

# **HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN MONTESSORI SCHOOL**



**PARENT HANDBOOK  
2024-2025**



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The information contained in this Handbook is not intended and shall not be interpreted to supersede, in whole or in part, the Enrollment Agreement between HCAMS and the Student's Parents or Guardians. If a discrepancy exists between the Enrollment Agreement and any other HCAMS document, the terms and conditions of the Enrollment Agreement shall apply.

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## WELCOME TO HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN MONTESSORI SCHOOL

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Hans Christian Andersen Montessori School was founded in 1964 and is one of the oldest continuously running Montessori schools in the country. We are licensed by the State of Connecticut and affiliated with the American Montessori Society serving Tolland County and other surrounding communities. We offer four- and five-day, part- and full-time programs for children ages 2 years 9 months through 6 years.

Our approach to educating young children is based on the teachings of Dr. Maria Montessori. Dr. Montessori believed that the goal of education was not to fill the child with facts, but to develop his or her own natural desire to learn. At the Hans Christian Andersen Montessori School, we provide a stimulating, beautiful and child-centered environment where the child can observe, explore and learn at his or her own pace, thus nurturing a lifelong love for learning.



*"Our care of the children should be governed not by the desire to 'make them learn things', but by the endeavor always to keep burning within them the light which is called intelligence."*

-Dr. Maria Montessori

## **HISTORY OF HCAMS**

Hans Christian Andersen Montessori School was opened in Tolland, CT in 1964 by Clara Berman. It is named after a Danish man who invented stories and poems for children's (and adults') delight; including: The Little Mermaid, The Princess and the Pea, and The Ugly Duckling.

In 1969 the school was incorporated as a nonprofit organization, and a Board of Trustees was formed. In 1974, HCAMS moved to Bolton, renting space at St. George's Episcopal Church. The school eventually grew into its current residence at 212 Bolton Center Road in 1986. The building was built in 1938 and originally served as the Bolton Public Library, and the parish of St. Maurice. Rev. William McGurk originally purchased the property in 1898 to run a summer home for girls with respiratory problems.

In 2024, Hans Christian Andersen Montessori School is celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> year. It has a uniquely iconic presence as the "little red schoolhouse" in a beautiful rural setting.

The school has a seasoned history as a nurturing climate in which children can educate themselves through creative activity and sensorial exploration. It perseveres with devotion to and excellence in Montessori early-child education.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to create a community where children can learn and grow to their true potential, in an environment that fosters independent thinking and allows each child to gain the confidence within themselves to become life-long learners.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

At our school, we believe that learning takes place through the senses. Students will learn to manipulate the materials that have been prepared by the teaching team independently and in small groups of peers. The mixed ages in the classroom create a cooperative environment where the youngest children have the positive older role models, and the eldest children learn to mentor the youngest learners. The aim of the Montessori curriculum is to foster life-long learning in children, for them to be confident, to question and problem solve with the assistance of the teachers in the classroom. Each individual child is challenged to become a competent, responsible, adaptive citizen. All the child's intelligences will be developed: physical, emotional, social, aesthetic, spiritual, and cognitive. In our classroom, you will find happy, curious, social children busy learning and experiencing all the wonderful materials that have been carefully chosen for their individual needs. Each teacher is trained to observe children to anticipate their needs, understand their emotions and facilitate future learning experiences.

## **GOALS**

- Challenge children with intellectually engaging lessons
- Maintain weekly lesson plans for each individual child
- Extend children’s vocabulary and understanding of existing ideas
- Build a respectful work environment
- Create a compassionate and nurturing classroom
- Foster positive family and school interactions
- Plan yearly goals for each child
- Build creativity and cognition in each child through open-ended work experiences
- Understand and respect each individual child, their unique talents, and interests
- Help each child develop a habit of concentration
- Create life-long learners

## **VALUES**

- High level of parent involvement
- Strong sense of community
- High academic standards for children
- An inclusive classroom where all children are encouraged to learn at their highest ability
- A caring, giving, respectful classroom enveloping the needs of the community, families, and children
- A respect for nature and the outdoor environment

## **SCHOOL ORGANIZATION**

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

HCAMS is governed by a Board of Trustees, comprised of a combination of parents, staff and alumni or community members. The Board is responsible for general oversight of the school as well as fiscal and strategic management. A current list of Board members can be found in your monthly newsletter.

Board meetings are held monthly. All parents are welcome to attend Board meetings. Open Forum gives parents the opportunity to bring any questions or suggestions before the Board. If a topic is very involved, parents are requested to contact a Board member in advance to request the item be added to a future Board Meeting Agenda. Before an issue is brought before the Board, parents are encouraged to work with the Head of School and/or Head Teacher as appropriate. If an issue arises where Board involvement is required, parents do not have to wait until the next scheduled Board meeting but are encouraged to contact any Board member via phone or email.

## SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

The Head of School and the Teaching Team work together to accomplish our goal of providing a superior early childhood educational experience for our students. The Head Teacher is primarily responsible for all education related activities, including, but not limited to curriculum, conferences, special programs, field trips, orientation of new students, and classroom activities. The Head of School is responsible all business-related functions including, but not limited to, enrollment, licensing, building and grounds, marketing, tuition, and finances.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Full Day Schedule: 8:25 am to 3:25 pm

Morning Session: 8:25 am to 11:45 am

Before-Care Program: 7:45 am to 8:25 am

After-Care Program: 3:25 pm to 5:25 pm

## SCHEDULE OF THE DAY

HCAMS SCHEDULE OF THE DAY	
7:45 – 8:25 am	Optional Before-Care
8:25 - 8:40 am	Drop-off, teachers greet children at car and escort into the building
8:45 - 10:45 am	Independent work period; handwashing and snack time
10:45 - 11:00 am	Group time, stories, songs, and finger plays, transition to outdoor play
11:00 - 11:45 am	Outdoor play
11:45 am	Dismissal for half day students
11:45 - 12:00 pm	Transition to lunch
12:00 – 12:30 pm	Handwashing, lunch and clean up
12:30 – 1:30 pm	Quiet time and reading
1:30 – 2:30 pm	Independent work time
2:30 – 2:45 pm	Handwashing, ground snack time and transition to outdoor play
2:45 – 3:25 pm	Outdoor play
3:25 PM	DISMISSAL
3:25 – 5:25 PM	OPTIONAL AFTER-CARE

## **CANCELLATION**

HCAMS will close for inclement weather in conjunction with the Bolton Public Schools. If Bolton Public Schools are closed for the day, we will close. If Bolton Public Schools have a late opening, we will also open late (based on the time delay) without a change in the rest of the schedule for the day. With a delayed opening, the Before-Care Program will be cancelled for that day. If Bolton Public Schools have an early dismissal for inclement weather, HCAMS will close at 11:45 am and there will be no After-Care. Please check Brightwheel, email, WFSB or NBC Connecticut, or [www.boltonpublicschools.com](http://www.boltonpublicschools.com) for information regarding closures.

If Bolton Public Schools cancel their after-school activities (generally) by 1:00 pm, HCAMS will cancel the After-Care program. If there is impending inclement weather, please be prepared for HCAMS to potentially close early.

In the rare event that both teachers are sick, and subs are not available, school will be closed. Parents will be contacted directly by phone and/or the Brightwheel app. If more than 50% of the students are absent *due to illness*, the school will be closed the following day to clean and give an opportunity for students to rest and recover. Any additional days of closure will be at the discretion of the Head of School.

If the school needs to close for circumstances other than inclement weather, such as heating, flooding, electrical or water problems, parents will be contacted directly by telephone, email and/or the Brightwheel app.

Cancelled days will be made up at the end of the school year. The number of days to be made up will be at the Board's discretion, but in most cases, will equal the number of days cancelled. Early dismissals and late openings are NOT made up.

## **ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**

HCAMS accepts children ages 2 years and 9 months (by September 30) through 6 years into its preschool and kindergarten programs. Registration opens to returning students and siblings during the month of January and opens to the public mid-February. New Student Application Forms are accepted throughout the year and are placed on the school's waiting list. A child's place on HCAMS' waiting list is not the sole criteria by which a child is accepted to HCAMS. A child's school readiness—which includes being fully potty trained, as assessed by HCAMS Staff; the family's willingness to participate in the school community through HCAMS' Parent Guild; a Parent or Guardian's commitment to their child's education in a Montessori environment; a Parent's willingness to communicate and work with the Teaching Staff; and the age and gender distribution of the incoming class are all factors considered when HCAMS Staff considers children for enrollment at the school.



## HCAMS FORMS

Before the start of school, all HCAMS forms must be submitted to HCAMS Staff. If these forms, especially the health forms, are not received by HCAMS staff by the start of school, a student may not begin their program.

*These forms include:*

- All health forms (state and HCAMS-specific), and, all required medications and accompanying script and administration data/authorizations (please see section 31)
- Emergency Contact Names (via Brightwheel Profile)
- Authorized Driver Names (via Brightwheel Profile)
- Media Permission Form (noted in Student Contract)
- Parent Handbook Signature Page

## **SIX-WEEK TRIAL ACCEPTANCE (DISCUSSED AT PARENT MEETING 8/26/2024)**

Each child is accepted on a six-week trial basis. HCAMS staff and facilities are generally not equipped to meet the special needs of children with social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties, or who are otherwise unable to work independently in the classroom. Accordingly, when deemed in the best interests of HCAMS or the student, the Board of Trustees, reserves the right to deny admission to, or dismiss at any time, any student deemed inappropriate, unacceptable, or unsuitable for the HCAMS classroom environment, as determined in the sole discretion of HCAMS. In the event of a school-initiated dismissal, unused tuition will be refunded on a pro-rated basis.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

A child's records are open only to the HCAMS Teacher and Head of School, Board of Trustees, state inspectors, authorized individuals, and the child's parent or legal guardian. Parents must sign a written release form to allow access to student records by any other individuals.

## **TOILET-TRAINED POLICY (DISCUSSED AT PARENT MEETING 8/26/2024)**

- Children **must** be toilet trained to attend HCAMS. Specifically, they must be able to recognize, independently, when they need to go to the bathroom, be able to sit on the toilet without help, independently wipe themselves clean, flush the toilet and wash their hands.
- We understand that occasional accidents, especially in the first few weeks of school, may occur. Please send in an extra set(s) of labeled clothing for your child.
- All children are observed by the teaching staff for the first three weeks of school to assess whether they are trained or not. If it is determined that your child is not trained, a conference will be scheduled to discuss the situation. If your child does not

show signs of improvement a decision will need to be made collaboratively as to whether the child should remain at HCAMS.

## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

*Parents have the right:*

- to know that their child is cared for in a safe, supportive environment;
- to access to their children (unless prohibited by a court order);
- to access the school staff during the school's normal hours of operation;
- to be informed about serious misbehavior on the part of their own child; and
- to be regularly informed of school activities

***Parents have the responsibility to fulfill their obligations as described in various portions of this handbook. These obligations include, but are not limited to:***

- paying tuition and fees on time;
- keeping their child's records up to date;
- following the health policy and being upfront about any symptoms or potential illnesses
- contacting a staff member at the school when picking up a child so that the school knows that the child has been received;
- letting the school office know if their child will not be attending on a regularly scheduled day;
- noting any communications from the Head of School or teachers regarding their child's behavior, and to cooperate in any efforts to bring about improvement in the situation;
- attending school activities that involve parents; and
- informing the school of any significant changes that occur in the home.
- Being responsive to requests from the school to communicate about any issues of concern

***Children have the right:***

- to experience a safe, supportive, and consistent environment;
- to use all the program equipment, materials, and facilities on an equal basis with all the other children;
- to receive respectful treatment;

- to experience discipline that is fair and non-punitive; and
- to receive nurturing care from staff members.

***Children have the responsibility:***

- to be accountable for their actions;
- to respect the school rules that guide them while at school;
- to always remain with the group and staff; and
- to show respect and care for materials and equipment properly.

**TUITION**

Tuition may be paid monthly, in a single lump sum (for a 2% discount) or in two lump sums (for a 1% discount). There is no refund of tuition for absences. Students who are a sibling to another currently enrolled HCAMS student are eligible for a \$200 reduction in tuition for the child with the lower cost program. In all cases, timely payment of tuition is a condition of continued enrollment. Please see your Enrollment Agreement for further details regarding tuition and overdue or delinquent accounts.

**FEE SCHEDULE**

Fee Name	Assessment Date/Time	Amount
Application Fee	On submission of Waiting List Student Application	\$50.00
Registration Fee	At time of signing Enrollment Agreement. One time as a new student.	\$75.00
Activities Fee	At time of signing Enrollment Agreement. A yearly fee.	\$175.00
Parent Guild Hourly Rate	Missed Parent Guild Obligations	\$25.00 per hour
Before-Care	7:45 – 8:25 am	*Annual contract or \$115 punch card for 10 sessions
After-Care	3:25 pm-5:25 pm	*Annual contract or \$200 punch card for 10 sessions

\* Discounted Yearly Contracted Rate available for these programs.

## **WITHDRAWALS AND DISMISSALS**

### **WITHDRAWAL/TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT BY PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S).**

If the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) wish to terminate this Agreement, they shall notify HCAMS in writing.

- If this Agreement is terminated by the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) on or before May 1, 2024, the Enrollment Fees, Activity Fees and first installment of tuition deposit shall be non-refundable, but there shall be no obligation on the part of the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to pay any further tuition.
- If this Agreement is terminated by the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) at any time after May 1, 2024, but prior to September 1, 2024, the Enrollment Fees, Activity Fees and full tuition deposit shall be non-refundable, and the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) agree to pay a total of three (3) months tuition to HCAMS (including the Tuition Deposit).
- If this Agreement is terminated by the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) any time after September 1, 2024, the last day of the month in which HCAMS is notified of the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) intent to terminate this Agreement shall be considered the Withdrawal Date. The Enrollment Fees, Activity Fees and tuition deposit shall be non-refundable, and the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall be responsible to pay three (3) months tuition to HCAMS for the three (3) months following the Withdrawal Date.

### **CANCELLATIONS/CHANGES TO HCAMS BEFORE-CARE/AFTER-CARE PROGRAMS**

HCAMS will allow for cancel/changes to the Before-Care/After-Care Program after the start of the school year. Please notify the office in writing of your intent to cancel/ change your Before or After Care selection.

### **DISMISSALS**

If a student is dismissed from HCAMS, any tuition prepaid will be refunded on a pro-rated basis, however, no other fees shall be refunded. In all cases-dismissal or withdrawal-the first installment of tuition is non-refundable. Please see your Enrollment Agreement for further information on dismissals or withdrawals.

## **PARENT GUILD**

Parent participation is a very important part of our program. Parent involvement is essential to the successful operation of our school and is an essential component of a Montessori education. The Parent Guild was created to give parents the opportunity to share in the classroom experience of the children and to offer their skills and expertise in community service to our school.

Parents are required to fulfill three (3) hours per month of service in a position, which has been approved by the Head of School. Please see your enrollment contract for further information on Parent Guild. Any deviation from our Parent Guild policy is at the sole discretion of the Board of Trustees.

#### **GROUND RULES**

- Children have the freedom to choose their own work in the classroom.
- Work may be done on a work rug or at a table.
- Children will walk in the classroom.
- Children will use an “inside voice” and “quiet feet” while working in the classroom.
- Children will clean up an activity before returning it to the proper place on the shelf.
- Table space will be cleaned, chairs pushed in, rugs rolled, and put away before the child moves on to another activity.
- A child may work with any activity for as long as they choose.
- No child may interfere with the work of another.
- Children may work together only with the consent of all parties involved.
- Every child has the right to refuse a lesson.
- Children are free to observe as long as they are not disruptive.
- Ringing of the bell means to stop moving and listen.
- Children will not interrupt but learn to wait their turn.
- Children must not be allowed to harm themselves, others or their environment.
- When sitting at group time, a hand must be raised, and the child called on when the child has something to say.
- Ground rules are modeled and followed by the adults in the classroom.
- By establishing the ground rules as quickly as possible, every child gains a sense of security because the expectations are known.
- Ultimately, the children become the keepers of their environment.

## **BEHAVIOR AND CONSEQUENCES (DISCUSSED AT PARENT MEETING 8/26/24)**

If a child does not follow the classroom ground rules as stated, the following consequences will be followed:

- Redirection and reminders
- A note or phone call home
- A meeting called with teachers and guardians
- Possible intervention with an educational, social work consultant or psychologist

Parents may be required to pick their child up immediately from school in certain circumstances. Examples of these circumstances are: destructive behavior to school property, bodily harm to themselves or another, uncontrolled behavior and failure to comply with classroom ground rules after repeated reminders.

## **DISCIPLINARY REPORTING (DISCUSSED AT PARENT MEETING 8/26/24)**

*When a child does not follow the ground rules set by the teaching staff:*

- 1) They will be reminded by a teacher of the rules to be followed and redirected to appropriate tasks.
- 2) Peers and teachers will model rules for children.

*Repeated offenses will:*

- 1) Be brought to the parent or guardian's attention.
- 2) Be discussed among the teaching team.
- 3) Be documented in a written journal.

*Serious offenses against the classroom ground rules will result in contact with the parent or guardian in the following ways:*

- 1) A phone call to the parent or guardian.
- 2) Verbally at pick up or drop off time.
- 3) A written note.
- 4) Parents may be contacted to have a formal conference to discuss future action if the child cannot follow the classroom ground rules on a consistent basis.
- 5) Whenever possible the teacher who witnessed or handled an incident with a child will report the data directly to the parent.
- 6) The teaching staff has the right to bring any disciplinary concerns to the Board of Trustees at any time.

## **ACCEPTED AND PROHIBITED DISCIPLINARY MEASURES (DISCUSSED AT PARENT MEETING 8/26/24)**

Developmentally appropriate guidance, which helps children understand and grow, is directed toward correcting or improving situations and behavior. It is the responsibility of the staff to facilitate the development of self-esteem in children by expressing respect, acceptance, and comfort for children regardless of the child's behavior.

*Adult behaviors that are NEVER acceptable toward children include:*

- Screaming in anger
- Neglect
- Inflicting physical pain
- Criticism of child by ridiculing, blaming, teasing, insulting, name calling, threatening, or using frightening or humiliating punishment
- Discussing a child's behaviors among staff members while the child is present

*It is our policy to use the following disciplinary techniques:*

- Providing clear, consistent, fair limits for children's behavior
- Treating all children with dignity
- Valuing mistakes as learning opportunities
- Listening when children talk about their feelings and frustrations
- Giving children the opportunity to solve their own problems
- Patiently reminding children of ground rules and using age-appropriate language to explain rationale as needed

## **BEHAVIOR INCIDENT POLICY (DISCUSSED AT PARENT MEETING 8/26/24)**

Children at this age are still learning appropriate methods of interaction, socialization, and communication. It is not uncommon for a child to resort to some kind of physical action to get their wants met. However, excessive aggressive behavior is not safe or acceptable in our classroom.

- The following behaviors or actions are examples of what HCAMS qualify as an "aggressive behavior":

PHYSICAL: Biting, pushing, stabbing, scratching, spitting, hair pulling, tackling, hitting, choking

EMOTIONAL: intense anger, frequent loss of temper, extreme impulsiveness

VERBAL: use of foul language or extreme hurtful words

- Any aggressive behavior deemed beyond a simple learning experience will be reported to the parents of all students involved (initiating and receiving; no names will be disclosed).

If a child exhibits aggressive behavior, a parent or guardian will be asked to remove the child for the remainder of the day.

After a second incident of aggressive behavior, a meeting between the Head of School, Teaching Team and parents will be necessary. At this meeting we will discuss the behaviors, observations, and an action plan for school and ways the parents can support the child at home as they work through this behavior.

If the behavior does not improve within a specified timeline established between school and parents, the Teaching Team may determine whether the child should be excluded temporarily or permanently from the school.

All such determinations by the Teaching Team shall be subject to review by the Board at the request of the parent; the decision of the Board, in its sole discretion, shall be final.

The school will work with all children and families, but we must also keep the safety and well-being of all the children and staff in mind.

#### **WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL**

- A regular-sized backpack labeled with your child's name to carry important papers and projects safely home in (not pre-school sized.)
- A pair of comfortable slippers, preferably with rubber bottoms (so there are no slips on wet floors). Please refrain from purchasing character slippers with large stuffed heads. These slippers are difficult for children to walk in or sit on the floor in for extended periods of time. Please label your child's slippers with his/her name. They will be stored in the coat room in each child's individual cubby.
- A couple of extra sets of current season clothes in a Ziplock bag, labeled with your child's name. Please label all clothing inside the bag as well. HCAMS staff is not responsible for clothing that is lost, stained, or damaged. Check your child's extra clothing bag throughout the year to be sure the clothes inside are the appropriate size and weight for the season.
- A labeled Ziplock back for soiled clothing.
- Bathroom wipes if your child uses them.
- Water bottle labeled with your child's name.
- Sunscreen &/or hat (Non-prescription topical application form must be on file)
- Lunch box & cloth napkin labeled with your child's name.
- If your child stays all day, please send in a small blanket and small soft comfort toy for rest time.
- For After-Care students, a separate snack, labeled for After-Care.



## **TOYS AND TINY OBJECTS**

Students should leave toys, stuffed animals, pacifiers, handheld games, etc. at home.

On occasion, children may bring some of the classroom materials. These are usually small items that fit easily into pockets, and which cannot be easily replaced (puzzle pieces, etc.) If you discover your child has something unfamiliar, it might be part of our Montessori materials. Please encourage your child to return the material in an honest, upfront manner directly to one of the staff members.

## **LUNCH PROGRAM**

**WE ARE NOT A PEANUT/TREE-NUT FREE SCHOOL.**

We encourage healthy eating at HCAMS! We also encourage proper utensil use where appropriate. We encourage whole food lunches and snacks that are naturally low in sugar and contain a healthy balance of protein and complex carbohydrates. By encouraging your child to help make their snacks and lunch, they are learning valuable practical life skills, establishing healthy eating habits and are more likely to finish their meal at school.

### **NO CANDY, please**

The lunch program is a socializing experience as well as an opportunity for the children to put their practical life skills into action.

They are asked to unpack the entire contents of their lunch box, place it on their placemat and keep the food on the table until cleanup. The children remain seated facing the table quietly talking with the other children nearby. They raise their hands to request an adult's attention/assistance. They are encouraged to practice simple table manners, talking quietly, and using utensils. They are encouraged to consume healthier foods before their snacks and desserts. They are expected, as much as possible, to reserve leftover food and repack it in their lunch boxes so parents have an idea of what is consumed daily. Please refrain from sending in applesauce-type pouches. These discourage practicing utensil use and create lots of waste.

### ***In the lunch box please include:***

- A cloth napkin to be used as a placemat to define the child's personal dining space
- Re-sealable plastic, glass food containers, or Bento-type boxes, allows caregivers to monitor eating habits, leftovers can be repacked, less waste and less trash.
- Flatware as needed
- Small ice pack (**required by state regulations**) to keep lunches cool until lunchtime
- A short note or drawing for your child to read at lunch, if desired
- A napkin
- For AfterCare students, please provide a snack labeled AfterCare

**SNACK PROGRAM**

Having snack at school is FUN! HCAMS provides a snack table for two. Snack is free choice. While the children are eating snack, they wear beaded necklaces, which distinguishes them as snackers. The children sit only at the snack table to eat. The children wash their hands---always---before touching/eating food at school. We provide a serving hutch that houses dishes and utensils to eat with. The children enjoy washing and drying their real plates and utensils in the sink.

Snack is provided weekly by each of our families, on a rotating schedule. A snack and events calendar is distributed monthly, listing names in rotation each school week. This information is also available on the Bloomz app. Each family should provide enough snacks for approximately 30 child-size servings times 5 days (or 4, if it is a 4-day week.) Snack should be brought to school at arrival on the first morning of your snack week. The daily snack is offered to the children throughout the morning independent work period as outlined in our Schedule of The Day.

(Families who have children with food allergies will be asked to provide their child’s daily snack. They will not be included in the rotating snack calendar. These families will also be asked to provide a “special snack” for the staff to keep on hand (i.e. Box of fruit snacks, etc.) For the times when birthdays are celebrated, etc.)

HCAMS strongly encourages fresh, healthy, low-sugar choices. We serve two food groups daily. This is not just a healthy choice, but also a mandate of the licensing laws of the State of Connecticut.

The school will keep a supply of non-perishable snack items on hand if a family forgets their snack. The family will receive a printed reminder of their snack week, along with a request for some non-perishable snacks to replenish the cupboard. The school keeps a written record of the daily menu of snack offerings, per the State of Connecticut.

We request that when it is your week, you provide 3 choices from the fruit, berry, or vegetable categories (washed, but not cut, please) and 4 from the dry goods/dairy/ other category. Below are some suggestions:

<b>VEGETABLES</b>	<b>FRUITS</b>	<b>BERRIES</b>	<b>DRY GOODS</b>	<b>DAIRY/OTHER</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrots (bag)</li> <li>• Cucumbers (6)</li> <li>• Cherry tomatoes</li> <li>• Peppers(sliced)</li> <li>• Celery</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grapes</li> <li>• Clementines</li> <li>• Apples</li> <li>• Raisins</li> <li>• Watermelon</li> <li>• Cantaloupe/ melon</li> <li>• Applesauce</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strawberries</li> <li>• Blueberries</li> <li>• Raspberries</li> <li>• Blackberries</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pretzels</li> <li>• Whole grain crackers</li> <li>• Goldfish</li> <li>• Mini rice cakes</li> <li>• Tortilla chips</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sliced cheese</li> <li>• Yogurt tubes (low sugar)</li> <li>• Cheese sticks</li> <li>• Mini bagels</li> <li>• Cream cheese</li> <li>• Mild salsa</li> <li>• Vegetable dip</li> <li>• Hummus</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>

## OUTDOOR PLAY/ DRESS CODE

We will take the children outside to play as long as:

- The temperature (wind chill factored in) is above 20 degrees Fahrenheit and below 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
- All children must come to school prepared to play outdoors with proper attire. Please dress children in clothing appropriate for sitting on the floor and outdoor play. If the girls like to wear dresses or skirts, please have them wear shorts underneath for modesty's sake.
- As the weather becomes cooler, please remember that leggings tend to be thin, and may not be warm enough. In winter, please provide: snow pants, boots, a hat, gloves or mittens (waterproof, if there is snow on the ground,) and a warm coat with a working closure (all labeled with the child's name.)
- Shoes should be manageable by the child (please no flip-flops.)
- In warmer temperatures, hats to keep sun off their face, **stick or sunscreen that does not need to be rubbed in** (please label sunscreen with your child's name) and a labeled water bottle.
- We do not have the ability to leave children inside if they are not feeling well. If they are too sick to go outdoors to play, please keep them home to rest.
- Please leave jewelry or special items at home.

## DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURE

We will apologize ahead of time, however, as much as we would love to chat with you about your child's day, we cannot do this during the pick-up / drop-off line. Many families are trying to drop-off / pick-up their HCAMS student and then hurry to catch the bus dropping off an older sibling. We would love to chat with you about anything, but we please ask that you call, email, or make an appointment at any other time than drop-off and pick-up and we will be more than happy to accommodate you.

If you are dropping your child off after 8:50, please come through the playground and quietly knock on the back door. A staff member will greet your child and take him/her to the coat room to put their items in their cubby and begin their day.

### Drop Off

- 1) At the start of drop-off, cars line up along the left shoulder of the road in front of the school. The teachers will come to the cars, greet you and your child and have you sign your child in via our Brightwheel App. You will answer the few health screening questions to assure our staff your child is healthy that day. They will then escort your child into the school building and proceed to the next car. **Please stay in your car! If you would like to walk your child into school, please park in one of the spaces.** Families may have other children that they need to get to another school and getting out of your car slows down the car queue.

- 2) Once a car has completed drop-off and pulls away from the line up, then the next car can pull in its place and the rest of the line can move up.

*IF YOUR CHILD DOES NOT EXIT CAR WILLINGLY WITH THE TEACHER, YOU WILL BE ASKED TO PROCEED TO A PARKING SPOT AND YOU MAY WALK YOUR CHILD IN.*

### **Pick Up – Option A**

Cars will line up, along the left side of our road, beginning in front of the school building. The teacher will bring your child directly to you at your car.

### **Pick Up – Option B**

Parents who do not wish to wait in this line up, can also choose to park behind the school and walk to the front of the school where the teacher will call you over to receive your child when your child is ready.

**To make things easier for drop off / pick up, here are some helpful DOs and DON'Ts.**

- **DO NOT** cut in front of the car in front of you, even if there is a space open.
- **DO** dress your child so that they are ready to exit the car when it is your turn.
- **DO** pull as far to the left as possible while waiting to pull up to the school so as not to impede traffic.
- **WHILE WAITING IN THE CAR LINE, PLEASE DO NOT LET YOUR CHILD CLIMB INTO THE FRONT SEAT OR HAVE THEIR HEAD OUT OF THE MOON ROOF. WE HAVE HAD FENDER BENDERS AND DO NOT WANT ANYONE GETTING INJURED!**

### **LATE PICK-UP POLICY**

Navigating the traffic flow through pick-up and drop-off can get difficult, so it is necessary to be prompt when picking-up or dropping-off a child. Please remember to adhere to the following dismissal times:

Morning session:	11:45 am
Afternoon session:	3:25 pm
After Care:	No later than 5:25 pm

### *Late pick-up fee:*

A late fee of \$5.00 for every five minutes will be assessed after the pickup deadline of 3:40 pm (or 12:00 pm for AM students and 5:40 pm for AfterCare students). If, after fifteen minutes, a parent has not called, the staff will contact the names on the child's emergency pick-up list. If, after fifty minutes, the school is unable to contact a responsible person to pick up the child, and the parent has failed to contact the school, HCAMS staff will call the police.

If an emergency should arise and you are unable to pick up your child on time, you must make alternative arrangements for prompt pick-up and notify the school of these arrangements.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **CONFERENCES**

Twice a year, in November and March, we have formal, scheduled parent/teacher conferences. A teacher will then meet with you on Zoom to discuss yearly goals for your child. You will be given a written document with these goals outlined for you. The school is closed for conferences and the teaching staff will meet with you on Zoom to discuss your child's progress. A written evaluation for your child will be given to you at the November conference. March conferences will be a mid-year check in. A second written evaluation will be given to you at the end of the school year. (Kindergarten students do receive a mid-year written evaluation before March conferences). If you should desire a conference at another time in the school year, please contact the teaching staff to set up a convenient time.

### **VISITOR POLICY**

Any parent or guardian of a current student may visit the school at any time for purposes of picking up a student or making use of the observation window. Except in cases of emergency, the teaching staff shall be informed in advance of the intended visit to minimize any disruption of the classroom. All other visitors, including parents and guardians who visit for other purposes (not mentioned above), must contact the head teacher or the Head of School in advance for permission to enter the school premises. At the discretion of the teaching staff, any person who does not comply with this policy, or whose presence or conduct is potentially disruptive of the normal functions of the school, shall be requested politely to leave the premises. The staff member involved should advise the visitor of this policy and request that the visitor comply with the policy by obtaining advance permission for all future visits. If the visitor does not comply with a request to leave, the staff member is authorized to contact the appropriate authorities and request the visitor be removed.

## **OBSERVATION POLICY**

All parents are encouraged to come and see their child working in the classroom environment. There are two ways to observe the class in progress: the coat room has a special observation window which can be utilized during the school day and there is a visitor's chair in the classroom from which a parent can observe. It is best to schedule direct visits with a teacher in advance, although spontaneous visits are usually accommodated. For liability and supervisory reasons, it is not possible for visitors to take part in classroom activities.

## **NEWSLETTERS**

Approximately every month, the teaching team designs a newsletter to inform you of upcoming events and special things going on at the school. You will receive the newsletter electronically via the Brightwheel app, email or a hard copy if you prefer.

## **EVENTS CALENDAR**

Each month the events calendar will be emailed. It will inform you about events that are happening at the school that month.

## **THURSDAY FOLDERS**

On periodic Thursdays, a folder will be sent home with your child containing important papers from school for you to review. This is a way for us to be sure that information you need is not misplaced. After removing the papers in the folder, please return the folder to school in your child's backpack so it is ready for the next week's documents.

## **CONTACTING THE SCHOOL**

The Head of School can be contacted via Brightwheel app, email ([admin@hcams.org](mailto:admin@hcams.org)), or by calling the school directly at 860-646-5727. Our teachers can be reached via Brightwheel, and will respond once available.

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

We have what is called a "Birthday Walk" for children on their birthday. We encourage parents to share photos of the birthday child from each year of his/her life. Pictures can be mounted on a poster or similar display, and will then be up for all to see for the day. Though not necessary, a special treat may be shared with classmates during this time. We encourage these treats to be SMALL (ie: a cookie, mini-cupcake/muffin, fruit snacks) and must be pre-approved by the Head Teacher. A parent wishing to participate in their child's Birthday Walk should contact the Head Teacher and Head of School beforehand to arrange for the visit.

## **AUXILIARY PROGRAMS**

### **FOOD PREPARATION**

Each teacher will have the opportunity to prepare food with the children. The children will learn basic food preparation activities: washing, peeling, cutting, stirring, measuring, and mixing. The focus of the food preparation class is to introduce these skills and provide a healthy snack for the children. This is also a great way to reinforce math and science skills.

### **MUSIC AND MOVEMENT**

The teachers have a diverse array of songs, finger plays, and games to teach at circle time. The children delight in remembering the songs, which reinforce concepts in Math, Language, Science and Geography.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

We typically have a field trip in the fall. Whenever a field trip is planned, a consent form is sent home and parents must sign and return it for their child to participate. Parent chaperones will be utilized on field trips at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

The school will hire bus transportation for all children and chaperones. Parents have the option of driving their own child to and from the field trip destination. Our Head Teacher will carry a cell phone, class list and first aid kit on every field trip. No food may be consumed during bus transport.

Under no circumstances are students to be transported in the private vehicles of any HCAMS staff member or volunteer.

We also take walking field trips to the library next door and invite in-house field trips from places like The Lutz, Mystic, The Science Center, K-9 Officer Tildy, and many others.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Several times throughout the year, HCAMS will ask families to participate in Fundraising programs, which bridges the gap between operating expenses and tuition. HCAMS appreciates active participation from all current families regarding Fundraising efforts. The Board of Trustees welcomes feedback and suggestions from parents on new Fundraising ideas and programs.

## **HEALTH FORMS AND IMMUNIZATION DOCUMENTS (DISCUSSED AT PARENT MEETING 8/26/24)**

All children MUST have their health forms and documentation of up-to-date immunizations (as required by the State of Connecticut Public Health Code) on file with the school. Children who do not meet this requirement will not be allowed to attend the school until they comply. The influenza vaccine is required (by 12/31/24) in the State of Connecticut for all children 59 months and under attending a preschool program. If your child is not medically exempt from this vaccination (with a signed form from doctor), he/she may be excused from our program for a time determined by our nurse consultant.

It is expected and essential that parents share their child's medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, bee sting, food, medication, and seasonal allergies on the "Early Childhood Health Assessment Record" form, as well as on any other HCAMS Emergency Contact Form requesting the information. Confidentiality of the affected student will be maintained always.

## **SICK POLICY (DISCUSSED AT PARENT MEETING 8/26/24)**

*If a child has any one of the following conditions, the school requires that the child NOT be at school:*

- Communicable/contagious condition (HCAMS will work in conjunction with its Health Consultants--Nurse Consultants LLC, to determine if a child's condition is communicable and/or contagious and will defer to the decision of Nurse Consultants LLC regarding the child's participation in the program)
- Fever over 100.4 or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle/ body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Congestion
- Runny nose
- Behavior changes showing an inability to participate in class
- Draining sores or burns
- A rash, until diagnosed and determined to be non-contagious
- Accident requiring emergency medical attention
- Any condition that prevents the child from comfortably participating in program activities or that results in greater care for the child than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children



If the child exhibits any of these conditions while at school, the child's parent/guardian or emergency contact will be notified to come and remove the child from the school until the above conditions no longer apply. Alert the school if your child is diagnosed with any communicable disease (including, but not limited to, COVID-19, lice, scabies, Hand, Foot and Mouth disease, Fifth's, pinkeye, etc.) Please call the school to let us know if your child will be absent for the day due to illness at 860-646-5727. Children may return to school when they have been symptom-free **without the aid of medication for 24 hours**. (THIS INCLUDES COVID-19)

*\* Medications, even over the counter, can alter a child's behavior. PLEASE let a teacher know if your child is taking any medications.*

### **HEAD LICE POLICY (NIT-FREE POLICY)**

If a child is observed to have lice or nits within ¼ inch of their scalp, the parents will be called to pick up the child. The child's head will be examined by the Head of School or Teacher when returning to school, after treatment has been administered at home. If nits are observed within ¼ inch of the scalp the child will be sent home and may return when they are both lice and nit free.

### **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION**

The staff at HCAMS will administer the following Emergency Medications as long as a current OEC Administration of Medication Authorization Form is completed by the Health Care Provider AND signed by parents:

- Epinephrine Automatic Injectors (Must have a Care Plan on file)
- Asthma Inhalers (Must have a Care Plan on file)

All HCAMS staff have current Medication and Epi-Pen Certificates. No child requiring an EpiPen, or other emergency medications will be allowed to enter the program if a current EpiPen/medication is not supplied with the proper documentation to the HCAMS Staff.

HCAMS staff will administer non-emergency medications **only** when it is not possible to administer medication at home before or after school. An adult must transport any medication to and from HCAMS. At no time shall a child be in possession of any medication. No medication may be administered without filling out both the state form, "Authorization for the Administration of Medication by Child Day Care Personnel/ Care Plan" and the HCAMS form "Medication Administration Record and Consent Form". These forms need to be signed by the pediatrician. In accordance with State law, all medications are stored out of reach of children in a locked cabinet in the HCAMS office, except for emergency medications. Medications requiring refrigeration will be kept in a locked box in the refrigerator.

Any topical non-prescription topical medications must have appropriate documentation for staff at HCAMS to apply. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Sunscreen
- Eczema lotions/creams
- Topical diaper ointments free of antibiotic, antifungal, or steroidal medications
- Lip medications (ChapStick, vaseline, etc)

### **INCIDENT REPORTS**

Although many precautions are taken to ensure a safe environment, occasional accidents and/or injuries do occur. When this happens, first aid is administered, and the staff fills out an incident report and a message will be sent via Brightwheel. A parent or guardian is asked to sign the form and a copy is given to you and kept in your child's file.

In the event of a serious injury, 911 will be contacted, the parents will be notified (or an emergency contact if the parent cannot be reached) and the child will be transported by ambulance to Connecticut Children's Medical Center or nearest hospital. The child will be accompanied by a staff member of HCAMS if the parent or guardian is not able to. The child's entire file, including contact and health information will be brought to the hospital with the child. The HCAMS staff member will stay with the child until the parent arrives. The parents are solely responsible for any medical bills incurred.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT**

The school's staff is trained in First Aid and CPR. First Aid kits are present in the classroom. If an accident should occur, a staff member will administer simple first aid. In the event of a more serious injury, 911 would be called and the child would be taken to the hospital at the discretion of emergency personnel. A parent and/or the emergency contact will be called immediately thereafter. After injuries are treated and the medical situation has been stabilized, and as soon as practical, an accident report will be written up explaining what happened and the treatment that was performed. Parents will receive a copy of this report.

## **MANDATED REPORTERS**

As professionals in the field of early childhood education, all staff at HCAMS are required by law to report all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities. HCAMS requires its staff to report any concerns immediately.

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY**

All children have the right to be free from abuse or neglect.

#### *Definition(s):*

- 1) According to the State of Connecticut General Statutes 46b- 120, child abuse is defined as: a child who has had non- accidental physical injury(s) inflicted upon him or has injuries which are at a variance with the history given of them, or is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual molestation or exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional mal-treatment or cruel punishment.
- 2) According to the State of Connecticut General Statutes 46b- 120, child neglect is defined as: a child who has been abandoned, is being denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally, or morally, or is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances, or associations injurious to his well- being.

Should any HCAMS staff person have reason to suspect that a child in HCAMS care has been abused or neglected by a parent or member of the community, the staff person shall follow DCF reporting guidelines.

Should any HCAMS staff member witness abuse or neglect by another staff member, they must immediately report it to DCF. After making their report, the mandated reporter must inform the HCAMS Head of School, who shall in turn, notify the Board of Trustees. HCAMS shall immediately report the incident to the child's legal guardian. Any employee who has been reported to DCF and is suspected of the abuse or neglect will be immediately suspended, with pay and with no impact upon their accrued and on-going benefits, until such time that the investigation is sufficiently completed. The Board of Trustees will immediately dismiss an employee who is found to have in any way abused or neglected a child.

It is the obligation of HCAMS that all allegations of abuse or neglect be reported immediately to DCF. HCAMS staff is not authorized to conduct a facility- initiated investigation without the prior consent and knowledge of DCF.

HCAMS will maintain written records on matters such as injuries, staff training in abuse/ neglect, filed abuse/ neglect reports, refresher training and new employee orientation.

## **IMPAIRED OR COMPROMISED ADULTS**

It is always the policy of HCAMS to act in the best interests of the children in our care and with the primary purpose of maintaining the safety of all students and staff. With that in mind, in no event will a child be released to an adult where there is a question as to whether an adult is impaired. If during this situation, the adult in question is not cooperative with staff members, the Staff will immediately call 911.

## **EMERGENCY AND DISASTER PLANNING**

The school has developed a series of procedures to follow in the event of a fire, natural disaster, emergency or lock-down. Staff members review these policies at the start of each school year.

In the event of a lock-down or other emergency, the safety of students in our care is the primary concern. Parents will be notified by phone or email as soon as it is safe and practical to do so. Staff and parents must follow all directions given to them by emergency personnel. Please do not call the school unless directed to do so, as phone lines need to be kept clear for contact with local authorities. Parents are encouraged to turn to local television and radio broadcasting networks, which will carry any updates on the situation. In the event of the need for an extended lock-down or a “shelter in place” situation, the school stocks ample supply of water, juice and snacks.

In the event of fire or evacuation of the premises, children will be walked to either the Bolton Town Hall main foyer or to the Bentley Public Library, both a short walk from the school. Parents will be contacted from one of these locations with further instructions.

## **SUPERVISION PLAN**

*At no time shall a child be left unsupervised*

- 1) There shall be at least one (1) program staff person for every ten (10) children, or fraction thereof in attendance always (this includes indoor, outdoor & naptime). At least two staff members 18 years of age or older will always be present on HCAMS property.
- 2) Children are carefully watched while outside at play. Staff members rotate among the play areas and equipment.
- 3) When a child goes inside to use the restrooms from outdoors, a staff member is designated to accompany him/her. Children are never allowed to travel from the outside to inside by themselves.
- 4) Children are carefully watched while at play during an activity within the building, or on field trips, including bathroom use.

When a child or children use the bathroom, adequate staff will always be present.

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