


Puddletown School Parent Handbook

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Parent Handbook



Puddletown School

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to create an environment in line with Maria Montessori's teachings where children learn to trust themselves and feel the freedom to explore who they are; with curiosity and confidence they create their individuality.

At Puddletown School we encourage children to explore learning and independence. Self-trust and confidence are important parts of developing independence, especially if that confidence is tied to a sense of self-worth rather than ability. Friendliness with error is a positive part of the learning process.

At Puddletown School the teachers, known as guides, allow each child the freedom to make choices that feed her own developmental needs. The guides encourage, redirect, and supervise with gentle guidance. Puddletown provides a consistent classroom environment with established routines. This frees children from continually having to test and re-establish boundaries.



MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

The Montessori Method is named after Dr. Maria Montessori, who devoted her life to the observation and study of children and peace. From these observations, she discerned that learning is most effective when children are allowed to learn in their own way and at their own pace.

Dr. Montessori discovered that children from birth to age six are capable of absorbing information from their environment with much less effort than later in life. In this first plane of development she felt that it was important to prepare an environment tailored to the many aspects of a child's development. The Montessori primary environment is designed to stimulate exploration of each child's interests. She developed a curriculum focusing on math, language, sensory exploration, art, music, and practical life skills. Abstract ideas are introduced as a hands-on exploration. Gradually this leads the child to a self-discovery of the concept. In the primary classroom, lessons are given individually on isolated aspects of an abstract idea that children put together on their own to form a cohesive whole. In this way each learned skill or lesson becomes a building block for the next, helping the child to experience success.

The second plane of development Maria Montessori noted includes ages six through twelve. Just as for three to six-year-old children, there are work choices, movement with purpose, and freedom within limits. However, the lessons at the elementary level are given in group settings as the social aspect of learning is becoming more and more important. The elementary structure integrates personal choice as well, where children learn to manage their time, while also managing and prioritizing their work. Each child keeps a daily record and uses this to plan her own education. Ultimately, this structure is a preparation for life. Montessori wrote, "the elementary child has reached a new level of development. Before she was interested in things: working with her hands, learning their names. Now she is interested mainly in the how and why; the problem of cause and effect."

The job of the guide is to show the world's interconnectedness and create a class that allows students to discover it for themselves. The Montessori classroom offers students opportunities to learn, develop, and succeed in a nurturing, enriching, and appropriate learning environment. The second plane child begins to explore ideals and the struggle of conflicting interests. The elementary class compares the history that brought us here and what we want the future to be. The imagination is given new possibilities and gives inspiration for learning. This is a time for seeing the world as they would have it be and find a way to be a part of it.

PRIMARY PROGRAM

Puddletown's primary program is for children ages three through six. Our program fosters growth in independence and problem solving, the development of order, concentration and coordination, the nurturing of oral communication skills, and stimulation of the child's joy in discovery and learning.

Puddletown's primary program meets at the following times:

- Early care 7:30–8:20am to a limited amount of children
- Half day 8:20am–12:45pm
- Extended day until 3:15pm
- After care 3:15–5:30pm
drop-in may be available, depending on the student to teacher ratio

CURRICULUM

In the primary classrooms at Puddletown, the learning environment is based on the Montessori Method—an approach to learning that engages the five senses, kinetic movement, spatial refinement, and small and large motor skill coordination. Puddletown uses this method as a basis for studying language, science, mathematics, music, art, and other subjects. In addition to children's development of movement that is inherent within the activities in the classroom, children also develop gross motor skills outdoors during our daily playtime.

PRACTICAL LIFE

Practical life is the area of the classroom in which the child creates, controls, changes, and cares for her physical environment and her physical well-being. Practical life is the most basic and essential area of Montessori development. There are four goals of the practical life curriculum that make it a foundation of the child's day to day life:

- Through these activities the child grows to respect and love the physical world around her, both natural and man-made.
- The child develops techniques and skills that are basic to other areas of development.
- The child unites her growing body, developing intelligence, and will.
- The child comes to discover the joy of participating and contributing in a community setting.

The success of our program depends upon this foundation. Through practical life, the child develops a work process that is freely chosen, undertaken with self-discipline, using physical skills in an intelligent way. The result is a self-aware child, creating through her work a self-created adult.

SENSORIAL EXERCISES

Sensorial exercises are done with an extensive set of materials, each of which isolates one sense and expands upon it: shape, weight, texture, or pitch are matched, graded (contrasted), and named. The knowledge is then applied to the larger world outside the classroom. The sensorial work allows the child to develop her sensory awareness and organize her perceptions to form concepts and abstractions. The purpose of this work is threefold:

- The satisfaction of the work with the materials.
- The ability to perceive one's environment with increasing sensitivity and intelligence.
- The appreciation of the natural order that intelligent awareness cultivates in one's life.

MATH & LANGUAGE

Cognitive work in math and language develops from concrete sensorial materials that the child uses, forming the foundation for the use of symbols. The child will first be introduced to each sound and number orally before using the written symbol that represent it. With the symbols, the child begins to communicate what she knows and does. In this way we will move from concrete ways of understanding to the more abstract concepts that follow. Arithmetic, geography, reading and writing, grammar and syntax, music, art, science, algebra, and geometry are developed in gradual stages from the concrete sensorial to the abstract conceptual through sequential materials and exercises and repetition of these exercises. Each child works from her own choice at her own pace, successfully completing self-correcting materials, while the guide, through observations, works to give lessons that seamlessly provide the next step of growth.

EXTENDED DAY

Rest time & extended work time.

The extended day provides extra time in the classroom for older children (about four-and-a-half to six years old) to explore and for younger children (about two-and-a-half to four-and-a-half years old) to rest.

Older children who are ready (a determination made by parents and guide) are invited to participate in extended day. By spending full days at school and by working with the guide in a smaller group setting in the afternoon, children are able to experience more of the lessons available for older children in Montessori. It is not intended that children will stay on an occasional basis. Please consult your child's guide if you are considering extended day.

If your child is between three and four-and-a-half years old, your child will be taking a rest during the extended day. Twenty-five dollars will be added to your first month's tuition so that your child may have a nap mat to rest on at school. All nap supplies should be taken home at the end of each week to be washed.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

Puddletown's lower elementary program is for children ages six through nine with plans to add upper elementary, for ages nine through twelve, as our group grows. As in the primary classroom, a major component of Montessori elementary is the manipulation of concrete materials. However, as the child continues to progress from the physical act of addition, using beads or rods, she eventually leaves the need for concrete associations through gradually increasing levels of abstraction.

At the elementary level, children receive lessons in a mixed-age grouping in an environment created to encourage exploration and research. They work with materials that emphasize reason, relationships, analysis and abstraction. The interests that each child develops from the group experience are the basis of the individual exploration and research that is an integral part of the curriculum.

Students take ownership of their education process and cultivate personal responsibility for their learning as they keep a journal of their progress. They use this journal when they invite their parents and teacher to meetings about their progress throughout the year.

Puddletown's elementary program meets at the following times:

- Early care 7:30–8:20am to a limited amount of children
 - 8:20am–3:15pm
 - After care 3:15–5:30pm
- Drop-in may be available, depending on the student to teacher ratio.*

CURRICULUM

When children reach the elementary classroom they continue with the manipulation of concrete materials. From her foundation in concrete correlations the elementary child builds the ability to think and reason in the abstract. As she gains confidence in thinking in the abstract she explores further areas that are difficult to touch. Learning also takes place beyond the boundaries of the classroom as nature and cultural programs extend the students exposure to the surrounding community. Classroom exploration includes:

Language:

- Reading and spelling
- Grammar, including parts of speech and parts and types of sentences, phonics, diphthongs and consonant combinations, sight words, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, and root words
- Penmanship done in manuscript and cursive

Mathematics:

- Concepts of the four basic operations (+, -, x, /) and basic geometric figures, memorization, and application
- Squaring, square root, cubing, and cube root
- Operations with money
- Area and volume, fractions and decimal fractions
- Set theory

Physical Geography:

- Political divisions, capitals, major cities, and commerce
- Flags of countries and states

History:

- Theories of the formation of the earth, development of life, development of human beings and society, and contributions of various life forms
- Continental drift (plate tectonics)
- Specific historical events, including U.S. and Oregon history and current events

Science:

- Experiments revealing natural laws
- Basic terminology, classification, and taxonomy of the plant, animal, and mineral kingdoms
- Field trips

Arts, language, and health/physical education:

- Spanish curriculum incorporating concurrent activities in the classroom
- Art, music, and drama
- Health and physical education

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO EXPLORE

Going Out:

A carefully designed excursion supervised by the guide and parents. Students initiate, plan, organize, and carry out these trips to extend knowledge, information, or experience in relation to classroom studies. Giving the students the reins establishes and invigorates each students' responsibility for their own safety. It helps ensure their ability to think clearly and make sound choices in taking care of themselves.

Research:

Literature and basic research tools, such as encyclopedias and dictionaries, are in constant use. Children borrow books from the school library and visit our local library for their own reading. They are also read to as a group daily.

ATTENDANCE

Be sure your child only misses school when absolutely necessary. At the elementary level, group learning and experience are vital parts of an environment created to encourage exploration and research. The children work collaboratively, forming work and study groups that change for various projects. The guide gives presentations to the children in groups. If a child is absent, she might miss a presentation or group discovery and is left to explore alone, without the support of her classmates. This can lead to feeling left out or disconnected.

ADMISSION POLICY

A Nondiscrimination Policy

Puddletown School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in hiring, promoting, or training of employees, nor in the admissions, rights, privileges, programs, and activities of its students.

The following requirements must be met prior to admission:

- Prospective primary students must be at least three years old and toilet-trained.
- All forms and contracts relating to admission must be completed and signed in full before the student begins class.
- A deposit must be remitted to save the student's place.



PUDDLETOWN CALENDAR

Puddletown School loosely follows the Portland Public Schools (PPS) calendar. Please consult the printed calendar included in your packet, Puddletown's website, and the list below for holidays, administrative planning days, etc. Throughout the year we will have other scheduled events, such as parent education nights (fall and spring), work parties, and fund raisers (winter and spring). The dates of these events will be announced as they approach. For closures due to weather and other emergencies, we follow PPS closures and late starts for the east side, which are announced at www.flashalert.net/news.html?id=69.

2015

AUGUST 31

1st day for 3rd/4th year primary & all elementary children

SEPTEMBER 2-3

Orientation for new primary children

SEPTEMBER 4 & 8

½ day for new primary children

SEPTEMBER 7

Labor Day

SEPTEMBER 9

*1st day for 2nd year primary children.
Regular schedules begin.*

OCTOBER 9

Planning Day

NOVEMBER 11

Veterans Day

NOVEMBER 20

Planning Day

NOVEMBER 23-25

Conferences/Camp

NOVEMBER 26-27

Thanksgiving Holiday

DECEMBER 21-JANUARY 1

Winter Break

DECEMBER 21-23 & 28-31

Winter Holiday Camp

2016

JANUARY 4

Planning Day

JANUARY 5

School Resumes

JANUARY 18

MLK Day

FEBRUARY 15

Presidents Day

MARCH 21-25

Spring Break/Camp

MARCH 28

Planning Day

MARCH 29

School Resumes

APRIL 25-29

Conferences—no extended day

MAY 30

Memorial Day

JUNE 7

Last Day of School

OBSERVATIONS

We request that each family visit at least once a year to observe their child's classroom. Observations are typically scheduled in November and April.

During the observation, please sit quietly in the observation chairs indicated. Try not to make your presence felt; please don't initiate conversation or get things from the shelves. We are hoping through these observations to create a way for parents to get as objective a view as possible of how a day goes at Puddletown. Please make notes to discuss during your conference with the classroom teacher.

We encourage you to observe. Seeing the children in class is to experience the Montessori philosophy in action. To make your observation more meaningful, take a look around the room and notice the amount and diversity of activity, the range of ages, the types of materials, the individual and group activity, and the interactions among the children. Take some time to watch the teacher and notice the composure, observation, and respect the teacher shows each child. Watch your child and notice the succession of activities, the concentration on work, the enthusiasm and self-satisfaction in each activity, and the child's respect for other children, the materials, and the teachers.

Please plan to spend at least 1 hour and be aware that your child may or may not have a "normal" day while you're there. If your child is having any trouble transitioning as you are leaving, we may ask that you take them with you for the remainder of the day.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS, WEATHER SAFETY & FIRE DRILLS

Puddletown School follows PPS closures and late starts for the east side, which are announced at www.flashalert.net/news.html?id=69. Fire drills and emergency evacuation drills are held on a regular basis. The evacuation plan is posted and all staff members are familiar with these procedures.

In case of evacuation we will either be at Berkeley Park (weather permitting) or Holy Family School (7425 SE César Chávez). We will contact parents as soon as possible after evacuating. Please let us know if you would like to see a detailed description of our emergency procedures for illness, fire, earthquake, and evacuation.

In these situations, parents will be contacted as soon as children are safe. Emergency files are kept right by the classroom exits for accessibility, and all adults take contact information for each child with them whenever they exit the building.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In order to be prepared for an emergency or earthquake, Puddletown School requires families to provide their child with provisions that will last one day (24 hours). The following items are requested:

- Nonperishable food items (e.g., snap-open cans of fruit and tuna, crackers, raisins, sunflower seeds, fruit rolls, granola bars)
- A picture of the family and pets
- A brief note addressed to your child offering encouragement and comfort
- A small toy or stuffed animal
- A large plastic lawn bag
- A space blanket

Please place all items in a resealable bag that is *dated* and *labeled* with your child's name on it. Each child must have her own kit of provisions. Each guide is responsible for storing the kits in their classroom so they will be readily available in an emergency. Kits will be returned upon request at the close of the school year or before the end of school if a child leaves. For the 2015–16 school year, all children must have a kit at school by the second week of October.

REUNIFICATION PLAN

In the event of an evacuation, parents/guardians will be notified as soon as the children are in a safe environment and all of their needs are met. This will be done primarily by phone, email and by the Puddletown website if necessary.

For non-evacuation emergencies that are not life threatening, we will notify parents/guardians either by phone or at the end of the day. If necessary, a letter explaining the nature of emergency and action taken will be sent home. In the event of an evacuation, parents/guardians will be reunited with their children at a location deemed safe by emergency personnel. We will refer to the child's emergency contacts for individuals who are allowed to pick up each child. We will follow our normal policies regarding identification checks if necessary.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

ARRIVAL TIME

Classroom doors are unlocked between 8:20-8:30am. If you would like to take advantage of our drop-off program, please arrive at the curb on SE Knapp Street between 8:20-8:30am.

DRIVE-THROUGH DROP OFF

Drop off is on the south side of Puddletown on SE Knapp Street. Please make sure you are facing west as you pull up. To help foster good relationships, do not use our neighbors' driveways to turn around. Pull up to the drop off zone and a staff member will escort your child to her classroom. If you are early, please wait with your child; staff members are unavailable to be with children before 8:20am. A \$1/ minute fee will be charged for early drop off. If it is a repeat situation, you will receive a call and an alternative solution will be sought.

PARKING

Parking is available on SE César Chávez Blvd. and in the parking lot on the north side of the school; the entrance to the lot is on SE Ogden Street. If you park in the lot or on the street, you can escort your child to the door of their classroom and say goodbye outside. Sage and Lavender doors are located on the east side of the building (Sage is the north classroom and Lavender is the south classroom), for entrance to the Cedar and Doug Fir classrooms, use the SE Knapp Street door and escort your child to the interior door, where they will be greeted by a staff member. Children will wash their hands after they have said goodbye and taken care of their things.

LATE DROP OFF & PICK UP

Promptness in a child's life is very important. Children who arrive late or who are picked up late tend to feel uncomfortable. Tardiness can be very disruptive to the teachers and classes in session and creates an awkward beginning for a child's day. Children arriving at school on time create an important ritual with their community to start their day. Consistency is an integral part of the child's schedule.

If you are running late and try to reach us by phone, we may not answer as we are often helping children with dismissal. Please leave a message and we will contact you as soon as we can.

LATE POLICY

If you arrive after 8:30am please wait at the SE Knapp Street door until 8:45am, when a staff member will come and walk your child to her classroom. After 8:45am, children will be permitted to join their class only if special arrangements have been made.

When late picking up, your child will be waiting with an adult. If you are more than five minutes late five times to pick up your child, you will receive a note. On the sixth time we will begin charging \$1/minute.

GOODBYES

Goodbyes can be an emotional and anxious time for children and parents alike. It is important to remember that lengthy goodbyes are hard on everyone. Parents are reminded to model the behavior they want their child to demonstrate. Be strong and confident! Consistency is the key. Please remember the tears rarely last long. You are always welcome to call and check in after a difficult goodbye.

PICK UP

Half-day pick up is from outside your child's classroom door at 12:45pm. If you are late, please come to the office. Extended day and elementary pick up is from your child's classroom door at 3:15pm. Aftercare pickup is from the aftercare room or the playground anytime between 3:15–5:30pm.

DISCIPLINE/CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Montessori grace and courtesy lessons introduce the skills of active listening and conflict resolution. Basic skills and examples give students appropriate choices in social situations that require taking turns, reacting to problem situations, understanding another's point of view, communicating clearly, stating one's feelings and needs, creating win-win solutions, and acting as a third party mediator for others with conflicting needs and coming up with solutions that move them to a resolution.

In any environment conflicts arise naturally. Practicing conflict resolution gives children the skills to solve problems themselves. This method also gives children tools for dealing with conflicts before they happen, which helps to avoid discipline problems that come from not knowing how to work through arguments peacefully. We want to give children the skills to create a balance between freedom and responsibilities—to teach them to respect themselves, others, the classroom, and the materials.

While this approach to discipline is effective for most children, there are always exceptions. A child who has misbehaved is sometimes requested to work for a time near the guide. Guides gently redirect the child toward work that will engage her interest. The child might be assigned temporarily to work at a seat or specific area. When necessary, careful physical restraint (bear hug) is permitted when a child appears out of control and may harm themselves, materials, or others. If necessary, a conference with a child's parent will be scheduled. If a child becomes too disruptive, arrangements will be made for the child to be picked up. Our aim is to be fair and compassionate while remaining realistic, and this may mean finding a better place for the child to be successful.

In the elementary program we continue our education for peace. A key component of our program is to foster respect for each child's progress along the path of truthfulness, honesty, empathy, compassion, and action in relation to immediate peers and our larger community. We further develop peer mediation where the children are prepared and supported to resolve issues among themselves, guided and encouraged by the adult. We strive to give them the tools to handle generalized and ongoing issues as well as specific interpersonal conflicts. Our goal is to empower a self-managing elementary community where they are organizing and managing the daily operations of their environment and community.

POSITIVE APPROACHES TO BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal at Puddletown. Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly and logical manner. Children choose work that they are capable of doing and are free to do as long as they wish without interference. This approach alleviates many problems of discipline that might arise in another kind of environment. In addition, the mixed-age group gives the younger children an opportunity to emulate the more mature behavior of older children.

PROTOCOL FOR ONGOING, UNRESOLVED ISSUES

All discipline will be administered in the moment in a loving, consistent, fair, and positive manner. Parents will be notified of serious discipline problems immediately. Minor problems can be solved through communication and consistency between school and home. This communication serves as a valuable tool to enable both teachers and parents to have similar expectations in the guidance and discipline of their child. No use of physical punishment is ever used. The consequence for inappropriate behavior is simply to separate the child from the person, area, or situation in question and allow the child to regain control. This separation occurs as kindly and as naturally as one would separate a child who is ill. This pause is always used as positive motivation in helping a child realize what is appropriate and what is not acceptable. The child is never criticized, the inappropriate behavior is defined with our expectations in as short and clear a way as possible. All redirection is presented in a positive manner to teach the child how to be a better individual, a better friend, and a better human being.

In the case of extreme disciplinary problems, every attempt will be made to work together with parents to establish specific ground rules and expectations for the future. However, if these attempts fail to meet the child's individual needs, both staff and parents should re-evaluate the benefits of the child staying in the program. If the staff notices that the child may be in need of additional support, parents will be asked to sign a waiver to allow an observer to come in and evaluate the child. If the parent is unwilling to sign the waiver, the child will be asked to leave the program. Any child whose presence is determined to be detrimental to the group as a whole shall also be asked to leave the program.

HEALTH POLICY

If your child is sick and will not be attending school, please call or email by 9am.

In the classroom, children tend to infect and re-infect each other. When young children are recovering from an illness, they may seem fine at home. However, when you bring them back to school too soon and they are in a group setting, they may ultimately stay sick longer. We want your child to be well enough at school to take care of his or her own physical needs (as appropriate for their age), and contribute as a member of the group all day. If your child has clearly developed a communicable illness, please make other arrangements for her care. Also, please call us so we may alert all families to look for symptoms.

In Oregon any child who has had an elevated fever, vomiting, or diarrhea is required to be free of symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child has been to a doctor and needs medication, she is not to return to school until the medication is “active” (usually after 2 doses). If your child is found to be sick at school and needs to be at home, we will contact you.

MEDICATIONS

No prescription medication or nonprescription medication, including but not limited to pain relievers, or first aid ointments, may be given to a child except under the following conditions:

- A signed, dated, written authorization by a parent is on file.
- Prescription medication is in the original container and labeled with the child’s name, name of the drug, dosage, directions for administering, date, and physician’s name and signature.
- Nonprescription medication is in the original container, labeled with the child’s name, dosage, and directions for administering.

LICE

Head lice infestations have been an occasional problem at Puddletown, as in schools everywhere. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) released new lice guidelines in 2010 stating that children with lice should stay in school:

Head lice are not a health hazard or a sign of poor hygiene and, in contrast to body lice, are not responsible for the spread of any disease. No healthy child should be excluded from or miss school because of head lice, and no-nit policies for return to school should be abandoned. Though head lice pose no definite health threat, the bugs are an annoyance for children and adults alike.

—American Academy of Pediatrics

Lice do not spread disease, most often they just cause itchiness, although not everyone gets the itchiness. Transmission within schools is thought to be relatively low. Many school outbreaks, which typically first show up in October, are left over from the summer.

What's more, children are typically diagnosed several weeks after infection since it takes about a month for the scalp to start itching. Most of the transmission of lice happens before the child is even aware she has them.

The pediatricians' group also suggests that parents combating an outbreak might want to try alternative treatments that don't rely on pesticides. Among these is "wet combing," or wetting the hair with water or other fluids and combing out the lice and eggs, or nits, with a fine-toothed "nit comb."

We will notify the community of any lice outbreaks and ask that you take precautions at home to ensure the quickest possible end.

ILLNESS & INJURY

If your child has an accident or is involved in a noteworthy incident at school, normal first aid and follow-up procedures will be followed. An accident/incident report and copy will be completed and handed to you at the end of the day. The copy must be initialed by a parent to indicate they have received it, and then returned to us. Parents are notified at the time of the accident or incident if there is a question as to whether the child should be picked up. In the case of an accident that requires your child to be taken to a doctor or hospital, the parent will be called IMMEDIATELY. If the parent or emergency contact person cannot be reached and the staff thinks medical care is necessary, the child's doctor will be called. If the injury is life threatening, we will call 911. In a medical emergency we will have your child transported to the nearest hospital.

TOILET TRAINING

All children enrolled in our program must be toilet trained. This is defined as knowing when and how to use the bathroom independently. Since accidents happen, we ask that an extra set of clothes be kept in the classroom. Please dress children in clothing they can manage themselves. Buttons down the back, one-piece outfits, and buckle belts are difficult for young children to manage.

LUNCH & SNACK

Puddletown students bring their lunch to school every day. Lunch is a very important part of your child's school day. If a child comes to school with food containing sugar or a sugar substitute as one of the first three ingredients, the food will be sent home for eating later. Please do not send juice boxes or food that comes in a tube. Uneaten foods will be sent home. We appreciate your care in preparing a good and balanced lunch.

Depending on children's schedules, they may eat snack 1-3 times per pay. Parents submit a \$150 snack fee each September (\$100 extra for each additional child enrolled), and Puddletown staff purchase snack for all classrooms. We make every effort to purchase organic food whenever possible and always make sure that snacks are healthy and low in sugar. We can accommodate most food allergies/intolerances by referencing the forms parents fill out upon enrollment. If there are any changes in your child's diet please notify us immediately.

FIELD TRIPS

Primary classes occasionally take walking field trips around the neighborhood area. When we are off campus we leave a note with our planned map and a phone number in case you need to reach us.

Elementary children begin taking more field trips and participating in an individual excursion we call Going Out. These are excursions into the community that are thought of and planned by the students themselves. Going Out is to be a natural extension of the learning begun in the classroom. These trips are supervised by the guide and parents with the goal of establishing the children's responsibility for their own safety and education. The elementary students also participate in an overnight Outdoor School trip at the end of every school year.

HOLIDAYS

Holidays that focus on history, seasons, and cultural heritage are observed throughout the year. If your family observes a specific holiday, please feel free to talk to us and perhaps offer items that would enrich a classroom celebration.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

IN THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM

Birthdays are special. Please join us at the school celebration of your child's birthday. You can bring photos of your child and help us tell the story of your child's life.

If you are planning a home birthday party for your child, please do not bring or hand out invitations at school unless everyone is invited. Those not invited may have hurt feelings.

The Birthday Walk

During the birthday celebration each child is honored with "The Birthday Walk." Parents share in this important occasion by helping their children select photographs from each year of their life and preparing a written history of milestones reached and fun times had during each year. Parents are invited to share some of these milestones as the teacher leads the celebration and the child "walks around the sun" for each year celebrated. Parents should make every effort to participate in this beautiful ceremony with their child.

IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

Birthdays are honored at the elementary level with peers and a classroom celebration. Often the birthday child brings a treat to share with the group. Please check in with the guide to see about any allergies before bringing a birthday treat for the classroom.

A Birthday Book

To enhance our libraries, we ask each family to give a library book to the school on their child's birthday. A book is truly a gift that keeps on giving. Your child feels a sense of pride to see her name inscribed in a book. Children are also interested in the books given by their friends. When considering a birthday book, you can ask the teacher for a suggestion, or suggest a favorite book. The presentation of a birthday book can be an integral part of your child's birthday celebration.

CLOTHING

Comfortable clothes are encouraged (i.e. simple, washable, sturdy, and easy-to-manage). In cold weather, layering is best. Please have your child's name on all clothing—including boots, hats, and gloves—so we can help identify their clothing. Raincoats and boots are a must for rainy winters.

Your child must have a complete change of weather-appropriate clothing, including underwear and socks, kept in the classroom. The extra clothing should be brought with the child on the first day with her name on it; the set should be checked frequently.

Clothing that cannot be dirtied should be left at home. Please also remember that when children come to school in clothing with characters (e.g., super heroes, Disney characters), it can be a disruptive distraction. Please focus on providing clothing that is label and character free.

LOST & FOUND

Misplaced and unlabeled items will be placed in the lost and found box in the entry and purged at the end of every other month.

MYSTERIOUS OBJECTS

Many of our classroom materials consist of small attractive objects that are appealing to children. If you find any mysterious objects in your child's possession, please return them to school.

SUGGESTION BOX

Have a great idea? Insight? We would love to hear about it. Please place your suggestion in the tuition tin located in the entry. You can also email or call us with any ideas or concerns.



VOLUNTEERING AT PUDDLETOWN

Every family is expected to contribute their talents and time to fundraising, community events, and classroom endeavors with a minimum of 10 hours a year (5 hours more for each additional child). At the end of the school year a per-hour payment of \$20/hour is charged for families who have not reached the minimum level. A time card will be in the entry for you to keep track of your hours. We will tally your hours mid-May so that you can include any money owed in your June tuition check. The school makes every effort to connect families to volunteer work that fits their interests, and our goal is that no one use the payment option.

Please ask us about volunteer opportunities. During the course of the year there are many opportunities for parents looking to donate time and energy, including work parties, fundraising, garden care, and bringing a special talent or skill to the Puddletown community. We also look for ways to build our scholarship fund and suggestions are appreciated. Included in your enrollment packet is a volunteer form. Use this form to let us know how and where you have interest in helping.

PARENT ASSOCIATION

All parents with children attending Puddletown are automatically members of the parent association. From there, involvement is up to you. The purpose of the parent association is to serve as an avenue of communication and cooperation among parents, administration, and faculty; to build and foster the spirit of community; and to assist in the implementation of mentoring, fundraising and other school activities.

ASSESSMENT

At Puddletown there are no grades and comparisons are kept to a minimum. Each child is assessed according to her progress on an individual basis. A portfolio is created for each child, in which the teacher records which lessons have been given and observations of the child's interaction in the classroom. Conferences are set up between parents and teachers throughout the year.

At the elementary level parent teacher conferences are led by the students. Each student will arrange a meeting twice a year with both the teacher and the parent to highlight areas of achievement and explore where more work is needed. When that portion concludes, parents and teacher continue the conference without the student. Each student will keep a daily journal of activities and will be checking in weekly to assess progress. The students are made aware of the state standards and work to show how they are meeting and exceeding those standards. Further discussion between the teacher and parents can be made through the office.

TRANSITIONING INTO PRIMARY

At the beginning of the year, students transition into the classroom in phases. The phase-in is a stabilizing period in which the children and teachers get to know one another. During this transition, we foster security and comfort in a smaller group before the whole class meets. The new children get an overview of how things work in the classroom and the returning children receive reinforcement and guidance on how to welcome the new students and act as role models. They prepare by learning the new student's names and how to graciously help them through their first days at Puddletown.

The new children are eager and excited about the year ahead and they learn new skills quickly. Their environment throughout the year will be stimulating and exciting, where independence, freedom, and choice of materials are the rule. The children must learn how to handle this choice and freedom while respecting the materials and each other. We begin the year with a few core materials on the shelves that focus on specific skills and on the completion of a work cycle (taking a task from its beginning to completion). These materials introduce the child to the classroom and allow older children to re-establish work habits. Montessori schools all over the world have a phase-in:

- In smaller groups, the teacher can establish or re-establish a relationship with each child individually, by moving slowly, creating an atmosphere of security and emotional comfort.
- The gradual phase-in allows the child to absorb and digest new concepts and ideas without becoming confused from too much information.
- Phasing-in establishes a tone of respect and care for one another and the environment. It sets the stage for making choices and independent learning.

TRANSITIONING TO ELEMENTARY

The transition into the elementary classroom is done through visits made in the previous school year. Each year we invite all students to start on the same day. New students will be invited over the summer to spend time with a classmate and their family to give a connection for beginning the year.

WHAT TO BRING

PRIMARY

- A complete change of clothes with your child's name on all items
Please check periodically to ensure clothes will be there when needed
- Rain boots, jacket, and pants
Rain pants are optional, but helpful
- Lunch with your child's name on it
Please use an insulated lunch bag with freezer pack for perishable lunch items such as meat, fish, dairy, and previously cooked items
- Weather-appropriate items
Sun hat, winter hat, gloves
- Indoor shoes.

ELEMENTARY

- 1 plain pencil box
- 3 plain lead pencils
No mechanical pencils
- 1 glue stick
- 1 white eraser
- 1 small steel (*not plastic*) pencil sharpener
- 1 set of 24 good quality colored pencils
Laurentien, Prismacolor, Berol or Crayola
- 1 ruler (15 cm)
- 1 3-ring binder (1½" rings)
- 1 spiral bound sketch book (5½" x 8" or 9" x 12")
- Cloth place-mat, cloth napkin and napkin ring
- Mug with a handle
- Library card
- Rain gear

WHAT NOT TO BRING

- Toys of any kind
- Candy, gum, or other sugary food
- Personal items
If your child has a favorite toy or blanket that they are attached to, please practice leaving it in a safe place (the car seat or a specific spot at home) so your child can trust it will be there when they return

TOYS AND BOOKS

Children should not bring toys to the classroom. Books or other educational materials that might be of interest to all children are welcome. Clearly mark your child's name on all items. Avoid bringing special things to school; we can't ensure that they will come back in the same condition (or at all).

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

The classroom environment contains pocket-sized items such as money, rocks, shells, and educational materials. We often have fish to observe in the classrooms. Because of the self-correcting nature of the materials, any material that is missing a part is removed from the classroom until that part is found or replaced. This is a practical and not a punitive action. On some occasions, if your child's pockets should contain such an item, please return it promptly. It can otherwise take six or more weeks to replace an item, and some items are irreplaceable.

Electronic toys, trading cards, and money are to be left at home. If there is a unique item you believe would be of interest to your child's class, send the guide a note asking if and when it may be brought to school.



DAILY SCHEDULE

Monday through Friday

SAGE CLASSROOM:

8:20–8:30am	Arrival
8:30–11:30am	Individual projects
11:30–11:40am	Gathering, transition to lunch time
11:40am–12:10pm	Lunch
12:10pm–12:45pm	Outside
12:45pm	Dismissal for 1/2 day children
12:45–3:15pm	Extended day
3:15pm	Dismissal for extended day children

LAVENDER CLASSROOM:

8:20–8:30am	Arrival
8:30–11:30am	Individual projects
11:30–11:40am	Gathering, transition to outside time
11:40am–12:10pm	Outside
12:10pm–12:45pm	Lunch
12:45pm	Dismissal for 1/2 day children
12:45–3:15pm	Extended day
3:15pm	Dismissal for extended day children

CEDAR CLASSROOM:

8:20–8:30am	Arrival
8:30–11:30am	Individual projects
11:30–11:40am	Gathering, transition to lunch time
11:40am–12:10pm	Outside
12:10–12:45pm	Lunch
12:45pm	Dismissal for 1/2 day children
12:45–3:15pm	Extended day
3:15pm	Dismissal for extended day children

DOUGLAS FIR CLASSROOM (ELEMENTARY):

8:30–11:45am	Individual projects
11:45am–12:00pm	Gathering and transition
12:00–12:30pm	Lunch
12:30–1:00pm	Outside
1:00–1:30pm	Read aloud
1:30–3:15pm	Afternoon work time
3:15pm	Dismissal

THE FIRST WEEKS

Beginning school can be tiring for young children. They are busy forming new relationships and experience new procedures and challenges. Be sure your child has adequate rest and appropriate quality time spent with you. Reluctance to go to school sometimes manifests itself after the first week and usually passes quickly with your consistent support. It is important that you communicate with your child's teacher so that she can be aware of any reluctance and you can be informed of the child's adaptation to school (but be sure not to communicate about this in front of the child; a note or phone call will initiate the discussion). When parents express confidence in their child and the school experience by encouraging her to attend, it helps build her security.

For children and parents the first weeks can bring wonderful and challenging new situations to daily life. It often takes 21 days to form or break a habit. A consistent schedule, positive attitude, and working together can make this transition smoother. If we feel that your child needs additional support or more time to prepare before attending Puddletown with the schedule you have chosen, we will talk with you about options for making your child's experience more successful.

COMMUNICATION

Communication between parents and staff is vital. At Puddletown there are several ways to communicate easily with one another:

- The bulletin board located in the entry is used for notes to and from teachers. Also posted are the school calendar, field trip/walk information, notices, and lists of special events and activities.
- If we are busy, please write us a note with the best time to call. Feel free to email us or call, and leave a message on the school phone if you don't reach us.

All lead guides and administrators are available for meetings by appointment. Puddletown also has parent-teacher conferences twice a year.

Feel free to leave a message for your guide on the classroom clipboard or via email, phone or notes through the office. Expect a timely response and please reach out to Andrea or Sam if one is not given. Be aware that guides are generally checking messages at the end of the day and any urgent messages should go through the office.

WEBSITE

puddletownschool.com

Puddletown's website is full of useful information regarding upcoming events, recent happenings in the classroom, and other helpful material. Our news page is updated frequently to keep families in touch with some of the things that happen during their child's day. Watch for updates on the Puddletown Journal and be sure to follow the Daily Story to find out about the highlights. A unique part of the website at Puddletown is the Daily Story, which includes pictures and stories that the children tell about their day. This section of the website requires a password (sent via email at the beginning of each year).

CHANGES IN THE HOME

Changes in the home can have a profound effect on your child's behavior and performance at school. Please inform your child's teacher of major changes that might affect your child.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

Parents wishing to withdraw their child must provide a statement in writing at least 30 days prior to the discontinuation of the program.

PAYMENT POLICIES

Payment is due in full the first of every month for the current month. Families pay 10 payments beginning in September and ending in June. Families who pay the whole year in advance (by no later than September 30) receive a 3 percent discount. We also offer a sibling discount of 10 percent off of the second child's tuition while they are in attendance together.

A \$20 late fee is assessed to payments made after the fifth of the month. There is a \$25 fee for returned checks. To continue enrollment, a missed payment must be received by the first of the following month.

TUITION

Tuition is based on a 10-month school year.

FEES

2015–16 school year:

- \$6200 (5 mornings)
- \$8150 (5 full days)
- \$8500 (elementary)
- \$880 Early care (offered to a limited amount of children, drop in may be available for \$8/hr depending on space)
- \$1900 After care (drop in may be available for \$8/hr depending on space)

ADDITIONAL FEES:

- \$500 registration fee (one time)
- \$50 materials fee primary (annually)
- \$200 materials fee elementary (annually)
- \$150 snack fee (annually)
\$100 for each additional child

We ask that each family submit a nonrefundable \$500 deposit by the end of February to hold a space for your child for the following year. When September of the next school year arrives, you will submit only the materials fee and the remainder of tuition.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Puddletown offers a limited number of partial scholarships. Awards are based on financial need, space, availability, and family commitment to a Montessori education. The number of scholarships is dependent upon available funds but we strive to offer about 20% of tuition income in scholarships each year. If interested, please submit your most recent tax documents, a written proposal of interest, and any other information that will help us assess your needs. All requests and information are strictly confidential. If you would like to donate to the scholarship fund, please let us know.

REFUNDS OR RELEASE OF CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION

No refunds of paid tuition will be made for any uncompleted portion of the school year unless the child is withdrawn at the request of the school. Please contact us in person and in writing to discuss a need for a tuition waiver. Missed school is not refundable.

STAFF

ADMINISTRATORS

Andrea is a co-founder of Puddletown School. She received her bachelor of arts degree in English literature and creative writing from Colorado State University. After graduating she headed a creative writing and arts program at a local Fort Collins, Colorado, preschool. Andrea then moved to Portland where she began assisting and teaching at the Northwest Children's Theater. In 1998 she began to work at local Montessori schools. She returned to school in 2001 to receive her Montessori certification from Montessori Institute Northwest and a Master of Education degree in Montessori education from Loyola College. She has worked with many Portland public schools and local Montessori schools through outreach and other after school programs. In her free time Andrea enjoys baking, walking her dog, reading, and swimming in the ocean.

Sam is a co-founder of Puddletown School. He has been working for Montessori Education since 1994. He has worked to develop an immersion program for Spanish speaking students and taught in Connecticut at an inner city Montessori school inside the Public School system. He has taught here in the Pacific Northwest in the elementary setting and worked to establish a Montessori middle school. Sam received his BA in Art and English from William Penn a Primary Certificate from Montessori Institute Northwest and a Master of Education degree from Loyola College. He continues to be amazed at how much there is to learn from children.

ELEMENTARY: DOUGLAS FIR CLASSROOM

Raven is the guide in the Douglas Fir classroom. A Portland native, she has worked with children in many capacities over the past 22 years, including assisting in several Montessori programs from Chicago to Portland to London and back to Portland. She has worked for PPS as an occupational therapist with children with autism. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree (with honors) in painting, drawing and printmaking from PSU. Raven holds AMI primary and elementary diplomas as well as a Master of Education degree from Loyola College. In her free time, Raven enjoys traveling in pursuit of artistic inspiration. She loves natural history museums, baking, sewing, creating art, and most of all spending time with her husband and daughter. She feels extremely fortunate to call Montessori her profession and feels passionate about sowing the seeds of wonder, compassion, and joy, and helping to inspire life-long learners!

Matt is the assistant in the Doug Fir classroom. He grew up in Southern Florida, where he first got involved in environmental education while attending and teaching in the Everglades. After moving to the Pacific Northwest, he began working at Trackers Earth in 2012, teaching wilderness survival and primitive skills to children as well as adults. His areas of expertise include medicinal and edible plant identification, animal tracking, wild craft, blacksmithing, archery, and fire-starting.

STAFF

PRIMARY: SAGE CLASSROOM

Amy is the guide in the Sage classroom. She graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in social science from PSU and received her AMI primary teacher training in 1998 at the Montessori Education Center of Arizona. Amy began her exploration with children in Montessori in 1994 as an assistant and enjoys learning new things from them every day. She enjoys gardening, sewing, baking, backpacking, hiking, camping, reading, knitting, travel and finding humor in every day events.

Sara is the assistant in the Sage classroom. The parent of Puddletown alumnus, Netti, and current student, Olive, she was introduced to the school in 2007 and has been an enthusiastic advocate of both the school and the Montessori Method ever since. She has worked providing childcare for nine years and enjoys spending time in the company of children. An Oregonian in all ways except place of birth, she enjoys riding her bike around town with her family, creating art, playing at the park with friends and spending time in nature.

PRIMARY: LAVENDER CLASSROOM

Emmy is the guide in the Lavender classroom. She has extensive experience caring for children. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from the University of Hartford and received her AMI diploma from Montessori Institute Northwest in primary education. Emmy is committed to the essence of the Montessori Method and believes in the marvel of the true nature of the child. She spends her free time cooking, walking, knitting, and sewing, and has a newly sparked interest in maintaining an edible garden in her backyard.

Kimberley is the assistant in the Lavender classroom. Kimberley is from Spokane, Washington where she graduated from Spokane Falls Community College with both business and a liberal arts associates degree. She arrived in Portland in 2006 and has been a member of the Puddletown family since 2007, where she began as an assistant in the Lavender classroom, and immediately fell in love with the joy of the Montessori philosophy. She has studied Early Childhood education and psychology at Portland State University. She is an avid artist and has an extensive history working with children in alter- native education since 1999, including infants and at-risk youth.

STAFF

PRIMARY: CEDAR CLASSROOM

Jane is the guide in the Cedar classroom. Originally from Minneapolis, Minnesota, she moved to Oregon in 2006 to attend the University of Portland, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree, double majoring in Spanish and communication studies. She is a fifth-generation teacher but the first ever in her extensive lineage to become AMI certified as a Montessori Primary Guide. She completed her training at the Montessori Institute Northwest and earned her Master of Education degree from Loyola University in 2012. Jane spent two years as the assistant in the Sage classroom. If she's not at the dog park playing with her Lab puppies Stella and Harlow, Jane can be found reading a good book, sewing, thinking about future travel destinations, or trying to prepare a new scrumptious dish.

Erika is the assistant in the Cedar classroom. She grew up in Missouri and received her Bachelor's degree in Exercise Science from Truman State University. In 2011, she earned her AMI primary diploma at MNW and later a Master's Degree in Montessori Education through Loyola University of Maryland. In her down time she loves seeing live music, dancing, art, crafts, roller derby, travel, backpacking, cooking, and spending time with friends. Other than being a part of the wonderful world of Montessori, she has a passion for health and wellness and continues to help people bring joy and movement into their lives as a personal trainer, holistic lifestyle coach, and Certified Laughter Yoga Leader.

SUPPORT STAFF

Meghann is the guide for the outdoor environment. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a minor in Spanish at Arizona State University, AMI Primary training from the Montessori Education Center of Arizona and Masters of Education at Loyola University. Meghann has always enjoyed observing children's curiosities come to life and is deeply honored to play a role in bringing forth their new discoveries. When not making downward dog bridges for her early crawler or digging for worms with her 3 year old, Meghann might be found reading, gardening, sewing, experimenting in the kitchen, camping with her family, or communing with good friends.

Michael runs the aftercare program and is support staff. He moved to Portland in 2012 from southern California for the Douglas Firs and rivers. He writes poems & stories for children (and grownups) and makes collages from old magazines. He finds kinship in the Montessori Method and with the teachers at Puddletown School. Michael has tutored children with autism, teaches drama classes at the Northwest Children's Theater and runs a creative writing workshop from his home.

STAFF

SUPPORT STAFF

Theresa received her BA from Binghamton University in New York and her MA from the American University of Beirut. She has taught English as a Second Language to adults and children on three continents. Theresa now spends most of her free time with her two daughters, one a Puddletown alumna and one a current student. Traveling is Theresa's passion, but at home she loves to garden and learn new things every day. Theresa is part of our support staff and provides early care at Puddletown.

Erin helps run the aftercare program. She grew up in Montana, where she spent nearly 8 years working with Montessori schools as an after care provider, summer program director, and classroom assistant guide. Currently, Erin is finishing up her BA in Applied Linguistics with a focus on child development and education, as well as a TESL certificate at PSU. She also plans to continue her schooling at the MNW to achieve AMI primary and elementary diplomas. Erin loves hiking, fly fishing, reading, art, singing and travel. She is grateful to be a part of Puddletown, and share her love of the arts, and the outdoors to nurture sprouting young minds!



RESOURCES

BOOKS:

Many of these books are available for borrowing in our parent library.

THE ABSORBENT MIND

Maria Montessori

HOW TO RAISE AN AMAZING CHILD THE MONTESSORI WAY

Tim Seldin

UNCONDITIONAL PARENTING

Alfie Kohn

PUNISHED BY REWARDS

Alfie Kohn

MONTESSORI: A MODERN APPROACH

Paula Polk Lillard

MARIA MONTESSORI: HER LIFE AND WORK

E.M. Standing

TAKING CHARGE

Joanne Nordling

WEBSITES:

CHILD OF THE WORLD CATALOGUE

michaelolaf.net

TOMORROW'S CHILD MAGAZINE

montessori.org

ASSOCIATION MONTESSORI INTERNATIONALE

montessori-ami.org

OREGON MONTESSORI ASSOCIATION

oregonmontessori.org

MARIAMONTESSORI.COM

mariamontessori.com

MONTESSORI INSTITUTE NORTHWEST

montessori-nw.org

NORTH AMERICAN MONTESSORI TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

montessori-namta.org

