



## **Parent–Student Handbook**

**2025–2026 School Year**

### **Welcome**

Welcome to **International Montessori Academy (IMA)**. We are honored that you have chosen our school for your child. This handbook is designed to provide families with clear information regarding our philosophy, daily practices, and school policies.

This handbook serves as a reference document. Financial obligations, tuition rates, and required consent forms are outlined in the **Tuition Contract & Enrollment Agreement**, which is a separate document.

### **Montessori Philosophy**

International Montessori Academy follows the Montessori approach, which respects each child as an individual learner. Our environment encourages independence, responsibility, concentration, and respect for others. Children learn through hands-on materials, freedom within limits, and guided exploration.

### **Program Overview**

Our preschool program is designed to support children’s academic, social, emotional, and physical development in a safe and nurturing environment. Activities include:

- Montessori practical life exercises
- Sensorial activities
- Language development
- Early mathematics
- Cultural studies
- Outdoor play and movement

## Daily Schedule

Children arrive between **8:45 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.** A consistent routine supports emotional security and independence. Daily activities include work cycles, snack time, outdoor play, lunch, rest, and group activities.

## Enrollment Requirements

To enroll and remain enrolled at International Montessori Academy, children must:

- Be at least one (1) year of age and walking independently
- Have a completed Enrollment Agreement on file
- Submit all required health and immunization records as required by the State of Florida
- Have up-to-date emergency contact information
- Meet program readiness expectations appropriate to their age and development

The school reserves the right to request additional documentation as required by licensing or regulatory agencies.

## Attendance & Absences

Regular attendance is essential for a child's success and consistency in the Montessori environment.

- Parents must notify the school if a child will be absent.
- Excessive or unexplained absences may result in a parent conference.
- Late arrivals disrupt the classroom environment and should be avoided.

## Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

- Children must be signed in and out daily by an authorized adult.
- Only individuals listed on the child's authorization form may pick up a child.
- Valid photo identification may be required at pick-up.
- Children will not be released to unauthorized individuals.

## Late Pick-Up

Consistent late pick-ups are disruptive and may result in additional fees or dismissal from the program.

## **Discipline Philosophy & Guidance**

International Montessori Academy uses positive discipline to guide children's behavior. Discipline focuses on teaching appropriate behavior through:

- Redirection and modeling
- Clear expectations and consistency
- Encouragement of problem-solving and communication
- Respect for the child's developmental stage

Discipline never includes corporal punishment, humiliation, verbal abuse, withholding food, or withholding bathroom privileges.

## **Aggressive Behavior & Biting Policy**

Aggressive behaviors such as hitting, biting, or kicking are addressed with immediate intervention and redirection. Parents will be notified of repeated incidents. Staff will observe patterns, provide guidance, and implement strategies to support positive behavior.

If aggressive behavior persists despite intervention, a behavior support plan may be required.

## **Student Dismissal & Expulsion Policy**

International Montessori Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all children, families, and staff.

A student may be dismissed from the program for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Behavior that endangers the safety of the child, other children, or staff
- Persistent aggressive behavior that does not improve despite documented interventions
- The school's inability to meet a child's developmental, emotional, or behavioral needs
- Failure of parents or guardians to cooperate with behavioral support plans or recommendations
- Repeated violations of school policies
- Failure to maintain current tuition payments
- Inappropriate, aggressive, or disruptive behavior by parents or guardians
- Providing false or incomplete information regarding a child's health or needs

## Intervention Process

When possible, the school will follow a progressive process:

1. Documentation of concerns
2. Parent conference
3. Development of a support plan with a review timeline
4. Ongoing evaluation

## Immediate Dismissal

The school reserves the right to immediately dismiss a student or family if there is a serious safety concern or a violation that compromises the school community. All dismissal decisions are made at the discretion of school administration and are final.

## Health & Illness Policy

Children must be healthy enough to participate fully in the school day. Children may not attend school if they have:

- Fever
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Contagious illness
- Any condition that prevents participation in daily activities

Children must be symptom-free for **24 hours** before returning to school.

## Medication Policy

For the safety and well-being of all students, International Montessori Academy **does not administer medications of any kind** to children while they are at school.

This policy includes, but is not limited to:

- Prescription medications
- Over-the-counter medications (such as cough syrup, fever reducers, allergy medicine, or pain relievers)
- Vitamins, supplements, or herbal remedies

Parents or guardians must ensure that all medications are given to their child **before or after school hours**.

Children who require medication during the school day may not attend school until the medication is no longer needed during school hours.

Additionally:

- Medications must not be sent to school in backpacks, lunchboxes, or personal belongings.
- If medication is found at school, parents will be contacted immediately to pick it up.

This policy is strictly enforced to ensure a safe learning environment for all children and to comply with school health and safety standards.

## **Food & Nutrition**

Parents are responsible for providing daily snacks, lunch, and a water bottle. The school promotes healthy eating habits. Families must notify the school of any food allergies.

## **Nap & Rest Time**

Children who remain for the full day will have a scheduled rest period. Parents must provide a nap mat or bedding as requested by the school.

## **Uniform Policy**

Students are required to wear the official International Montessori Academy uniform t-shirt daily.

- Khaki bottoms: pants, shorts, or skorts (khaki color only)
- Flip-flops, sandals, crocs, backless shoes, and high heels are not permitted
- Inappropriate footwear may restrict participation in outdoor activities

## **Personal Belongings**

Children should not bring toys or personal items from home unless requested by the teacher for a specific activity. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged personal items.

## **Sunscreen & Insect Repellent**

International Montessori Academy may apply sunscreen and insect repellent **only when provided by parents or guardians.**

- Products must be clearly labeled with the child's full name.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent will be applied as needed, according to the product instructions.
- The school is not responsible for allergic reactions or sensitivities related to parent-provided products.

## **Parent Communication**

Open communication between families and staff is essential. Parents are encouraged to communicate concerns respectfully and schedule conferences when needed.

## **Parent Conduct & Expectations**

Parents and guardians are expected to:

- Treat staff, students, and families with respect
- Follow school policies and procedures
- Address concerns in a calm and appropriate manner

Aggressive, threatening, or disruptive behavior by parents may result in dismissal.

## **Holidays & Birthday Celebrations**

International Montessori Academy observes major holidays. A school calendar will be provided at the beginning of the school year.

Birthdays may be celebrated in a simple and respectful manner. Families wishing to bring treats must receive prior approval and must comply with food allergy guidelines. Candy, balloons, and elaborate celebrations are discouraged.

## **Safety & Emergency Procedures**

The school maintains emergency procedures for fire, severe weather, lockdowns, and other emergencies.

- Emergency drills are conducted regularly in accordance with state licensing requirements
- Children and staff are trained on appropriate responses during drills
- Parents will be notified when emergency situations occur

## **Severe Weather & Storm Procedures**

In the event of hurricanes, tropical storms, or severe weather, families will be notified regarding closures or schedule changes. Decisions are made with the safety of children and staff as the priority.

## **Privacy & Student Records**

Student records are confidential and maintained in accordance with Florida law and DCF regulations.

- Records are accessible only to authorized school personnel and parents or legal guardians
- Information will not be shared without written consent, except as required by law

## **Emergency Contacts & Custody**

Parents or guardians are responsible for keeping all emergency contact information current. Any custody or legal documentation affecting a child's care or release must be provided to the school and kept on file.

## **Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting**

All staff members are mandated reporters under Florida law. Any suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect will be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities as required by law.

## **School Closure & Refund Policy**

In the event of emergency or temporary school closure, families will be notified as soon as possible. Refunds, tuition obligations, and non-refundable fees are governed by the Tuition Contract & Enrollment Agreement.

## **Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)**

Participation in Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program is subject to state eligibility requirements and funding guidelines.

- VPK attendance requirements must be met
- Absences may affect funding eligibility
- Refunds related to VPK are governed by state regulations

# Handbook Acknowledgment

This handbook may be updated as necessary. Families will be notified of significant changes.

By enrolling at International Montessori Academy, parents acknowledge responsibility for reviewing and complying with the policies outlined in this handbook.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This agreement is governed by the laws of the **State of Florida**.