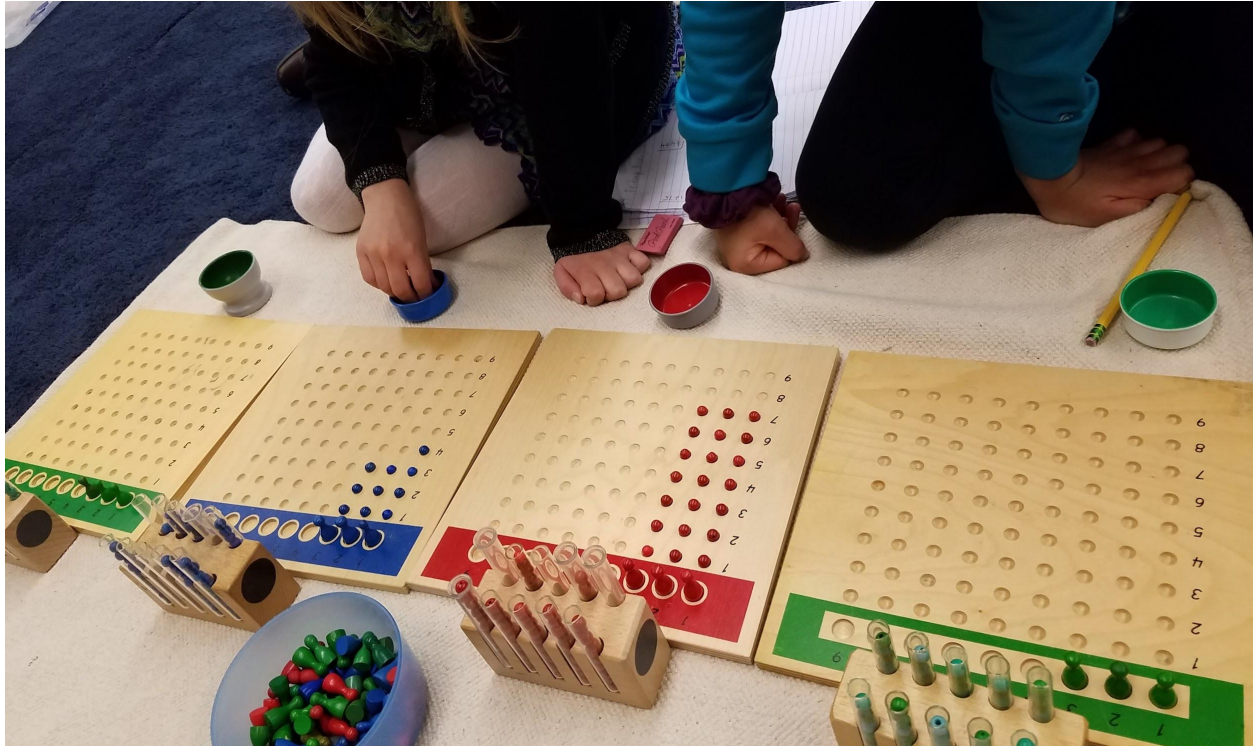


ROBERT GODDARD MONTESSORI SCHOOL



STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

Prince George's County Public Schools

ROBERT GODDARD MONTESSORI SCHOOL
9850 Good Luck Road
Seabrook, MD 20706

Deatrice Womack ~ Principal
Airis C. Freeman ~ Assistant Principal
Karuna Skariah ~ Coordinator

Telephone: (301) 918-3515

School Hours: 9:15 - 3:55

Fax: (301) 918-8670

Office Hours: 8:45 - 4:15

*Dismissal begins promptly at 3:30 for primary and elementary walkers & car riders. Middle school students and all bus riders dismiss at 3:55. We ask if you have school business to conduct that you visit the office before 3:00.

Family Handbook

“Education is a natural process spontaneously carried out by the human individual, and is not acquired by listening to words, but by experiences upon the environment.”

Dr. Maria Montessori

Welcome to the Robert Goddard Montessori School. Your child’s teacher, the staff, Montessori Coordinator, Assistant Principal, and Principal look forward to working, learning, and growing with you and your child.

Children worldwide have been educated with the Montessori Method for nearly one hundred years. This method is based on the observation that children are naturally motivated to learn. Montessori classrooms are filled with self-teaching materials. These children learn how to learn.

In the Montessori program, children receive an education addressing all aspects of development: intellectual, emotional, social, and physical. Critical thinking and cooperative learning are part of every lesson. An atmosphere of respect and dignity is found as each child receives an individualized approach to instruction.

Four levels of the program are offered at Robert Goddard Montessori: Primary, Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, and Middle School. The Primary classroom is devoted to the needs of children ages 3 to 6. The Lower Elementary program is dedicated to children ages 6 to 9, and the Upper Elementary program is devoted to the needs of children ages 9 to 11. The Middle School program, for ages 11 to 14, provides continuing Montessori experience for our 7th and 8th-grade students.

Admissions Policy

The Prince George's County Board of Education does not discriminate based on race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or age in its programs and activities. It provides equal access to designated youth groups.

As a PGCPs Specialty Instructional Program, the Montessori program admits all students through the yearly lottery process, with individual school placement determined by the parent or legal guardian's home address. Students must begin the program at age three or four. Students in kindergarten or older must be enrolled full-time in an accredited Montessori school the previous year.

Attendance Policy

Students driven to school by a parent or Day Care may NOT be dropped off before 8:45 a.m.

Children at all levels of the Montessori Program are expected to attend school daily. Absences are a severe hindrance to your child's educational and emotional growth in the life of the classroom. Arriving on time is also critically important. The first 30 minutes of the school day is when vital communication is shared between and among students and teachers. Students also use this time to organize their materials and complete their work plans, setting the tone for the entire school day.

Your child must bring a signed note the day they return to school after an absence, documenting the absence as a lawful absence. An absence is considered lawful only in the case of illness, doctor's appointment, or the death of a family member.

Students arriving at school after 9:15 a.m. need a late pass from the office to enter their classroom. Tardiness is also considered lawful or unlawful. Lateness will be considered excused if a note explaining the lawful reason is documented.

All students are expected to attend school for the entire length of the school day. If students are requested for dismissal before 3:30 p.m., their early dismissal must be documented with a note explaining the lawful reason to be excused.

Frequent unexcused absences, unexcused tardiness, or unexcused early dismissal could result in removal from the program.

Birthday Celebration Policy

Birthdays may be celebrated in the classrooms once a month in elementary through middle school. Teachers at these levels will solicit parents whose child was born in a particular month to bring healthy snacks; this will happen on the first Friday of every month. In Primary classes, the Timeline of the Child's Life Celebration emphasizes the beautiful changes that have occurred since your child entered the world and is a part of the Montessori curriculum at the primary level. Teachers will coordinate with the parents of the students at this level before the celebration to discuss the healthy treat and the materials needed.

Only healthy treats for all classroom celebrations with attention to allergy restrictions will be allowed. PGCPs mandates that all food brought to school to share with children must be packaged with the ingredients clearly labeled on the package. Please contact your child's teacher for details. Birthday celebrations should be no longer than 15 minutes. Primary student celebrations will be held at 11:15 a.m. before half-day students are dismissed. **Balloons or goody bags are not allowed at any level.** Healthy treats are fruits, vegetables, pretzels, yogurt, granola bars, mini muffins, etc. **Cupcakes, cookies, and cake are not options for birthday celebrations at any level.**

Please **DO NOT** send invitations to school to your child's "out of school" party unless **ALL** the children in the class are being invited. If you have questions about this policy, please contact the main office before bringing treats.

Cafeteria

Fill in Later

Contact Information

Parents **must** inform the school office immediately if there are any changes in the home address, home or work phone numbers, or emergency phone numbers. These numbers must be kept current for your child's health and safety. Although a change in the home address may change the school assignment, the student will continue to be enrolled in the Montessori program as long as they reside in Prince George's County.

Visitors/Volunteers

ALL visitors and volunteers to the building must check-in at the main office and show their I.D. to receive a **VISITOR'S PASS *BEFORE*** proceeding to a classroom. This safety procedure applies to ALL parents and other visitors during the school day, including arrival and dismissal.

We appreciate the volunteers who generously donate their time and effort to our students. Any volunteer working with our students must complete the [volunteer application and approval process](#) for screening before volunteering to ensure our students are safe. This includes volunteering in the school and chaperoning field trips. Any volunteer, chaperone, or parent working at the school must present a receipt documenting completion of the fingerprinting, child protective services (CPS) check, and completion of the safety videos before performing any duties. The completion of the fingerprinting and CPS check takes approximately 14 days. This process is completed at the Sasscer Administration Building. You will be given a receipt to take to the Montessori Office to keep on file. All school volunteers must indicate their desire to continue as volunteers each school year by renewing their volunteer application after July 1st of each new year.

Dismissal

Three-year-olds attend school from 9:15 – 11:45. They must be picked up promptly at 11:45. The instructional aides and teachers have other duties that begin at morning dismissal time, and there is no one available to watch children who are not picked up on time. If an emergency arises and you must be late, please notify the school office (301) 918-3515 as soon as possible.

Full-day primary and elementary students will be dismissed at 3:30 and middle school and all bus riders at 3:55. If dismissal plans change for your child, please notify the office in writing of the change. **Your child will be placed on the bus if there is no note.** If you are picking up your child, please call the office before 3:00. The office is hectic at the end of the day, so calling early avoids confusion.

Early Dismissal

Parents must come to the office to pick up their children. Students will remain in their classrooms until called by the Main Office staff to go and meet their parents in the office. Students should stay in their classrooms until their parents arrive.

Dress Code

How students dress and present themselves during the school day is to be determined by the parents of the student. It is the responsibility of the home to determine the fashion and manner in which they desire their children to attend school. However, the school reserves its legal right to act individually concerning any student whose appearance may be inappropriate for the school environment, according to the PGCPSS Board of Education Dress Code Policy.

PGCPSS Board of Education Dress Code Policy:

- Students can wear a headdress indoors for religious or health reasons only.
- Shirts and blouses should be continuous from the neckline to the waist. The entire midsection should not show—also, no tank tops or muscle shirts.
- No clothing, vulgar language, obscene pictures, weapons, drug/alcohol or drug paraphernalia, or tobacco products.
- No identifiable gang/crew clothing or paraphernalia.
- No see-through clothing.
- Skirts, dresses, shorts, and spandex skirts should be approximately 6 inches below the buttocks or no shorter than fingertip level.
- Students must secure pants at the waist – no sagging below the waist to expose undergarments.
- Tights, stretch pants, leggings, and spandex body suits must be worn with clothing covering the buttocks.
- Shoes must be worn at all times. A shoe is a covering for the foot. Students must wear sneakers or tennis shoes to PE.

Field Trips

These activities are planned with the teacher, and fees are based on total class participation, including entry fees and transportation costs. Once this fee is determined and payment is made, no refunds will be issued.

Health Room Information

Jane Ulrich Chesnes, RN

301-918-8677 OR 301-918-3515 ext. 230 / FAX 301-918-8670

- **If your child has any type of disability, physical disorder, or health problem, please notify the Nurse so that proper procedures and care routines may be established for the best possible handling of your child's health needs.**
- **For any medication – this includes prescription and over-the-counter drugs – to be given at school, a Medication Administration Form must be completed by your child's doctor and returned or faxed to the Health Room. Students should not carry any medications in school, nor may they self-medicate. Only the nurses may dispense medication, including cough drops or lozenges.**
- **Please send in copies of any updated immunizations that your child receives.**
- **A second MMR is required for students moving up to Kindergarten.**
- **A lead certificate should be on file for every student enrolled in 5th grade and under.**
- **We have several students enrolled in this school with SEVERE FOOD ALLERGIES! Please let the nurse, teacher, and cafeteria staff know if your child has allergies.**
- **Ensure your child knows not to share their food with others.**
- **Encourage your child to wash their hands before and after lunch and after using the restroom.**
- **Donations of new (small-sized) underwear and saltine crackers are always welcome.**
- **Please feel free to call or stop in the Health Room if you have questions or concerns!**

Home/School Communication

The monthly Robert Goddard Montessori PTSA bulletin provides information on school events and opportunities. You can also find important dates on the school's website. School Messenger will notify families, via telephone & email, about school events, school emergencies, early closings, late buses, and numerous other happenings. All families must create a SchoolMax Family Portal Account to receive school messenger communications. Please use this [link](#) for directions to create an account. **Please notify the school if your phone number changes.**

Late Openings & Early Closings

The weather or other emergencies may necessitate a late opening or early closing of the school. **Please listen to the radio or television for information.** You may also wish to visit the Prince George's County website at www.pgcps.org for updates. If the county announces a late opening, three-year-olds DO NOT come to school. As announced, all reported students will have school one to two hours late.

Having every child call their parents is impossible in case of an early dismissal. Please be sure you have made and reviewed those arrangements with your child.

Lost & Found

Items that find their way to the school's Lost & Found will be donated at the end of each month to a local charity. If your child misplaces or loses a personal item, encourage them to look in the Lost & Found immediately.

Observations & Conferences

Parent observations and conferences are an integral part of the Montessori program. The **observer** in a Montessori classroom is invited to the observation chair in a part of the classroom where they can get a broad view of the dynamics of the class. Most observations last approximately 30 minutes. All observers are asked to remain in the observation chair. Mrs. Skariah, our Montessori Coordinator, schedules observations and is present for the duration of all observations. Writing down questions you may have to ask after the observation is a good idea. Classroom observations will begin in October 2022.

Systemic parent-teacher conferences will be held on October 10, 2022, and February 21, 2023. Your child's teacher will contact you to schedule conferences. Parents can request a conference at any time during the school year. Virtual conferences are an option for parents unable to report physically.

Report Cards

Three and Four-Year-Olds: Progress is reported in parent/teacher conferences, either by phone or in person. Please feel free to request to meet with your child's teacher throughout the year to discuss your child's progress. No written report will be made, nor are in-person conferences mandated.

Kindergarten children: Report Cards are prepared in January and June to show progress, which is indicated without letter grades. At least one in-person conference is required each year.

Elementary grades: Report Cards are issued quarterly for children in grades one through five. No letter grades are assigned. Interim progress reports will be sent home midway through the quarter.

Middle School: Report Cards are issued quarterly. Middle school students are assigned letter grades. Interim progress reports will be sent home in the middle of the quarter and may be given at any time, as needed.

Sporting Events and Special School Programs

As spectators, students wishing to attend special programs (concerts, plays, etc.) and sporting events **MUST** be accompanied by an adult 21 years or older.

Discipline

The school-wide discipline plan at RGMS is progressive and is governed by the Prince George's County Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. Dr. Montessori founded her method on freedom with responsibility. Each student enters the classroom with the potential to choose activities, manage time, work with peers and move freely in gathering resources and materials for learning.

When a student encounters difficulty making productive choices or interacting with others respectfully, the teacher structures the environment to provide support. After setting clear expectations, the teacher may modify a student's work plan, seating, or opportunities to work with peers for some time to give the student limits to help work toward the freedoms available in the classroom. When modifications are made to the student's environment, the teacher will contact the parent to share observations and gain insight from the parent's perspective.

When additional support is needed, the teacher will contact the Montessori coordinator and the guidance counselor for help with interpersonal challenges and the academic specialists to help provide interventions to support the student's academic success.

The Personal Behavior Reflection allows students to self-reflect and take responsibility for communicating on their behalf. When a teacher asks the student to write a Personal Behavior Reflection, the student describes the incident and writes a more appropriate response they might choose next time. The student and teacher sign the form, and the student takes it

home to share with the parent. If the document is not returned, the teacher will call the parent. If repeated Personal Behavior Reflections do not produce a behavior change, the teacher will refer the student to an administrator, and the parent will receive a call.

Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

Students are prohibited from using cell phones or personal electronic devices during school hours. "School Hours" means the time a student enters the school bus or school property until the end of the designated "school day." "School property includes parking lots, school buses, and outside or inside all areas of the school building. Cell phones and personal electronic devices must be turned off or powered off and stored out of sight.

Consequences for misuse of cell phones and personal electronic devices:

First Offense: The student's cell phone or personal electronic device will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the day.

Second Offense: The student's cell phone or personal electronic device will be confiscated and returned to the student's parent or guardian.

Third Offense: The student will be prohibited from bringing a cell phone or personal electronic device to school.

Fourth Offense: Students committing repeated violations of this procedure shall be subject to additional disciplinary action consistent with the Student Code of Conduct.

Transportation

School bus transportation is provided to each student age four and older, based on the parent's home address. Transportation **may** be provided to a daycare address **only** if the address falls within the boundary area of the school.

Students must ride their designated bus home from school unless **written permission** is received from parents. Buses are not to be used for sleepovers or birthday parties. **Bus drivers have the right to refuse transportation services to students.**

Requests for permanent change of pick-up or drop-off sites should be made as soon as possible by completing a Transportation Change Form, which is available in the Montessori Office. Please be aware that implementing the change may take two to three weeks. If afternoon transportation arrangements change, please phone the office before 3:00 p.m. Four-year-olds and kindergarten students are escorted to their buses.

2022-2023
Student and Family Handbook

The below signatures confirm that we have received and read the 2021-2022 Robert Goddard Montessori School Student and Family Handbook.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature