



Aspen Hill  
Montessori

# *Parent Handbook* *2022-2023*



# Welcome to Aspen Hill Montessori!

Our common goal for the care of the children at our Centres is their social, emotional, physical safety, and overall well-being, at all times. The intention of our policies is to clarify for parents the policies and practices that guide our actions while your child is in our care. This handbook is developed in consultation with Alberta Education, Alberta Childcare Licensing, Alberta Health Services, and Alberta Family Services.

Please ensure that all adults that are involved in your child's care has reviewed this handbook. If you have any questions or concerns, please bring them to the staff's attention.

*This manual was reviewed as of Mar. 1 2022, with additional review dates per section or policy as noted.*



# *Core Policies*

# Arrival and Dismissal Policy

*Reviewed and updated Aug. 1 2018; May 8 2019; June 4 2019; Nov. 19 2019; reviewed and updated June 10 2020; expanded Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022; updated Feb. 15 2022*

## Arrival Routine

*(Updated June 10 2020; June 24 2021; updated Feb. 15 2022)*

It is important for each child to enter the classroom and begin their day with the other children in the class. The Centre requires that children are brought to care on time to allow them to receive the full benefit of the daily lesson plans and respect the work cycle. Respecting Centre start times also keeps interruptions to our learners to a minimum.

Our doors open at 8:45AM, and Centre programs start at 9AM sharp for morning and full day children, and at 12:45PM for afternoon children. **Doors close promptly at 9:05AM for morning/full-day children, and open at 12:45PM and close at 1:05PM for afternoon children.**

If you arrive past 9:05AM or 1:05PM, the doors will be locked and teachers will have moved on to other duties. At Strathcona, please phone 403-607-1880; at West Springs, please ring the doorbell. **Please expect to wait for late admittance as we are attending to other duties and may not be immediately available to answer the door.**

If you have a planned late, please call or e-mail the Centre 1 business day prior to the day of absence / lateness so alternative entrance times can be arranged.

Please follow all Centre directives regarding entrance location for your child that are sent home before your child enters care. To reduce crowding, only one adult per child and no siblings (other than babes-in-arms) are allowed in at arrival time.

Parents are expected to follow all staff directions regarding prompt drop-off and departure. Confident goodbyes are required of all attending adults; please refrain from extended conversations with staff and other parents. Attending staff reserve the right to ask families who are lingering to depart the premise, with their child if required for extended goodbyes.

**Please see our First Day Instruction sheet for specific directions for your class level and campus.**

## Dismissal Routine

*(Updated June 10 2020; updated June 24 2021; updated Feb. 15 2022, revised Feb. 22 2022)*

The Centre operates on an honor system and relies on families to work in partnership with us for consistent pick up times. This ensures teachers can effectively complete their end-of-day duties, as well as ensuring your children can count on seeing your presence. Dismissal for morning children is at 11:45AM sharp. For full day and afternoon children, dismissal is at 3:30PM sharp. Please ensure your pick up person is on-site no later than 11:40AM or 3:25PM as applicable to your child's schedule.

The Centre reserves the right to apply emergency care fees for repeat arrivals past 11:45AM / 3:30PM. If you have concerns about your child not being dismissed on-time / promptly at dismissal, please contact [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) so we can address with the teaching team.

For your child's safety and protection, no child will be released to anyone other than a person whose name appears on the registration form or Emergency Information form, unless arrangements have been made in advance of pickup. Anyone picking up a child must be at least 18 years of age, and may be asked to present photo identification if unknown to staff. If your family situation presents concerns around restricted access to certain family members, please alert Centre staff with a photo of the restricted member to assist staff in maintaining your parenting arrangements.

Once a parent or guardian has arrived at the Centre, please promptly identify yourself to the teachers supervising, collect your child and their things, and depart the Facility grounds. Once you have identified yourself to staff, the Centre is no longer responsible for supervising your child.

Please do not allow your child(ren) to run inside of the Facility or play unattended inside or outside of the Facility property, in the back play space, in the gardens, and / or in the parking lot. The Centre cannot be held responsible for accidents, injury or death that may result from lack of post-Centre supervision. Repeated offences of children left unattended on the Facility after dismissal may result in suspension of the family from attending services at the Centre.

**Please see our First Day Instruction sheet for specific directions for your class level.**

## Late Pickups and Emergency Care Fees

If you will be late, you must notify the Centre as soon as possible via 403-246-2794 (West Springs / Christie Crossing) or 403-607-1880 (Strathcona). If we have not received notification, the Centre administration will begin calling the emergency contacts on record for someone to retrieve the child as of 5 minutes past dismissal time. If emergency contacts and / or the family cannot be reached, Alberta Family Services and / or the Calgary Police will be contacted.



The Centre reserves the right to charge emergency care fees at a flat fee of \$30 per instance for any amount of late time, depending on the situation and frequency that lates have occurred for your family. *Please synchronize your time keeping devices with the Centre clocks and arrive **before** dismissal time to avoid unintended late fees.*

Emergency care fees are invoiced the week they occur, and must be paid before your child returns to care the following day. Attendance at Centre will be denied to families who have un-paid emergency care invoices.

Families that demonstrate a regular pattern of late or missed pickups may be required to register and pay for after-Centre Extended Care services, change their child's Centre schedule, and/or have their child's placement at Aspen Hill Montessori cancelled without refund.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Student Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Centre Fees and Tuition Policies

*Reviewed and updated Oct. 1 2018; June 4 2019; updated Nov. 19 2019; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022; updated Mar. 1 2022*

## Centre fees

Added April 13 2015, revised July 27 2015, revised October 1 2018; reviewed June 4 2019; updated Nov. 19 2019; updated Feb. 18 2021; updated Jan. 1 2022

Centre fees at list price are collected for each student before the Centre year begins. All Centre fees are non-refundable regardless of reason once paid. The Centre reserves the right to release a held space if any Centre fees are not paid.

There are two types of Centre fees: the application fee and the tuition deposit.

### *Application fee*

The application fee is \$100, and is collected annually within 3 days of submission of an application form. It does not guarantee placement. This fee applies to new and returning students. This is non-refundable, even if a space does not become available for your child. This fee is subject to change annually.

### *Tuition deposit (updated June 4 2019; Jan. 18 2022)*

Once a child has received successful placement notice, this non-refundable amount is due as noted in the placement letter. This deposit is applied to your last month of tuition in the upcoming Centre year. The tuition deposit is one month's worth of your child's scheduled tuition, and is taken at the current list price. Any applicable government funding related to support grants that are not income dependant will be refunded to you once your child's last month of attendance is complete.

Payments for Centre fees are accepted by the following methods in order of preference:

- e-transfer via Internet banking to 'aspenhillmontessori@gmail.com'
- PayPal
- bank draft / money order / cash

An NSF fee of \$25 + any charges levied by the bank will be charged back to the family if incurred.

From time to time, Centre fees may change. Aspen Hill Montessori reserves the right to issue 30-day written notice to parents of upcoming contract and / or fee amendments on a go-forward basis. Families who do not wish to continue their experience with the institution due to these changes must respond with written notice within the 30-day period.

## Tuition and extended care fees

Revised October 1 2018; June 4 2019; revised Nov. 19 2019; updated Feb. 18 2021 and June 24 2021; expanded Aug. 18 2021; updated Jan. 1 2022; revised Mar. 1 2022

Current tuition and extended care fees are listed on the Centre website at [www.aspenhillmontessori.ca](http://www.aspenhillmontessori.ca) . Depending on your date of enrollment and / or your personal tuition schedule, the amount that you pay may vary from what is listed on our website. Your student's personal tuition amount payable per month is available in the Centre's database system, or inquire through [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) .

Payments for monthly tuition and extended care fees are made by submitting monthly post-dated cheques as directed in your acceptance letter. If a cheque is unable to be cashed successfully, an NSF fee of \$25 plus any bank fees will be charged back to the family. If you are aware there will be a problem with a cheque, please advise as soon as possible via [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) .

Lump-sum (quarterly, bi-annual, or annual) payments are available but not recommended:

- All lump-sum payments made for future tuition, whether for core tuition or for a schedule increase, are non-refundable once paid – even if your child / family withdraws from the program or reduces the child's schedule.
- Lump-sum payments may only be credited or transferred to another learning season, person or student with approval of the AHM Board, and this approval is not guaranteed to be given / is at the full and complete discretion of the Board.

If other payment arrangements are made, they must be confirmed in writing with the Centre with a detailed schedule and information about the expectations on the family to pay.

If monthly tuition fees are not received by the first day of instruction in the current month, the Centre reserves the right to refuse to accept the child for further care until outstanding tuition is paid. The Centre also reserves the right to charge a late fee and / or 18% annual interest and / or banking / financing charges on unpaid fees.

## Affordability Grant

Added Mar. 1 2022

We are excited to be a part of the Provincial Government's efforts to decrease the cost of childcare in Alberta. Based on your child's registered care schedule, you may qualify for a full-time or part-time Affordability Grant provided by the Government of Alberta. Please see <https://www.alberta.ca/federal-provincial-child-care-agreement.aspx> for current rates, qualifying schedules, and more information.



Any amount your child's schedule qualifies for is removed directly from your up-front tuition that you pay. However, the Tuition Deposit will be charged at full list price for your child's level; any grant funding you qualify for will be credited to your account at the Centre after their last contracted month of attendance.

Any Extended Hours payments and / or Meal Program payments are not affected by the Affordability Grant program.

At this time, illness, vacation, absence by choice or preference, etc. does not reduce eligibility for the Affordability Grant. However, this is subject to change.

All funding programs offered are administered by the Government of Alberta, and are subject to change or cancellation at any time without notice. Aspen Hill Montessori does not guarantee availability of funding. By accepting placement in Aspen Hill, you commit to paying the list price for your child's tuition in the event that funding is no longer available.

## Childcare subsidy

Added Mar. 1 2022

Childcare Subsidy is a separate program administered by the Province of Alberta, and is intended to assist lower income families in affording quality childcare. Applying for subsidy is the responsibility of the family, and can be done via <https://www.alberta.ca/child-care-subsidy.aspx>.

If approved for subsidy, a separate mail will arrive from [funding@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:funding@aspenhillmontessori.ca) with details about how subsidy works at our Centres. Generally, any subsidy amount you qualify for is refunded to you approx. 1.5 months after your child's month of attendance via cheque. Please note, the Childcare Subsidy program is attendance-dependant, and less than 100 hours attended will drastically reduce the amount of subsidy you receive.

## Delayed entry / mid-year entry specific to tuition

Added Aug. 18 2021

The Centre does not allow space to be held for delayed entry without tuition fees being paid. (For example if you have registered for Sept. 2022 entry, and choose to delay your child's entry until Oct. 1 or beyond, you must pay for the missed month(s) as if you were attending to retain your child's space.)

If you choose not to pay for the missed months, the Centre considers your child's placement cancelled. In this case you will be notified by e-mail, your placement deposit will be forfeit, and your child's space will be reallocated to a family on waitlist. We will return your child to the waitlist.

You would be welcome to inquire about spaces available to re-apply 30 days prior to your interested month of entry; however, placement mid-year is not guaranteed. You would need to

pay a new deposit for your last month of tuition if space was available mid-year, as it would be considered a new registration.



*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Student Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Code of Conduct

*Reviewed and updated Oct. 1 2018, reviewed Mar. 13 2018; June 4 2019; Nov. 19 2019; updated June 10 2020; expanded July 31 2020; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; reviewed Jan. 18 2022*

By engaging in services and/or employment with Aspen Hill Montessori, all Staff, Parents, Guardians, Children Attendees and representatives of children agree to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct while in or near the Centre property, and in representation of the Centre brand.

By applying to and accepting registration / participation in this Centre, you acknowledge that:

- Courteous, respectful and ethical communication is expected between Parents, Guardians, Staff, Children and / or Teachers at all times
- Appropriate, respectful and ethical responses are expected between Parents, Guardians, Staff, Children and / or Teachers at all times
- Physical punishment and/or aggressive physical interaction on Centre grounds is not permitted by or between Staff, Parents, Children and / or Teachers
- Raised voices / yelling, swearing, cursing, threatening or otherwise aggressive speech, or aggressive acts towards any member of the Centre administration or teaching staff is grounds for immediate termination of your child's placement without refund
- Inappropriate / unprofessional conduct online in any forum, or in visibility of the media, that reflects poorly on the Centre could result in immediate termination of you or your family's association with the Centre without refund or compensation

As a Parent or Guardian, you also agree that your child will be taught about, and be held accountable, for age-appropriate applications of this Code of Conduct, and that you as Parent / Guardian will assist us in working with your child to uphold this Code of Conduct.

The Centre reserves the right to terminate employment of Staff and / or refuse further care or education to any Parent, Guardian, or family members that breeches these terms.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# COVID-19 Policy

*Created March 23 2020; updated May 4 2020; reviewed and updated June 10 2020; updated July 31 2020; updated Dec.1 2020; updated Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; updated July 29 2021; updated Sept. 16 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022*

Our policies are based on our commitment to help families stay well and keep our Centre environment safe from illness. As a vaccine has not yet been developed for children under 5, restrictions to prevent illness in our Centre will remain in effect much longer than for the general public.

## Symptom restriction

It is expected that all families observe your children for any illness as well as complete the Alberta Health Services Daily Health Checklist for your child before coming to care. The most current symptom screening list for children is available at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/covid-19-information-alberta-health-daily-checklist>.

**If any symptoms of illness appear, no matter how minor, DO NOT send your child to Aspen Hill Montessori, or do not attend if staff. Our regular Illness Policy is in effect, refer to this separately.** Please contact the Centre immediately at [absent@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:absent@aspenhillmontessori.ca).

If your child / if a staff member arrives with any of the listed symptoms at the Centre, or any additional symptoms as identified by Alberta Health Services, staff will refuse admittance and send them home with the transportation person that brought them. The Centre also reserves the right to call the parent / guardian back to the Centre for pick up if the symptoms are noticed shortly after drop-off.

**Please keep potentially ill children (cranky, crying unusually, generally 'off') at home until a final determination can be made.**

If your child becomes ill while at care, we will notify you promptly so that arrangements can be made within a 30 minute window to take him/her home. Children will be masked and removed from the classroom to sit with a staff member until pickup.

If we are unable to reach you or you are unable to make plans to arrive within 30 minutes, we reserve the right to call your emergency contact person on your child's records to collect the child from the Centre. (Please make sure that all numbers and information are kept up to date, and that your emergency contact understands we may reach out to them). During this period, your child will be isolated with adult supervision, using social distancing parameters, to ensure the safety of our staff.

We will provide further instructions for when the child can return to care.

## Exposure restriction

If you or your children attending the program have had close contact (face-to-face contact within 2 meters/6 feet) with someone who is ill; OR, if you or anyone in your household been in contact in the last 14 days from the date of your attendance with someone that is being investigated or confirmed to be a case of COVID-19; **DO NOT send your child to care.** Please contact the Centre immediately at [absent@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:absent@aspenhillmontessori.ca).

## Travel restrictions

The Centre follows all current requirements via the Province of Alberta and Alberta Health Services. At present, travel is permitted, but may require additional quarantine. Families **MUST** remain diligent about staying up to date on current travel restrictions, and abide by all enhanced measures. Please refer to [www.alberta.ca/covid19](http://www.alberta.ca/covid19) for more.

## Masking for children

Children under 3 are not required to wear a mask while in care, but are permitted to if parents prefer and / or if they can accomplish mask wearing without excessive face touching / on/off removal of the mask. Children 3 and over are strongly recommended to mask while indoors, and are asked to come to care with 2-3 clean masks each day. Educators will promote and encourage responsible mask use, but will not force children to wear them. Children who arrive without masks will have masks offered to them for wear with parent permission.

Children who present with illness symptoms and are on their way home will be masked until they can be picked up. Children who present with known allergy symptoms that are on file **WILL NOT** be required to mask unless their production is significant.

Children who are returning from illness and have a lingering cough or lingering nose production will **ALSO** be required to mask while at care until they are completely well.

## COVID-19 testing for ill children

If COVID testing is available, you may wish to have your child tested. **Testing is not required to return to care, however, our regular Illness Policy applies and your child must be symptom-free to return.**

If a positive test COVID case confirmed, families are requested to advise the Centre in confidence at [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) so other families can be informed. *We will work with your family on a case-by-case basis on when your child will be able to return to Centre following health protocols in place by the Province.* Affected areas of the Centre may be closed for 72 hours to allow for complete disinfecting of the facility before care can resume.

Please see our regular Illness Policy regarding Administration of Medicine and children with severe allergies or asthma.

## Health protocols

The Centre follows enhanced sanitization procedures, screening procedures, and entry / exit protocols. These may change over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Information on current health protocols will be sent to you via e-mail upon confirmation of attendance, with updates provided via e-mail as required. Your strict and continued adherence to these procedures is required to participate in all Centre programs.

**If a family or staff member is not complying with the requirements as identified by our Centre, the Centre reserves the right to refuse care or work immediately without a refund/payment.**

The Centre will follow and enforce all quarantine, closure and isolation requirements / recommendations made by Alberta Health Services, the Province of Alberta, the Canadian Federal Government, and / or the World Health Organization in managing and preventing the spread of identified pandemic and endemic illnesses that may affect our city. This may include refusing entry to the Centre for children that have been identified or potentially identified as having been exposed to the noted illness, for the time period recommended by these governing organizations.

In the event of a sudden closure without notice, notice will be posted on the Centre doors and added to our voicemail systems.

## Refunds related to COVID-19

Families who are registered for childcare services are aware of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the potential impacts to childcare.

All families who choose services with the Centre forward of March 2020 recognize and agree that in the event that in-person learning services become unavailable related to COVID-19, the Centre will immediately move to on-line / at-home supported learning. Refunds for early learning services and private ECS related to COVID-19 health orders for partial or complete closure will not be provided.

Our standard Centre policies apply for non-COVID related refunds and / or withdrawals. **If a family chooses to keep their child home due to discomfort with the current COVID-19 situation, and if in person services are able to be provided (i.e. the Centre has not been mandated to close for in-person services), the Centre is not obligated to provide at-home learning options or refunds.**

If in-person services are not able to be provided by order of the Province, the Centre will automatically move to at-home and online learning services.

If a child or member of the child's family contracts a confirmed case of COVID-19 through Alberta Health Services testing, and results are shared with the Centre; or The Centre is not permitted to operate for in-person services OR on-line learning by Provincial Order due to COVID-19; we will work with affected families on a solution to ensure that value is received for funds paid on a case-by-case basis.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

## Illness Policy and Pre-Existing Conditions Policy

*Reviewed June 4 2019; updated Nov. 19 2019; reviewed and updated Jan. 15 2020; reviewed and updated Mar. 9 2020; updated May 13 2020; updated July 31 2020; updated Dec. 1 2020; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; reviewed May 31 2021; updated June 24 2021; updated Sept. 16 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022*

Our policies are based on our commitment to help families stay well. When we keep our school environment safe, children can attend and derive the most benefit from care.

Our Centre has a firm 'do not attend' approach for any illness, no matter how minor. This includes:

- unusual crankiness
- aching stomach without clear cause
- productive runny/mucous nose of any colour
- sore throat / complaining of sore throat
- any amount of frequent coughing
- rashes (not including documented eczema)
- vomiting / diarrhea
- pink eye
- sores on the mouth
- fever
- other illness visible but not documented above

**Children who are ill may not return to care until they are 100% symptom-free AND fully able to participate in the program.** We recommend waiting for 24 hours PAST your child's last symptom before sending them back to care, to avoid us having to call home again for early pickup. *If your child has symptoms aligned with COVID-19, we recommend having a test done. Positive COVID results should be shared with the Centre for the health of all children.*

**If your child returns to care and begins showing symptoms again, we will call again to have them picked up.**

If a child presents with any illness symptoms at entry, staff will refuse admittance to your child (or an affected staff member) and send them home with the transportation person that brought them. The Centre also reserves the right to call the parent / guardian back to Centre for pick up if any symptoms are noticed shortly after drop-off.

If your child becomes ill while at Centre we will notify you promptly so that arrangements can be made within a 30 minute window to take him/her home. If we are unable to reach you or you are unable to make plans to arrive within 30 minutes, we reserve the right to call your emergency contact person on your child's records to collect the child from Centre. (Please make sure that all numbers and information are kept up to date, and that your emergency contact understands we



may reach out to them). Children who are waiting for pickup will be isolated with a supervising staff member in an area that is easy to clean upon departure.

Ill staff members must isolate, then report immediately to the Office for replacement coverage to be issued, and depart the premise immediately.

If your child has a bacterial infection and lingering symptoms, you may secure a doctor's note that describes the lingering symptoms, and states that they are well enough to be in care. A child with any continuing presenting symptoms will be required to wear a mask while in care.

An Administrator may permit a slight clear runny nose to re-enter the Centre as long as there are no other presenting symptoms AND a minimum of 24 hours has passed AND the child's nose does not need to be blown more than once per 45-60 minutes. A child with a clear, slight runny nose will be required to wear a mask while in care.

Thanks for your support to keep Aspen Hill Montessori a safe and healthy place to learn.

## Endemic/Pandemic Illness

Added Mar. 9 2020; updated Dec. 1 2020; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022

Please refer to our separate COVID-9 Policy for requirements for students in attendance at our Centre.

The Centre will follow and enforce all quarantine, closure and isolation requirements / recommendations made by Alberta Health Services, the Canadian Federal Government, and / or the World Health Organization in managing and preventing the spread of identified pandemic and endemic illnesses that may affect our city. This may include refusing entry to the Centres for children that have been identified or potentially identified as having been exposed to the noted illness, for the time period recommended by these governing organizations.

In the event of a sudden closure without notice, notice will be posted on the Centre doors and added to our voicemail systems.

## Pre-existing conditions

Updated May 13 2020; updated June 10 2020; updated June 24 2021

If your child or a staff member has a pre-existing condition such as autism, epilepsy, febrile seizures; and/or seasonal allergies, asthma and/or other non-bacterial/viral presentation that could be mistaken for bacterial/viral, you will be required to complete a set of medical forms specific to the needs of Alberta Childcare Licensing before your child's first day of program.

For serious conditions, a note from a medical doctor that is current dated must also be presented a minimum of 1 week BEFORE first day of attendance with the causing factors, symptoms, emergency plan, and expected outcomes.

This note must contain at minimum:

- Detailed description of symptoms
- Diagnosis and treatment in a non-emergency situation
- Diagnosis and approach in an emergency situation
- Medication provided to relieve or treat casual symptoms (inhaler, etc.)

Please ask the Centre for an Emergency Plan template to support you in getting an adequate doctor's note.

For children or staff whose pre-existing conditions require at-Centre medication (EpiPen, ventilator, seizure rescue, etc.), dedicated Centre medication must be checked in via senior staff at the Centre prior to the first day of attendance. It must be clearly labelled in original packaging from the prescribing pharmacy with the student's prescription and name. These will be stored out of reach of students, but within quick access if needed. Parents or submitting staff will need to complete a Medication Authorization Form for our files.

Parents or submitting staff remain responsible for replacing medication on-site before expiry dates.

The Centre reserves the right to refuse entry for care to children with pre-existing conditions who require on-site medication, if that on-site medication is not provided by parents and / or is expired.

## Administration of medicine

The Centre does not administer over the counter medication (Tylenol, Claritin, etc.) to children or staff in attendance. If your child or a staff member is not well, they should remain at home.

(Nov. 2019) If your child or if a staff member has been cleared from a bacterial infection by a medical doctor, and requires the remaining doses of an antibiotic to be administered at Centre, this will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Antibiotics will need to arrive in prescribed containers with dosing instructions, and parents or staff will be required to complete a Medicine Administration Form to leave with the Centre. All medications will be stored in a secure location.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Student Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

## Outdoor Clothing Policy / Kit List

*Updated Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; reviewed Jan. 18 2022*

Our program is an outdoor-focused program, in all kinds of weather. Children may be outside for a minimum of 20 minutes to upwards of 1 hour at a time, depending on the conditions and the activities. As such, **it is critical that all children arrive with the outdoor gear needed for each day at all times.**

*Please avoid clothing that is intended for style (i.e. Gap, Children's Place, Gymboree, Tommy Hilfiger, etc.). Big pom-poms on hats, character-based rain boots that leak, and a glittery coat that is hard for a child to zip may be in style, but don't work for childcare.*

Good shops (online or in person) to purchase true outdoor clothing from include:

- Mountain Warehouse (online and in-store)
- Mountain Equipment Co-Op
- Atmosphere
- Camper's Village
- Great Outdoors Junior Outfitters (Calgary store)
- Patagonia
- Sport Chek

All outdoor clothing must be clearly labelled with a family identifier / clothing label to prevent mixed up items.

Please look ahead to the forecast and make sure that your child has more than is needed to keep them warm, dry and happy at care. If you would like ideas or suggestions on how to acquire outdoor clothing on a budget, please let us know via [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca).



## Fall gear

### REQUIRED:

- Extra change of uniform, especially pants, socks and underwear!
- Sturdy, easy to put on outdoor runners or hikers that elastic/stretch laces / Velcro on (NO SHOELACES PLEASE for speed getting outside!)
  - o Please make sure your child can get them on and off themselves easily.



- Waterproof rain boots or snow boots (NOT Bogs or Uggs please) – true rubber ‘wellies’ or SOREL-brand style winter boots
  - o Wear these or your outdoor runners to and from care EVERY DAY depending on the weather. If it is even slightly wet from the night before, or looking chilly, wear boots!





- Water proof rain coat (lined or unlined) – best slightly big so a polar fleece jacket can fit underneath



- Water-resistant soft-shell or polar fleece coat



- Waterproof rain pants (rubberized, elastic cuffs and waistband, loose enough to get on easily over uniform – can be lined or unlined)
  - o NO 'all in one' rain suits please, even for Nido children



OPTIONAL BUT RECOMMENDED:

- Waterproof mitts (check H&M online, Mountain Warehouse, NationalSports.com, etc.)



- Lightweight knit toque / beanie





## Winter gear

### REQUIRED:

- Warm socks, one pair in the outdoor clothes bag in case of wet feet



- SOREL style winter boots rated to at least -30 degrees C; - 40 is better
  - o NO 'Bog' brand boots please – they don't keep out the wet OR the cold well for little feet.
  - o WalMart winter boots can work, as long as they have a degree rating for the cold



- Pull on or bib snow pants – a bit of extra room is best for easy on and off
  - o NO 'onesie' / 'all in one' jumpsuit-style snowsuits please, even for Nido and Bambini children



- Warm snow coat with a simple hood – go for one with an easy-to handle zipper for better independence and learning, even for Nido and Bambini children!
  - Avoid fur on the hood, they freeze up around faces
  - Look for a weather rating on the coat – should be at least -20 degrees
  - Look for water and wind resistant





- Polar fleece coat that fits under the winter coat as a layer



- Waterproof snow mitts
  - o **Please have 2-3 pairs at home in case of a lost mitt, wet mitts, or dirty mitts.**
  - o NO gloves, 'stretch mini mitts', knit mitts, or inexpensive character / cartoon brand mitts
  - o Look for a degree rating on the mitts – this is one place to spend money to ensure warm hands.
  - o Ski mitts are ideal.



- Heavier toque / beanie
  - o Aim for something lined, such as a wool toque lined with polar fleece



- Neck toque
  - Polar fleece or a ski tube are best – Canada Olympic Park shop sells many of them all year-round!
  - NO SCARVES! These present a choking hazard and are hard for children to put on themselves.



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## Refunds and Withdrawals Policy

*Reviewed and updated Sept. 1 2018; June 4 2019; updated Nov. 19 2019; revised Mar. 9 2020; reviewed and updated June 10 2020; confirmed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022*

All families committing to Aspen Hill Montessori are provided with this policy in advance of paying any tuition fees.

### Non-Refundable Fees (updated June 10 2020; updated Jan. 18 2022)

The application fee and commitment / tuition deposit are **NON-REFUNDABLE** once paid, even if a family withdraws from the Centre prior to starting care. If the contract learning year of care is completed for the child, the commitment deposit paid on acceptance is applied in full to the last month of care in the contract.

*The exception is related to any Provincial / Federal funding non-related to income. As long as your child attends their final month of care, any government funding that applies to your child that is non-income related will be returned to you post-month-of-attendance. However, if your child does not attend their final month of care, for whatever reason, your entire tuition deposit remains forfeit and no government funding will be granted.*

### Parent-Initiated Withdrawal (revised Nov. 19 2019; revised Mar. 9 2020; update June 10 2020)

If a child is withdrawn from Aspen Hill Montessori prior to January 1st of the current learning year, 30 days written notice via e-mail to [office@asepenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@asepenhillmontessori.ca) is required. Notice must include the child's last day with the Centre. Responsibility for fees remains with the family until such notice is received. If less than 30 days' notice is given, the family remains responsible to pay the following month's care fees. Monthly care fees that have already been deposited / paid are non-refundable if a child withdraws partway through a month of study.

If notice to withdraw is made on or after January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current learning year, the withdrawing family remains responsible for the remainder of the care fees due until the end of the Centre year unless the space can be sold to another incoming family.

No portion of fees paid will be refunded in the event of a child's temporary absence due to reportable illnesses, viral / bacterial illness, vacation, or personal leave.

Once formal notice of withdrawal is given, the child is required to depart on or prior to their noted date of departure. The Centre is not obligated to accommodate the child after this time. Any and all Centre materials in possession of the family must be returned prior to leaving, or the departing family will be charged at current market value for the materials.

We are unable to provide for government subsidies or funding refunds after the date of departure.



## Unforeseen Permanent Medical Withdrawal (created June 10 2020; updated June 24 2021)

Please see the separate COVID-19 Policy for circumstances related to COVID-19.

If your child develops a medical condition that prohibits them from permanently attending care in any setting (for example, severe seizures, cancer, etc.), the Centre will work with families at that time to develop an at-home learning plan where possible and / or other accommodations in light of the unique circumstances. Supporting doctor's notes and recommendations will be expected.

## Centre-Initiated Withdrawal (added Nov. 1 2018; reviewed Nov. 19 2019, updated Feb. 18 2021)

Ongoing evaluation of child progress and the family's support of and integration within the Montessori environment is made by the teaching and administration staff of the Centre. Children are provided a 2 week 'settling in' period before observations began.

During their time with the Centre, issues may be noted with the child's progress, ability to settle in the environment, or with achieving developmental targets that allow them to operate safely within the environment without causing harm to self or others. In these cases, the teaching team will progress to the following, depending on the severity of the situation:

- Working directly with the child on alternative approaches
- Send an e-mail home to the parents
- Discuss the situation with the parents at the door, as well as through one or more ZOOM meetings
- Send the child home for the day to the parent's care
- Shift the child between classrooms or programming areas / schedules within the Centre, with parent awareness
- Review issues during parent-teacher interviews and develop an action plan
- Send a letter home with the child
- Make in-Centre appointments to sit and review the concerns with the family
- If possible, connecting the family to external support resources such as PUF funding or offering the family the chance to have their child attend with a private-paid aide

In some cases, there may be issues with adherence to Centre policies or with the family's integration into Centre life (i.e. regularly not wearing uniform, non-payment of fees, speeding in parking lot, etc.). In these cases, the administrative staff will use any and all of the following to address the concerns:

- Sending an e-mail home to the parents
- Discussing with adults at pick-up
- Scheduling a ZOOM meeting with the family

- Sending the child home for the day to the parent's care
- Sending a letter home with the child
- Make outside-of-Centre appointments to sit and review issues with the family

In some instances, it may be decided that:

- The Centre is not the ideal fit to ensure the safety and / or the best educational future and / or healthy development of the whole child
- The family approach is not congruent with the approach of the Centre

Situations which are grounds for immediate termination at the discretion of the Centre include:

- The child is causing repeated harm to self or harm to others, that cannot be supported or corrected within a reasonable amount of time by staff (i.e. running away from staff while outside; attempting repeatedly to leave the premises; hitting their head on the floor or equipment in a repetitive manner; involuntary breath holding; striking out at others; biting; inability to communicate with staff verbally or non-verbally; refusal to drink and / or eat while in care)
- The family directly violates policies of the Centre intentionally and without reasonable action to correct
- A child is performing ongoing and documented / witnessed conscious actions that violate the Code of Conduct of the Centre (hitting, swearing, bullying)

In these cases, the Centre will issue notice of termination of provision of services via e-mail or mailed / hand delivered letter to the family. Refunds of partial and / or remaining fees for the year are not guaranteed; administration reviews each case independently and refunds or credits at the Centre's discretion. Children who have been terminated from services by the Centre are removed effective the date indicated in the communication. All Centre materials must be returned within 10 days of the effective date of removal to the Centre or the family will be charged current market value for the items. The Centre will return all materials belonging to the family / student within 10 days for pickup outside of the front doors of the campus the child attended.

## Refunds and Withdrawals Specific to Natural Disaster / War /

Pandemic Illness (added Mar. 9 2020; updated June 10 2020)

Please see our separate policy regarding Unforeseen Large-Scale Events

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

## Schedule Change Policy

*Added Dec. 10 2019; updated Jan. 15 2020; updated June 10 2020; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022*

During the learning year, a family may request to increase or decrease their child's schedule, or the Centre may recommend a schedule change for the benefit of the child. All schedule changes are subject to the policies below, as well as to availability of desired space within the Centre.

All changes to schedule request must be made before Dec. 1 or after Feb. 1 of the current Centre year. No schedule changes are permitted between Dec. 2 and Feb. 2 each year due to pre-registration. Changes (increases and decreases) made after Feb. 1 are subject to the following year's fee schedule and policies; decreases may be denied at the discretion of the Centre unless the open space can be filled.

*For information on withdrawals, please see the Refunds and Withdrawals Policy.*

### Decreasing your child's schedule

All requests to decrease your child's schedule (reduce the days they attend) require 30 days' notice, and will be charged a \$125 change fee for each request. For example, a schedule request made on November 5<sup>th</sup> will take effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>. The family remains responsible for the current fees until the month where the change takes effect.

The family will be expected to e-transfer the new amount for the first month of the change, as well as provide revised post-dated cheques for the new payment on or before the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month following the change taking effect. All old cheques will be returned to the family.

When you decrease your child's schedule, the decrease is permanent, and the Centre will fill your child's vacated placements. If you wish to increase your child's schedule in the future, you will need to request an increase and see if spaces are available. The Centre does not 'hold' spaces for the future.

Commitment deposits are non-refundable in portion or in whole. If a family decreases schedule, they do not receive a portion of their original commitment deposit back.

Regardless of the amount of deposit initially paid, your child is not able to 'revert' back to their previous schedule in June.

- For example: a child attends full time, five days a week, and pays this level of deposit. The family then decreases the schedule to four days a week in January. The family cannot move their child back to 5 days a week in June, regardless of the deposit initially paid, as the placement will be sold.

The Centre reserves the right to decline any requests for schedule decreases after Jan. 1 each year.

## Increasing your child's schedule

All requests to increase your child's schedule (add days) require 15 days' notice and can happen mid-month if space is available. There is no change fee charged for adding schedule. For example, a schedule request made on November 5<sup>th</sup> can take effect as early as Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>, assuming that there is space available in the Centre.

The family will be expected to e-transfer the additional amount for the first month of the change (pro-rated if a partial month), as well as for the difference in deposit, before the new schedule begins. You will also be expected to provide revised post-dated cheques for the difference in the new payment on or before the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month following the change taking effect.

When you increase your child's schedule, the increase is permanent until the end of the Centre year. If you wish to decrease your child's schedule in the future, you will need to follow the separate process in this policy.

Commitment deposits increase with the schedule increase. Regardless of the amount of deposit initially paid, your child is not able to 'revert' back to their previous schedule in June.

- For example: a child attends full time, three days a week, and pays this level of deposit. The family then increases the schedule to five days a week in January. The family cannot move their child back to 3 days a week in June, regardless of the deposit initially paid.

## Centre-initiated schedule changes

From time to time, the Centre will recommend an increase or decrease in schedule for a child. In these cases, no change fees are charged, and individual timelines for fee submission may be established by working with the family. deposit increases / new cheques may be required as per the individual situation. The family agrees to abide by the timelines set out by Centre management in these opportunities.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Child Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Uniform and Indoor Shoes Policy

*Reviewed and updated Nov. 14 2018; June 4 2019; reviewed Nov. 19 2019; updated June 10 2020; updated July 31 2020; modified Feb. 18 2021; reviewed June 24 2021; updated Jan. 4 2022*

## Uniform

Our Centre maintains a formal navy, white and tartan uniform throughout the year. Uniforms help reduce distraction and provide for a professional learning environment. All families are expected to comply with this uniform policy every day of care, unless there is a specified casual day identified on the Centre calendar. Uniforms must be reasonably clean, pressed and presentable every day, without holes or tears. **All clothing items must be labelled to prevent loss of items.** The Centre is not responsible to find or replace lost uniform items.

All indoor clothing pieces must be purchased from our designated supplier, Elegant Design, unless otherwise indicated in the Uniform Package. Please order early before your child's first day of attendance to ensure your pieces will be ready. E-mail and phone-based ordering is available. Personal shopping appointments for sizing can be set through:

Elegant Design + Clothing  
Manufacturing Inc  
Bay 11 – 1420 40 Ave NE  
Calgary, AB T2E 6L1  
Phone: 403.250.8747  
Fax: 403.291.9268  
E-mail: [info@elegantinc.ca](mailto:info@elegantinc.ca)

Recommended combination for girls is:

- Navy / plaid skort, navy leggings, or navy pants with a white or navy logoed polo top and logoed polar fleece jacket or vest
- From Apr. 15 – Oct. 1, weather dependant, navy dress shorts are allowed

Recommended combination for boys is:

- Navy pants with a white or navy logoed polo and logoed polar fleece jacket or vest
- From Apr. 15 – Oct. 1, weather dependant, navy dress shorts are allowed





Uniform costs are paid for directly by the family and are not included in Centre fees or tuition fees. A typical new family's uniform cost is between \$300 - \$450 per child.

Families are expected to have a complete set of extra uniform available in the child's at-Centre storage in case of toileting accidents.

If your child is chilly in the classroom during winter, please choose long-sleeve polo shirts, as well as adding a Centre polar fleece or sweater as the top layer.

**If you are having difficulty accessing uniform pieces due to financial hardship, please let us know for used uniform options.**

## Indoor shoes

Families must have sturdy solid black indoor uniform shoes or black runners that can be polished. StrideRite and similar brands are recommended. Please ensure that your child can put them on with minimal assistance – Velcro is recommended. No decorated dress shoes, coloured running shoes, sandals, or character shoes, please.



Children without proper indoor shoes beyond a first warning may be refused care or admittance to class.

## Backpacks and lunch kits

All children must have one SMALL backpack and a self-contained, zippered lunch kit to bring to the Centre each day with a change of clothes, including underwear and socks. As per Montessori guidelines, only plain backpacks and lunch kits are permitted. No licensed cartoon characters or TV/branded logos. Ensure that the pack you choose is an appropriate size for your child. LL Bean, Indigo, Children's Place, and other specialty children's stores have appropriate backpacks and lunch kits.



A zippered lunch bag is also required, as well as a spill-proof child-friendly water bottle. Please do not send multiple Tupperware containers / Ziplocks / self-sealing containers without a zippered lunch bag to contain them. Please avoid Bento boxes / YumBoxes unless you have worked with your child on how to open / close these themselves.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Families Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

*Supporting Policies*

## Birthdays and celebrations policy

*Updated May 1 2019; reviewed June 4 2019; updated Nov. 19 2019; reviewed June 10 2020; updated Dec. 1 2020; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated May 26 2021; updated June 24 2021; updated Nov. 1 2021; reviewed Jan. 18 2022*

We look forward to celebrating your child's birthday! Please email the Centre at [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) two weeks prior to your child's birthday.

To support the Montessori style of celebrating birthdays, please bring a poster board (24" x 36") with 1 to 3 photos pasted on of your child from **each** year of their life, including the current year. We recommend grouping the photos by year of age. You can decorate the poster as much as you like to express your child's personality and preferences, see some examples below for ideas. You can also search 'Montessori birthday poster' in a web search engine for other ideas.



Montessori birthday celebrations focus around a ceremony called a 'Earth Goes Round the Sun'. The children sing a special song, and the celebrated child walks one year around a symbolic sun for each year of life. On each circulation, the child and teacher shares memories from that year of life, assisted by the picture board and the parent. We find that this is a wonderful way to recognize the journey of the child as a person and their accomplishments to date.

At this time, we cannot host parents for the celebration or distribute items or food brought from outside of the program due to COVID-19, thank you for understanding.



In order to avoid the 'tourist trap' approach to multiculturalism, we do not celebrate any cultural holidays or holy days (for example, Christmas, Halloween, Ramadan, Hanukkah, Diwali, etc.). However, we do discuss and explore celebrations of the seasons, as well as learning about important cultural celebrations as we explore continents around the world. If you would like to share your family's culture, please speak with your child's teacher. We would love to work with you to include every-day ways to showcase and share language, imagery, cultural dress and celebrations in our teachings to help your child embrace their culture.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*



# Child Guidance Policy

Revised and separated July 21 2021; reviewed Jan. 18 2022

Our Centre uses a child guidance strategy of teaching children how to manage their own Behavior through the tenants of Montessori philosophy. In the best interest of the children, we help develop the ability to express their wants and needs appropriately by giving them a variety of tools (what words to use, appropriate ways to express emotion through role play and modelling, substitution). The children then learn to express their emotions and solve problems by making appropriate choices. For children who are non-verbal, primary tools used are adult-to-child modelling and speaking 'on behalf' to create appropriate scenarios, accompanied by redirection to another activity or removal of the offending material causing the challenge.

There are a number of steps taken before children are in our environment that provide the best possible outcomes for a calm, nurturing environment based on the Montessori core principles:

- setting clear and understandable rules from the beginning of the learning season, summer or fall entry
- preparing an environment that looks inviting, is safe and welcoming
- creating a curriculum path based on child interests
- providing material that is safe and age appropriate to use and develop the child's interests
- creating an environment where expectations are expressed but feelings are allowed

Our key strategies to use in the classroom are:

1. Lead by example: We encourage children to follow guidance, and lead by example with teachers following the same rules.
2. Minimize the need: We regularly review our environments and classrooms to ensure that they are child-friendly, to minimize having to stop a child from acting.
3. Redirect: Taking a child away from a temptation to get involved with something else is sometimes all that's needed. ("Let's go look at the fish in the big tank")
4. Use words that call attention to the problem: "You are hurting your friend" or "Ouch! That hurts!" gives more concrete information than saying no, while still getting across the message that what they are doing is not OK. We reinforce the consequences of actions, and emphasize that when we care for others, we are caring for our environment as well.
5. Give positive alternatives: We tell the child what we would like them to do instead of the forbidden action. This positive instruction lets them know how to behave in a way that gains approval. Words like: "We walk in the classroom." "We sit on chairs." "Use two hands to carry your work."

# Communication, Calendars and Schedules Policy

*Reviewed and updated Aug. 1 2018; June 4 2019; Aug. 7 2019; Nov. 19 2019; reviewed June 10 2020; updated July 31 2020; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022*

It is very important that all families are kept aware of our Centre activities. The following communication vehicles are used to ensure families are informed:

- Centre calendar distributed via e-mail at the start of the year, and periodically by e-mail
- E-mail communications, sent through Constant Contact
- Re-posting important documents on the Centre's website under the Current Families section at [www.aspenhillmontessori.ca](http://www.aspenhillmontessori.ca) (e-mail [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) for password)

We want communication to be two-way between the Centre and our families. Please feel free to contact the Centre through e-mail at [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) or phone: 403-246-2794 (West Springs / Christie Crossing) or 403-607-1880 (Strathcona) with any concerns or information about your child.

The Centre does not take responsibility for parents' misunderstanding or lack of awareness of Centre schedules. It is up to the families to ensure they are aware of their child's upcoming Centre activities, PD days, and vacation periods. The Centre is not responsible to provide care for children that arrive at Centre at identified non-care / professional development days. If you need support on non-care days, the Centre may provide some access to pre-registered Extended Care days. See the separate policy on Extended Care for details.

All families are expected to read and adhere to the Centre calendar, sent at the start of the year with regular updates and reminders provided by e-mail.

Parents can subscribe to our e-mail newsletter by e-mailing [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) .

The Centre may take planned or spontaneous walking field trips to nearby locations. We will notify you a minimum of 2 business days in advance of any field trips that require hired transportation with proper consent and information forms.

From time to time, the Centre may invite in guest speakers. These guests will always be supervised when with the children, and will be from qualified providers of educational programs for children (Petland, Usborne Books, etc.) You will receive advance notice of guest speakers where possible.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Child Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Community Consultation Policy

*Added Nov. 27 2019; updated June 10 2020; revised Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; reviewed Jan. 18 2022*

Aspen Hill Montessori operates an Advisory Board that consists of the Administration Team of the Centre (at least three senior staff members), as well as at least two non-senior staff members and three members of our community (accountant, safety advisor, etc.). Two parent members (parents of current or past students) will be involved for certain areas of consultation.

Staff members are invited to participate based on performance within the Centre and demonstrated interest in seeing the best interests of the Centre put forward at all times.

Parents of current students are invited based on their history with the Centre. If a parent is on the Advisory Board and their child leaves the Centre for whatever reason, the parent's participation on the Board is normally terminated immediately unless special exception is provided.

Community members are invited based on their integration into the Centre community, and their level of participation in making our Centre an effective place to learn and work. The management team of the Centre regularly looks for opportunities to involve more members of the wider West Springs / Aspen communities with the Centre, to ensure an evolving engagement with organizations that affect and influence our families.

Invitations to participate are normally issued by e-mail. The term of any one staff or parent member is for a maximum of two regular consecutive Centre seasons. The term of community members and the Administration Team is ongoing.

The schedule of meetings the Board participates in is:

- One meeting in June to review the Centre year just passed, and the Centre year upcoming
- One meeting in late January / early February to share thoughts on the current Centre year, as well as the summer program to be launched

Members of the Board are also invited to participate in Open Houses and Parent Information Nights as applicable, and may be asked to participate in voting decisions on significant items that affect the Centre.

*This policy is provided for information only; acknowledgment is not required to become a student at the Centre.*



6. Give simple explanations: (“Hitting the toy might break it”; “That’s Miss Suzie’s—not for students”) helps them understand the consequence of their action. We can use a caution word, like danger, to establish reason why: “Play over here, Calder. The step is dangerous.”
7. Have a warning signal: Teachers may let a child know that they’re on the wrong track with an alert sound: “Ah, ah, ah!” Then they follow immediately with instructions: “Move away from the CD shelf, or it could fall and hurt you.” We focus on the consequences of actions to help the child understand the outcome to build their logic patterns.
8. Ask for the rule: When students are breaking a rule they’ve learned, a teacher might ask them: “Where do we throw balls?” or “Can you show me how we use walking feet?” This helps reinforce that they know the rule, and gives them a chance to correct themselves.

Teacher voices are kept modulated and positive, yelling and / or using the word ‘no’ is not leveraged in our classrooms.

If a resolution cannot be developed by the child taking ownership for the challenge, the child is redirected to other areas in the class where they can be successful. If the issue involves another child, we ensure that both children have the venue to express their concerns and apologize mutually to each other. Methods like space by yourself, redirection, and discussion are used; punitive punishment such as time-outs and any physical admonishment are not used in Montessori education. We do have a Peace Table available for older children to sit and relax or reflect. This is a standard Montessori practice.

If a child is experiencing ongoing behavior issues in the class, the active teacher consults with the Floor Manager as well as the Curriculum Manager and / or Administrative team. If needed, the team reaches out to parents to brainstorm potential causes, and team together on solutions that can be implemented at home and at care. If a child is experiencing ongoing behavior issues in the class, the teacher will schedule an appointment with the parents to discuss solutions. If parental support is not gained, and a child’s behavior is causing harm to self or harm to others, the Centre reserves the right to take additional steps with appropriate notice / opportunity to the family to take action; up to and including removal from the Centre. Please refer to our Refund and Withdrawal Policy.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Custody, Parental Access and Parental Rights Policy

*Created Oct. 23 2019; updated June 10 2020; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022*

All information provided to the Centre regarding custody, parental access and judicial decisions are confidential and private to Centre administration and the family involved. Requests for the Centre to provide information to support a custody or access case is considered on a case-by-case basis, and is at the option of the Centre.

## Parental rights

It is very important that all legal guardians of a child registered in our Centre have the right and the information in order to participate fully in their child's Centre experience if they choose.

As such, we require **all** legal guardians' contact information (full name, e-mail address, phone number, and mailing address) to appear on all registration / intake forms in our online system ( <https://aspenhillmontessori.zohocreatorportal.com>) (most importantly, the user registration form, parent contact form, medical and emergency contact form).

If one of the legal guardians mentioned do not wish to be contacted about Centre items, potentially up to and including emergency situations, they must submit a signed letter (physical or via e-mail) to the Centre indicating what they are willing to be contacted for, and / or that they waive their rights to be involved (as they select) in the current scholastic year. This letter can be repealed at any time at the parent's discretion and must be updated yearly. Having this letter in the child's file releases the Centre from being obligated to involve or contact that particular parent.

If no letter exists, the Centre reserves the right to contact both or either legal guardian regarding information about their child, and to release information about the child's progress and activities at the Centre to all guardians as requested.

If there is only one legal guardian for the child, the Centre reserves the right to request written confirmation via e-mail to stay on-file with the child.

## Custody information

It is important that the Centre is aware of any separation or divorce situation that affects the living arrangements of the registered child. This is important insofar as it affects the primary parent from week to week and / or pickups from Centre, and who the Centre is allowed to release the child to. It is also important as it may relate to statements or behaviours that the child may make while in Centre.

If you have a custody agreement involving your child, a digital or physical copy of this agreement is required to be on-file with the Centre at the time of registration.

If the agreement changes during the child's tenure, it is the obligation of one or both parents to provide the Centre with a new copy. If a new copy is not provided, the Centre reserves the right to maintain the custody information from the existing document for pickup authorizations and contact authorizations.

All custody agreements are confidential. No judgements about your situation / the child's situation are made at any time.

## **Parental access**

Unless a custody agreement is on file with the Centre, the Centre is permitted to release the child to either of the listed parents / legal guardians on the registration forms without further confirmation.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Child Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Emergency Policies

*Reviewed and updated Nov. 15 2018; June 4 2019; expanded Sept. 10, 2019; reviewed June 10 2020; updated Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022*

## Portable records

Updated Nov. 19 2019; updated June 24 2021

In order to meet with licensing requirements, Portable Emergency Information Records for each child are maintained for each child at the Centre. These emergency records are easily accessible to the staff in case of an emergency. These records specific to each classroom are taken off the Centre premises on nature walks, during fire drills, during outdoor gym classes and in the event of an emergency evacuation. It is very important to keep us informed of any change in your child's information as they occur by notifying [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) .

## Snow / extreme cold or heat days

Reviewed Sept. 15 2018; expanded Sept. 2019; updated June 24 2021

There are days when weather makes travel difficult or attendance unsafe. The Centre follows the recommendations of Environment Canada, Alberta Childcare Services, and Alberta Health Services when we make decisions that affect our Centre community. On these days of extreme or severe weather, classes may not be held or care may be ended early at the Centre's discretion. Please watch your e-mail for official notice of closures and early end days.

Refunds are not provided for occasional days (1-2 times per year) when the Centre is closed due to weather. While the Centre attempts to provide reasonable notice (24-48 hours) prior to closure, sudden changes in temperature or weather conditions can lead to less-than-ideal notification windows. The Centre reserves the right to make these closures in extreme situations as needed to protect our vulnerable population, and for the safety of the entire Centre community.

In the case of severe snow/ice or other emergencies, a same-day early closing may become necessary. If this should become necessary, parents will be informed and asked to pick up their child(ren) early.

## Security procedures

Updated Nov. 19 2019, reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021

Your child's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times, both on and off the Centre

premises. Every attempt is made by enforcing our security procedures and the exit/entrance procedure to ensure the security of the children is maintained at all times.

An intruder can present an emergency situation in any Centre setting. The Staff at AHM is trained to approach all unidentified or unauthorized persons as intruders.

In order to prevent instances of unwelcomed intruders, we facilitate and are strict with our locked door policies and our parent identification requests. If we occupy a shared facility and exterior doors cannot be locked, the interior program doors to our programming rooms will be locked to outside entry.

*Please see instructions specific to your campus regarding early pickups and how to arrange in advance.*

You must populate your 'approved pick up' people at the start of the Centre year on our online application system, and validate it each year. Approved pickup people still must show ID at pickup if they are not known to Centre staff. We highly recommend advising staff at drop-off if someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, to avoid end of day confusion. Please advise your person picking up that they may be asked to provide ID. If teachers are unsure of the pickup arrangements, we will phone and confirm with a parent before releasing the child. We appreciate your patience as we work to keep your child safe.

## Emergency Plans

Added July 2nd, 2015; updated Sept. 5 2018; reviewed Nov. 19 2019 and Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021

We follow these steps in any emergency:

1. Assess the seriousness of the situation.
2. If required, call 911 and secure everyone's safety.
3. Give assistance to victims.
4. Follow appropriate procedures as per First Aid Training and CPR.
5. Notify families of children/staff involved. This shall be done by the Director, or person designated.
6. Reassure the children.
7. As soon as possible, fill out a report and notify Alberta Childcare Licensing

All staff are trained in CPR and First Aid, which are administered by staff members when necessary. The staff will treat minor injuries and the child will remain at Centre or a parent may be called at this time. The injury will be reported to the parent when they pick up their child. At the discretion of the staff dealing with the emergency, 911 will be called. Every injury and the treatment are recorded on an Occurrence Form; for serious incidents on a Licensing Incident Form. The staff will give a copy of the report to the parent. Major injuries requiring medical treatment or hospitalization are also reported to Alberta Childcare Licensing.

## Emergency Evacuation

Revised July 2nd, 2015, reviewed Sept. 5 2018; reviewed Nov. 19 2019; updated Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021

Please refer to the separate Evacuation Policy.

## Missing child

Updated Nov. 19 2019, reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021

If a child cannot be located within 10 minutes and after a detailed search inside and outside of the facility, we call 911 immediately. We provide the following information:

- Child's name and age
- Address
- Physical and clothing description of child, including any distinguishing marks, such as visible birth marks or scars
- Medical status if necessary
- Time and location the child was last seen
- Person with whom the child was last seen

A search party is organized immediately to rule out the possibility of the child hiding nearby. Children will shelter in place with instructors until the child is found.

## Uncollected children

Reviewed and revised Nov. 1 2018; updated Nov. 19 2019; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021

If a parent or caregiver fails to collect a child, the following procedure will be followed:

- Telephone the parent or caregiver
- If they are unable to be reached, we will then call one or both of the emergency contacts on the child's online application form.
- We will keep trying until someone is reached and the situation is resolved.
- In the event that a parent or an emergency contact cannot be reached within a 30 minute period past the closing of the Centre, we will call Calgary Police.

## Reporting child abuse

Updated Nov. 19 2019; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021

We are required by law to report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect to Alberta Childcare Licensing Intake Line. The teachers do not to investigate or determine whether or not child abuse has occurred.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*



Aspen Hill  
Montessori

## Evacuation Policy

*Added June 24 2021; reviewed Jan. 18 2022*

To be prepared for potential evacuation at any time, all children in the Centre are required to wear indoor shoes at ALL TIMES. Indoor shoes should be sturdy and close securely, with solid treads on the bottom. We strongly recommend that children wear uniform options appropriate for the season (for example, tights or leggings under dresses / skorts in winter instead of knee socks; a sweater or cardigan in winter not just a short sleeve shirt.)

We are required by Alberta Childcare Licensing as well as the Calgary Fire Department to practice unannounced fire drills once a month. There is a fire evacuation plan and a fire extinguisher placement floor plan posted throughout each Centre. All staff have been provided with the employee handbook that has the outline for emergency evacuations. The staff conduct a fire drill review monthly to ensure all staff are comfortable with the procedure in the case that a real fire should occur. At monthly meetings the staff go over the previous fire drill and record notes in the monthly meeting minutes. Evacuation routes are posted in each room to ensure clarity for all persons working at the time.

In a drill situation, we will mimic the fire bell, and have all children exit through the main doors of the Centre buildings. We gather immediately outside to be counted / do attendance in our cohorts. We then return inside as quickly as possible to minimize exposure of children to the weather, as they will not have their coats on (to simulate a real emergency). While we attempt to select days that have better weather, we also are required to prepare children and staff for a potential evacuation in less than ideal conditions.

We also practice 'shelter in place' scenarios, to prepare for the emergency of a potential intruder, natural occurrence such as a tornado, or wild animal on the property. *Thank you for your support and understanding around these important practices.*

The children will evacuate the Centre immediately if the fire alarms sound regardless of the situation.

If the Centre is deemed safe, we will return to regular classes. Parents/guardians will then be notified at pick up time.

In the event of a true emergency that requires us to leave the immediate building, staff gather their class calmly and exit using the signed exit door closest to their location. Teachers are instructed to take the class Emergency Backpack, which will contain emergency contact information for children in the class and rescue medications for children requiring them. If possible, teachers will 'sweep' coats to be put on outside once the class is a safe distance from the building at the muster point.



Aspen Hill  
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### WEST SPRINGS CAMPUS

Cohorts proceed to the Muster Point on the grass at the far south-east corner of the parking lot, next to the Truman fence and adjacent to the Mosque fence. Cohorts will stay on the grass when possible.

Teachers take attendance for their class and help children put on coats. Administrators will evaluate the situation working with first responders as appropriate.

If re-entry to the building is not possible and / or weather is cold, cohorts will proceed to St. Michael's Church on 85<sup>th</sup> St. SW depending on the situation. Our evacuation location will be indicated on the front doors of the Centre if we must leave to another location.

### STRATHCONA CAMPUS

Strathcona Campus children are either taken to the exterior campus at 7102 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW or into First Lutheran Church at the same property, depending on where the issue presents. Barring this, children are taken to the Korean Church across 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW.

### CHRISTIE CROSSING CAMPUS

Procedures will be established once we have access to this site.

Administrators will call parents for early pickup. The situation will be discussed and where the children can be picked up from. In the event that parents/ guardians cannot be reached, the emergency contacts will be notified.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*



## Extended Care Policy

*Added April 13 2015, revised July 22 2015, revised September 1 2018, reviewed and updated May 8 2019; reviewed June 4 2019; updated Nov. 19 2019; reviewed June 10 2020; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022*

### Regular Extended Care

We are pleased to offer extended care for our students depending on availability. Our guaranteed placement extended care program is available on a pre-arranged and pre-paid basis only.

Extended care is intended for working parents who need extra time to drop off and pick up their children. **Due to required staff planning to maintain child to teacher ratios, we may not be able to offer drop-in care. Emergency/last minute drop-in care, if available, will be charged at Emergency Care rates.**

Extended care hours are:

7:30AM – 8:40AM (before care)

And

3:30PM – 5:30PM (after care)

Parents can select both options, or just morning or afternoon. We cannot do a combination of mornings and afternoons.

Please see our current fee schedule for rates. We do not pro-rate for partial schedules.

Payments for extended care fees are only accepted by post-dated cheque(s) dated on the first of the month for each month of care in your child's contract. An NSF fee of \$25 will be charged back to the family if incurred. If fees for full-time care are not received before care is required, the Centre will not accept the child for care.

From time to time, extended care fees may change. Aspen Hill Montessori reserves the right to issue 30-day written notice to parents of upcoming fee amendments on a go-forward bases.

Families who do not wish to continue their extended care experience with the institution due to these changes must respond with written notice within the 30-day period.

### Occasional Extended Care

*Updated Dec. 24 2019; revised Feb. 18 2021*

Occasional care is intended for working parents who have unexpected appointments from time to time on non-scheduled attendance days. Occasional care is not guaranteed and is based on available space in the Centre. It is available **ONLY** by minimum 24 hours advance request to [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) in advance of the day of care needed. If space is available, a price will be quoted, and must be pre-paid before the child will be accepted into care.

## Special Days Extended Care

*Added Oct. 1 2018; revised Nov. 19 2019; updated Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021*

From time to time, we may offer full-time care on certain holidays for working parents.

These spaces are offered in advance of the day off, and may be cancelled/refunded if there is insufficient registration. Notice of special days care, if available, will be sent by e-mail with payment and registration instructions.

## Emergency Care (revised Oct. 1 2018, revised May 8 2019)

See our Arrival and Dismissal Policy for Emergency Care policy and fees.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Food and Healthy Eating Policy

*Reviewed June 4 2019; revised Nov. 19 2019; updated June 10 2020; expanded July 31 2020; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; reviewed Jan. 18 2022*

Aspen Hill Montessori creates a healthy eating environment by role modelling healthy eating behaviours and allowing children to decide how much to eat from what is offered. Staff supervising snack and lunch sit at the level of the children and eat with them, offering support as requested and monitoring for safe food intake. Staff do not use bribes or rewards to pressure children to eat. We encourage mealtimes that are pleasant with positive conversations, and focus on independence of eating and selection. Children must remain seated while eating, and are given at least 20 minutes to eat snacks and meals.

Students are required to have a non-spill water bottle that they can open themselves at all times, in all class levels.

Families have the option to subscribe to an in-Centre meal plan, provided by an outside licensed vendor. These plans are menu-balanced against Canada's Food Guide for children and are guaranteed to provide balanced nutrition for children who are eager eaters. To learn more, e-mail [meals@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:meals@aspenhillmontessori.ca).

Children who are not subscribed are asked to bring their own healthy lunches as well as a morning and afternoon snack. We encourage snacks and lunches to be balanced nutritionally, with as little sugar as possible. Please minimize pre-packaged 'snacks' in a lunch (granola bars, chips etc.); fresh food in resealable containers is best. Juice boxes, pop, chips, cookies, cake/cupcakes, excessive pre-packaged food, and candy are not considered healthy. The Centre reserves the right to schedule a meeting with parents if a pattern of sending unhealthy food emerges.

Good ideas for children are:

- Pasta in a Thermos
- Pretzels
- Berries
- Yogurt
- Applesauce / fruit sauce
- Cheese cubes
- Crackers
- Slices of meats
- Cold pasta salad
- Hamburger pieces
- Bread / bun / pita

To increase the amount of time children have to enjoy their lunch, please make your child's lunch as 'self-serve' as possible. We do not heat food in microwaves other than for our infant programs; please pre-heat food and send in temperature-controlled Thermos-brand containers. Ensure containers are easy to open, and work with your child on how to open items themselves. We also recommend a cold pack to keep lunches cool, as we do not refrigerate items.

Staff are also asked to bring healthy lunches, especially when food will be eaten in the presence of children. Power drinks (RedBull, Monster) are not allowed on campus at any time. Pop, milkshakes, etc. are also not allowed in the presence of children. Any 'group food' provided to staff is encouraged to be healthy – crackers, cheese, veggie trays, fruit trays instead of donuts and muffins.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Student Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Grievance Policy

Reviewed and updated Nov. 15 2018; June 4 2019; Nov. 19 2019; reviewed June 10 2020; updated Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; revised and modified July 21 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022

## Allegation against a staff member or the Centre

Specific to potential abuse; updated June 24 2021

If an allegation is made against a member of staff it may come from a parent, another co-worker or from a child's disclosure, it must be reported in the same way as any other child protection referral. If it appears from the result of the investigation that the allegations are justified, the Administration Team will instigate disciplinary procedures. This will always be done in full consultation between the Administration Team and legal counsel. It is important to remember that allegations don't necessarily mean that the alleged incident has taken place. The staff member concerned must be supported and treated with concern and respect. False allegations are very upsetting and stressful, and it is important that the staff member is not judged until the result of the investigation is made known.

A parent who is uneasy about any aspect of the Centre's provisions should first discuss these concerns with the Centre's Administration team. We believe children and parents are entitled to expect careful attention to their needs and wishes. Our intention is to work in partnership with parents and the community, and we welcome suggestions on how to improve our Centre program at any time.

## General grievance procedure

Added May 7, 2015; updated June 4 2019; updated June 24 2021

Individual concerns should be e-mailed to [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca). The Administration Team will consult with the teaching team to gather information, and then will set up a ZOOM meeting or a phone call with parents to discuss. If needed, a third-party mediator will be retained and involved to help all parties come to an abiding, written agreement on how to proceed. Collaboration between all parties is essential.

The Centre reserves the right to return all refund-allowed payments as per signed child contract and cancel the enrollment of a family with due process and notice to said family if a mediated agreement cannot be abided, or if the Centre feels that the child's needs cannot be best met by the Centre.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Immunization Statement

*Created Apr. 11 2019; reviewed Nov. 19 2019; updated June 10 2020; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 1 2021*

We are committed to helping families stay well. When we keep our Centre environment safe, children can attend and derive the most benefit from their Montessori class time and parents can attend their own schedules consistently.

We request that all staff and students in our Centre complete the immunizations / vaccinations as recommended by Alberta Health Services, appropriate to their age group. Learn more about the immunization schedule at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/hp/cdc/if-hp-cdc-ip-sm-routine-imm-schedule.pdf> , and at <https://www.alberta.ca/immunization-routine-schedule.aspx> .

All staff are required to be vaccinated for COVID-19 and must present proof of vaccination to be considered for employment.

As per Alberta Health Services regulations, staff or children who contract a reportable disease will not be allowed to attend care without full clearance from a licensed medical doctor, and based on Provincial isolation periods as at <https://www.alberta.ca/notifiable-disease-guidelines.aspx> . No refunds will be provided for children who miss care or must terminate care based on missing immunizations or reportable diseases.

If your child does not have current vaccinations, you will be required to complete a Waiver related to reportable diseases – please request through [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) .

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Student Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Incident / Illness / Injury Reporting Policy

*Created July 31 2020; modified Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; expanded July 21 2021; expanded Jan. 18 2022*

**For any occurrences, injuries or illness, no matter how minor, staff must advise the Administration Team immediately upon occurrence.** This is especially critical with any bump or knock to the head. Incidents/illness/injuries include but are not limited to:

- Bathrooming accidents
- Collision or physical incident between two or more children, intentional or accidental
- Independent injury (child trips, falls, etc.)
- Slips and falls
- Bumps, finger pinches
- Temporarily misplaced child / cannot find child
- Choking
- Allergic reaction
- Feeling generally unwell, reported or observed
- Visible illness symptoms, no matter how minor (more than 1 sneeze every hour, runny nose that does not clear up with one tissue, cough more than once a day, etc.)
- Serious emotional or psychological upset / potential upset (swearing, discussing inappropriate topics at the Centre (horror, violence, guns, sex), sexualized commentary or exposure actions, inappropriate bathrooming exposure, inappropriate bathrooming talk, violence, bullying actions)

For any occurrence that requires emergency services, we will call 911 FIRST. Then an Administrator will contact parents by phone using the information provided on their Emergency Contact Form.

For ALL OCCURANCES OUT OF NORMAL OPERATIONS, no matter how minor, staff document their experience using an Occurrence Form. We will include the time and date of the incident, and the time and date that the form was completed. Every situation is reviewed by the Administration Team and notes added to the child's file are kept with the Centre. Parents will be requested to review and initial an Occurrence Form specific to their child.

In a serious incident / when required, the Administration Team will also complete an Incident Reporting Form and submit to Provincial Childcare Licensing. The following incidents must be reported as per law:

- An emergency evacuation that is unplanned
- Unexpected program closure
- An intruder on the program's premises
- A serious illness or injury to a child that requires the Centre to request emergency services and/or requires the child to remain in the hospital overnight.

- An error in the administration of medication by a program
- An unexpected absence of a child from the program on a day they are registered to attend (ie. a child who does not attend the program, and the parents cannot be reached to confirm the absence)
- A child removed from the program by a non-custodial parent or guardian
- An allegation of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child by a staff member or volunteer
- A child left on the premises unattended

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our Staff Contracts and in our Online Application System. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*



# Non-Discrimination Policy

*Revised Sept. 1 2018; reviewed June 4 2019/Nov. 19 2019; updated June 10 2020; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021*

Aspen Hill Montessori maintains and conducts all practices relating to enrollment, discipline, and all other terms and benefits of childcare services in a manner which does not discriminate against any child, parent or family specifically on the basis of:

- Race
- Colour
- Origin
- Nationality
- Immigration status
- Religion
- Marital status
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Socioeconomic status
- Disability

The Centre may decline admission to a child who is not within the age limitations of the program for insurance and licensing restriction reasons, or whose developmental needs are not best met by a rigorous independent-oriented academic learning environment.

Discrimination against any of the above listed items by any member of the teaching or administration staff is grounds for immediate dismissal with cause of the offending staff by the Centre.

Discrimination against any of the above listed items by the adult members of any family whose child attends the Centre against any other parent of or child who attends on Centre property is grounds for immediate termination of services provided to the family committing the offense.

Children who commit discrimination offences without parental presence will:

1. First infraction: be guided according to Montessori principles for correction, with a note or comment home to parents
2. Second infraction: at Centre's discretion, be removed from the classroom setting and sent home to parents, with a discussion and plan of action with the parents
3. Third infraction: at Centre's discretion, enactment of a Centre-initiated withdrawal (see Refunds and Withdrawals Policy).

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Records application. In the case of discrepancy, the offline policy document will apply.*

## Nut-free policy

*Updated Nov. 25 2018; reviewed June 4 2019 / Nov. 19 2019 / June 10 2020; updated Feb. 18 2021;  
reviewed June 24 2021*

Aspen Hill Montessori is a nut-free environment. Please do not send snacks or lunches containing nuts or nut by-products, or they will be thrown out. Our teaching equipment and furniture is used exclusively by the Centre, and is sanitized regularly to ensure a clean environment.

The Centre cannot be held liable for activities that occur in the kitchen or building space during non-school hours. As such, we cannot guarantee the absence of nuts during non-care hours.

If your child has a nut allergy, please advise staff upon admission so urgent care steps can be registered as part of the Centre's response plan, should allergy response support be needed.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Parent Participation

Added Nov. 2019; updated June 2020; revised July 31 2020; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021

We encourage parents and families to get involved in our Centre! There are many ways to participate throughout the year, depending on current health regulations.

## **In-class and special day volunteering**

- We have regular Casual Days to celebrate the seasons, with crafts, games and more. We also have seasonal Sports Days and do round robin activities. We can always use parent helpers!

## **Parent-teacher interviews**

- Occur in October/November and March/April each year as per our published calendar. Watch for online registration and goal setting forms to go home in advance of the dates. Interviews may be in person or by ZOOM.

## **Classroom observation**

- Occur in February each year. Parents can experience their child's learning in the classroom via ZOOM. Watch for announcements and sign up via e-mail.

## **Participation on social media**

- Follow our classroom activities on Facebook and Instagram channels.

## **Philanthropic opportunities**

- Donate your used books, craft supplies, and toys – we leverage them in our summer programs. Please ask us about which items we can accept used if you are cleaning out your closet at home!
- Wish Book and Winter Art Gala – enjoy an evening out with your child, and purchase items most desired for the Centre
- Cheque writing campaign – donate an amount that you prefer to the Centre

*This document is provided for information only; it does not need to be acknowledged to be a member of our student body.*

# Photography and Tours Policy

*Reviewed and updated Oct. 1 2018; June 4 2019; revised Nov. 19 2019; updated June 10 2020; updated July 31 2020; reviewed Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; reviewed Jan. 18 2022*

## Academic Photography (added Nov. 19 2019; revised June 10 2020)

As part of our parent portal, teachers take photos of children completing lessons and work to showcase to parents how their child operates in the classroom environment. These photos become part of a closed Centre system, and are only available to administration, teachers, and the registered parents / guardians of the child. These photos are taken regardless of the Centre's Image Release, as they are not available for the public.

**\*\*If you would not like these photos taken of your child due to religious or personal preferences, you must separately discuss this request with your child's assigned teaching group at the start of the learning year.\*\***

## Marketing Photography (revised Nov. 19 2019; updated June 10 2020)

Marketing our Centre is an important and continued part of our growth plan. From time to time, there will be photos taken by hired professionals and / or staff of key Centre activities and events to showcase our work on social media accounts and to prospective parents.

If you are willing to have your child be featured as part of our Centre family, you must sign an Image Release form, held on record with the Centre for the duration of attendance. This is done as part of your application in our online system. If you decline for your child to participate, you agree that your child may be removed from group photos and / or have their face hidden if a picture including them is featured online.

You can change your child's Image Release status at any time.

## Per-Child Photos (revised Nov. 19 2019; updated June 10 2020)

We provide the option of annual photos of your child through a professional photo vendor. The vendor varies from year to year.

They come on-site in October and potentially May to capture unique poses that capture your child's personality and provide a wonderful memory for years to come.

In order to have your child participate in our class photos and individual photography, we require your permission at the time of the photo session, which is provided by signing up for your child's photo to be taken. Generally, sign ups happen online.

The photography session is provided free of charge; any photos you choose to order are at your investment. Pricing is provided after the shoot.



## Centre Tours

Hosting interested parents in our Centre is an important and continued part of our growth plan. During COVID-19, tours are done online via ZOOM. If we are allowed to return to in-person tours, masks will be required, and interactions with children will not occur. Privacy and safety is of utmost importance to our Centre, and no guests will ever be left unattended or unescorted in the child environment.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Program Review and Improvement Policy

*Added Dec. 10 2019; updated June 10 2020; updated July 31 2020; modified Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021*

Aspen Hill Montessori aims to continuously improve and grow to meet the needs, ideas and expectations of our community, staff, parents and attendees.

Staff members and parents of current children are invited to provide feedback on their experience with the Centre, as well as their thoughts around overall Centre programming, twice a year through formal surveys. The surveys may be distributed electronically through a tool such as SurveyMonkey. Parents can also provide face to face feedback about their child / family experience during parent-teacher interviews in fall and spring each year.

Community members are invited to participate in a survey once per year to evaluate how our engagement with them has been, and where we could improve our relationship. This survey goes out in winter of the learning season.

Questions for our surveys are developed using recommendations on best practices for Centres from across Canada, Provincial Childcare Licensing, and consultation with our Board.

Of course, we welcome informal feedback at any time of the year. Parents, community members and staff have the following avenues open to them to communicate with the Centre:

- E-mail to the Centre through [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca)
- Talking to a teacher or administrator through a scheduled meeting
- Phoning in to the Centre at 403-246-2794 during regular business hours

Feedback that is gathered is analyzed as a collective whole and provided to the Management Team of the Centre and the Board for consideration. Where possible, we take feedback into consideration as we plan for future growth of the Centre, including investment of time, money and resources.

*This policy is provided for information only; acknowledgment is not required.*

# Student Assessment Policy

*Added Dec. 2 2020; updated Feb. 18 2021 and June 24 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022*

Aspen Hill Montessori assesses and observes learners on an ongoing basis, with the primary purpose to improve student experience and meet the needs of learners. Methods may include:

- Small group and individual question-and-response opportunities; group games; collaborative participation lessons with opportunities to demonstrate knowledge
- Completion and self-correction of various self-directed Montessori activities, and forward progression through various levels of difficulty under self-motivation
- One-on-one activities between a student and teacher
- Observation of a student's activities from a distance

'Tests' (isolated, timed events where each child is expected to perform a series of activities) are not part of the assessment methods at Aspen Hill. Our education activities focus on a broad range of outcomes across the social, emotional, and academic perspectives of the whole child.

Assessment interactions are always appropriate to the student's age, developmental and cultural background; are constructive; and focus on what a student can do. Assessments encourage movement forward to overcome areas of difficulty, linking new learning to what a student already knows and can do successfully. This information is used by teachers to be informed about, to reflect upon and to initiate activities that enhance their students' learning.

Especially in a Montessori environment, students are involved in their own assessment on a daily basis. This gives them internal motivation and responsibility for their own learning.

## **Diagnostic observations**

All Aspen Hill Montessori teachers are trained in how to observe, assess and communicate areas where a different approach to learning may be needed. This helps ensure that potential learning difficulties are recognized early and that families can be connected to support. It also helps us provide more challenging activities as students become ready.

## **Communicating observations**

Communication regarding assessments and observations in class take place in a wide variety of ways at Aspen Hill Montessori, including:

- Photos and observations in our online sharing platform
- Two parent-teacher conferences per learning season
- Additional parent-teacher conferences as requested or required
- Annual report cards available on Montessori skills, social, emotional and developmental growth
- Student work samples sent home on a regular basis

*This policy is provided for information only; acknowledgment is not required to become a student at the Centre.*



# Supervision, Participation and Observation Policies

*Reviewed and updated Nov. 15 2018; reviewed June 4 2019; updated Nov. 19 2019; reviewed June 10 2020; updated Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021; expanded June 29 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022*

## Supervision of children

Updated Feb. 18 2021; updated June 24 2021

Every child at Aspen Hill Montessori is supervised constantly, actively and diligently. This involves ensuring staff members are always in a position to observe each child, respond to the individual needs and intervene if necessary. Our supervision tactics include:

- Arranging the classroom to enable close monitoring of children
- Accounting for the number of children entering the classroom at start times and
- referencing attendance records throughout the day at key points of entry / exit into class
- Providing an appropriate ratio for supervision of teachers to students as per Alberta Provincial Childcare Licensing
- Ensuring that doors to any upper floors and outside rooms are secured and / or monitored
- Educating children about the importance of informing staff members before leaving the classroom space to the bathroom, and supervising children with float staff while in the bathrooms to provide assistance as needed
- Engaging each student regularly throughout the day
- Visibility and accessibility in areas in which the children are engaged in activity and lessons, including calling for an additional staff member when necessary
- Being alert to and aware of the potential for incidents and injury throughout the classrooms
- Ensuring that no child or group of children are left alone at any time throughout the day without an educator being present
- Supervising children's daily arrival and departure from the Centre and being aware of the person who has authority to collect a child
- Evaluating supervision practices regularly

All staff members must complete and clear a Calgary Police Criminal Check Record including vulnerable sector categories before being employed by the Centre, must hold a Alberta Childcare Certification, and must carry valid First Aid certification.

The ratio of adults to children as per Alberta Licensing is a minimum of 1:4 for children under 19 months; 1:6 for ages 19 months – under 3 years; 1:8 for ages 3-4.5; and 1:10 for ages 4.5 +.

## Outdoor play

Updated June 4 2019; revised June 10 2020; updated Feb. 18 2021

The children are lined up at their exit door before they go outside and lined up at the appropriate entrance on their return to the classroom, to enable the staff to count them in and out.

Children may have outdoor experiences inside a fenced play space or in outside fields on the property of either campus. Children are closely supervised at all times. In spaces that are fenced, staff spread out throughout the space and are assigned to supervise small groups of children so every child has a direct set of eyes on them. In spaces that are not fenced, staff will spread out on an outer boundary around the children group and ensure that children do not leave the perimeter. Staff will also be assigned to watch specific children to ensure their well-being during play.

Children are encouraged to explore safe risky play to help them expand their physical abilities and vocabulary. Risky play is done with safety in mind and is focused on climbing, balancing and experimenting with materials that are available.

Depending on the campus, older children (3+) may use non-traditional loose parts outdoor to encourage experimentation and creative thinking. These can include sanded wood planks, milk crates, fabric, plastic pots, PVC piping, dryer hoses, and more. Loose part use is supervised.

If you are picking your child up from our outside areas at day's end, please be sure to make contact with the teachers to let them know that you are leaving with your child. Please note that once the transfer of responsibility is made from teacher to parent, the Centre is no longer responsible to supervise your child. Please depart the outdoor play area promptly upon pickup.

## Supervision and response approach / safety plan for children deemed to be a 'run risk' during transitions to and from outside play

Added June 29 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022

Ensuring the safety of all children in our care during transitions to and from the outdoors is an important part of our Centre mandate.

At the start of every learning season, staff are provided training about strategies for successful transition times involving the outdoors and other areas of our Centres. Training includes how to better prevent and then stop children safely who may dart or run from staff due to challenges coping with transition times. In-person training is provided with demonstrations as part of the staff orientation, as well as sharing articles with best practices from industry. We also share the negative physical consequences that can occur to children when best practices are not followed.

Staff must sign a policy confirmation stating that they understand the preventative strategies in place, and that they commit to implementing them.

We also train and monitor staff on our standard exit and entry approach:

To exit the Centre for outside play, all classes line up inside their exit door. Supervising teachers do a head count. One teacher goes in front of the group to open the door, and the other teacher stays at the back of the group. The children go out in a line. They line up against the outside wall with a teacher in front. The door is locked. They proceed in a line to the fenced play space with one teacher in front, one in back. When they arrive at the play destination, teachers repeat the head count. When play is completed, they reverse this process (head count before departure, staff member at front and back, line up against outside wall, unlock door, enter, lock door, repeat head count.)

The first strategy in all classrooms is prevention. Preventative steps taken to reduce issues during transition times include:

1. Using a 'walking rope' to and from the outdoor fenced play space for all classrooms of children under 3 years of age, and in classrooms where there are children who struggle with transitions or following directions
2. Ensuring that children used the outdoor fenced play space at all times when under 3 years of age, and when over 3 years of age if there are children in the class who struggle with transitions or following directions
3. Playing games with children indoors and outdoors at appropriate ages that help to develop skills in listening and motion control (Red Light, Green Light; What Time is it Mr. Wolf; Simon Says, etc.)
4. Ensuring that adequate, stepped-approach warnings leading to a transition time have been provided (10 minutes, 5 minutes, 1 minute)
5. If a class is finding that opening and closing the exit door is becoming a distraction, Securing assistance from an Administrator for opening and closing the entry door to allow teachers to focus on the children during movement outside and in.

From time to time, a child may be noted to struggle with transitions during this process. Struggles may be identified by a child being unwilling to come back inside, be unwilling to hold a teacher's hand / walking rope, or not being willing or able to follow directions on safety-related matters. It may also be noted if a child runs or dart away from a staff member.

Upon noticing concerns, the teachers in the class immediately connect with the Curriculum Manager and the Program Supervisor to make them aware of the challenge. The Curriculum Manager will review the prevention tactics with staff to ensure that all strategies are being effectively implemented. Additional staff will also be made available to assist the class during transition times.

A ZOOM meeting would then be set up with parents to share observed behaviour and concerns, and to develop next-step solutions.

Solutions may include:

- Having the child be secured in arms or by hand with a caregiver before a transition is announced / occurs
- Having one caregiver dedicated to ensuring the child's successful transition between indoors and out
- Having the child hold a caregivers' hand at all times when in transition between indoors and outdoors, and in a non-fenced area
- Having the child be carried in-arms until the fenced space is reached
- Walking with the child in a child-safe backpack harness with the parents' permission while in non-fenced spaces
- Transporting the child in a stroller or wagon with the parents' permission while in non-fenced spaces

Solutions would be documented and added to the child's file. Any child that has been a run risk in the past will continue to have solutions applied for the remainder of their current learning season, unless additional consultation with the parents occurs.

Ongoing transition run risks that present a potential for serious harm to self during transitions may require additional measures, up to and including evaluation of suitability for the programs available at Aspen Hill.

## Classroom visitation and observation

Updated May 7, 2015, reviewed Sept. 2018; reviewed Nov. 19 2019; reviewed June 10 2020; updated Feb. 18 2021 and June 24 2021

Given time without distraction or disruption, Montessori classrooms develop into normalized environments where children are absorbed in their work and confident of their ability to engage in it, either in small groups or alone. If observers and visitors come into the classroom before the children have learned to attend to their own work, the children respond to the stimulation of observers and the very atmosphere that the observer has come to see will not exist.

(TBC FOR FALL BASED ON HEALTH REGULATIONS) Staff use the first six weeks of programming to create the Montessori Environment – no visitors or tours are allowed during this time. After that time frame, interested parents and qualified guests (potential families or student teachers) may make an appointment with the Office who will be more than happy to coordinate a classroom visit. All classroom visitors will be supervised during their visit and will not be permitted access to individual children without supervision.

In February of each year, we have parent observation opportunities throughout the month by appointment. Parent observations are completed via ZOOM.

## Parental involvement

Added May 7, 2015, reviewed Oct. 2018; updated June 4 2019; updated Nov. 19 2019; updated June 10 2020; updated Feb. 18 2021 and June 24 2021

Depending on current health regulations, there will be times and ways you can get involved in your child's Centre experience. You are welcome to participate in any or all of these; watch for invitations via our e-mail system. Volunteer parents are required to have a valid (within 3 years) criminal background check and to sign in and out. Please ask administration at the Centre how you can secure a police check.

Some additional ways to be involved include:

- Helping your child at home with the sound of the week
- Helping your child prepare for a class sharing time
- Helping to provide a photo board for birthday celebrations
- Preparation for events (We will ask for volunteers via email)
- Reading to your child at home

## Parent-teacher conferences

Updated Nov. 19 2019; reviewed June 10 2020; updated Feb. 18 2021 and June 24 2021

Shared communication is an integral part of providing an optimum experience for your child.

We have parent-teacher interviews twice each year, once in October / November and once in late February / March. Invitations to book a time are sent by e-mail. These may be held in person or by ZOOM conferencing.

Special meetings outside conferences may also be arranged. Should you need to address a teacher regarding a concern, please email [registrar@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:registrar@aspenhillmontessori.ca) so that Administration can set up a meeting. Please do not attempt to engage instructors directly before or after care times, as their attention must remain on the children.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Student Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Technology Policy

*Reviewed and updated Oct. 1 2018; reviewed June 4 2019; reviewed and modified Nov. 19 2019; reviewed and modified June 10 2020; confirmed Feb. 18 2021; reviewed June 24 2021; reviewed Jan. 18 2022*

As part of Montessori philosophy, technology is minimized in the teaching of students. From time to time, we may feature a show or movie as part of our planned Casual Days, or as part of our Summer Program. All shows will be appropriate for children, and focus on themes and topics pursuant of educational learning.

We encourage families in our program to limit their children's amount of 'screen time' (tablets, smartphones, TVs, etc.) in order to encourage the habits of creative development and intellectual play fostered at our Centre.

An online web application is used to communicate information home on a regular schedule about children's academic, social and emotional progress in the classroom.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Student Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Transportation Policy

Reviewed and updated July 2018; reviewed June 4 2019/Nov. 19 2019; reviewed June 10 2020; Feb. 18 2021; June 24 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022

At this time we are unable to provide core transportation for our students to and from our primary facilities. Each family is responsible to ensure that they have safe and reliable means to convey their children. If an alternative provider will be picking up your child, they must be on our approved pick up list, and may be expected to show ID at the door.

Please note that the speed limit in all of our parking lots is 5KM / hr. Careful driving is essential to prevent accidents.

For children that are part of our Agricultural Kindergarten program, transportation will be provided to and from our agricultural site in Springbank as part of your program contract. All current transportation approaches and policies in place by Alberta Education as well as related to group transportation of children under Alberta Traffic and Road laws will be followed.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Student Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*



# Unforeseen Large-Scale Events Policy

*Created May 1 2020; updated June 1 2020; updated July 31 2020; updated Feb. 18 2021; reviewed June 24 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022*

Aspen Hill Montessori and attending families / staff agree that unforeseen, large-scale events may occur during the current learning season. These events would affect at minimum the entire structure that the Centre is located in, and at most potentially the entire continent and / or world. Examples of unforeseen large-scale events can include but are not limited to:

- Disease / pandemic
- Health emergency (fatality, serious injury, tainted water, sewage backup, etc.)
- Fire / explosion
- War
- Natural disaster (tornado, flood, windstorm, earthquake, etc.)
- Change in land ownership / sudden lease cancellation of space the Centre occupies

In the event of an unforeseen large-scale event occurring, the Centre and every family's priority must be focused on following direction from the appropriate authorities (Provincial Licensing, Alberta Health Services, the City of Calgary, the Province of Alberta, Federal Canadian Government, etc.). The Centre will endeavor to the best of its ability to provide communication to registered families regarding next steps specific to the Centre. However, in the event of unforeseen large-scale events, registered families acknowledge that communications may not be possible in a timely manner. As available, communications will be transmitted by e-mail, posted at the location if possible, and / or through the Centre's phone voice mail.

Registered families and staff acknowledge that the Centre will not be equipped to provide immediate information requests, especially regarding refunds and withdrawals, and will not respond to requests for such. As information becomes available, and the Aspen Hill Montessori Administration Team is able to form next steps, information will be communicated to families and staff. **Until other notice is provided, the Centre's standard policies will continue to apply.**

Regardless of the above, the Administration Team commits to working with all registered families and staff and the appropriate authorities as best able to provide equitable resolutions considering the reality at the time of the unforeseen event.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Student Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

# Weather and Outdoor Experiences Policy

*Re-added and updated August 7 2019; reviewed Nov. 19 2019; revised June 10 2020; updated July 31 2020; updated Feb. 18 2021; reviewed June 24 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022*

Aspen Hill Montessori has deep appreciation for the benefits that time spent in the outdoors can bring. Children and staff spend time in the outdoors each week, in most weather conditions. Time outside per instance can range from 20 minutes to 1 hour, depending on activities.

Children and staff who attend / support Aspen Hill Montessori programs will have outdoor time each day. The Centre uses Environment Canada as our single weather resource for official decisions: [https://weather.gc.ca/city/pages/ab-52\\_metric\\_e.html](https://weather.gc.ca/city/pages/ab-52_metric_e.html)

Outdoor time may be limited in length or cancelled for temperatures below -18 degrees Celsius including wind chill, above 28 degrees Celsius, or where conditions render any beneficial activity pointless or high-risk. The best interest of the children and the likelihood of ability to conduct beneficial learning activities will always be considered (for example, shaded activities and drinking plenty of water for hot days; shelter from wind and exposure to sun where possible for cold days).

Alternative arrangements to remain indoors are possible for *occasional instances* where children are unable to go outside (due to pre-existing medical conditions only).

All children and staff attending and supporting our programs are expected to have full weather gear appropriate to the forecast on-site at all times. **Children who arrive without proper weather gear will be refused entry to the Centre at drop off to protect the child's best interests.**

Gear does not need to be new! Many good second hand and thrift stores are in Calgary to assist with used items. If you need assistance to locate gear, please contact the Centre **prior** to your child's start date.

At no time are open-toed shoes allowed on premise.

**Please see the separate Outdoor Clothing Kit List for a complete description of required items.**

Weather gear required for wet weather forecasts includes:

- Waterproof boots (not water-resistant) that fit properly
- Waterproof rain suit (rain pants and rain coat)
- Waterproof and warm mitts

- Full change of clothing

DO NOT send your child in fashion spring coats, water-resistant boots like BOGS or non-waterproof hikers (choking hazard).

Weather gear required for winter weather forecasts (below 0 Celsius) includes:

- Waterproof winter boots that fit properly (SOREL or similar brand)
- Snow pants
- Snow jacket
- Waterproof snow mitts
- Toque
- Neck toque

DO NOT send your child in fashion toques, fashion coats, fashion boots or scarves (choking hazard).

Weather gear required for windy/overcast/cool and DRY forecasts (between -3 Celsius and +15 Celsius) includes:

- Sturdy outdoor hikers or runners with Velcro or slip on (NO LACES)
- Rain pants (for wind)
- Coat lined with polar fleece
- Light stretch mitts
- Toque

Weather gear required for sunny forecasts over +15 Celsius includes:

- Sturdy outdoor hikers or runners with Velcro or slip on (NO LACES)
- Sunscreen (optional)
- Sun hat (optional, please involve your child in selecting the hat to ensure they will wear it!)

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Student Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*