

Puddletown  
School  
Family  
Handbook



2022/23

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# Family Handbook



Puddletown School

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## MISSION STATEMENT

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Our mission is to create an environment in line with Dr. 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.

The teachers, known as guides, allow each child the freedom to make choices that feed their 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

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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 preschool and kindergarten 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 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. 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 their 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 Elementary guide is to show the world's interconnectedness and create a class that allows children to discover it for themselves. The Montessori classroom offers children 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.

Adolescence is the third plane, present around ages twelve to eighteen. Montessori middle schools focus on the first half of this period, ages twelve to fifteen or 7-8th grade. Social connections become even more critical at this time and young people begin to exhibit a strong desire to remain independent from adults. It is the Montessori guide's job to find ways to allow youth to experiment with independence within a safe structure and facilitate ways for learners to refine their own personal moral compasses, develop a stronger sense of responsibility, and contribute to more and more of the planning and decision making within the learning environment. Mutual aid, connections with nature, and engaging and vigorous interaction with the arts, humanities and sciences/STEM make this program enriching, memorable, and validating

## **ANTI-BIAS/ANTI-RACIST (ABAR) AND INCLUSION STATEMENT**

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Puddletown School is a community dedicated to dismantling oppression, bias, and white supremacy through intentional community building, ABAR education practices, and mutual aid. We seek to uplift and center the voices of historically marginalized communities. We value intersectional diversity: race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender expression and identity, sexual orientation, religion and belief systems, family structure, cognitive and physical abilities, socioeconomic status, and thought. Celebrating the diversity of our staff, caregivers, and learners enriches learning and teaching experiences for everyone.

We are committed to actively countering systemic biases and racism at our school and in our society. We use anti-bias/anti-racist (ABAR) teaching frameworks to instruct our work and to support children in meeting the four goals outlined by Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards. These are:

### Identity

- Teachers will nurture each child's construction of knowledgeable, confident, individual personal and social identities.
- Children will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.

### Diversity

- Teachers will promote each child's comfortable, empathetic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds.
- Children will express comfort and joy with human diversity, use accurate language for human differences, and form deep, caring connections across all dimensions of human diversity.

### Justice

- Teachers will foster each child's capacity to critically identify bias and will nurture each child's empathy for the hurt bias causes.
- Children will increasingly recognize unfairness (injustice), have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.

### Activism

- Teachers will cultivate each child's ability and confidence to stand up for oneself and for others in the face of bias.
- Children will demonstrate a sense of empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

At Puddletown we are working to:

- Foster and support a diverse and inclusive community of families and educators.
- Create collaborative opportunities for staff, children, caregiver and family development toward cultural intelligence and sensitivity.
- Offer tools, events, activities, and support to help families address issues of diversity, inclusion, and social justice outside of Puddletown.
- Create a climate of respect, reflection, and engagement around issues of cultural sensitivity, privilege, oppression, and power.
- Challenge ourselves to continually reevaluate curriculum, policies, and practices to ensure that we continue to grow and welcome all voices in a way that is consistent with our values of accessibility, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

## **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ACTION STEPS**

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The Portland Metro area rests on traditional village sites of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin, Kalapuya, Molalla, and many other tribes who made their homes along the Columbia River creating communities and summer encampments to harvest and use the plentiful natural resources of the area. (Portland Indian Leaders Roundtable, 2018). We take this opportunity to thank the original caretakers of this land, from whom the land was stolen, and we commit to reparations for their descendants.

Puddletown encourages all community members to learn the names, pronunciations, and stories (past and present) for the Indigenous people of this land. Join us in committing to take impactful action to support Native communities. For the year 2022, one step Puddletown has taken is making recurring monthly contributions to the Peacekeeper Society, an organization Puddletown staff voted to support.

## **PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

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Puddletown's preschool/kindergarten 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 preschool/kindergarten program meets at the following times:*

- Early care 7:30–8:15am to a limited amount of children
- Arrival 8:15–8:30am
- Half day 8:15am –1:00pm
- Extended day (dismissal 3–3:15pm)
- After care 3:15–5:30pm
- Early care or After care drop-in may be available with 24 hour notice

## **CURRICULUM**

In the preschool/kindergarten 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 their physical environment and their 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 them, both natural and man-made.
- The child develops techniques and skills that are basic to other areas of development.
- The child unites their growing body, developing intelligence, and will.
- The child comes to discover the joy of participating and contributing in a community setting.



The success of the preschool/kindergarten program depends on this foundation of practical life. 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 their 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 their sensory awareness and organize their 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 AND 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 they know and do. 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 their own choice at their 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 three to four-and-a-half years old) to rest.

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. Fifty 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

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Puddletown's elementary program is for children ages six through twelve. At the elementary level, children receive lessons in a mixed-age grouping in an environment created to encourage community building, deep self-knowledge, and capable confidence. Learners are invited to small group lessons using manipulative materials, stories, and dynamic, hands-on demonstrations to support them in developing core academic skills, facilitate the development of executive functioning and to encourage collaborative learning. The lessons are a starting point and an invitation to expand learners' knowledge of a subject through creative, collaborative follow-up projects and practice toward mastery with Montessori materials.

Learners take ownership of their education process and cultivate personal responsibility for their learning through the use of the journal, regular 1-1 meetings with the teachers, and by being guided to work toward the expectations of the common core curriculum.

Puddletown's elementary program meets at the following times:

- Early care 7:30 to 8:15 a.m. to a limited amount of children
- 8:15 a.m to 3:15 p.m. (dismissal 3:00-3:15 p.m.)
- After care 3:15 to 5:30 p.m.
- Early care and After care drop-in may be available with 24 hour notice)

The elementary child is thirsty for knowledge about the whole universe and our curriculum allows children to see and explore the connections between everything they are actively learning. The elementary approach supports children's developing intellect by providing stories and lessons that impress upon them the immensity of time, the intricate and amazing evolution of life on our planet, and the responsibility that we have as humans to be agents of positive change. By seeing the whole, children better understand their role—their strengths within a community and what their contribution can be!

At the beginning of every year, Puddletown teachers tell the “Five Great Stories,” dramatic tales that introduce key curricular areas and spark learners' curiosity. The intention of these lessons is to create excitement and to raise more questions than answers so that the learners feel impelled to seek out information through research, asking for further lessons, or going out. These lessons provide meaningful context for the key lessons that follow and again impress children with the sense of interrelationships that exist in our universe.

The Five Great Stories include:

1. The Story of the Creation of the Universe
2. The Story of the Coming of Life
3. The Story of Human Beings
4. The Story of the Development of Literacy
5. The Story of the Development of Numeracy

These lessons provide the foundation for the key lessons that follow up on various strands from these stories and that expand in complexity as children develop their intellectual capacity for deeper learning. The subject areas we address in our elementary community include the following:

- Science (biology, earth science, astronomy, and chemistry)
- History and physical geography
- Language
- Mathematics and Geometry
- Arts, music, drama, and physical fitness

Learners initiate, plan, organize and carry out "going out" trips to meet a tangible need they have and/or to extend their classroom knowledge. Trips to the public library, pet store, hardware store or to museums, natural area, and historical sites allow children to meet their need to extend their learning beyond the classroom walls. Empowering learners to lead these trips establishes and invigorates the children's responsibility for their own safety and helps ensure their ability to clearly and make sound choices in taking care of themselves.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

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Fall 2022 marks the beginning of what Puddletown aims to be a collaboration across Southeast Portland Montessori Preschool-Elementary schools -- the slow growth development of a Montessori Adolescent/Middle School program.

A Montessori adolescent program provides the opportunity for adolescents to realize they are strong, worthy, and capable. It responds to the adolescent's need to exhibit creativity, to problem solve, to take responsibility, and to claim independence. We want each student to find a place in the community and become a respectful, responsible, and ethical contributor to society.

Students will learn from an array of adults and experience both on and off-site, in areas both urban and rural. As with our Elementary program, they will remain aligned with state education benchmarks, while also engaging their whole self in their education and their work. Stay tuned for fuller details!

## ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS

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We understand that life happens. We also hope that your child misses school only when absolutely necessary. Many wonderful and important things happen here every day that connect classroom community members together, and we want your child to regularly feel and be a part of that. Late arrivals and early departures can also create a disruption or distraction to the group as well as your child missing beginning-of-day or end-of-day full group gatherings and announcements.

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, they might miss a presentation or group discovery and be left to explore on their own, without the support of their classmates. This can lead to feeling left out or disconnected.

## ADMISSIONS POLICY

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### *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 children.

*The following requirements must be met prior to admission:*

- Prospective Puddletowners 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 child begins class.
- A registration fee must be remitted to save the child's place.

## PUDDLETOWN CALENDAR

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Puddletown School loosely follows the Portland Public Schools (PPS) calendar. Please consult the calendar included in your packet, Puddletown's website, and the list below for holidays, teacher planning days, etc. Throughout the year we will have other scheduled events, such as adult education nights (fall and spring), work parties, and fund raisers. The dates of these events will be announced as they approach. For closures due to weather and other emergencies, we generally follow PPS east side. If we are making a different decision than PPS, we will contact children's adults via email and text.

### 2022

#### AUGUST 29

*First day for 2nd–6th year Elementary students and returning students in preschool/kindergarten*

#### SEPTEMBER 1st

*First day for 1st year Elementary students*

#### SEPTEMBER 1-15

*Orientations and first days for new preschool/kindergarten students*

#### SEPTEMBER 5

*No school - Labor Day*

#### OCTOBER 5

*No school - Yom Kippur*

#### OCTOBER 10

*No school - Indigenous Peoples' Day*

#### NOVEMBER 10

*Half Day - Teacher planning day*

#### NOVEMBER 11

*No school - Veterans' Day*

#### NOVEMBER 18

*No school - Teacher planning day*

#### NOVEMBER 21 - 25

*No school - Fall Break*

#### DECEMBER 19 - 30

*No school - Winter Break*

### 2023

#### JANUARY 2

*No school - Teacher planning day*

#### JANUARY 16

*No school - Martin Luther King Jr Day*

#### JANUARY 23

*No school - Lunar New Year (observed)*

#### FEBRUARY 20

*No school - Presidents' Day*

#### MARCH 27 - 31

*No school - Spring Break*

#### APRIL 3

*No school - Teacher planning day*

#### APRIL 28

*No school - Teacher planning day*

#### MAY 29

*No school - Memorial Day*

#### JUNE 9

*Half Day - Last day of school*

## **OBSERVATIONS**

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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 and may be hosted virtually or in-person.

During a virtual observation, please mute yourself and turn off your video, and not record the session. During an in-person 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 children's adults 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's guide.

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 activity, the range of ages the types of activities, the individual and group activity, and the interactions among the children. Take some time to watch the guide and notice the composure, observation, and respect the guides 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 guides and staff.

Please plan to spend at least a half 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 CLOSURES, WEATHER SAFETY AND FIRE DRILLS**

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Puddletown School generally follows PPS closures and late starts for the east side. 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 children's adults 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, children's adults 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

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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 garbage bag
- An emergency 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 their 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. All children must have a kit at school within the first month of school.

## REUNIFICATION PLAN

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In the event of an evacuation, children's adults will be notified as soon as the children are in a safe environment and all of their needs are met. This will be done using whatever type of communication is most readily available. Whenever possible we will use Flash Alert, our text service managed by Twilio, phone, email and the Puddletown website if necessary.

For non-evacuation emergencies that are not life-threatening, we will notify children's adults 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, children's adults 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**

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### **ARRIVAL TIME**

Classrooms open at 8:15am. Drop off is from 8:15-8:30am. If we are offering it and you would like to take advantage of our drop-off program, please arrive at the curb on SE Knapp Street from 8:20-8:30am.

### **DRIVE-THROUGH DROP-OFF**

Drive through drop off is an offering possible some years and not others. We will communicate if this is available this school year prior to the first day of school. If drive-through drop-off is indeed available, 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 block or use our neighbors' driveways to turn around. Pull up to the drop-off zone and a staff member will escort your child to their classroom. If you are early, please wait with your child; staff members are unavailable for drive-through drop-off before 8:20am.

### **PARKING AND DROP-OFF**

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 their classroom's entrance 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 Sunflower classroom, use the SE Knapp Street door, where they will be greeted by a staff member. Elementary children will enter the South building through the building's east corridor or west staircase.

### **LATE ARRIVAL AND PICK-UPS**

If arriving after 8:30, come to the North Office door on Ogden and ring the doorbell. A staff member will come to welcome your child and escort them to their classroom.

If you anticipate a late pick-up, please reach out to us by phone. Please know that around 3pm 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 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 their adults alike. It is important to remember that lengthy goodbyes are hard on everyone. Children's adults 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's drop-off location at 1:00pm. If you are late, please come to the office. Extended day and elementary pick up is from your child's drop-off location from 3-3:00 15pm. Aftercare pickup is from the aftercare room or the playground anytime between 3:15-5:30pm.

## **GUIDANCE & CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

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Children naturally test and observe the world around them. We find that modeling is the best way to give children the skills they need for navigating conflict. Children observe and imitate all people in their environment. Children's caregivers are the primary source for this information, and as they enter the classroom they expand their skills as they continue to observe and imitate. Demonstrating a variety of healthy responses to frustration and setbacks, as well as modeling effective problem-solving techniques and non-judgmental communication, are especially valuable to children who are still learning to establish their own self-control.

In any environment conflicts arise naturally. In the classroom, we use what Montessori called "grace and courtesy" lessons to develop the skills of active listening and conflict resolution. Through modeling, children are shown appropriate choices for all manner of social situations, typically before they happen. They are then given the opportunity to practice. We make an effort to show examples of how to gracefully manage taking turns, react to a variety of challenging situations, and understand another's point of view. We strive to give children the tools for coming up with peaceful solutions and create a balance of individual freedom and responsibility. As these skills grow, they find themselves naturally acting as third party mediators for others.

## **EDUCATION FOR PEACE**

At the start of the year in the preschool and kindergarten classrooms we often use an object and a guide, staff person or an older child to facilitate a conversation. A peace rose, stone, shell, or other object is passed as a way of designating the speaker. This discussion evolves without placing blame. In a grace and courtesy lesson we give the script for how to tell someone what is wrong. "I didn't like it when you \_\_\_\_\_." "Next time would you \_\_\_\_\_." Eventually this will be done without a guide, staff person or an older child.

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, and prepare and support children to resolve issues among themselves. 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 the children are organizing and managing the daily operations of their environment and community.

In addition, in the elementary setting we have a weekly meeting called 'Circle of Friends.' During this meeting members of the community offer suggestions for resolution for a variety of topics, without blaming. The group develops skills for showing empathy and functional problem solving, eventually appointing an older child in the group to facilitate and lead the discussion.

## **POSITIVE APPROACHES TO BEHAVIOR SUPPORT**

Puddletown School strives to provide a learning environment in which each and every child feels secure and loved. We work to address issues as a community early. It is important that communication is clear and timely to be as effective as possible. The development of inner regulation in a child is always the goal. Often dysregulated behavior is the result of frustration or impulsiveness. It is our belief that skills such as learning to listen carefully, to calm oneself, to generate suggestions, to imagine someone else's point of view, etc., must be taught and cultivated.

Self regulation is an important skill and is fostered in many ways. The classroom lends stability with an organized and logical layout to the classroom and its rules. This alleviates many common discipline issues 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.

All redirection is done in a loving manner. We look for the underlying reasons for a given behavior instead of reacting to the surface situation. Minor problems can be solved through communication and consistency between school and home. This communication serves as a valuable tool to enable both guides and children's adults to have similar expectations in the guidance of the child. No use of physical punishment is ever used. The consequence for challenging behavior is to kindly and naturally separate the child from the person, area, or situation in question and allow the child to regain control. This pause is always used as positive motivation in helping a child realize what is appropriate and what is not acceptable. The child is not criticized. The challenging behavior is defined with our expectations in as short and clear a way as possible. All redirection is presented by phrasing to the child what behavior we would like to see. This positive phrasing is done in an effort to teach the child how to be a better individual, a better friend, and a better member of our community.

## **PROTOCOL FOR ONGOING , UNRESOLVED ISSUES**

In the first 3 months we are getting to know your child. If, after or during the 3 months, attempts to meet the child's individual needs fail, both staff and children's adults will re-evaluate the benefits of the child staying in the program. During this time of evaluation, we will communicate frequently.

A child who is having trouble navigating challenges peacefully is asked to work closer to the guide or another staff person. When the child seems ready, the guide or another staff person gently redirects the child toward work that will engage their interest. This can include offering a chance to do some deep breathing, a space with less people, noise-canceling headphones, or another solution that seems helpful.

When necessary, careful physical restraint is used if a child may hurt them self or others. When necessary, a specialized plan will be developed. Sometimes this involves asking for additional support from public or private specialists. Whenever an outside specialist is working with a child or family, we ask to be connected and receive copies of written reports.

Puddletown recognizes that there are some situations that are unique and therefore reserves the right to deviate from policy when necessary. In these instances all consequences will be considered and acted upon after at least two members of the staff (including an administrator) come to a consensus, taking into consideration the circumstances, welfare of the child, and the school as a whole. Our aim is to be fair and compassionate while remaining realistic about our ability to serve the child.



## HEALTH POLICY

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If your child is sick and will not be attending school, please call or email by 9:00am.

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 their own physical needs (as appropriate for their age and capacity) and contribute as a member of the group all day. If your child has clearly developed a communicable illness, please make other arrangements for their care. Also, please call us so we may alert all families to any trends in symptoms across the community

In Oregon any child who has had an elevated fever, vomiting, or diarrhea is required to be free of symptoms for 24-48hours before returning to school. If your child has been to a doctor and needs medication, they are 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.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the school also has a handbook addendum that is updated in real time is accessible from the banner on our website.

## MEDICATIONS

No prescription or non-prescription 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 child's adult 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) guidelines are as follows:

*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 they have them.

The pediatricians' group also suggests that children's adults 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 the child's adult to indicate they have received it, and then returned to us. Adults 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 child's adult will be called **IMMEDIATELY**. If the child's adult 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

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Puddletown children bring their lunch to school every day. Lunch is a very important part of a child's school day. If a preschool-kindergartend 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 also typically be sent home. We appreciate your care in preparing a good and balanced lunch.

Depending on a child's schedule, they may eat snack 1-3 times per day. Elementary children pack extra food with their lunches so they may also eat snack in their classroom. Puddletown provides snack for preschool and kindergarten classrooms and aftercare. 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 children's adults fill out upon enrollment. If there are any changes in your child's diet please notify us immediately.

## FIELD TRIPS

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Preschool and kindergarten 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 excursions called *going outs*. These are excursions into the community that are thought of and planned by the children themselves. *Going out* is a natural extension of learning the children have begun in the classroom. These trips are supervised by a guide and/or the children's adults with the goal of establishing the children's responsibility for their own safety and education. The elementary children also participate in an overnight *outdoor school* trip at the end of every school year. Elementary children sometimes go on an overnight camping trip at another point in the school year, as well.

## HOLIDAYS

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

## **CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE**

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### **IN THE PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM**

*Trips around the Sun.* We like to make note of each child's trips around the sun and all the amazing changes that happen for our children as they get older. During the celebration each child is honored by holding a globe and demonstrating their trips around the sun. Children's adults 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. Children's adults 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. Children's adults should make every effort to participate in this beautiful ceremony with their child. If you are planning a home birthday party for your child, please do not bring or hand out invitations at school. Those not invited may have hurt feelings.

### **IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM**

Each year we will be hosting gatherings to celebrate the special traits each individual brings to our community. We divide our community into smaller groups and about once a month honor them with a celebration that will include a treat, songs and games. During their month (this is done randomly and makes sure all in our community are celebrated), the group will plan a treat to serve to the group on celebration day. The treat will always be something the whole community can eat. On the day of the celebration, the honorees will each be presented with a compliment book, a book of lovingly crafted letters from their classmates. This celebration will most likely not be on the day your child was born but will be planned out by each group monthly throughout the year.

## **CLOTHING**

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Comfortable clothes are encouraged (e.g., 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 their name on it; When clothes get wet or too dirty to wear, your child will change into their spare set and we will wash and return the clothes to your child's cubby. If clothes are heavily soiled we will return them to you.

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, and also please leave light-up or roller-type shoes at home.

## **LOST & FOUND**

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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**

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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**

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Have a great idea? Insight? We would love to hear about it. Please place your suggestion in the black mailbox outside of the South Office. You can also email or call us with any ideas or concerns.



## **VOLUNTEERING AT PUDDLETOWN**

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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). Puddletown community education events count toward hours. We encourage families to use up to 3 hours volunteering with your child in the greater community (for example, food bank, park clean-up, animal shelter, etc.). 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, unless this presents an undue hardship for your family and we've arranged otherwise. A link will be shared where you can track 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 children's adults 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.

## **FAMILY ASSOCIATION**

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All adults with children attending Puddletown are automatically members of the family association. From there, involvement is up to you. The purpose of the association is to serve as an avenue of communication and cooperation among adults, 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**

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

At the elementary level conferences are sometimes led by the children. During this conference, each child will meet with both the guide and their adults to highlight areas of achievement and explore where more work is needed. When that portion concludes, adults and the guide continue the conference without the child. Each child will keep a daily journal of activities and will be checking in weekly to assess progress. The children are made aware of the state standards and work to show how they are meeting and exceeding those standards. Children will explore and build test-taking skills to be ready when they transition out of Montessori.



## **TRANSITIONING INTO SCHOOL**

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Each new child enters with a provisional thirty-to ninety-day trial period. During this time, the guides expect that all children will experience an adjustment as they begin a new routine with a new guide, staff and classmates. Guides will communicate during this time to share observations, victories, and challenges. If a child is struggling significantly, a meeting will be requested. No child is ever discriminated against because of information shared prior to or during the enrollment process. This information will allow us to serve your child and do our best to meet their needs.

### **PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN PHASE-IN**

At the beginning of the year, children transition into the classroom in phases. The phase-in is a stabilizing period in which the children, guides and other staff get to know one another. During this transition, we foster security and comfort by phasing in new children gradually. 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 children and act as role models. They prepare by learning the new children'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 guide can establish or reestablish a relationship with each child individually, 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.

### **ELEMENTARY PHASE-IN**

The transition from kindergarten to lower elementary and from lower to upper elementary typically begins the previous school year through visits. At the beginning of each school year we spend time with the older children, re-establishing routines before introducing new children to the classroom.

## WHAT TO BRING

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### PRESCHOOL / KINDERGARTEN

- A complete change of clothes with your child's name on all items  
*Please check periodically to ensure clothes still fit and 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*
- Water bottle that closes tightly and is clearly labeled with their name
- Weather-appropriate items  
*Sun hat, winter hat, gloves*

### ELEMENTARY

- Indoor shoes that will live at school. These need to be sturdy enough to wear outside for fire drills and other emergencies, but easy to take on and off.
- Rain gear, rain boots, and warm weather gear
- Lunch and snack
- Water bottle that closes tightly and is clearly labeled with their name
- Multnomah County Library card
- Child-sized hiking backpack, appropriate for hikes or extended days at the park

### WHAT NOT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

- 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 and other critters to observe and care for 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

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*Generally, the Monday through Friday schedule is as follows,*

### **LAVENDER , SAGE AND SUNFLOWER CLASSROOMS :**

8:15 am – 8:30 am	Arrival
8:30 am – 11:30 am	Individual projects
11:30 am – 11:40 am	Gathering, transition to lunch time
11:40 am – 12:10 pm	Outside (Sunflower eats lunch at this time)
12:10 pm – 12:45 pm	Lunch (Sunflower goes outside at this time)
1:00 pm	Dismissal for 1/2 day children
12:45 pm – 3:00 pm	Extended day
3:00 - 3:15 pm	Dismissal for extended day children

### **ELEMENTARY CLASS ROOM :**

8:15 am – 8:30 am	Arrival
8:30am-11:30am	Morning work period
11:30am-11:45am	Tidy up/transition
11:45am-12:15pm	Lunch
12:15pm-1:10pm	Outside
1:00pm-1:30pm	Read aloud
1:30pm-3:10pm	Afternoon work period
3:10pm-3:15pm	Transition/Dismissal

## THE FIRST WEEKS

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Beginning school can be tiring for children. They are busy forming new relationships and experiencing 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 guide so we 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 children's adults express confidence in their child and the school experience by encouraging them to attend, it helps build their security.

For children and their adults, 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

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

- Emailing is the quickest way to get in touch with office and administration. This also allows us to revisit a conversation since all information is saved.
- Phone calls and notes are also encouraged. These can include requests for a longer in-person conversation as well.

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

If a response is needed same day, please go through the office. Guides typically do not check messages during the school day and are unable to communicate during class time unless previous arrangements have been made. Guide emails are checked about once a week.

To best support your child, it is imperative to attend conferences and reply to communications regarding behavior. It is vital that the child receives support when needed. Regular communication is fostered in order to address any emerging difficulties in a timely manner.

## WEBSITE

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[puddletownschool.com](http://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.

Be sure to follow the Preschool/Kindergarten Daily Story and Elementary Weekly find out about the highlights. A unique part of the website at Puddletown are these regularly updated within-community blogs, which includes pictures and stories that the children tell about their day/week. This section of the website requires a password (sent via email at the beginning of each year)

## CHANGES

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Please notify the school as soon as possible if any significant changes occur in your family's life. Your child's guide will be happy to schedule an appointment if you would like to discuss this matter in detail. These events could include:

- Changes in health, including adding or stopping medication or diet. Change in family member's health
- Change of pronouns for child, family members/caregiver
- Loss of a family member, including pets
- Moving or staying somewhere other than home (relative/friend) for an extended period
- Change in family environment (e.g., separation, divorce, new partner, new baby)
- Changes in health, including adding or stopping medication or diet

## WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

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Tuition and enrollment is an annual commitment for the academic year September to June. When you enroll your child at Puddletown, you are obligated to pay the stated annual tuition and associated fees. Should it become necessary to withdraw your child, the following policies apply:

- You must provide written notification to the head of school of your intent to withdraw your child.
- Withdrawal prior to July 1st — *no fee.*
- Withdrawal between July 1st and September 1st — *a prorated tuition fee will be incurred based on the date of withdrawal.*
- Withdrawal after September 1st — *you will be responsible for 50% of annual tuition (minus any tuition installments already paid).*
- Withdrawal after December 15th — *you will be responsible for the entire annual tuition (minus any tuition installments already paid).*
- The head of school reserves the right to consider alternative withdrawal policies based on individual circumstances.

## **PAYMENT POLICIES**

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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 15) 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**

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*Tuition fees for the 2022–23 school year are based on a 10-month school year.*

### **PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN:**

- \$9,150 Half Day – 5 mornings: drop-off 8:15 - 8:30am, pick-up 1:00pm
- \$11,150 Extended Day – 5 full days: drop-off 8:15-8:30am, pick-up 3:00-3:15pm

### **ELEMENTARY:**

- \$12,250 Full Day Only – 5 full days: drop-off 8:15-8:30am, pick-up 3:15pm

### **EARLY & AFTER CARE :**

- \$1,600 Early Care – 7:30am to 8:15am
- \$2,950 After Care – 3:15pm to 5:30pm
- *When space is available, drop-in care is \$10/hr with at least 24 hours notice*

### **PRIMARY FEES :**

- New Child Registration Fee \$500 one-time fee, due by deadline in enrollment invitation email. Non-refundable, not deducted from tuition
- Primary Program Deposit \$800, due during first year of enrollment, holds child's space until primary (ages 3-6) cycle at Puddletown is completed. Will be deducted from tuition in final month of Puddletown kindergarten year. Non-refundable
- Nap Mat & Bedroll Fee \$50 one-time fee
- Building Fee \$100 annually, paid in August
- Materials Fee \$150 annually, paid in August
- Snack Fee \$200 annually, can be paid over 10 months
- Next-Year Deposit \$600 annually by March 1st to hold child's space for the next school year. Will be deducted from the following September's tuition. Non-refundable

## **ELEMENTARY FEES :**

- New Child Registration Fee \$500 one-time fee, due by deadline in enrollment invitation email. Non-refundable, not deducted from tuition
- Elementary Program Deposit \$800, due during first year of enrollment, holds child's space until elementary (ages 6-12) cycle at Puddletown is completed. Will be deducted from tuition in final month of Puddletown 6th grade year. Non-refundable
- Building Fee \$100 annually, paid in August
- Materials Fee \$415 annually, paid in August
- Next-Year Deposit \$600 annually by March 1st to hold child's space for the next school year. Will be deducted from the following September's tuition. Non-refundable

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

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Puddletown School invites any child whose family is interested in our programs to apply for entrance, no matter a famil's financial situation. Please see the Tuition, Fees and Financial Assistance page of the puddletown website for more information. Allrequestsand informationarestrictlyconfidential.Ifyouwouldliketodonatetothescholarshipfund, please let us know.

## **REFUNDS OR RELEASE OF CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION**

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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.



## RESOURCES

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### BOOKS :

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

THE ABSORBENT MIND, THE CHILD IN THE FAMILY, THE SECRET OF CHILDHOOD,  
CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

Maria Montessori

HOW TO RAISE AN AMAZING CHILD THE MONTESSORI WAY

Tim Seldin

UNCONDITIONAL PARENTING, 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

THIS BOOK IS ANTI-RACIST: 20 LESSONS ON HOW TO WAKE UP, TAKE ACTION, AND  
DO THE WORK

Tiffany Jewell

### WEBSITES:

CHILD OF THE WORLD CATALOGUE

[michaelolaf.net](http://michaelolaf.net)

TOMORROW'S CHILD MAGAZINE

[montessori.org](http://montessori.org)

ASSOCIATION MONTESSORI INTERNATIONALE

[montessori-ami.org](http://montessori-ami.org)

OREGON MONTESSORI ASSOCIATION

[oregonmontessori.org](http://oregonmontessori.org)

MONTESSORI PUBLIC

[montessoripublic.org](http://montessoripublic.org)

MONTESSORI NORTHWEST

[montessori-nw.org](http://montessori-nw.org)

MONTESSORI FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

[montessoriforsocialjustice.org](http://montessoriforsocialjustice.org)

NORTH AMERICAN MONTESSORI TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

[montessori-namta.org](http://montessori-namta.org)

