure your child is on time and ready to learn each day. One way to promote wellness with your child is to make sure they are consuming at least 5-9 servings of fresh fruits and vegetables everyday. RCM's entire wellness policy is available at www.redwoodmontessori.org.

Lice Policy

Our school policy is a "no live bug" policy. Parents are encouraged to pick up their child once lice are found on their child. The student may return to school when all live lice have been removed, and two careful, thorough combings of the hair have been completed.

Please remember that these small insects are not particular. They are just as happy on clean hair as hair washed less often so any child can get them.

Some resources you may find useful are the following:

RCM Lice Checklist (see appendix B)

RCM Parent Education Packet - Lice Management (see appendix B)

Vaccination Policy

All RCM students are required to receive vaccinations as outlined in SB277 prior to attending school. For more information about SB 277, please see the Frequently Asked Questions available at: <http://www.shotsforschool.org/laws/sb277faq/>.

For more information about school immunization requirements and resources, please visit the California Department of Public Health's website at www.shotsforschool.org, or contact your local health department.

Getting Rest

We have observed that children are at their best when they get a good night's sleep. To feel good and do well during the day, please work with your child to set a regular routine with a bedtime that allows for plenty of sleep. Children of ALL ages need ample sleep and a regular schedule.

Lunch

RCM is a healthy place for learning and growing, which includes our lunchtime. We encourage good nutritional habits and ask that parents pay close attention to the food in their child's lunches. An ideal lunch would contain a healthy, balanced mix from the different food groups. Candy, gum, carbonated drinks, and other sugary items are definitely treats to leave at home. That being said, there may be times where a student, parent, or the school wants to furnish a special treat to celebrate a birthday or holiday. This special occasion may be a time where a small amount of sugar may be appropriate, but please make the snack as nutritious as possible.

Redwood Coast Montessori participates in the National School Lunch Program. Hot lunches are served every school day. All students may purchase hot lunches for \$3.50/meal. Eligible students receive either free or reduced price (\$0.40) lunches. Eligibility for free and reduced price meals is determined by either direct certification or household income. To apply for free or reduced lunches, interested families should contact the school office for an application.

Snack

Young learners get hungry often! Students in each classroom take turns hosting snack once a month, with a parent volunteer in each class coordinating and assigning snack days. Snacks do not need to be elaborate or expensive, but should be nutritious, wholesome foods—organic is encouraged. By first grade, children are able to and enjoy participating in shopping for and preparing their hosted snacks.

Some examples of snacks include the following:

- Slices of apple, banana, or other fruit

- nuts or nut/bean/tofu spreads
- cheese sticks or cubes
- pretzels, whole grain crackers or bread sticks
- vegetable slices
- any other food that is nourishing and easy to eat as a snack.

The goal is to be sure each child has enough energy to learn effectively. Please avoid sending sweet pastries or other very sugary treats.

In the event that you forget your snack day, please consider bringing a non-perishable snack—such as pretzels, crackers, nuts, and dried fruit—to replenish our a back-up snack supply.

Learning Atmosphere

Redwood Coast Montessori is a public charter program operating within the Arcata School District. Our school days will be filled with extended academic work time intermixed with physical education, lunch, and free time. Schoolwork is focused in six broad categories:

- Reading/Writing
- Practical Life Skills
- Social Studies
- Math
- Science
- Special Interests

Throughout the year your student may have a variety of school and homework across all areas. There will be weekly home reading practice.

Schoolwork

Montessori philosophy encourages students to complete their classwork during school hours so that they may spend time with their family participating in family activities. In the event that a child does not complete their classwork during school, or for some extended research projects, there may be some schoolwork done at home. Additionally, reading and spelling and basic math facts can be practiced as homework.

Weekly Home Reading Sheet / Spelling List

Home reading is a lifelong habit that we will support by requiring weekly reading. We will provide a reading sheet, which is to be turned in weekly. Reading can be recorded onto any kind of paper or you can help your child type and email the reading log to their respective teacher. Spelling will be assigned weekly and quizzes will be given weekly.

Other Assignments

Beyond reading and spelling, students will have a blend of school work, much of which will be individualized to each learner’s needs, likes, and challenges. Some will be

traditional curriculum from math, reading, writing, and penmanship, and some project-based. We will also incorporate assignments that are individualized to each student's area of interest in geography, botany, biology, geology, astronomy, etc. Teachers will provide directions for research, illustrations, revising drafts, and practice presentations.

Adolescent Program

Beginning with seventh grade, students will have daily homework assignments in math. Due to the rigorous nature of the curriculum, additional homework will be assigned based on individual projects and the needs of the child.

High School Program

The high school program includes an increase in the level of work and expectations for work outside of school. Daily homework in multiple subject areas is an integral part of the high school program. Although the high school program continues the increasing rigor or the RCM curriculum, students are encouraged to communicate directly with each other and with their teachers for guidance and support.

Computer and Internet Use

RCM's approach to learning integrates the use of technology into curriculum in an innovative way. The use of computers, the Internet as a research tool, presentation software, and other tools are introduced in a developmentally appropriate way as grades progress.

Our school makes every effort to protect students and teachers from misuse or abuse when accessing electronic information services. Students are responsible for their behavior on the computer and for ensuring that they follow established guidelines. Computer and Internet rules at school may differ from those you have at home, so we encourage you to review RCM's computer/Internet use policies with your child in order to support the school in its use of technology as a learning tool.

Supporting Your Child's Learning at Home

In the Montessori environment, the children are meant to take charge of their learning as well as the day-to-day functioning of the classroom. The teacher's job is to take charge of coordinating lessons and learning. There are many ways parents can, at home, foster a child's developing sense of independence, learning, and contribution to community.

- If you are not already doing this, **consider teaching your student to do the personal maintenance and chores he or she is capable of doing.** For younger children, these jobs may include making the bed in the morning, making their own nutritious lunch, feeding pets, helping prepare parts of meals, setting and clearing the table for meals, watering plants, folding laundry, etcetera. Your children will

feel proud and satisfied when they know they are contributing to the household. As your child masters skills, add some new ones.

- **Foster your child’s sense of independence by making it easier for them to do their jobs unassisted.** For example, your child needs a stool to reach the sink to help wash dishes, please help to provide one. By supporting your child’s growing sense of independence and responsibility at home, you will be reinforcing what we are creating in the classroom.
- **Help your child practice being organized.** This skill also helps in learning. Their school work and backpacks are truly theirs and we work to help everyone take ownership of paperwork that is going home and coming back.
- When work does come home, **please support your child’s efforts.** If you are concerned, please check in with us and we can update you about what your child is working on, whether it is getting turned in, and things you can do at home to support your child’s efforts.

If you have questions about the Montessori method of education, please ask! RCM has an extensive collection of Montessori books and materials you may borrow. We can also point you to some great resources on the Internet.

Conferences

RCM offers two parent/teacher conferences per year—one in the fall, and the other in the spring. Sign-up sheets for conference slots will be available prior to the conference period. Both teachers and parents may request additional conferences on an as-needed basis to discuss your child’s progress or well-being at school. Progress Reports are sent home three times each year to inform parents of academic growth as well as behavior and work habits.

Sharing

After the first few weeks of school, children in TK/K and Lower Elementary classrooms will be assigned a specific day of the week as their sharing day. Students can only bring items to share on their specific day unless we pre-arrange a special date. Throughout the year we will keep the focus on **educational items only**. If your child wants to share something that seems questionable, ask yourself, “How is our share item educational or academic?” If it seems to truly be of educational value and is not too valuable or irreplaceable, then send it in a protective wrapping or container. If something does get broken, we will be sad but cannot be held responsible.

Field Trips/Excursions

Students at RCM participate in many field trips. It is important for elementary and adolescent age students to get out into their community and learn about transportation, local history, how businesses function, and what people do for work. These trips help inspire children to begin considering where they will fit in as adults in the future.

Student Field Trip Coordinators

Our students have the opportunity to plan field trips for the class. Planning a field trip is an honor and a huge responsibility that older students are strongly encouraged to undertake as the leaders in our school. If you are an upper-grade parent, please begin having conversations with your student about where they might want the class to go and what is involved in getting us there. If you are a first or second grade parent, encourage your student to coordinate with an older student to put together a field trip. We always welcome great field trip ideas, so if you have one, please let us know!

Parent Chaperones

We generally need responsible adult chaperones willing to supervise students on each field trip. We also need enough drivers to carry all the children safely to their destination as well as chaperones to accompany us on the field trips to ensure the children have adequate supervision. Drivers must provide:

- 1) Proof of liability insurance with a minimum of \$100K/\$300K coverage. The parents/guardians shall acknowledge in writing that their insurance carrier is the primary agent responsible for insurance for the field trip or excursion.
- 2) A copy of their Driver's License and Car Registration.

Remember, when you are chaperoning, you are there to support the goals of the field trip and to supervise students. Please keep distractions to a minimum and follow all laws and rules of the road.

For all over night excursions Parents/guardians will:

- 1) pass a criminal background check and a tuberculosis screening in advance of all overnight field trip/excursions and if parent/guardian will be working alone with students
- 2) appropriately manage student behavior as necessary to maintain safety and adherence to all Charter School rules.
- 3) not consume alcohol or use controlled substances (except for medications taken under a physician's orders) while accompanying and supervising students on a field trip or excursion
- 4) stay with the group as much as possible at all times including during transport. No side trips allowed, with out prior approval from lead teacher/staff, including gasoline stops. Please be sure to have enough gas before leaving on the trip.
- 5) follow all California driving laws including child restraint laws.

- 6) avoid all types of distracted driving including consuming of food, use of cell phones (including hands free devices), or other behaviors that affect their ability to focus on safe driving.
- 7) not show movies in vehicles.
- 8) not purchase or give students any foods or medicines that have not been approved by the student's classroom teacher.
- 9) call the Charter School office or teacher in charge immediately if there is a problem.

Cost of Field Trips

Some field trips have a small fee associated with them and for those we ask for voluntary donations. If you are unable to donate, please don't worry. All students will go on field trips regardless of their ability to donate to the cost. Some of our fundraising proceeds cover these costs, but if you are able and would like to help out one or more classmates, we welcome the additional monetary support.

Field Trip Behavior

Only students who have shown that they can follow directions, maintain self-control, and interact in a polite, respectful manner will be joining us on field trips. These expectations also include walking quietly with our group or in line, keeping hands to oneself, and waiting, listening to and then following directions from the group leader. Please help reinforce these behavior expectations at home to be sure that your child is ready for each and every field trip. If a student is having trouble meeting these expectations during a field trip, his or her parent/guardian must come and pick the child up immediately. If a child has shown that he or she is not yet able to follow field trip behavior expectations, then a parent or other responsible adult must come along on the field trip or we will regretfully insist that. The student stays at school with another class for the trip. For more details, please refer to the RCM Field Trip/Excursion policy.

Birthdays in the Classroom

Birthdays are a significant milestone for children and we acknowledge them in the Montessori tradition. We generally celebrate birthdays in the week they occur, and will send a request to families ahead of time asking for some photos of the birthday child (that will be returned) and some notes about each year. For those students who have birthdays in the summer, we will have a celebration at their half-birthday (so a child born in June will celebrate with us in December). Parents are welcome to join us in our birthday celebration. If you wish not to have your child's birthday acknowledged, please let us know.

Birthday Celebrations Outside of School

To support our classroom's sense of community and to model polite manners, any party invitations handed out at school must include the entire class. If you are planning a smaller party, please contact individual families to deliver invitations outside of school.

After School Care

Redwood Coast Montessori offers after school care until 5:30 p.m. on all regularly scheduled school days. The afterschool care program provides children with a selection of recreational, creative, artistic, and learning activities. You are welcome to enroll your child in after school care at any time during the school year.

- At the beginning of the year, parents complete an after school care form accompanied by a \$100 deposit per child that will be refunded at the end of the school year. Once your child is enrolled, they are welcome to participate in afterschool care as needed.
- The fee schedule for after school care is:
 - Students that do not qualify for free or reduced priced meals: \$4.00/hr.
 - Students that qualify for reduced priced meals: \$3.40/hr.
 - Students that qualify for free meals: \$3.00/hr.
- The late pick-up fee is \$1.00 per minute for every minute after 5:30 p.m.
- Monthly invoices will be placed in your parent cubby at the end of each month. Invoices will reflect all after school care charges and any other expenses incurred during the month. To avoid late fees, payments are due within 30 days from the date listed on the invoice.
- Families wishing to use RCM's after school care must agree to support their child in following the behavior expectations of the program. Children who are not able to follow the behavior expectations, or who are otherwise not successful during after school care, will not be allowed to attend the program.
- If parents wish to stay after school and allow your child to play, you must be present and responsible for your own child at all times. Please become familiar with our guidelines for respectful and safe behavior on the playground.

Independent Study

Family vacations and visiting friends and relatives are wonderful opportunities for students to learn more about their extended community. With this in mind, RCM provides students with the ability to complete work during any school absence whether due to illness or family obligations.

RCM maintains the follow conditions for all independent study agreements:

- **Voluntary:** We understand that independent study is an optional educational alternative that students voluntarily select, including students covered under

California *Education Code* sections 48915 and 48917. All students who choose independent study must be offered the alternative of classroom instruction, and they must have the continuing option of returning to the classroom.

- **Assignment:** We understand that assignments listed on the back of this form, are to be completed as outlined by the supervising teacher. All assignments will be evaluated by Interview (I), Observation (O), and/or Documentation (D). Attach all completed assignments to this form.
- **Reporting:** We understand that reporting of student progress shall be made to the supervising teacher at least every 3 weeks during regular office hours as scheduled with Redwood Coast Montessori staff. Student work samples will be submitted at each meeting. Other interim contacts will be made via phone, email, visits, mail, fax, or other appropriate methods. According to school policy, the maximum length of time between meetings to evaluate student progress is 3 weeks. Parent and/or Education Coordinator may schedule meetings more frequently.

Running/Walking Club

The purpose of Redwood Coast Montessori's Running/Walking Club is to enable RCM students to participate together in a fun, healthy, aerobic activity that builds strength and endurance. We also hope to foster a lifelong love of running, walking, and being active. Running club takes place on Mondays and Wednesdays after school. Sign-up forms with additional information will be available the first week of school.

Personal Items From Home

Anything your child brings from home is the child's responsibility. Please help remind your student that all toys, trading cards, electronic games, and other distracting items should be kept safely at home. See the **Sharing** section for what you can encourage your child to bring to school. Sports equipment can be brought to share with others at recess, at the discretion of supervising staff.

If an item comes in that does not belong at school, we will first ask that it be put away in their backpack. If it comes out again, it will be put in the parent cubby to be picked up at the end of the day. If an item becomes a repeated problem, we will create a "June Box." If something goes into the June Box it stays there until the last day of school in June!

Cell phones

If you want your child to have a cell phone at school for emergencies, it must be turned off and put away during the school day. RCM is not responsible for these items if they are lost or damaged.

RCM staff will use the school phone or cell phones during the school day to communicate about school-related issues and will refrain from any personal cell phone use while working with the children. We ask that parents and other visitors refrain from using cell

phones while working with the students. If you must make or take a call/text while at school, you are welcome to step outside.

Adult Guests and Visitors

RCM enjoys having visitors come in to tell about what they do for a work, offer a special lesson, help with projects, or listen to children read. It is helpful for us to know ahead of time so we can plan our schedule and to be sure there is time for guests to feel welcome. ALL visitors should check in with the front office before entering the campus.

Pet Visits

It is great for students to have the opportunity to meet different types of animals. If you have a child-friendly pet, do arrange with us ahead of time to bring it in for a visit. Small pets that will be content in a cage or tank can come for an all day visit (rodents, reptiles, fish, etcetera). Larger animals, like dogs and cats (goats, horses, pigs, etcetera) should be cleared first, come with a parent/guardian for a shorter visit, and then go home again. All dogs visiting the campus must be on a leash or under voice command at all times.

A Caution For Our Younger Visitors

We love your families and want everyone to feel welcome and safe in our school. With this in mind, our classrooms are filled with specialized materials with small, hard to replace parts, and “works in progress” that our students often spend a great deal of time to create. Our classrooms are neither set up nor safe for younger, curious learners to explore freely. Please help keep your younger children safe and our materials in good condition by closely supervising your little ones and steering them away from delicate work. We will keep a few young, child-friendly things on hand for your little ones to explore, and if you have something to donate to our supply, please do.

School Clothing

Children should wear clean and comfortable clothes suitable for sitting, movement, and play. Please do not send your child to school in clothing that could be damaged easily or cause accidents on the playground.

- Children should be adequately prepared for outdoor activity, even in cool and wet weather. On most days, students go outside at least twice a day, and only on the most severe windy, cold, or rainy days will we stay indoors as a group.
- Dressing in layers is appropriate almost year-round here so close to the ocean.
- Wear or have available at school, closed-toe shoes appropriate for P.E. or other outside activities.
- We find that the atmosphere of the classroom is enhanced if children wear clothes that reflect the fact that this is primarily their place of work, just as most adults dress appropriately for their work. For example, clothing that promotes indecent, obscene,

or lewd messages or clothing otherwise designed to be especially attention getting, offensive, or immodest is not for school. We encourage you to help your child select appropriate school clothing when shopping and when choosing what to wear each day.

- No make-up.
- Midriffs, cleavage, and under garments need to be covered.
- Hats and hoods should be removed when indoors.

Lost and Found

Please clearly label all RCM students' clothing, lunch boxes, packs, and bags. A lost and found box is in the common room. Unclaimed clothing will be donated to charity at various times throughout the school year.

Special Circumstances

Life is full of unexpected surprises both happy and sad. It helps us to support your child when you keep us informed of events such as a new member of the family, death of a loved one (pets too), special adult leaving for an extended trip, moving, or anything else that may impact your student's learning. We do not need to know all your personal details yet we do want to be prepared should your child need extra attention.

Emergency Preparedness

In the case of fire, earthquake, or other natural disaster, RCM has comprehensive procedures in place to ensure the safety of our students and staff. RCM staff regularly review our emergency procedures, and we conduct school-wide safety drills on a monthly basis. If you would like to review our emergency preparedness policies, please feel free to ask the director for a copy.

Parent Guidelines

In the event of an emergency or natural disaster, we will keep the children safe until you are able to pick them up. Please follow these guidelines:

- Please call the school line at 707.832.4194 to receive updates and instructions regarding when it's appropriate and safe to pick up your child.
- Only people designated on your emergency form will be allowed to pick up your child.
- If you are able to stay and help, school personnel will give you instructions as to where your support is needed.
- If it is unsafe to remain at the school, the staff will walk with the children to a safer location. We will leave a sign stating our alternate location.
- Staff will remain with our students until all children have been picked up. We have the resources to feed children and stay overnight if necessary.

Athletics

After school athletic teams provide an opportunity for students to learn more about a specific sport and to participate in a healthy activity to promote fair play and sportsmanship. Participation in RCM sponsored athletics is a privilege. Students interested in participating on a school team will be asked to maintain a good standing with their academic work and to commit to supporting a positive and encouraging attitude with their own teammates and players from other schools. Students participating in RCM athletics will be required to sign and adhere to the RCM athletic code of conduct. A health physical will be required for participation with all school teams. Please ask the front office for a health physical form.

Parent Participation

Volunteers

RCM appreciates and relies on its parent volunteers. We are a community of people working together to develop a unique and inspiring learning environment for our children. A volunteer form goes out to the parent community at the beginning of the year asking for information about special skills, interests, and availability. It is very important that all RCM parents help support and enhance the school through some volunteer activity.

RCM's PTO encourages all enrolled RCM families to contribute 30 hours of volunteer service to the school for the development of the school and its academic goals.

A variety of service opportunities exist and include the following:

- Working in the classroom with our Montessori staff
- Developing classroom materials / special unit studies
- Chaperoning field trips
- Organizing or working at fundraising events
- Serving on school committees.

Volunteer hours can be completed at the school or at home. Parent education nights, fundraising, school events, and parent workdays provide enough additional opportunities to assure a comfortable level of participation. RCM is grateful for the contribution volunteers make on behalf of the school and to the lives of all of our students. In order for parents to participate in certain volunteer activities a negative TB test and a clear criminal background check will be required from the volunteer. A complete description of RCM's Field Trip & Excursion Policy is available in the school office.

Communication

Parent Directory

A parent/student directory is distributed each year, and lists each child and their parents along with email, address, and phone number. This directory is provided so that families

can contact others in the RCM community. If you prefer that your contact information be omitted, please contact the Director.

The Redwood Bark Newsletter

The Redwood Bark is a weekly parent email that provides important RCM news such as upcoming community and parent events, field trips, special date reminders, and other activities.

Parent Cubbies

Each family has a parent cubby assigned to them in Room C at RCM. Please check the cubby area regularly for important paperwork, communications, and sign-up sheets for various events and activities.

Website and Social Media

The school maintains the website at www.redwoodmontessori.org as a means of communication for current and prospective families. Enrolled families will find a current calendar, announcements and events on the website along with other school related documentation and information.

Families and friends can also follow events happening at RCM via our Facebook pages at Redwood Coast Montessori and Friends of RCM High.

Fundraising

RCM strives to provide a rich and diverse learning experience for every child. To meet this goal, we need to raise money for extra resources beyond what our regular operating budget can provide. With the support of RCM students, parents, and community, we will host several fun, community-focused events throughout the year.

RCM Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The RCM PTO is a parent-led organization that works in cooperation with the RCM Board of Directors, faculty and staff to support the mission of the school. All RCM parents are encouraged to participate at any level. Joining the PTO is a great way to meet other parents, get involved with the RCM community, and have fun.

Conflict Resolution and Student Behavior

Peaceful conflict resolution is a core tenant for RCM and our school community. Although the process of resolving conflicts looks slightly different at various developmental levels, the basic premise is the same throughout: communicate directly, describe your concerns respectfully, listen with openness, seek resolution with humility. RCM emphasizes traditional Montessori approaches to conflict resolution including use of the Peace Table/Peace Area as well as Positive Discipline strategies as a school-wide approach to developing a healthy student-centered community.

The Peace Table/Area

The Peace Area components are kept in a designated area of the classroom that children can take and set up in any available space. When conflicts arise between children in our classroom, the following procedures are followed:

1. Tell or ask the friend what is wrong and ask for a change.
2. If that does not work, invite the friend to the Peace Table/Area.
3. If the problem cannot be solved, the teacher or another adult can be asked to help.

Students are usually able to solve their problems using conflict resolution strategies, however, in the rare event that a problem is so big that it requires parent intervention, the teacher will consult with parents of the children to help resolve the conflict. This does not necessarily mean anyone is in trouble, but we work to solve our problems inside the classroom among the students involved and want the students to know that sometimes it takes more input than one has on hand at the moment.

Discipline

Freedom Within Limits is a basic tenant of the Montessori approach to teaching and learning. In general, students are free to choose from an array of challenging work, to work undisturbed, and to care for themselves and the classroom environment. Ground rules are established early in the year, and the children are allowed to work freely so long as they do not disturb others.

We strive to resolve all conflicts and behavior issues within the classroom setting. Should a problem, conflict, or behavior develop into an ongoing distraction to student learning, parents will be contacted the same day. If the behavior is so serious as to cause injury to anyone or damage to things in the classroom, then parents will be called right away. The teacher or staff member will decide whether the behavior warrants that the child be sent home. If the situation requires a parent/guardian conference, then a meeting will be arranged to discuss and implement an action plan to help the student change the behavior. It is up to the director to decide whether the student can continue to attend school until the conference is held and a plan put into place. If the director decides that the student will not attend regular classes, independent study work will be assigned and the student and family will be responsible to work with the student.

If the discipline problem continues after a plan has been established, the school director may meet with the family to assess the student, the action plan, and decide on next steps. Examples of immediate, go-home behaviors include causing serious injury to another student or self, causing serious damage to school materials or building, refusing to comply with basic safety procedures such as coming inside with the class when recess or outside activities, or behaving in such a way that the rest of the class cannot continue with the regular school day.

Bullying

RCM believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The schools and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance. Each incident of bullying should be reported to a teacher or to the director, and be promptly investigated.

What is Bullying?

- Bullying may consist of hitting, teasing, taunting, spreading rumors and gossip, stealing, or excluding someone from a group.
- It is carried out with the intent to harm someone and is a repeated activity.
- Bullying always involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The person bullying has more power due to such factors as age, size, strength, support of friends, or access to resources (things like toys and other belongings), and uses this power in a deliberate way.

Boys and girls tend to bully others in different ways, though they may both use face-to-face and behind-the-back methods. Boys are more likely to use methods such as hitting, fighting, and threatening. These face-to-face behaviors are easy to observe. Girls often bully using physical and verbal attacks, but they also engage in behind-the-back methods that are harder to observe. These behaviors include getting peers to exclude others and spreading rumors and gossip.

Because bullying jeopardizes children's safety and potentially creates both short and long-term problems for all children involved, we take it very seriously at RCM. It is important to know that bullying IS NOT just a normal part of growing up. Conflict is normal, but bullying is not.

Often children don't tell adults (parents, teachers, school staff) that they are being bullied because they think they won't be helped, they are afraid the bullying will get worse, they think they should be able to solve their own problems, or they don't even realize they are being bullied.

If You Think Your Child Is Being Bullied ...

- Listen to him/her and explain that people who bully are trying to get certain reactions (make the child feel angry, sad, jealous) and that they need to respond assertively with "Stop! That's bullying!"
- Assure your child that they are not to blame.
- Advise your child to report all bullying incidents to an adult at school or a parent.
- Contact your student's teacher and let them know.

Core Values

- Our primary focus will always be the safety, well-being, and best interests of our students.

- We recognize that a Montessori School is more than a place of learning; it is a community of children and adults that have a significant impact on our students' capacity to learn, grow, create, develop, assimilate values, and relate peacefully and respectfully to other people and to the natural world.
- We treat all students, families, teachers, and staff members with kindness, warmth, and respect.
- Our school will never permit the use of corporal punishment.
- We consciously teach our students values fundamental to Montessori Education, which include: respect for oneself, others, and their property; peacefulness, empathy and kindness; truthfulness; a search for the solution fairest to all; the pursuit of independence and self-mastery; and a love of work and a passion for excellence.
- We endeavor to provide a school environment that will promote and protect the physical and emotional well being of our students and staff.
- We seek to instill in our students, parents, and staff not only a reverence for the Earth, its waters, and all living things, but also a sense of stewardship for the environment based on a conviction of our individual responsibility for the beauty of the land and the health of our ecosystems.
- Our school does not discriminate in matters of admission or employment on the basis of race, religion, or ethnic background. We consciously teach children to accept, respect, and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of the global community.
- We consciously work to build a constructive partnership between the family and school in support of each child's educational development.
- Within reasonable guidelines established to ensure the integrity of our educational program and the privacy of other students' records, parents are welcome to visit the school to observe their child in class or to review his/her academic progress.
- We will promptly consult with parents should it ever become clear that a student is not benefiting from the school's program, or if the school is not the best program to meet his/her needs.

Transfer and Enrollment of Students

- Our school recognizes each family's right to visit and consider other schools and to hold preliminary discussions regarding admission without feeling compelled to notify the school, which their children presently attend.
- While we welcome inquiries and interest in our school, we strongly encourage all students that are presently enrolled in or committed to attend another Montessori program to give this first priority. Before considering a change, parents should thoroughly discuss the potential consequences of this decision with teachers and administrators from both programs.

- Before filing an application for admission, we ask that families advise their children's present schools and authorize in writing the release to us of their children's academic records and student recommendations upon our request.
- Before making the decision to enroll at Redwood Coast Montessori, we strongly encourage parents to familiarize themselves with Montessori education and philosophy. This may involve observing in the classroom or seeking out reference materials (RCM staff can suggest useful Montessori resources).

Employment

- We consciously follow fair and equal employment practices in hiring, assigning, promoting, and compensating both teaching and non-teaching staff members.
- We endeavor to employ persons solely on the basis of the factors necessary in the performance of the job and the operation of our school without discrimination on the basis of religious affiliation (unless our school is operated either by or on behalf of an established church for the purpose of religious education), race, national origin, gender, and any other factor on which discrimination is prohibited by the laws of the jurisdiction within which our school is located.
- No official of our school will seek to induce a teacher who is under contract at another school to break that contract. [There is nothing deemed improper if a member of the teaching or administrative staff of one school independently approaches another school about possible employment.]
- Our school will take all reasonable and lawful precautions to maintain the confidentiality of records and information concerning teachers and other staff members who are applying for employment at another school, in accordance with the rights of the individual.

Appendix A: Montessori Resources

The Montessori Foundation

www.montessori.org

A resource for information about Montessori teaching and learning including conferences, books and teacher training.

Montessori World Educational Institute

www.montessoriworld.org

A training institute with many helpful resources and videos available online.

American Montessori Society

www.amshq.org

Advocate for quality Montessori education with many helpful resources.

Association Montessori Internationale

www.montessori-ami.org

Advocate for Montessori education worldwide with many helpful resources.

Redwood Coast Montessori

www.redwoodcoastmontessori.org

RCM has a lending library of books on Montessori and parenting. Just ask.

Montessori Services

www.montessoriservices.com

A warehouse and mail order supply company in Santa Rosa, CA.

Montessori Outlet

www.montessorionoutlet.com

Online supply company.

An interesting piece of work, freely chosen, which has the virtue of inducing concentration rather than fatigue, adds to the child's energies and mental capacities, and leads him to self-mastery.

–Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind

Appendix B: Lice Resources

RCM Lice Checklist

Identify and Treat Lice and Nits

- Check all members of family for lice or nits. Contact individuals who regularly visit or have recently visited your home, such as babysitters, guests who sleep over, or playdate friends.
- Apply lice treatment of your choice, following directions precisely. (More information can be found on RCM Parent Education Packet - Lice Management)

- *** ***THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP!!*** ***



Remove as many nits as you can find. Careful wet-combing and re-combing of all of the hair with a special lice removal comb will enable more nits to be found and removed. Please view the instructional videos and/or read information on nit removal on the [RCM Parent Education Packet - Lice Management](https://tinyurl.com/RCMlice).

(<https://tinyurl.com/RCMlice>)

- Your child may return to school when all live lice have been removed, and two careful, thorough combings of the hair have been completed.** Upon return to school your child's head may be checked by a member of school staff.

Recommended Treatment for your Home, Personal Items and Vehicle(s)

- Wash personal clothing and bedding in hot water (130°F or higher) dry in a clothes dryer on the HOT or sanitize setting for at least 20 minutes.
- HOT dry all blankets, pillows, bedspreads, etc. Items that cannot be washed (ie stuffed animals) can be put in a sealed plastic bag for 48-72 hours.
- Combs, brushes, headbands, hats, etc. should be washed in hot soapy water.



and



- Thoroughly vacuum carpets, rugs, and furniture.
- Vacuum or wipe clean car upholstery.
- Inform school and parents of others in contact with your child as soon as possible.
Support from the school is available for families who need assistance with treatment.

Follow Up!

- Inspect hair for lice or nits every day for 2 weeks.*
- Re-treat*** in 7-10 days.
- Families with recurring cases will be provided additional support/information/resources as needed.

School Staff Checklist:

- If live lice are found on a student, call the parent to pick the child up at their earliest convenience.
- Send home lice information with the student’s family. ([RCM Parent Education Packet - Lice Management](#) and this Checklist)
- Inform other staff members of lice cases (especially teachers of siblings)
- Inform all RCM families (via email)
- Vacuum carpets in the classroom
- Vacuum couches and pillows. Bag pillows in sealed plastic bags for 48-72 hours.
- Instruct/remind students about how lice travel and the life cycle of lice. Caution students to avoid hat sharing and head to head contact.
- Get assistance to check student’s head upon return to school and in 3, 7 and 10 days.

Date of first check _____

In three days _____

In seven days _____

In ten days _____



RCM Parent Education Packet - Lice Management

Head lice most commonly affect school aged children. We recognize that contracting head lice can be a seriously inconvenient and often stressful experience. Below, we have included links to sites and videos with information about the identification and treatment of head lice.

Resources and authorities agree that the most critical step toward eliminating a lice infestation involves the physical removal of all lice bugs, nymphs, and nits through

repeated combing and picking by hand until no lice at any stage of the lifecycle are found. Heads should be checked daily for ten days after the last evidence of lice is found.

Combing Tools and Steps: Gather all tools before beginning. You will want a large comb for the first detangling comb through, a nit comb, paper towels for wiping gathered nits and bugs off, a large plastic bag for disposing of used paper towels, conditioner or treatment oil/cream, and hair ties and clips for longer hair. **Be sure to treat used combs and ties once finished by soaking in boiling water for five minutes or in rubbing alcohol for an hour.*

- Examine hair in bright sunlight if possible and with the benefit of a flashlight to shine on the roots/scalp.
- Conditioner, oils, or treatment creams make combing easier.
- Use hair ties or clips to tie or pin back hair, leaving only the section free that you will check.
- Use a fine toothed lice/flea/nit comb to comb through very small sections of hair at a time, removing bugs from the scalp and nits from the hair shaft.
- Slide hard to remove nits off the hair shaft using fingers or pick them off with tweezers.
- Methodically move from one section of hair to the next, tying back any long hair that is not being checked, including hair you have finished checking.
- Repeat this process daily until no evidence of lice bugs, nymphs, or nits remains.
- Continue checking hair for ten days after the last evidence of any lice is found.

It may seem that the treatment used has failed when actually there may have been:

1. Misidentification of substance on the hair shaft as nits, i.e. dandruff, styling products, etc.
2. Re-infestation
3. Inadequate treatment, i.e. insufficient combing, used too little product for insufficient time
4. Lack of awareness that it may take 8-12 hours for lice to die after treatment

*****Please note that often reinfestation happens because adults fail to check themselves.***

General Education Re: Identification, Treatment, and Successful Removal:

Below are some helpful links regarding general information and removal practices for lice in all stages of the lifecycle (bugs, nymphs, and nits):

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/AParentsGuidetoHeadLice.pdf>

This is a very accessible, relevant, and informative brochure from Dept. of Public Health explaining lice and how to successfully eliminate them from your hair and home, including

step-by-step instructions for identifying and combing out lice bugs and nymphs and removing nits.

<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/index.html>

The Center for Disease Control offers a website with pages devoted to a span of lice related topics, including biology, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

<https://identify.us.com/idmybug/head-lice/head-lice-FAQS/origin-of-head-lice.html>

IdentifyUS provides this website with many enlarged, color pictures of lice at different stages of the life cycle. They also provide an FAQ style format to answer many questions families may have.

<https://www.nasn.org/programs/educational-initiatives/lice-lessons>

The National Association of School Nurses assembled this site to inform parents and educators about lice identification, management, and support.

<http://www.familypracticegrouppe.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Head-Lice-Wet-Combing-Method-10-16-web.pdf>

Step by step instructions for the “wet combing” method: Helpful Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMqj88S8lMg>

This video provides an excellent lesson in how to thoroughly and methodically check a head of hair for nits.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9S1lrliT9w0>

This video shows a serious case of nits and how to successfully eliminate them with thorough combing and picking with tweezers by hired professionals.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zY4Nvab6uLM>

A professional who trains other professional lice removers explains his successful combing techniques.

Alternative Treatment Methods

While many argue the unscientifically proven benefits of alternative treatments, there are anecdotal accounts of success using Cetaphil or other thick oils like mayonnaise if the required step of 8 hours of treatment is completed according to directions.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4475297/>

This recent study addresses using 100% dimethicone -a silicone product commonly recommended in the EU for lice treatment. (dimethicone is a very common ingredient in cosmetics)

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/revenge-of-the-super-lice/>

This *Scientific American* article explains the development of lice resistance to over the counter treatments while discussing currently evolving alternative options, such as the use of synthetic oils over the last decade in Europe where they are seeing overall diminished lice numbers, as well as the importance of effective combing technique. The authors point out the surge of cases after campouts, holidays, and sleepovers due to children sharing beds and head to head contact over time.

http://nuvoforheadlice.com/test/?page_id=9#acceptLicense

This site opens with a disclaimer about not giving actual medical advice, but it goes on to detail the directions for a non-toxic Cetaphil treatment.

<http://headlicecenter.com/head-lice-olive-oil-treatment/>

This site explains a test done by Harvard School of Medicine regarding the process for removing lice by suffocating them with olive oil. While no test was done on nits, staff has had success using a thick olive oil coating combined with a shower cap for at least 8 hours to kill bugs and nits through suffocation.

Policies and Recommendations for Schools and Child Care Facilities

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/SchoolGuidanceonHeadLice2015.pdf>

This document was issued by the California Department of Public Health regarding head lice prevention and control in schools and child care facilities.

<https://schoolnursenet.nasn.org/blogs/nasn-profile/2017/03/13/head-lice-management-in-the-school-setting>

The National Association of School Nurses issued this document advocating the abandonment of “no nit” policies and mass screening in favor of increased parent education that stresses the importance of adherence to treatment protocols and reassessment practices.