

# SHOOTING STARS MONTESSORI SCHOOL

## FAMILY HANDBOOK

2024

**Tayler Horton**  
Owner, Director

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Tayler Horton Owner/Director – 785-224-6223

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<https://ssmontessorischool.com/>

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## Welcome to Shooting Stars Montessori School Family Handbook

We are so happy you are a part of our Montessori School family. Over the course of this year our children will grow in a Montessori environment to become confident, vibrant students who love to learn. Family are the most important teachers in the lives of their children and are a very important part of what makes our school community so special. We are honored to be partners with you in the development of your child. We rely on your communication, energy, support, and family and teacher engagement to ensure a successful experience for your child. Shooting Stars Montessori School can benefit your child best when you understand the roles played by family, teachers, and children. We are delighted to share the many wonderful things about us and to orient you to our policies, procedures, resources, and events.

Please review carefully the information included in this handbook. It is intended to acquaint you with the policies and procedures of the school. It is important that you read it thoroughly.

We do our best to remain in close communication with our families in several different ways.

- You may visit our website at <https://ssmontessorischool.com/> for information about the school and our fees.
- If you have suggestions, ideas or concerns or have billing questions, please contact Director Tayler Horton: [directorthorton@gmail.com](mailto:directorthorton@gmail.com) or 785-224-6223 or Co-owner Mark Murphy: [mjmurphykc@gmail.com](mailto:mjmurphykc@gmail.com) or 816-305-6912.
- An annual family survey provides you with an opportunity to give us feedback covering the whole program.

Shooting Stars Montessori School is licensed by the Kansas Department of Health & Environment and the Director received a certification & training from North America Montessori Training Center.

We look forward to another wonderful and productive year.

*Tayler Horton*

Owner/Director

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This handbook is intended to familiarize families with current Shooting Stars Montessori School policy, practices, and standards. Electronic copies (PDF) of the handbook are available on our website <https://ssmontessorischool.com/> Shooting Stars reserves the right to revise its policies, practices and standards as deemed appropriate by the Director.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

At Shooting Stars Montessori School, children and families experience an individualized education that builds the foundation for a lifetime of success and a love of learning through specialized teachers, lessons, and materials in accordance with the principles and philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori.

### **EDUCATIONAL GOALS**

We aim to provide high-quality, comprehensive education that fosters your child's love of learning and addresses the whole child academically, emotionally, and socially.

- To enter a partnership with the family in the education of their children.
- To lead children toward mastery of individually identified intellectual, social, physical, and daily life skills.
- To foster in the children deep and persistent curiosity that will lead to lifelong pursuit of knowledge.
- To help children develop self-confidence.
- To assist each child, develop a habit of concentration.
- To spark in our children, wonder, imagination, and joy.

### **OUR CORE VALUES**

We believe that the principles and practices developed by Dr. Maria Montessori fundamentally respond to the developmental characteristics and needs of children. We seek to utilize her educational principles and methodologies at Shooting Stars Montessori School.

- We believe that all children deserve to develop in an environment that is nurturing, safe and intelligent.
- We believe that the model of our own behavior serves as the most distinct teacher to the child.
- We believe that intelligence is not rare, but a state of the healthy mind. As such, it can and should be nurtured and encouraged.
- We center the programs and curriculum of The Montessori School on the natural needs of human development.
- We describe the learning environment of The Montessori School as active as opposed to passive. The environment is dynamic, with children functioning as active agents in the learning process by making choices and learning to be responsible for those choices.
- We believe that the first 5 years of life are critical to the development of one's life.

- We offer a flexible learning environment that responds to individual needs, has an adaptable curriculum, and honors diverse learning styles.
- We strive to create a true balance among freedom, order, and responsibility.

### **OUR CODE OF ETHICS**

We have an open-door policy for family to visit and observe their children at any time. Early childhood is a unique and valuable stage in the life cycle. The prime responsibility of early childhood caregivers and educators is to provide safe, healthy, nurturing, and responsive settings for children. It requires them to be committed to support children's development, respect their individual differences, help children learn to live and work cooperatively, promote good self-image, and encourage health, self-awareness, competence, confidence, and resiliency. We will promote self-esteem and confidence in every child through the curriculum and decisions provided and taught here at the program. Helping to prepare young children for the future.

### **ADMISSION & ENROLLMENT**

*TUITION POLICY:* Monthly tuition is due on or before the 25<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month by EFT bank draft through the Brightwheel app. Should the 25<sup>th</sup> fall on a weekend or holiday; tuition is always due the prior business day. All fees are paid in advance and are nonrefundable regardless of the child's attendance, holidays, winter break, sickness, or severe weather days. For any EFT non-payment due to insufficient funds a charge of \$35.00 will be assessed plus the tuition owed. This is due immediately upon notification of insufficient funds and must be paid directly to the school Director. Brightwheel charges a fee depending on the type of payment made – approximately \$2.00 for bank debit and approximately 2.9% for credit card payments.

*ENROLLMENT:* Following the tour and to secure a spot, you will complete the enrollment form and pay the enrollment deposit of \$300.00. After your child's enrollment application has been processed and a start date has been identified, you will be notified. You will have access to direct communication with our School Director through the Brightwheel app, text and/or email. The remaining enrollment packet must be completed and returned one week before the child's first day of attendance.

The following requirements must be met for a child to be admitted:

1. Preschool: Your child must be 3 years old and completely potty trained. We do not provide care for children after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.
2. Guardians must complete an enrollment packet (forms are listed below) and return all pages to the Director one (1) week prior to admission!
  - A. Enrollment Form
  - B. Enrollment Agreement
  - C. Medical Record, History of Immunizations, and Physical Assessment
  - D. Emergency Medical Care Authorization
  - E. Serious and Minor Injury Procedures
  - F. Photo release form
  - G. Consent to Administer Certain Medication

**\*\*Please notify Shooting Stars of any changes of phone number, address, place of employment or a change in emergency pick up information as soon as possible\*\***

If your child does not start once we have an open spot, then we charge a non-refundable reservation fee of \$400/month. This is a monthly fee required to keep your child on the school wait list for future attendance. The fee is payable either: (1) Monthly, by electronic debit from a checking account on the 25<sup>th</sup> day prior to each month reserved via the Brightwheel app (OR (2) payable by writing one check for all months to be reserved, payable by the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> month reserved.

***Rates:***

Please refer to the current rate sheet available from Tayler Horton.

***WITHDRAWAL NOTICE:*** A Guardian agrees to give a full 30-day written notice on or before the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the preceding month before the child is to be withdrawn from school.

***TRANSITIONING TO PRESCHOOL ROOM:*** Child must be potty trained prior to transitioning to the preschool room (State Regulation). If your child is not potty trained by the time he/she must move to the preschool room, we must decline care, and you will be given a 30-day notice that we are terminating this agreement.

***LICENSING AND INSPECTIONS:*** Shooting Stars Montessori School is regulated by the Kansas Department of Health & Environment. Our facility is inspected by the Johnson County Health Department.

KDHE  
Curtis State Office Building  
1000 SW Jackson  
Suite 200  
Topeka, KS 66612-1274  
(785) 296-1270

[Email: kdhe.cclr@ks.gov](mailto:kdhe.cclr@ks.gov)

Johnson County Health Department  
11875 S. Sunset Dr. Suite 300  
Olathe, KS 66061  
(913) 826-1200  
[www.jocogov.org](http://www.jocogov.org)

**NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Shooting Stars Montessori School recruits and admits students of any sex, gender identity, religion, race, color, physical or developmental ability or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities. In addition, the school will not discriminate based on sex, gender identity, religion, race, color, physical or developmental ability or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, scholarship/loans/fee waivers (if offered), educational programs and/or athletics/extracurricular activities. In addition, the school is not intended to be an alternative to court, or administrative agency ordered, or public school district initiated, desegregation. Shooting Stars Montessori School will not discriminate based on sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, race, color, physical or developmental ability or ethnic origin in the hiring of its certified

or non-certified personnel. This policy observes the provision of the Kansas Act Against Discrimination.

**DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT** Diversity, equity, and inclusion have always been at the heart of Shooting Stars Montessori School. Since the beginning, our school has welcomed families and educators from different backgrounds into a community in which everyone's voices are valued and weave our social fabric. At this point in our country's history, there have been too many examples of racism, bigotry, and exclusion. In response, we feel compelled to reassert our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in a stand-alone statement.

### **SCHOOL POLICIES**

*HOURS OF OPERATION:* Operating hours are Monday through Friday 7:30am-6:00pm (please see tuition rates for specific schedule options and prices). We will be closed on various days for holidays. Please see HOLIDAYS schedule below:

MLK Jr. Day  
Presidents Day  
Good Friday  
5-day Spring Break in mid-March  
Memorial Day  
Juneteenth  
Day before Independence Day  
July 4th: Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Columbus Day  
Thanksgiving  
Day After Thanksgiving  
Christmas Break: Typically, the Day Before Christmas Eve to January 2

*EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS:* The school reserves the right to close the school location due to extreme weather conditions or loss of utility services for the safety of the children and staff. School Staff will attempt to notify all families of closing through the Brightwheel app and text messages.

*DAILY SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES:* The Director worked to create a daily schedule and plan activities that meet each child's developmental abilities and needs. The daily schedule and activities create a balance between active and quiet times; large and small group, and individual activities; small and large muscle activities; indoor and outdoor play times; as well as times for self-selection and teacher-directed activities. Consistency from day-to-day is particularly important to the overall well-being of the children and classroom environment. Children thrive on consistency! Routines will be maintained whenever possible for arrivals and departures; meals and snacks; resting or nap times; personal care routines like toileting and hand washing; and transitions. Daily schedule, lesson plans, and lunch calendar are posted.



## Daily Schedule

7:30–8:30	Before School Activities
8:30–9:00	Morning Snack
9:00–9:30	Music and Movement
9:30–10:00	Morning Meeting/large group
10:00–11:00	Montessori Work-cycle individual/small group
11:00–12:00	Morning indoor/outdoor Recess
12:00–12:30	Lunch
12:30–1:00	Read Aloud/Look at Books
1:00–3:00	Nap/Rest Time
3:00–3:30	Afternoon Snack
3:30–4:00	Afternoon Meeting/large group
4:00–5:00	Afternoon indoor/outdoor Recess
5:00–6:00	After School Activities

### *EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:*

- Payment for guest luncheons, in class field trips and special activities (to be announced) are the responsibility of the guardian for the child to participate.

### *PROGRAM & RATIO REQUIREMENTS:*

<b>Classroom</b>	<b>Ages</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
Infant:	2 weeks to 12 months	1 to 3
Movers	12 mos. to 2 ½ years if walking alone	1 to 5
Toddlers	2 years to 3 years	1 to 7
Preschool	3 years to the child's 5 <sup>th</sup> birthday	1 to 12

**All Children must be potty trained to be in the Preschool Room. Please note that we do not provide care for children after their 5th birthday.**

*OPEN DOOR POLICY:* Family members are welcome to visit their student at any time. Family is encouraged to be involved in the program by reading stories, joining us for celebrations, and attending family-teacher conferences.

*ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE:* Shooting Stars requires that each child must be clocked in/out via the Brightwheel app by the guardian for accurate count to be always maintained. Guardian will pay \$15.00 late fee for every 15 minutes. Guardian agrees to pick up child from school or designate an authorized person to pick up child at front door by notifying school by phone, text, email, note, or through the Brightwheel app. It is the responsibility of the Guardian to contact the school regarding any changes prior to the time the child is to arrive or to be picked up. Driver's License/ID will be used for the purposes of identification.

*ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES:* Attendance is important for your child to fully receive the benefits of the program; therefore, we encourage you to bring your child to class every day. All the children are expected to arrive by 9am. If you plan to arrive late, please notify the school. If your child has not arrived and you have not called in that day, a staff member may follow up with a phone call or message no later than 10am.

## *DISASTER/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS POLICY*

Upon enrollment and yearly, Guardians shall be notified in writing and/or by email of the emergency plans and reunification location at Wheatland Enterprises, one building west of Shooting Stars Montessori School. Guardians are given two phone numbers to use to reach us during an emergency: Primary – Director Tayler Horton 785-224-6223. **All Guardian/child contact information** is kept in the Emergency bags hung in the classroom across from the rear Emergency Exit door.

## **HEALTH POLICIES**

*PHYSICALS & IMMUNIZATION RECORDS:* We follow the State mandated vaccination schedules and exceptions. Each child must have a health assessment and immunization record on file at Shooting Stars Montessori School. Immunization records must be updated whenever a new immunization is received. Updated immunization records can be emailed to Shooting Stars Montessori School directly from your healthcare provider.

*ILLNESS:* If a child becomes ill during the day, the Guardian will be contacted and agrees to promptly pick up the child within an hour of being notified. We **DO NOT** administer any medication, prescriptions, or over-the-counter medicine unless authorized by the Director. Family are welcome to return to the school to administer medication. It is the School Director's discretion to require a doctor's written approval before readmitting the child if the illness is deemed contagious. You will be contacted immediately if your child becomes ill at the center. If you cannot be reached, your emergency contact will be notified to pick up your child. While waiting to be picked up, your child will be allowed to rest in the classroom but will not participate in activities with the other children. For the protection of all, children suspected of having an infectious disease must have a physician's statement and be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to center. If a life-threatening emergency involving your child occurs while attending Shooting Stars Montessori School, you will be notified and 911 will be called to transport your child to the nearest hospital. If a Guardian cannot be reached, your emergency contact will be notified. It is important that you notify the center to update your center records whenever there is a change in your address, phone number, or emergency contact person. Symptoms that would exclude a child from care include:

- Fever of 99 degrees or above with symptoms
- Fever of 100.4 or above with no symptoms
- Conjunctivitis, Bacterial (Pinkeye)
- Unexplained rash or sore
- Discharge from eyes, ears, or nose
- Vomiting once or Diarrhea twice

Please see attached Covid-19 Addendum.

*MEALS:* We will provide two healthy snacks and a lunch daily. They are not to share with one another. Menus will be posted. Treats can be provided for special occasions like birthdays. We will have an allergy list posted, so Guardians should inform us as soon as possible if your child is allergic to anything.

**FOOD ALLERGY ACTION PLAN:** If your child has a food allergy, please complete a Food Allergy Action Plan form, available upon request. This form will be posted in your child's classroom, as well as in food preparation areas. If medication for an allergic reaction is provided, please have your physician sign the Food Allergy Action Plan as well.

**NAP/REST TIME:** The Kansas Department of Health & Environment requires that all children must be provided with a regularly scheduled nap or resting time. Children will not be forced to sleep but may be encouraged to lie quietly for a period. The length of time a child should have to remain resting varies by child. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the maximum amount of time a child should have to remain resting. Children should be provided with alternative quiet activities if unable to rest.

**PHOTO RELEASE POLICY:** Shooting Stars Montessori School photograph activities during normal school hours for the use of sharing with Guardians. A Photo Release form is provided in the Enrollment packet.

**SUNSCREEN & INSECT REPELLANT:** Between the months of March and October, all families will be required to supply sunscreen for their child/ren for outdoor activities. A permission slip must be on file before sunscreen will be applied to a child. Sunscreen must be SPF 15 or above and will be applied by classroom teachers regularly throughout the day. Guardians must apply sunscreen and insect repellent to their child before arriving at Shooting Stars Montessori School for the day.

**FAMILY-TEACHER CONFERENCES:** Family-teacher conferences will typically be held at least once per year. The goal of the Family -teacher conference is to gain insight into your child's development. During conferences, your child's development, and any goals you may have for your child will be discussed. Family are encouraged to request conferences whenever they feel it necessary.

**TOYS:** Family are asked not to give children toys to bring to school. This causes a lot of disruption. Children are not allowed to bring in outside toys or items unless asked by their classroom prior.

**DRESS CODE/CLOTHING:** Children should be dressed appropriately for the weather. Please provide a jacket as needed on cooler days. Shoes must always be always worn. All clothing should be labeled with your child's name.

**EXTRA CLOTHING:** All children should bring extra clothing with the child's name on it in case they have an accident or get their clothes dirty.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Confidentiality is a top priority for Shooting Stars Montessori School. Personal information of families and staff will not be shared for any reason unless required by state law or with written permission. In situations regarding behavior problems and/or Incident/Accident Reports, names of children involved will never be given to families.

## **WEATHER POLICY**

The term “weather permitting” means almost every day unless there is a weather advisory or public announcement related to extreme cold or heat that may cause health problems. Therefore, children should be dressed properly and taken out on most days. This might require that the schedule be changed to allow children outdoor play in the early morning when it will be hot later in the day. Or it might require that the children have appropriate shoes or a change of clothes when the ground is wet. The state requires us to go outside daily for an hour and the playground equipment must be completely dry.

## **CHILD SAFETY POLICIES**

*SUPERVISION POLICY:* To ensure that children are supervised throughout the day, in accordance with the Kansas Department of Health & Environment (KDHE), the following policies and procedures are implemented in our program. Staff should be aware of how many children are in their care and where all the children are, always. Children of any age are not allowed out of the classroom without adult supervision and staff will always maintain full supervision of all children. The children no matter the age will not be allowed out of the classroom without adult supervision at any time. The children are always supervised by sight and sound, including while in the bathroom. “By sight” means the child is being actively observed. “By sound” means the child can be heard from where the caregiver is positioned. While supervising children, staff should position themselves so they can see and hear all the children and re-position themselves as children move about the room and playground. When children are sleeping or resting, staff should position themselves so that all children are continuously supervised by sight and sound. The room should not be completely dark and should be bright enough for: 1) everyone to see clearly, 2) children to move around the room safely without assistance, and 3) for staff to maintain full sight supervision. Cots/mats should be fully visible to staff during naptime. However, if the environment prevents full visibility, then teachers need to circulate to provide full supervision. If children remain after closing, a staff member (or administrator) will remain until the last child is picked up. The playground is considered an extension of the classroom with the same supervision standards and ratios unless stricter standards are required by state licensing. Staff members should know how many children are always in their care and consider other supervision challenges which the outdoor environment presents. Staff should position themselves so that at least 2 areas of the playground can be viewed and are easily accessible. Staff should move about the playground, depending on where the children are at any given point in time, while continuing to interact with the children. Staff should consider individual children’s needs, including high risk behavior. If there are areas that cannot be supervised by sight, they should be blocked off and inaccessible. Staff use Name to Face attendance form to track the children throughout the day, including during transitions (i.e., moving from the classroom to the playground). Through this practice, teachers are required to.

- Always know the names of each child and the number of children in their care.
- Use Name to Face attendance form to account for the children in their care.
- Conduct periodic Head Counts throughout the day, in addition to those required during transitions.

- Always talk with the child on the child's level
- Give children choices when possible.
- Praise good behavior.
- Remind children what they can do, NOT what they cannot do.
- Respect children's feelings and model how to express their feelings.
- Redirect children in a positive manner to desired activity.
- Help children solve problems with other children by modeling and helping children find the words to use to problem solve.
- The safe space will be used as a last resort after all other methods have been used.

*POSITIVE GUIDANCE:* For a child to develop intellectually, it is important for a child to learn acceptance, cooperation, respect, and self-discipline. To run a successful classroom, clear and concise rules, limits, and expectations concerning classroom behavior and discipline are explained to the children. Teachers use a variety of methods in the classroom to encourage proper behavior. Redirection, setting limits, using a safe place, deep breathing, and sensory calming toys are a few of the most used methods of positive guidance used to promote the above characteristics. Persistent noncompliance will be brought to the Family's attention. Family and staff members are expected to support these guidelines. Resistance to these policies will jeopardize the child's enrollment position. Shooting Stars Montessori School reserves the right to terminate children at any time if behavior issues pose a safety to the child, other children, staff, or we are unable to meet the needs of the child or family.

*ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:* Minor injuries will receive appropriate first aid, and Guardians will be informed when they pick up their child. For emergency illness and injuries, Guardians will be contacted immediately. If illness or injuries occur which require immediate medical attention, Guardians will be contacted. Guardians will be advised to pick up their child; if the Guardian cannot be reached the child will be taken to the nearest medical facility. Guardians will be responsible for the costs of the emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation if required. Guardians will be informed of the facility to which the child has been taken.

*MANDATORY CHILD ABUSE REPORTERS:* As childcare professionals who interact with children daily, each staff member of Shooting Stars Montessori School is a mandatory child abuse and neglect reporter and must contact the Kansas Department of Health Services whenever abuse or neglect is suspected.

*BITING POLICY:* Biting is a behavior that usually occurs between the ages of one and three years. While biting is an age-appropriate behavior, it is important to remember it is also an unacceptable behavior in a childcare environment. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration, and stress. Biting is not something to blame on children, their Family, or their teachers. There are a variety of strategies we implement at Shooting Stars Montessori School to prevent and stop biting. This is the process followed when a child bites:

- The biting child is stopped and told, “Stop biting. Biting hurts” in a firm voice. Teachers should remain calm, being careful not to show anger or frustration towards the child.
- The biting child is removed from the situation. Depending upon the observed motive for the bite, the separation may include re-direction or meeting the child’s needs. As little attention as possible will be placed on the biting child, to avoid reinforcing the behavior.
- Appropriate first aid will be provided to the child who was bitten. The bite will be washed with soap and water; cold compress will be applied to reduce pain and swelling. A bandage will be applied if necessary.

***OUTDOOR PLAY POLICY:***

Per the Kansas Health Department children are required to go outside at least an hour a day. Wind chill and heat index play a part in making the decision when to go outside. Please make sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather, this includes a hat and gloves in the winter. If the weather is not appropriate for outside play, children will have gross motor time indoors.

***SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY:***

For caregivers, social media plays a part in our center, it is our policy to protect children in our care. Shooting Stars Montessori School has a photo permission form that is signed at enrollment and updated every year. This allows Guardians to choose where photos of their children are being used. To safeguard all children, maintain privacy and the security of our families and children, we require:

- No pictures taken within the school or a school event with children are posted for public viewing except those of your own children. Guardians do not have the right to take pictures of anyone’ else’s child.
- Pictures taken by Shooting Stars Montessori School staff are the only pictures allowed to be posted on social media after permission policy has been signed. Shooting Stars Montessori School does use social media to share information happening within our program. This does include pictures of events, classroom activities, and special events.

**FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS**

All drills will be conducted once every month, during which children will practice evacuating the building and/or moving to a safe place. Emergency evacuation plans are posted near the door.

**PETS & VISITING ANIMALS**

Staff may introduce a class pet to the classroom. Pets and visiting animals that are brought into the classroom must be carefully considered for their temperament, health risks, and appropriateness for young children. No animal may be brought into Shooting Stars Montessori School without first notifying and receiving permission from the School Director. Once approved by the Director, pets and visiting animals must have documentation from a licensed veterinarian or animal shelter to show that the animal(s) is fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children.

**MONTESSORI RESOURCE**

<https://www.montessoriservices.com/>

<https://www.themontessorinotebook.com/free-resources/>

<https://www.montessori.org/>