



# **Elementary Parent Handbook**

2025-26

## **The Elementary Classroom**

*Hello and welcome to the elementary program! This handbook has been prepared for you to ensure a smooth and easy adjustment from the Casa program. Please take a few minutes to read it and then store it in a safe spot for easy reference throughout the year. If clarification is needed on any aspect of the program, please do not hesitate to ask.*

Students between 6 -12 years of age are entering a new stage of development. The absorbent mind of the younger child is evolving into a conscious mind. Elementary students are interested in reasons, explanations, and the perspective of time; they love grand ideas and lofty concepts-the bigger, the better. They are eager to explore. Students of elementary age have developed a sure sense of what is real and now enjoy using their imaginations to explore things that they cannot experience concretely, such as other cultures or big ideas. The concrete, manipulative work of the pre-school Casa program naturally gives way to more abstract, intellectual work.

Elementary students are also more aware of their peers, community, and global issues. They are less focused on physical order and more interested in a moral sense of order. They have a strong sense of justice, fairness and rules.

Elementary students are interested in working in groups and often display a "herd instinct." They associate with others not merely for the sake of company, but also as a sort of organized activity. A leader is chosen and obeyed, and a strong group is formed. The multi-age Montessori Elementary classroom encourages this social development and the adult moderates the process.

In addition to a classroom and a method of teaching that encourages cooperation and exploration, the international Elementary Montessori curriculum taps into the natural sensitivities of this age to create an energy that animates Elementary education. Each year five great stories are told in a dramatic fashion to create a framework of information to which students will add detail and understanding throughout their elementary years. The story of the beginning of the universe, of life on the Earth, of human life and of the great human creations of language, mathematics and science create a broad framework that invites students to explore all the traditional curriculums (the sciences, history and geography, as well as mathematics and language) creating greater depths of understanding each year. The technical aspects of language, mathematics and geometry (grammar, spelling, verb tenses, math facts, mathematical operations and facts, geometry constructions,

etc.) are layered onto this curriculum, benefitting from the students' natural curiosity and desire to master their world. These skills are supported with materials and exercises that continue the sequence begun in the Casa program. The sequence of materials gradually directs the students into abstraction and work on paper. The Montessori curriculum encourages depth of understanding, creative thinking, problem solving, collaborative effort and mastery.

## **The Montessori curriculum**

Cosmic Education is a cornerstone of the Montessori Elementary philosophy. At its core, Cosmic Education tells the story of the interconnectedness of all things. It describes the role of education as comprehensive, holistic and purposeful; to encompass the development of the whole person within the context of the universe. It also introduces the possibility that humanity might have a "cosmic task," to better the world for future generations.

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that Cosmic Education was vital to early education because it provides children with a framework to understand their world and their place within it. Children learn to respect studies of the past, develop an understanding of ethics, and value the contributions of others. In this way, Cosmic Education teaches children to become aware of the interdependence of all things and develop a sense of gratitude that comes from that awareness.

Within the Montessori classroom, Cosmic Education forms a platform for teaching children to understand and adapt to their environment. In the first plane of development (0-6), Cosmic Education introduces the child to the natural world through experiences with nature and the sensorial learning materials. These experiences teach children to refine their senses, and thus the way they process and understand their world. These skills aid the child's development, and confidence with themselves, their society, and their world.

In the second plane of development (6-12), Cosmic Education introduces the child to the repeating natural cycles in our world, the fundamental needs that all humans share, and the connectedness of all living things. In the elementary years, children begin to draw connections between how each particle, substance, species, and event has a purpose in the development of all others. These "Great Lessons of Cosmic Education" are taught as a whole curriculum to show children how all

content areas, such as the study of history, culture, science and the environment, are all interconnected.

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that children who received a Cosmic Education in childhood were better prepared to enter adolescence as independent, socially responsible, and emotionally intelligent individuals. This is because Cosmic Education launches children into the world with a practiced understanding of who they are as individuals, as members of humanity, and as citizens of the universe. It also provides children with a deep understanding of their moral responsibility to address global issues that affect humankind and the environment. In Montessori, every moment is an opportunity to understand the integrity of the universe.

### **Why is Cosmic Education important today?**

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that the world was a purposeful place; and that war, poverty, and injustice, were deviations from that purpose. She believed that Cosmic Education was a way to restore harmony and order and thus allow humankind to realize their true potential. In the twenty-first century, global awareness, peaceful communication, and ethical cooperation are integral to resolving global disputes. By providing children with a Cosmic Education, Montessori empowers students with the knowledge to transform the world. As Dr. Maria Montessori stated: "The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind."

### **French**

It is well known that children acquire languages more easily than adults, so our Elementary French language program takes the oral foundation started in Toddler and Casa and builds on it. As well as continuing with the oral language, this is the stage where the students begin reading and writing in French. We use the AIM method to achieve this. AIM (Accelerative Integrated Method) is a foreign language teaching method that uses music, dance, gestures and theatre to support learning.

When using AIM to teach French, hundreds of essential French words are taught alongside gestures, which are then combined with storytelling, theatre, music, and dance, to help students remember and speak the new vocabulary.

Children in Elementary will receive at least 90 minutes of French instruction weekly. The children will also be exposed to French conversation daily in the classroom, outside during recess and Phys. Ed class and after school program, as French speaking teachers communicate to one another and the children.

## **Physical Education**

The elementary students participate in physical education program for a minimum of two and a half hours each week. Typically, this program is held outdoors. Your child will have outdoor Phys. Ed thirty minutes each day, weather permitting. On rainy days, indoor yoga or dance instruction takes place. Your child will require running shoes and comfortable clothing. Our Phys. Ed. Program also includes a 12-week skating program, a 6-week skiing program, and a rotation of lessons in a variety of other fun sports such as; golfing, curling (UE), badminton, pickleball, basketball and baseball.

On Fridays during the fall and spring we will be running cross-country. Please ensure your child comes to school with proper footwear.

## **Music/Art/ Drama**

The Arts are an important part of our daily work in the Elementary classroom. Follow-up work to lessons can take the form of songs, plays or visual art. We sing daily and the Montessori bells and tone bars are available to use every day. The Elementary class practices and performs a musical play for the school community each December. The role of artwork in the elementary classroom is an essential piece of self-expression and serves to direct coordination and concentration. The elementary child begins to care more about the product, creating art for the final masterpiece. The elementary child now begins to come to the realization that art is a skill that requires practice and repetition, and with practice comes improvement and immense satisfaction.

## **The Essentials**

### **Arrival Time**

School begins at 8:30. Please try to arrive at 8:30 every day. When your child enters the school, their day has begun, and these first social interactions are just as important as the work they are about to engage in. They will be met at the door by Ms. Bennett and then go to the cloakroom. Upon arrival they greet one another and then prepare themselves for class. They will remove outdoor clothing and put on indoor shoes. Then wash their hands and take their water bottle and agenda into the classroom where they are greeted by the lead directress who will sign their agenda. If your child is late, the agenda is often not seen. Lessons begin by 8:45. Please

ensure that your child is in the classroom on time, so they can catch the beginning of lessons and have a chance to say good morning. Late arrivals are very disruptive to their morning and impact the students that have already started their day.

## **Uniforms**

The elementary class has a special occasion uniform. This uniform is required by all students and is worn for special class functions. This includes; picture day and some field trips, etc. It is not required that this uniform be worn to school on a regular basis, but it will be needed periodically over the school year, so it is essential that each child has one that is complete and fits.

Our school uniforms can be purchased at InSchoolWear.

<https://inschoolwear.com/inschoolwear-register/> our school code is: chhm

### Boys Uniforms

Navy Dress Pants

Long Sleeved Oxford Dress Shirt

Dress Gordon Tie

Dark Socks

Black Dress Shoes (NO RUNNING SHOES)

Suggestion: Buy a quality comfortable pair of uniform shoes that fit well and use them as your child's indoor shoes. This way they get worn more often and you can be more aware they are outgrown!

### Girls Uniforms

Dress Gordon Tunic (lower)

Dress Gordon Kilt (Upper)

Long Sleeved White Blouse

Navy Tights

Black Mary Janes (NO HEELS)

## **Agendas**

In Elementary, each child has a notebook agenda. The agendas are intended to ensure continued dialogue between the classroom and home and to assist your child with organization and time management. The agendas will come home nightly and are to be returned every morning. During the day, your child will learn to record the work they completed and the lessons they had. This helps you to understand what your child is working on during the day. Each evening, they are to write in the reading they completed for homework. Younger students will need parental support to complete their reading record. The students will be writing down events, things they must bring in, reminders, due dates and spelling word lists. Your help in ensuring the agendas are used correctly and well cared for is appreciated.

The agendas are used to convey information to the classroom teacher as well as vice versa. Please make sure you write any messages in the 'parent comment' section as we check the agendas daily. Please initial every night that you have seen the agenda. This will help on our end ensuring you have received necessary information.

## **See Saw**

Our Seesaw app is a classroom driven digital portfolio and is designed for simple parent to classroom communication. Parents will be able to view a wide variety of items uploaded to our student journal, such as photos of the children, spelling lists, field trip forms and classroom announcements. All communication sent through Seesaw chat is private and can only be seen by myself and the family we are communicating with. In early September each family will be invited to join 'Seesaw Family'.

## **Nightly Reading**

As reading is vitally important to the success for every student, reading at night is a necessity but not referred to as homework. It is expected that every child read for at least twenty minutes or more at home on a nightly basis. The student's readers and novel studies will be placed in their reader bag.

This is done to assist with safe arrival for the book to and from school. Please be sure to check your child's agenda for new chapter assignments.

## **Spelling**

Each Friday your child will write a new set of spelling list words in their agenda. Should your child not be at school on a particular Friday their word lists can be located on Seesaw. We ask that you please have your child write their words into their agenda as soon as possible. Spelling tests will be taken each week on Friday morning at 9:00 unless otherwise indicated due to field trip or holiday. We do our best to complete spelling work in class but at times you may be asked to assist your child in completing their spelling workbook.

## **Extra Clothing and Shoes**

Each child requires a pair of shoes, which are expected to stay at school. We recommend using your child's uniform shoes as their indoor shoes. This way they get used daily, so you get your money's worth from the investment, and you are never surprised the night before a trip when the uniform shoes don't fit!

Additionally, please send your child to school each day in running shoes as they have gym daily and need proper shoes to participate safely. Every student has a hook and bag to keep a set of extra clothes which should include spare socks, pants, shirt, underwear, and mitts. Please ensure all clothes are labeled with your child's name.

### **Lost and Found/ Labeling Clothing**

Please label all clothing, especially items which are usually removed. Even coats and boots can be confused as students have the same clothing.

CHMS has an ongoing fundraising campaign with Mabel's Labels. These labels are highly beneficial when labeling personal belongings. Please feel free to use the following link to place a label pack order.

[https://mabelslabels.ca/en\\_CA/fundraising/support/](https://mabelslabels.ca/en_CA/fundraising/support/)

### **Lunches and Snack**

The Elementary program does not currently have catered lunch program. Please send a healthy packed lunch each day for your child. The lunch should include a main entrée, drink, piece of fruit and possibly a side. Snacks will be provided in the morning and for after school program, so it is not necessary to send snacks.

A calendar for snacks is sent home monthly via SeeSaw. As in the Casa program, your child will have a day to bring snack for the whole class about once a month.

We encourage the students to bring food that need preparation (ie- muffin mix, smoothies, etc) to allow them the opportunity to host snack for their friends. Please ensure that the snack is nutritious and will provide healthy brain power for the morning work time. Filler food may be fun, but it has little nutritional value. Please do not let your child guide you on what to bring if it sounds unhealthy. Water is provided in the classroom, and the children have access to their water bottles all day long.

### **Birthdays**

All birthdays are celebrated in the classroom. This is your child's snack day as well. Please send a special snack (maybe your child's favorite food) and his/her

favorite nutritional snack as well. As well, many families like to use this opportunity to make a small contribution to their child's classroom. The elementary class is always in need of new books and greatly appreciates any new contributions in honor of your child's special day. Please feel free to ask if you need title suggestions, we always have a running list. Alternately, a plant or other item for the classroom is always welcome. Thank you!

If for any reason you need to contact one of the elementary teachers, please feel free to contact us at any time through SeeSaw or email or leave a message with the office and we will do our best to respond as promptly as possible.