

***SCHOOL POLICY AND PARENT HANDBOOK***

The information contained in this “Parents Handbook” will introduce you to the philosophy and organization of the Center. It will serve as a quick reference to the daily operating policies and procedures. Your familiarity with them will help make your child’s day a most rewarding experience.

The Center was built to meet the needs for high quality childcare for the children of our corporate and community neighbors. We look forward to working with you to provide a secure foundation for your child to ensure successful growth and learning.

Not all policies and procedures can be listed here.

We will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Alka Montessori is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

**AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY RECOGNITION**

Alka Montessori Child Care Center is recognized by the American Montessori Society, dedicated to better education for all the children through the philosophy and practices of the Montessori world. To be a nationally accredited program means that our Center has demonstrated a strong commitment to providing high quality programs for young children and their families.

**PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

We believe that good childcare depends upon consistent caregiving in a home-like atmosphere. Children grow and learn best in a safe environment that provides opportunities to explore create and communicate with other children and adults. These groups function independently but cooperatively, following routines appropriate to individual needs.

The Center’s Program is designed to include both planned and spontaneous activities in response to the child’s interests. Apart from Montessori teachings and jobs, experiences with music, movement, art, language and building are incorporated into the daily plans. Regularly scheduled snacks and meals, rest time, indoor and outdoor play and routines in physical caregiving promotes the child’s health, comfort and ability to care for him/her. There is maximum flexibility for the children as a group and as individuals.

Children are encouraged to develop a positive self-image, to learn inner controls and to cooperate with peers and caregivers. Clearly defined limits help them recognize and accept their emotions and express their feelings as they grow and feel secure in the world around them.

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

***TODDLER PROGRAM (Turtles Class)***

Our toddler program serves children from 1.5 years to 3 years. This classroom is designed to provide stimulating experiences for the children where they can learn through their own curiosity. The emphasis during these years is on building self-confidence and fostering the natural curiosity that this age possesses.

Throughout the day children enjoy the large variety of play materials that are readily made available to them, as well as creative centers where children can build with blocks, and experiment in the sensory table. Art, music, language and science activities geared to the little hands are also introduced. Our teachers offer the tenderness, love, warmth, and patience so essential to this young age.

Children feel comfortable in our class settings when their parents leave. Deep respect for each child ensures that your child will truly love his or her school environment and, from that, develop a long-lasting love for learning.

***PRESCHOOLER PROGRAM (Dolphins Class)***

Children are assessed for class placement into the older classes by chronological ages ( 3 years to 5+ years) and in terms of their total development – social, physical and emotional. Interest level in the activities typical of each group is also taken into consideration, as is the actual availability of an open place at a particular time that matches the enrollment days of the child being moved. The classroom teacher is also consulted as to the readiness of the child. It is usually a slow transition where the child will go to the older classroom for the morning only for 3-4 days and once he/she is comfortable in the older classroom then he/she is on the way to be there full time.

**ASSESMENT OF CHILD PROGRESS**

All age groups are assessed formally and informally to ensure that the teachers plan their curriculum goals and activities to support individualized learning.

Our teachers observe, record and document children’s development, participation and learning throughout the year.

Our formal assessments are done once a year, (September). All our assessments are kept in the child’s folder, which follow the child from group to group to show the progress in cognitive, language, physical social and emotional areas of development that are consistent with our program curriculum and philosophy. We have parent teacher conferences twice a year, once in October and once in April or May.

**GETTING TO KNOW OUR CENTER FAMILIES**

Alka Montessori Child Care Center builds a positive relationship with our families by being familiar with their unique characteristics, strengths and issues important to each of them.

To develop partnerships with the families we create a welcoming environment and opportunities for involvement.

Our center gathers information during the enrollment process by asking parent’s questions and collecting the following items: enrollment form, health history, children and family background information. All the data is kept strictly confidential in the child’s file and

In addition, we schedule visit days to meet the family members and create a smooth transition for the enrolled child.

Our center has an open-door policy. Parents and family members are welcomed at all times. Parents may visit the center at any time. However, if there are problems arising from parent visits that interfere with the deliverance of quality childcare, then the parent(s) will not be permitted in the classroom.

**COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES**

In addition to conferences and assessments, there are many ways to keep you

Knowledgeable about what is happening in your child’s classroom.

*WAYS OF COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES*

• Telephone calls

• E-mails

• Daily sheets on notice board

• Notices

**DISPCIPLINE POLICY**

Corporal punishment of any kind is not allowed at Alka Montessori. Any method of discipline which frightens, demean, or humiliate a child is strictly prohibited. Children who are having difficulty for any reason will be re-directed to another activity with teacher assistance. In the event that a child’s behavior is likely to result in harm to the child, others or property, or seriously disrupts group interaction, the child may be separated briefly from the group. The child will be taken up to the office to sit with an administrator where he/she can gain enough self-control to rejoin the group. The child will always be left in an area where he/she is in full view of, and can be supervised and supported by a staff member. Interaction between the child and a staff member will take place immediately following the separation to guide the child toward appropriate group behavior.

**CHILD ABUSE POLICY**

All staff of Alka Montessori Child Care Center are mandated reporters and are required to report any suspected abuse, neglect, or maltreatment on the part of an employee, parent, or volunteer. Any abuse or maltreatment of a child, either as an incident of discipline or otherwise is prohibited. Any means of corporal punishment will not be tolerated. Additionally, withholding or using food, rest or sleep as a punishment is prohibited.

**NEGOTIATING DIFFERENCES**

When a parent has a concern about some aspect of our childcare program we will take every step to help resolve the issue as promptly as possible, keeping the safety and wellbeing of the children and staff is our number one priority.

**SIGNING IN AND OUT**

Parents are responsible for signing children in and out. Sign in/out procedure requires full legal signature of parent/legal guardian and time of the child coming into the school and the child leaving the school respectively. This procedure is extremely important for attendance, records and safety measures in emergencies and has to be followed each day the child comes to the day care center. There is a sign In/out folder next to the entry door. Parents/guardians are required to sign in the child when they are dropped off in the morning and sign out the child when they are picked up in the evening.

**FORMS FOR CHILD’S FILES**

A separate, complete and current record for each child is maintained in the child care center. The file shall contain information including, but not limited to, the following:

* Name of child, Birthdate, Sex and Date of Admission
* Name, address and telephone number of the child's authorized representative and of relatives or others who can assume responsibility for the child if the authorized representative cannot be reached when necessary.
* A signed copy of the admission agreement for Alka Montessori.
* Signed Form LIC 701- Name, address and telephone number of the child's physician and dentist and any other medical/dental or mental health providers.
* Signed Form LIC 702- Medical assessment, including ambulatory status and the following health information: (A) Dietary restrictions and allergies. (B) Instructions for action to be taken in case the child's authorized representative, or the physician designated by the authorized representative, cannot be reached in an emergency.
* Signed Form LIC 627 - A signed consent form for emergency medical treatment unless the child's authorized representative has signed the statement.
  + Record of any illness or injury requiring treatment by a physician or dentist and for which the center provided assistance to the child in meeting his/her necessary medical or dental needs.
  + Record of current medications, including the name of the prescribing physician, and instructions, if any, regarding control and custody of medications.
* Signed Form LIC 613A- Child’s personal rights.

**OPERATING HOURS**

The school timings are Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm. Holiday Schedules are posted on the notice board and can be requested at any time from Alka Montessori Staff. In order to maintain consistency and predictability it is recommended that children are dropped off and picked up relatively at similar times. Also if you walk your child into the building please say good-bye in the hallway and allow your child to enter the classroom independently. Saying good-bye can be hard for some children, but entering the classroom with your child can make the morning transition even more difficult.

**REPORTING ABSENSES**

If your child is going to be absent unexpectedly from school, please call the school. Please leave a message directly on the voice mail box or send an email. It is not mandatory to report absences; however, it is always helpful for the teacher to know the status of your child. If your child has a planned absence please notify the office via voice mail or other method in advance whenever possible.

**GOING ON VACATION**

If you are going away on vacation for a month or two, 100% of the tuition must be paid before leaving on vacation in order for us to maintain the spot for your child

**AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE A CHILD**

A child will be released to parents and those adults identified by the parents as authorized to pick up their child. If another adult comes to pick up your child, we will release the child only through notification in writing from the child’s parent. Proper I.D. must be given before the child is released.

***EMERGENCY CONTACTS***

Your emergency contacts listed on your emergency card will be contacted in the event that you are unable to be reached. Please adhere to the following policies:

1. Two (2) contacts that live in a 5-10-mile radius of Alka Montessori Child Care Center

2. Your contacts should know that they have been recorded on the card and are responsible for your child in the event that they need to pick up your child at any time throughout the

Day.

***PICK-UP POLICIES***

Our concerns for the children’s safety, both physical and emotional, ask that once the child has

been released to your care at day’s end, your child is not permitted to run in the hallways, roam around unattended or enter the kitchen.

Parents who spend a little time in their child’s classroom at day’s end need to also remember that

while your child is in his/her classroom with you, class rules that encourage appropriate behavior

still apply for your child. Parent’s visiting in classes at day’s end may also have an anxious affect on other children waiting for their parents, so please take the gentle cue from the teacher if it time to leave.

***PARKING***

There is parking available at the front and back entrance of Alka Montessori. Please park in the allotted parking space only and not block other cars from reversing from the parking space.

We ask that you not leave car motors running or leave other children unattended within your car when you enter the building.

***PERSONAL BELONGINGS***

A stuffed animal or doll may ease the transition from home and comfort the child feeling anxious; please be sure these items are “soft cuddliest always welcome. It is recommended that other toys be left in the car or at home, so as not to be lost, broken or envied by others. Action figure/superhero toys and projectile toys are not permitted in the center. Action figure toys encourage strong physical play which often leads to aggressive play; this can get out of control when children confuse make-believe with reality.

***SCHEDULE OF SCHOOL***

8:00-8:30AM - Arrival of children/Reading Books/Free Jobs

8:45-9:15AM - Snack time

9:15-9:45AM - Free Play Time

9:45-10:00AM - Circle Time

10:00-11:00AM - Montessori Jobs, Art, fine motor exercises

11:00-11:30AM - Reading Time

11:30-11:45AM - Wash Hands/Restroom

11:45-12:30PM - Lunch Time

12:30-2:30PM - Nap Time

2:30-2:45PM - Wake Up, Wash Hands, Restroom

2:45-3:15PM - Snack Time

3:15-4:00PM - Individual work, Art, Montessori Jobs

4:00-4:30PM - Outside Play

4:30-5:00PM - Free Jobs

5:00-6:00PM - Playtime/Pick up

***CLOTHING***

Children play hard and need to be comfortable. We ask that children be dressed in clothes suitable for the many art, playground and climbing activities of their day. Cold weather does not necessarily keep us indoors, so please be sure that children have the necessary mittens, sweaters and hats, etc., appropriate for the day’s weather changes. All clothing should be labeled with the child’s name, to facilitate dressing and reduce loss. Two full sets of extra clothes should be kept at the center, even for the oldest children. When accidents of play, feeding or toileting happen, we know you would want your child to be comfortable. Extra sets will need to be regularly replaced as soon as possible if your child uses them. Shoes need to be appropriate for indoor/outdoor play. Hot, wet snow boots, for health reasons, need to be replaced with indoor shoes. Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are required for safe play; an extra pair may be left in the child’s cubby and teachers will gladly help with the changes.

***REST TIME PROVISIONS***

Parents are responsible for providing and laundering clothes, bibs, blankets and crib sheets. Sheets & blankets need to be taken home every other Friday to be cleaned/washed.

***FIELD TRIP POLICY***

We do not have a field trip policy- children are at no point taken outside the preschool/day care center campus while they are in our care.

**FINANCIAL POLICIES AND *TUITION POLICY***

Tuition is payable monthly by the 3rd day of the month. Make checks payable to Alka Montessori There will be no refund for day’s missed while the child is enrolled.

A registration fee is required to reserve a place for your child. The deposit will be refunded if 30 days’ notice is given to the center, and there is no outstanding balance. Your deposit will be mailed to you or you can pick up once your account is paid in full and cleared by the bank. There will be a $35.00 late payment fee for all checks returned to us unpaid from the bank.

***LATE PAYMENTS***

There will be a $25.00 late payment fee charged to you if check is received after the 3rd day of the month unless the third falls on the weekend or holiday then it is due the next business day.

**HEALTH POLICIES**

*“The risk of transmission of the agents that cause infectious diseases is increased when children are gathered into groups for any reason. This risk is particularly significant in day care because of the many close physical interactions between children and adults. The majority of daycare programs attempt to exclude ill children. However, illness among young children is frequent and many parents want to bring mildly ill children to day-care programs. This results in a struggle between staff and parents and a desire for absolute criteria to use to determine when a child’s illness requires exclusion. Day-care personnel criticize parents for demanding care for sick children. In turn, parents criticize day-care programs, believing that their children acquire their illnesses from day-care contacts. The resulting tensions strain parent/staff relationships, negatively affecting the quality of the day-care experience. Unfortunately, absolute criteria for exclusion of ill children do not exist. Day-care programs base their exclusion policies on two issues:*

*(1) Risk of transmission of infectious diseases and*

*(2) The demand of sick children for increased adult attention, which may exceed the resources of the day-care program”*

(Quoted from Pediatrics in Review)

The health policy of the Alka Montessori Child Care Center is designed to best meet the needs of our children, parents and staff. The policy has been in place since the center opened, but we keep rewriting it in attempt to clarify and better define these policies No policy will eliminate the problem of illness endemic to group care – especially of young children – no policy will satisfy all the populations the center serves, and no policy can eliminate the element of subjective judgment inherent to individual situations. Center health policies may differ from your child’s pediatrician’s opinion.

***Incidental Medical Services (IMS)***

Incidental medical services will be arranged so that services provided, specifically medication administered will not need to be given during school hours. If medication must be given or made available during school hours, written requests from the child’s physician and parent/guardian must be identified on the Medication Administration form and submitted with either a routing or referral (on an Internal Request for Follow-up Services form). Neither the child nor the medication may be present at the center until a care plan is in place and staff has been trained (if necessary). This policy includes all prescription medications (temporary and long-term) and non-prescription medications, as well as administering inhaled medication, Epi Pen and Epi Pen Jr. Injection, and carrying or complying with medical orders.

All medicines and medical equipment including EpiPens will be located in the classroom under adult supervision and inaccessible to children.

***DAILY INSPECTION OF ILLNESS***

* Alka Montessori shall be responsible for ensuring that children with obvious symptoms of illness including, but not limited to, fever or vomiting, are not accepted.
* Additional attention shall be paid to children who:
  + 1. Have been absent because of illness.
    2. Have been exposed to a contagious disease.
* No child shall be accepted without contact between center staff and the person bringing the child to the center.
  + Alka Montessori shall require that the person bringing the child to the center remain until the child is accepted.
  + After the child has been determined to be without obvious signs of illness and has been accepted, the center shall require that the person sign the child in.

***SAFE SLEEP PROTOCOL FOR KIDS 18-24MONTHS OF AGE***

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), which includes Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), is the leading cause of injury death in infancy. Sleep is a big challenge for families with babies, but following safe sleep recommendations can prevent many SUID fatalities and help kids sleep safely

* Kids are required to sleep on their backs during nap time in their own sleep space with no other people.
* Each child sleeps on a separate cot, flat mattress, and a fitted sheet.
* An adult teacher is always present in the room where kids are napping to ensure their safety.
* Loose blankets, pillows, stuffed toys, bumpers, and other soft items away from the sleep space.

***COMPLAINS OF PAIN***

Signs/symptoms of disease including Severe coughing, sneezing, breathing difficulty, discharge from the nose, ears or eyes, diarrhea or vomiting.

Should any of these symptoms present themselves the child will be excluded until a medical evaluation allows inclusion. A doctor’s note must be submitted stating that the child is not contagious and indicating the date that they can return to daycare.

In order to minimize the spread of illness among children, it is important that parents have arrangements available for alternative care whenever your child shows signs of illness. The following symptoms will necessitate exclusion from the center:

***FEVERS***

A temperature of 100° F or higher is reason for exclusion from group care. A child who has been sent home with a fever of 100° F or higher may return to the center after being fever free for 24 hours without any medication.

***SEVERE COLDS***

Colds with extreme symptoms of excessive coughing, sneezing, nose drainage that is yellow or green and that interferes with a child’s ability to eat, sleep or play are reason for exclusion.

***DIARRHEA***

Bowel movements that are extremely loose, watery and frequent are reasons for exclusion. A child should be free from diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to the center.

EXPLANATION – Diarrhea in children is an extremely contagious illness. Bowel movements that cannot be contained in a diaper or a toilet pose a high risk of contagion. Young children, especially infants, may have frequent or loose stools regularly or in response to a variety of conditions, but these are different from diarrhea. One or two meals should be eaten during the “24 hours free from diarrhea” (overnight with no meals eaten should not be considered 24 hours free from diarrhea). Secondary symptoms of crying, pain, refusal to eat, etc., must be considered.

***VOMITING***

Vomiting is a reason for exclusion. As with diarrhea, 24 hours should pass (with at least one meal eaten) without an episode of vomiting before a child returns to the center.

EXPLANATION – infants can spit up or throw up for many different reasons. With no other symptoms present we would wait to see if an infant threw up a second time before calling the parent to pick up the child.

***RASHES***

Rashes must be physician diagnosed for a child to be in the center.

***MOUTH SORES***

Mouth sores with drooling are reason for exclusion, unless the child’s pediatrician states the child is non-infectious.

***CONJUNCTIVITIS***

Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep, and including a child with eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye is reason for exclusion. A child may return to the center 24 hours after medication is begun.

***TEETHING***

Teething is not a reason for exclusion. Teething can cause low-grade fever (under 100 F), crankiness, loose bowel movements and a clear, runny nose. Teething does not cause the exclusionary conditions described above, though.

***SYMPTOMS OF CONTAGIOUS CHILDHOOD DISEASE***

Symptoms of contagious childhood diseases are reason for exclusion. The center however, adheres to the Americans with Disabilities Act in the application of its disease policies. Parents should notify us if their child has been exposed to Measles, Chicken Pox, Roseola, Conjunctivitis (pink eye), Impetigo, Pediculosis (head lice) RSV, Bronchiolitis, Strep Throat, Ringworm and Coxsackie. Exposure to contagious disease is not reason for exclusion.

***IN CASE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS AT THE CENTER***

Basic first aid will be performed. In the event of a serious injury, a parent will be notified. If the parents are not available, the emergency numbers on the child’s emergency card will be called. If the person(s) cannot be reached, we will 911 unless the parents have designated a different emergency plan.

***SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICES***

Supplementary aids and services are intended to improve children’s access to learning and their participation across the spectrum of academic, extracurricular, and nonacademic activities and settings. Children in our care that require supplementary services will be provided assistance to help them meet their goals. We will work closely with the parents of the child and accommodate any special care givers or speech therapists or one on one observers that the parents arrange to come into our classroom to assist the child.

**Supports to address environmental needs** (e.g., preferential seating; in the classroom, at lunch, in the and in other locations; altered physical room arrangement)

**Levels of staff support needed** e.g., consultation with parents, stop-in support with specialized caregivers, classroom companion, one-on-one assistance; type of personnel support: behavior specialist, health care assistant, instructional support assistant (arranged and paid by respective parents).

**Planning time** for collaboration needed by staff

**Pacing of instruction needed** (e.g., breaks, more time, home set of materials)

***EMERGENCY PROCEDURES***

In the event that the children would be safer remaining indoors, we would shelter them inside the Child Care Center. If our building was not considered to be a safe place for the children, we would relocate to a designated space. Next we would begin calling parents to advise them of our location and to request that the children be picked up as quickly and safely as possible. For cases where parents cannot be reached we would begin to call your emergency contact numbers.

**IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENT FOR CHILD CARE OR PRSCHOOL**

**To enter a childcare center, day nursery, nursery school, family day care home, or development center, children must have received immunizations required by California law.**

1. Parents must submit their child’s immunization record as proof.

2. Copy the date of each vaccine onto the California School Immunization Record (Blue Card, CDPH-286).

3. Determine whether children meet requirements above

**GUIDE TO IMMUNIZATIONS**

REQUIRED FOR CHILD CARE OR PRESCHOOL

Requirements by Age at Entry and Later (Follow-up is required at every age checkpoint after entry.)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Vaccine** | **2-3 months** | **4-5 months** | **6-14 months** | **15-17 months** | **18 months – 5 years** |
| **Polio (OPV or IPV)** | **1 dose** | **2 doses** | **2 doses** | **3 doses** | **3 doses** |
| **Diphtheria, Tetanus,**  **and Pertussis**  **(DTaP or DTP)** | **1 dose** | **2 doses** |  | **3 doses** | **4 doses** |
| **Measles, Mumps, and**  **Rubella (MMR)** |  | **2 doses** | **2 doses** | **1 dose**  **on or after the**  **1st birthday** | **1 dose**  **on or after the 1st birthday** |
| **Hib** | **1 dose** | **2 doses** | **2 doses** | **1 dose**  **on or after the**  **1st birthday** | **1 dose**  **on or after the 1st birthday**  **(only required for children**  **less than 4 years, 6 months** |
| **Hepatitis B**  **(Hep B or HBV)** | **1 dose** |  |  | **2 doses** | **3 doses** |
| **Varicella (chickenpox,**  **VAR or VZV)** |  |  |  |  | **1 dose** |

***DISMISSAL POLICY***

* We at Alka Montessori have the right to terminate the admission agreement for reasons that include but are not limited to:
  + Physical or emotional abuse of another child or teacher, which is determined to be excessive or repetitious by the Staff and Director
  + Results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
  + Parental behavior which includes regularly coming in late and picking up late, sending sick child to school, late payment of fees, violent/abusive behavior towards staff.

Following is an outline of steps that will be taken before dismissal will be considered:

* Initially, a parent conference will be scheduled to discuss the behavior(s) needing to be addressed, and to develop a plan to correct them.
* An outside assessment may be appropriate to help evaluate the problem and assist in developing a plan to correct it. This may result in additional cost to the parent.
* Next, a reasonable amount of time will be given for improvement in the child’s or parent’s behavior. Another parent conference will be scheduled to evaluate the child’s progress.
* Finally, if the behavior persists, and cannot be resolved to the Center’s and the parents’ satisfaction, it may be determined by the Director and Staff that the program does not meet the child’s needs. At that time it may be necessary to withdraw the child from the program.
* Parents’ non-support of or non-adherence to Children’s Center policies will be cause for dismissal.