



Parent/Student Handbook

Revised
August 2020

Elementary Class

1370 Beech St.
East Lansing, MI 48823

(517)336-0422

<https://ssmeastlansing.org/>

MISSION STATEMENT:

Our school community creates and maintains a learning environment that nurtures the development of the whole child.

Preparing for the School Year

School Calendar

The school calendar has holidays, special events, and school breaks indicated. You will receive a copy of the school calendar from the office. You can also view our calendar on the school website. We will make every effort to alert you to any changes in this calendar.

School Supplies

A supply fee has been added to your start of year statement. No further funds are required of you. A very small personal supply list was sent home with your welcome letter.

Drop Off

Each morning, Stepping Stones staff will be outside the building ready to welcome your child to school starting at 8:20am. We will take temperatures and verify waivers at this time.

Before Care

Students that arrive before 8:20 will be in before care. Ring the doorbell and Ms. Margie will greet your child and take their temperature. They will begin their morning with Ms. Margie doing activities near the office. At 8:00 they will be able to enter the classroom and begin their normal morning routine.

Dismissal

We end the day with an afternoon meeting and saying “Good Afternoon” at 3:30pm. Please plan on picking up your child at 3:30. If you choose to enjoy the outdoor areas of our school after the school day, please follow all posted school rules regarding this space.

Students will only be released to their parents, guardians or adults authorized for pick-up. Stepping Stones Montessori School requires either written notice or a phone call if an adult other than the parent/guardian is to pick up a student.

Volunteer Opportunities

You can support our classroom and school by volunteering. We will need support in doing laundry. Please participate in our fall and spring clean up days. Watch the newsletters for other ways to volunteer.

Attendance

Punctuality

Consistent attendance and prompt arrival are essential to a successful school experience for your child. Excessive tardiness can have a detrimental effect on your student’s educational experience and future work ethic. Although excessive tardiness is when a student is late in excess of 30 minutes, the habitual tardiness of 5 to 10 minutes is equally detrimental. It is disruptive to the class as the other students stop their work to wonder why their peer was late. When your student is tardy, it prevents him or her from benefiting from one of the most important parts of a

school day when the class meets together, greets one another, shares important information, and prepares for the day ahead.

Elementary students are expected to be present at our Morning Meeting or outdoor activity at 8:45 a.m.

Please allow sufficient time for your student to arrive at school and not feel rushed. These feelings set the tone for the day. Your student will sign him/herself into the classroom on the clipboard inside the classroom.

Please assist your student to learn the valuable lesson of personal responsibility by setting the example for punctuality. It is a most valuable life skill. We depend on your family's full support in this area.

Absences/Vacations

For the elementary child to self-develop and self-educate, they must be present at school. Stepping Stones Montessori is committed to delivering a high quality, authentic Montessori education by a combined effort between the school, parents, and the individual child. Regular attendance is essential for students to succeed in school. A student who is excessively absent will miss out on community building and social opportunities that cannot be recreated.

At the elementary level, students work collaboratively. They form different work groups and pairings that change for various projects. We give lessons and presentations to students in groups. If they are absent, they will miss the lesson and could be at a disadvantage when participating and contributing with their group.

If your student will not be at school, please call or email to notify the office the morning of the day they are out. Every absence requires a communication stating the reason for the absence.

One of the nice things about Stepping Stones is that we do understand that every once in awhile we all love to take a little vacation. While we are understanding and supportive, it is still important that you inform us of the trip and keep your student's absences from school to a minimum.

With this in mind, we expect that, as much as possible, trips will be planned to occur within the scheduled holiday dates, and professional development days as listed on our school calendar. If you should schedule a trip or a day-off other than during these posted breaks, please submit a written or verbal notification to the Front Office prior to the date off. Also, note that your student's tuition is not reduced because of absences or vacations and that missed days at school can impact your student's education.

Picking up Early/Returning to School

If your child needs to leave early from school, please notify the Office of the time they will be leaving and an estimated return time. This will help us to schedule things to include your child, if

possible. When you arrive at school to pick up your child, please come down to our classroom. When returning to school, please check back in with the Office.

Life in the Classroom

Our Basic Daily Schedule

8:20-8:45- arrival and social outdoor time.

8:45- either engage in outdoor activities or enter the building

Morning meeting and work period

11:15- clean up classroom

11:45- recess

12:15- lunch

1:00- reading time

1:30-work period

3:00- clean up

3:15- afternoon meeting

3:30- dismissal

Use of Lockers

Each student will have access to a wooden locker to store personal items. These spaces should be kept neat and tidy without unnecessary clutter. There is a space for shoes/boots under the bench or in the locker. Students should get in the habit of bringing a backpack or shoulder bag to and from school each day. It doesn't need to be very large. Student's bag, coat, and snow pants can hang from the hooks on the lockers.

Learning Journal (Upper El only)

Children will have a calendar for long term planning and goal setting throughout the year. Children will also be recording their daily activities and lessons in their learning journal. This is a special tool and all will receive lessons on the many ways to use them.

Living Together Peacefully

The social environment is very important in our classroom. Part of our grace and courtesy work is learning how to solve problems and get along with others. We have procedures to aid students in conflict resolution and encourage positive, clear, productive communication. We also have a peace council biweekly to discuss issues that affect the whole class and work together to create solutions.

Academics

Curriculum

Our Curriculum includes studies in Math, Geometry, Language, History, Geography, Science, and the arts. You will see these areas in the organization of the materials in our classroom. The curriculum is integrated in as many ways as possible. Students are encouraged to see the

connections between the areas of study and we work together to find ways to connect what they are learning to what they are passionate about.

Technology

5th and 6th year Students have access to computers as a part of their daily work. Some of the skills and topics we work with are word processing, naming and saving files, creating a slideshow, using a spreadsheet, using the internet safely, keyboarding, research skills, and website credibility. Students will have individual Google Drive accounts for word processing, document storage, and peer revision. Students will also be using the Google Classroom platform for remote learning.

Enrichments

PE- We will participate in Friday group games and cooperative challenges. These experiences teach the students: good sportsmanship, communication, cooperation, teamwork, perseverance, following rules, and self-control as well as working on gross motor movement. Other studies in physical education will happen throughout the year in different ways: yoga, mindfulness/meditation, dance, nutrition, mileage club and sports.

Music- Our music instruction will be on Wednesday from 1:30-2 for k-1 and 2:15-3:00 for 5th and 6th. Ms. Dianne Syal will be returning as our music teacher and will primarily be working with instrumentation using the Orf approach.

Art- Ms. Wendy leads our art education program. She will join us Tuesday afternoon for one and a half hours. She will work with each level every other week. Students also use their art skills in much of their work: illustrating their writing, creating visual components for projects, creating maps and diagrams etc.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Art- 1:30-3pm Every other week	Music 1:30-2- k-1 2:15-3:00- 5-6		PE- 2:30-3:30- UE are welcome

Health and Safety

In our class we will have Band-Aids, Vaseline, lotion, tweezers, and a thermometer for students' health needs. Please see the Health and Safety Section of the school handbook for more information on medication, accidents and health forms.

Guidelines for Recess

All Students Must:

1. Stay on school grounds and remain within eyesight of the adult responsible for them.
Supervising adults must be in the areas in which their students are playing, not in parked cars or in the school building.
2. Play in a way that respects people's personal space.
3. Keep hands, feet and bodies to themselves.
4. Respect nature by observing it and letting it be.
5. Use outdoor materials (balls, shovels, etc.) for their intended purpose and return them to where they are stored.
6. Use Swings for swinging back and forth: sitting, belly, and spider style (2 people, gently and not too high)
7. Give swing pushes from behind.
8. Keep a safe distance from the swings when not on them (off the wood chips and green bars)
9. Use sticks for building only.
10. Use forts as communal areas that belong to everyone and respect the work of others by sharing building materials, and letting forts stand.
11. Stay within the area of the cones on the blacktop.
12. Maintain distance with others.

Communication

General

The environment of Stepping Stones Montessori School is made more complete due to communication between our families and the school. The office staff and teaching staff use email for disseminating information. Please be sure you keep us posted of any email, home address and phone number changes. Never hesitate to call the school with any concerns, or just to give us any changes we should have in your student's paperwork. You will receive informational paperwork and your child's returned work, and other classroom-related information in their take home folders. Students are responsible for filling these as well as taking them home each week.

The school website is a great place to find more information. Please visit <https://ssmeastlansing.org/> for the school calendar and more. Stepping Stones also has an active Facebook page. You can find it by searching for Stepping Stones Montessori School in East Lansing.

For weekly information about the Upper Elementary specifically, you can look forward to receiving the Upper Elementary Newsletter in your inbox each week.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Communication between our teaching staff and you, the parent, is of the utmost importance to us. We do ask that in order for you to have your questions answered and your message heard, that you support us in the following ways:

- You may call and leave a message for us with the office. I will return your call when possible. If your message is urgent or time sensitive it will be relayed immediately.
- Notes sent to school requiring a response will receive a written or verbal response within the school day. Please ask your student to deliver it directly to me or the Front Office.
- I have limited opportunities to view emails during the school day as I am with the students. Please allow 36-48 hours for me to reply. If you are in need of my immediate response, please continue to call or email the school office.
- On Thursday and Friday mornings, for our Upper El. students, short chats can take place via zoom at the start and end of the day. Ms. Mandi will be on zoom 15-20 min prior to the start of the class meeting.
- Longer conversations can be meaningfully held with a scheduled meeting. If you wish to make an appointment with me, please email.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences and Progress Reports

We ask parents to attend parent/teacher conferences three times a year. These will be held before school starts, in the fall and in the spring. These meetings provide a great way to check in with your student's progress and daily habits, as well as ask any questions. These meetings are a short checking in. If there are concerns a meeting should be scheduled outside of these conference times. A parent or teacher may request additional conferences as needed. The best way to arrange a meeting is by e-mail.

Progress Reports will be sent home twice a year. The first will come home in January and will report on the first semester's work. The second will come home after the end of the year and will report on the second semester's work. The focus for these reports is to update you on your child's progress in academic, social, and emotional behaviors as well as give insight into the skills and concepts they have been working on in class. Progress is measured in many areas of growth, such as work habits, interests, social skills within the group, and progress in each area of learning.

Special Events

Birthday Celebrations

Who? All Elementary Students

What? On, or near, a student's birthday (or half-birthday in the case of summer birthdays), we love to celebrate. Montessori provides a special way to celebrate which includes the birthday walk (showing how many times a child has gone around the sun), a poem, song and the showing of a timeline of the child's life. You will receive a note a few weeks or so before your child's birthday to set a day and time for the celebration. We will go through the various steps of the celebration and parents will be invited to share a few stories about their child.

Why? Birthday celebrations are unique and help the student feel special and celebrated as well as look back on their growth and development so far in their life.

Presentation Night

Who? All Elementary students and their families.

What? Each year students from both Elementary classrooms present a Montessori material or a Montessori work to small groups of parents. This year children will present to peers and we will record and share all the presentations with families.

Why? Presentation Night gives students a chance to practice their public speaking skills and reinforces their knowledge of the material they are teaching. It is a confidence builder and a time to work on getting over the nervousness that can come with speaking in front of others. This is also a parent education night which gives you the opportunity to learn about how some of the Montessori materials are used.

International Fair

Who? All Elder and Elementary students and families.

What? Each year our large International Fair event is held at Edgewood Church. It begins with a song and parade of children with the flag of their nation. Then children present posters they have created. In Upper Elementary, students each study one aspect of a country. In this way the students go deeper in their studies. We make this country a part of our entire year of study and incorporate it into other areas of study. This may be held virtually.

Why? The International Fair is both a social event and important academic practice for each student. It is a time to practice public speaking and ease in talking to unknown adults. It also fosters pride in work and creates a sense of community.

Musical Performances

Who? All Toddler, Primary, Elder, and Elementary students and families.

What? We will have a recorded virtual music performance before Thanksgiving break to showcase the students work in music.

Why? These performances give students a goal to work towards in their music class and provide a venue for students to feel pride in the fruits of their hard work. This also gives students a chance to learn and practice performance etiquette.

Science Fair

Who? All Elder and Elementary students and families.

What? Each year we hold a Science Fair in the spring. Science Fair is a time for students to share their research, experiments, or demonstrations with the school community. They spend several weeks planning and carrying out their research and project creation in class. They present their posters to families and practice their speaking skills. This is held on two nights, with some students from each level presenting each night.

Why? Science Fair helps students verbalize the process they went through in their experiment and their findings. As it is near the end of the year, it serves as a way to build on the public speaking skills they began to develop during Presentation Night and International Fair.

Achievement testing

Who? Third years with a request of parents and all 4th-6th year students.

What? Students will participate in a formative computerized testing session in the fall and spring. Students will take an assessment for math, reading, and language. The testing window will be a set time with students able to work on the tests at their own pace. The computer assessment will give higher or lower level questions depending on how students answer giving a more accurate indication of what they have mastered.

Why? Each year more schools are transitioning to computerized adaptive testing like this one. This allows the children to practice the skills of test taking, gain exposure to the kinds of questions and wording they will find on other tests in the future, and have an opportunity to show their learning and understanding in this way. Because this test can be taken in many testing sessions and the questions adapt to the test taker, results are less affected by fatigue and students have fewer negative feelings. This just becomes another work in their day.

Passages Ceremony

Who? All Elder and Elementary students and families.

What? The Passages Ceremony is an event that honors and celebrates the children who will be changing classrooms next year or did sometime during the current school year. Elder students, third-year students and sixth-year students will pass over a bridge, symbolizing their transition to their new environments. Third and sixth-year students make speeches and the sixth-year students' time at Stepping Stones is especially recognized. This will take place at Edgewood Church.

Why? This event occurs to help bring the school year to a positive close. For the students who will be transitioning, it gives a sense of closure to their previous experience at Stepping Stones and helps to mentally prepare them for the next step. All families are invited to attend to show our support of these students.



Elementary Parent/Student Handbook 2020-2021

I have read, understand, and will abide by the information in this handbook.

Names

Date