

Alka Montessori Admission Agreement

STATEMENT OF POLICIES

General Policy

Alka Montessori has created a comprehensive program and assembled a well-qualified staff to provide the finest services possible at a fair price. It is essential to conduct its operations in a businesslike fashion in which both the Alka Montessori staff and parents keep each other fully informed of their respective needs. The following policies are designed to ensure that the staff is fully utilized and that adequate cash flow is maintained to meet the needs of the operation. Exceptions to the policies cannot be made. Fees and policies may be changed with a 30-day written notice, although it has been the practice to change fees no more than once a year, on September 1. Alka Montessori makes no warranty regarding child progress nor does it specify classroom or teacher assignments as part of its contract with parents.

Enrollment Procedure

Once a child is accepted by Alka Montessori, enrollment is effected by completing an *Enrollment Agreement* and submitting it with all enrollment forms and a permanent deposit equivalent to one month's tuition fee to the director within three days of notification of acceptance. If a deposit is not made within three days of notification, the acceptance is withdrawn and no refund of the application fee will be paid. Once a deposit is received, a child is considered enrolled and all policies regarding withdrawal, late penalties, etc., become effective. In addition to the deposit, the first month's fees must be paid on the first of the month in which the child will begin attending the Alka Montessori or immediately if the month has already begun.

The date of first attendance for the child may be changed once only prior to the acceptance of the child by Alka Montessori, but the priority of the application will be changed to the date the Alka Montessori is informed of the change. If enrollment is not confirmed within three days of acceptance or if the desired date of first attendance is changed after acceptance, the application is voided and the fee forfeited. If the child is enrolled subsequently, no additional application fee will be required, but the application will not be granted a priority standing. If priority standing is desired, a new application is required and another application fee must be paid.

Withdrawals and Terminations

Parents may withdraw their children by notifying the director in writing at least 30 days prior to the date of withdrawal. Under no circumstances will this requirement be waived. Tuition will be charged through the period of notification regardless of whether or not the child is in attendance. The deposit paid at enrollment will be used to cover the final month's tuition; any remaining balance will be refunded within 10 business days of withdrawal. Re-enrollment following withdrawal requires a new application and a new fee.

Alka Montessori is required by code not to serve any child whose needs the director feels exceed those that can be served by the existing resources and will not serve any family whose goals are different than those espoused by the program, at the discretion of the director. (Examples of different goals include, but are not limited to, the following: unwillingness to adhere to recommendations made by staff members regarding parental support for educational and/or behavioral problems such as changes in home practices and/or the intervention of outside counselors and other specialists; rudeness and/or disrespect for children, parents, and staff; and failure to honor any contract with Alka Montessori, regardless of the child or site involved.) The director may terminate the enrollment agreement for any reason, with or without cause. Should the determination to terminate be made, the director will provide a 30-day written notice of termination of the *Enrollment Agreement* and, within 10 days of the last day of attendance, a full refund will be made of any balance remaining from the deposit and/or fees paid. Fees are pro-rated as if every month had 21 non-weekend days. The calculation are made by taking the days used (or required to be used as part of 30-day notification), including holidays, as the numerator; dividing that number by 21; and multiplying the product by the appropriate tuition rate.

Schedule and Vacations

For staffing purposes, the hours selected must be the same each day. Parents may request additional time on an occasional basis for an additional charge. Because of the complexity of staff scheduling, the hours of attendance--once selected--should change infrequently, if at all. Nevertheless, parents may change their children's hours by notifying the director in writing at least 30 days prior to the date of the change.

Unlike other centers that close during holiday periods, Alka Montessori maintains year-round contracts with its teachers. Since all operating costs--salaries, rent, insurance, and so forth--continue during holidays and when children are absent, Alka Montessori does not reduce tuition as a result of planned or unplanned absences. Parents taking extended vacations of a month or more may consider withdrawing and re-applying using the normal application and enrollment procedures, though re-enrollment is not guaranteed. The daily schedule for each program is posted in the classroom.

Payments

Payments for regular tuition fees, extended care, late pickups, and late payments are due in the tuition box by the first school day of each month. Charges for extended care, late pickups, and late payments are distributed throughout the month, but payment should be made on the first of each month only. Invoices are also provided for regular tuition for the new month, but as a courtesy only; payment is due on the first school day, whether or not an invoice has been received and whether or not the child is in attendance. The invoices include the tax I.D. and license numbers and may serve as a receipt for tax purposes; parents should retain the originals because Alka Montessori does not keep copies. Payments must be made by personal or cashier's check payable to "Alka Montessori"; cash cannot be accepted for security reasons.

If an invoice is believed to be incorrect, the amount believed correct must be paid on time and a note explaining the error left in the payment box. No late penalty will be charged on disputed amounts if the undisputed portion has been paid. However, it is the responsibility of the parents to clear up any errors in a timely fashion (i.e., prior to the next invoice). If no note is received and no contact is made by the parents, it will be assumed that the amounts invoiced are correct, including extended care fees and late penalties.

Late tuition payments will incur a penalty of \$5 per school day per child. Late payment penalties of \$5 per school day will also be assessed on unpaid balances for extended care and penalties that are not paid within 30 days of receipt of the invoice. There is a returned check charge of \$10 per item. Non-payment through the 6th of any month will be construed as a 30-day notice to withdraw.

Beginning with the 31st day of delinquency, any unpaid balance will accrue a late payment charge at the rate of 1.25% per month. In addition, the account balance will accrue charges for the actual documentation costs incurred in preparing the account for collection and for any charges for the collection of the unpaid balance. In the event that a suit is brought by either party relating to this agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to be reimbursed for all costs incurred in connection with such action, including reasonable legal fees and expenses.

Required Forms

To register their children, parents must submit the following:

- o *Application* with application fee
- o *Health History*
- o *Enrollment Agreement*
- o *Physician's Statement*
- o First month's fees and deposit
- o *Personal Rights* receipt
- o *Emergency Information*
- o *Parents' Rights* receipt
- o *School Immunization Record*

All documents in a child's file are considered confidential records and are not disclosed to outsiders, except officials of the Department of Social Services--Community Care Licensing, without the written permission of parents.

Sign-In and Sign-Out Procedure

Parents are required by law to bring their children into the Alka Montessori, to sign them in upon arrival, and to again come into the Alka Montessori to sign them out prior to departure. Sign-in sheets are kept in each room, so that parents must bring their children into their assigned rooms. On the sign-in sheet should be entered the time of arrival as well as the time of departure and signature, not initials.

The only people other than a child's custodial parents who are authorized to take that child from the Alka Montessori are those people designated in writing on the *Emergency Information Form*. This policy applies to Alka Montessori staff as well as parents of other enrolled children. For the convenience of parents, there is an option on the form that authorizes any parent of an enrolled child at the Alka Montessori to sign out a child.

Visitors

Parents, and all others designated as "authorized" on the *Emergency Information Form*, are permitted and encouraged to visit their children at any time, with or without notice. They may work and interact with their children, as long as--in the opinion of the head teacher--they are not disruptive to the functioning of the classroom. With the permission of the head teacher, they may participate formally in classroom activities.

Other visitors, including prospective parents, routinely visit the Alka Montessori. Unless they have a professional relationship with Alka Montessori, they should be escorted at all times. Except for representatives of the Department of Social

Services, as described previously, casual visitors are not permitted to spend an extended period of time with any specific child or group of children without the permission of their parents.

Emergency Evacuations

In the rare case of a need for an evacuation of the facilities for a period exceeding two hours, the following procedure will be implemented:

1. Alka Montessori staff will telephone parents, if possible, to inform them of the evacuation.
2. If parents believe that an evacuation is taking place, they may call Alka Montessori. If communications are not functioning at the location, parents should assume that an evacuation is taking place.
3. Parents should pick up their children from the Alka Montessori as soon as possible. Two hours after an evacuation is ordered, children who remain will be sent to one of the emergency evacuation homes. These are nearby homes of families whose children attend the Alka Montessori and who have volunteered to be a temporary relocation site until parents are able to pick up their children.
4. The locations of children relocated to other homes will be posted at the Alka Montessori.
5. Alka Montessori will resume operations as soon as it is safe and legally able to do so. Information may be obtained by calling the Alka Montessori or the administrative office.

Discipline and Limit Setting

At Alka Montessori, discipline and limit setting constitute a conceptual framework for behavior, not punishment. Parents and teachers set up the structure for a child to allow him or her to fit into the real world happily and effectively. It is the foundation for the child's self-discipline later. Within this structure, the child has choices of behavior that take into account the needs of other people and of society and that are within the child's control. For optimal learning, children must be fed, rested, comfortably dressed, safe, and a part of their community. If these needs are not met sufficiently, behavioral problems emerge. Learning takes a back seat while the brain reacts to threats or stress. Thus, it is important that love and acceptance be an ongoing part of both home and school life.

It is Alka Montessori's goal to arrange the children's environment to eliminate or at least minimize the need for disciplinary intervention. The emphasis on respect, the room arrangements, the philosophy of individualized learning, and the focus on problem-solving skills all contribute to encouraging appropriate behavior. Occasionally, it is necessary to take action that is intended to remind a child of the limits and standards that exist in the Alka Montessori community. Such actions should always be viewed as tools to help children learn self-control and social responsibility. In the event that a teacher must intervene to modify an unacceptable behavior, it is the policy of Alka Montessori to handle the situation as follows:

- a. Ensure the safety of children by removing a child temporarily from the scene of a dispute.
- b. State the consequences of the child's action.
- c. Follow up by providing the child with proper words to express displeasure, frustration, and/or anger.
- d. Allow the child a "calming down" period to regain his or her composure, if necessary.
- e. Allow the child to re-enter the group when the child feels that he or she is ready to do so.
- f. If necessary, hold a conference with parents and, if appropriate, the director to discuss the situation and a contracted plan of action.

Corporal punishment or any other aversive procedure is strictly forbidden by policy and by Alka Montessori employees' *Code of Conduct*.

Dress

Children should have comfortable clothing, with spare changes as requested by the head teacher. Shoes must be closed toe and secured around the ankle, such as athletic shoes, sneakers, and closed-toe sandals with secure ankle straps. Flip flops, Croc-type shoes, slippers, and sandals with heels are not permitted.

Engagement of Staff

Staff is free to engage in any outside, after-hours work that does not compromise their job performance or the reputation of the Alka Montessori. Alka Montessori bears no responsibility or liability for such work. As with anyone else, a staff member may sign out a child on behalf of a parent only with the parent's prior, written authorization.

Alka Montessori is diligent in its efforts to recruit, screen, select, train and retain highly qualified staff. To help reduce the cost and disruption of staff turnover, the Alka Montessori requires parents to agree, as part of their enrollment agreement, not to hire for regularly scheduled part-time or full-time work any current or former staff person of the Alka Montessori while their children are enrolled and for a period of one year afterward. Should a current or former Alka Montessori staff member be engaged by a parent during or within one year of enrollment, the parent agrees to reimburse Alka Montessori for the value of its screening and training services. Parents agree that the fees for such services shall be 25% of the annualized compensation of the staff person or \$2,500, whichever sum is greater.

Licensing and Reporting Requirements

Under state law, representatives of the Department of Social Services--Community Care Licensing may enter the Alka Montessori at any time, announced or unannounced. They may do a check the status of children's records, including their confidential files, room sign-in sheets, and medication forms. Alka Montessori may be cited and/or fined for violations of regulations. Therefore, to be able to serve a child, it is essential that all documentation for that child be complete and current.

Though it occurs very rarely, representatives of the Department of Social Services--Community Care Licensing may at any time interview any child in Alka Montessori without parental permission. Certain guidelines for such interviews exist and Alka Montessori will do everything possible to ensure that such guidelines are followed in order to minimize any stress.

Section 11166 of the California Penal Code requires all staff of the Alka Montessori to report any known or suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately. It is the policy of the Alka Montessori to report any such instance to the local police department.