

Gibbons Park Montessori School



PARENT HANDBOOK

2026 -2027

(Updated Jan - 2026)

Tel: 519-660-8731

Email: info@gibbonsparkmontessori.com

General Information

Our Mission
Administration
Staff
Programs Offered
Teacher -Student Ratio
Accreditation with the IMC
New Ministry Regulations
The Montessori Method
Program Statement
English as a Second Language
Religious Affiliation

School Policies and Procedures

Code of Conduct
Non-discriminatory Policy
Admission Procedures
Enrollment Forms ([Appendix](#))
Acceptance for Enrolment
Registration
Tuition fees
CWELCC Opt-Out
Withdrawal Policy/Refunds
Phasing in / Probation period
Waiting list policy
Child and Family Records
Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy

The School Experience

What to bring on the first day of school
School Calendar
Days and Hours of Operation
Monthly fees for Extended hours
Parking & Car Idling
Front Door at GPMS
Snow Closure
Cold/Hot Weather Alerts
Power Outage
Field Trips and Special Guests
Outdoor Playtime/Nature walks
School Shirts and Bags
Videos
Birthday Celebrations
Diversity Statement/Holiday Policy
Halloween
Emergency Drills
Clothing and Possessions
Volunteers and Students
Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC)

Health/Nutrition and Safety Policies

Immunization Policy
Individualized Support Plan for Children with Medical Needs
Medical Emergencies
Accident/Injury reporting
Injury Prevention
Sunshine/Smog/Sunscreen
Nutrition
Snack Menu (sample)
Lunch Menu (sample)
Food Allergies
Anaphylaxis Policy
Guideline for Lunches and Food Brought from Home
“Snack Basket” Project and Treats
Sleep/Rest Policy
Water Bottles
Daily Health Checks
Sickness
Fever
Contagious Diseases/Exclusion Regulations
Head Lice Policy
Administration of Drugs
Hand Washing Practices
Animals at the School
Smoke-Free School
Safe Drinking Water

Emergency Management Policy

Behaviour Management

Positive and Prohibited Practices
Anti - Bullying Policy

Serious Occurrence

Child Abuse/Neglect - Reporting

Parent Communication and Involvement

Orientation/Education
Family Conferences
School Newsletter
Parent Directory
Parents Issues, Feedback, Conflicts and Complaints
Changes in the Home
Confidentiality
Receipts/ Taxes
Contacting the School

Appendix

General Information

Our Mission

The Mission of Gibbons Park Montessori School is to provide a warm and nurturing environment in which children can experience an educational program firmly rooted in the Montessori philosophy while also inspiring social conscience, creativity, independent thinking and confidence in our students.

Administration

GPMS Supervisors:

Kim MacDonald-Heilandt

Dana Kerrigan

B.A, Montessori Diploma EC/EL I, RYT, RCYT, RPYT

B.A, Montessori Diploma EC

Tel: 519-660-8731

Email: info@gibbonsparkmontessori.com

GPMS Staff

The Staff at GPMS come from many different backgrounds and hold the certifications in Montessori Education (Toddler or CASA level) and the diplomas in Early Childhood Education (ECE), Bachelor of Arts, French, as well as Yoga.

Our Staff each bring their own learning experiences, talents and special interests into the classroom and model to the students their continuous passion for learning and curiosity about the world.

Our Staff remain current and enthusiastic through professional development opportunities and continuously upgrade their education through workshops, conferences, independent study, and researching topics of interest.

GPMS requires that all our Staff, students and/or volunteers undergo a full Vulnerable Persons Reference Check.

We also require all staff to be certified in Standard First Aid, AED and CPR for infants, children and adults.

Every 2 - 5 years all GPMS Staff complete 4-hour Threat Ready Safety Training that includes critical incident training in the following areas: immediate action planning, response to active attack, basic weaponry, and relevant scenario-based training. Most of GPMS Staff have the Food Handler Certification.

Substitute Staff

Qualified substitute Staff will be called in when regular Staff are away in order to maintain the ratio required by provincial licensing.

Programs Offered

Toddler Program: 18 months to 3 years

Casa Program: 3 years -6 years (Children need to be fully toilet trained before entering the program)

Student - Teacher Ratio

Toddler Program: 5-1

Casa Program: 8-1

Ministry of Education Licensing

Gibbons Park Montessori School is licensed by the Ministry of Education with the capacity for 20 Toddlers and 31 Casa students. GPMS undergoes the annual Ministry re-licensing inspection and follows all licensing requirements under the CCEYA.

The Montessori Method

Montessori is a method of education developed in early 20th century Italy by the first female medical graduate from the University of Rome. Dr. Maria Montessori recognized children's natural desire to learn and their extraordinary ability to absorb particular types of information at specific cognitive stages. She pioneered the multi-level classroom and child-sized environment, for which she designed a carefully structured series of graded materials. Even more important than the Montessori materials, however, is the implementation of the Montessori philosophy, which is based on a genuine respect for each child's individuality and intrinsic worth. The fine balance Montessori achieved between freedom and structure goes a long way towards explaining the world-wide success of her educational system.

At Gibbons Park, we provide a true Montessori environment, designed to nurture your child in every respect. We pride ourselves on our warm and welcoming atmosphere, our caring, committed, qualified teachers, our fully equipped classrooms, our exceptionally good student teacher ratio and our enriched program, which bridges the classic Montessori curriculum, and the standards set out by the Ministry of Education

Program Statement

GIBBONS PARK MONTESSORI SCHOOL (Est. 1988)

"Free the child's potential and you will transform him unto the world" Maria Montessori

We believe our young students should succeed in all aspects of life. A well-rounded student will excel not only in academics, but in life skills, and that it all starts deep in their inquisitive minds right here, right now.

We recognize each child is a unique individual who brings his or her own abilities to the program and deserves the encouragement and space to try new things, explore new ideas and develop their own unique creativity. GPMS provides an environment that fosters curiosity, one that allows children to explore. We believe that every child deserves a safe and caring environment, in which to grow and develop to their maximum potential. We understand the importance of taking children's stages of development into consideration. For each child, their stage of development is an individualized and complex interplay between development factors and their unique family, community and life experiences. In each case, we aim to integrate all areas of the child's development into our program in a holistic way. GPMS is dedicated to supporting children's learning, development, health and well-being through caring and responsive Montessori and Early Childhood Educators, who focus on active learning, exploration, play and inquiry, and who see children and their families as competent and able, and as active participants in all aspects of the program.

At GPMS we believe in creating an environment where attention is given to the development of the whole child. GPMS's interpretation of Montessori education and programming is consistent with **the Minister of Education's Policy Statement** as set out in **"How Does Learning Happen (HDLH)?"** and complies with **Child Care and Yearly Year Act, 2014** (General, O Reg 137/15).

How does learning happen? Ontario's pedagogy for the Early Years (2014) has a strong pedagogical focus, indicating that the pedagogy is not a prescriptive formula that lays out a specific curriculum or activities but instead challenges the status quo and explores how learning happens for children. *How Does Learning Happen?* is organized around four foundational conditions that are considered essential to optimal learning and healthy development for children: **Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement and Expression**. The four foundations apply regardless of the child's age, ability, culture, language, geography, or setting. Unlike a structured curriculum, the conditions are high states of being that children naturally seek for themselves and should not be viewed as separate elements.

1. **Belonging** refers to a sense of connectedness to others, an individual's experiences of being valued, of forming relationships with others and making contributions as part of a group, a community, the natural world.
2. **Well-Being** addresses the importance of physical and mental health and wellness. It incorporates capacities such as self-care, sense of self, and self-regulation skills.
3. **Engagement** suggests a state of being involved and focused. When children are able to explore the world around them with their natural curiosity and exuberance, they are fully engaged. Through this type of play and inquiry, they develop skills such as problem solving, creative thinking, and innovating, which are essential for learning and success in school and beyond.
4. **Expression** or communication (to be heard, as well as to listen) may take many different forms. Through their bodies, words, and use of materials, children develop capacities for increasingly complex communication. Opportunities to explore materials support creativity, problem solving, and mathematical behaviours. Language-rich environments support growing communication skills, which are foundational for literacy.

WHAT MAKES MONTESSORI EDUCATION UNIQUE?

The "Whole Child" Approach: The primary goal of a Montessori program is to help each child reach his/her full potential in all areas of life. Activities promote the development of social skills, emotional growth and physical coordination as well as cognitive preparation. The holistic curriculum, under the direction of a specially prepared teacher, allows the child to experience the joy of learning, ensures the development of self-esteem and provides the experiences from which children create their knowledge.

The Montessori Materials: Dr. Montessori has designed a number of multi-sensory, sequential and self-correcting materials based on her observations of the activities that the children enjoyed the most. These materials facilitate the learning of practical skills and abstract concepts.

The Teacher: The Montessori teacher functions as designer of the environment, resource person, role model, demonstrator, record-keeper and meticulous observer of each child's behaviour and growth. The teacher is known as the Directress.

Our educators are carefully chosen with proper qualification (MACTE/ECE) to ensure the quality of our program for all children under our care. GPMS Montessori recognizes the importance of continuous professional learning of our staff. To support the value, we place on importance of continual learning. We invite professional educators to offer training program to all staff during our Professional Development Day, as well as access to all childcare enhancement training programs that is available for all staff wish to attend to benefit them on delivering high quality experience and care for children.

"Prepared Environment" – The Third Teacher: In order for self-directed learning to take place, the whole learning environment—room, materials and social climate—must be supportive of the learner. The teacher provides necessary resources, including opportunities for children to function in a safe and positive climate. The teacher thus gains the children's trust, which enables them to try new things and build self-confidence. Our "Prepared Environment" revolves around the innate needs of children to explore and discover and helps them make sense and meaning of the world around them. The five curriculum (Practical Life, Sensorial, Language,

Math and Culture) areas allow children to learn to be independent, fosters confidence and self-worth. In our prepared environment, children learn at their pace and follow their own individual interests, they teach themselves, using materials specially prepared for that purpose. Children develop skills such as problem solving, creative thinking, and innovating, which are essential for learning and success in school and beyond.

At GPMS we believe in creating an environment where attention is given to the development of the whole child. To reach this goal, trained teachers guide and mentor the children using the principles of freedom within limits and self-directed activity. This allows each child to achieve his or her potential and allows them to explore and learn at their level of readiness. Our vision is to develop and foster a safe and caring community where children and families are valued, grow and succeed.

At GPMS, we have created a prepared environment where children are free to explore and choose their own work with enthusiasm and interest and develop a life-long love of learning.

Children's interests are valuable to their learning and offer a rich variety of experiences. The types of activities we offer daily include:

Practical Life – to develop fine motor skills, eye and hand co-ordination, concentration and confidence.

Sensorial – refine each of the senses and dexterity

Math – counting, decimals, arithmetic, multiplication, division, and even basic geometry and algebra.

Language - phonics, reading, writing, even grammar and sentence structure

Culture - including Arts, Sciences, Geography, History, Music, learning Social Skills.

Others – French, arts and crafts, music, dance, yoga, daily opportunities for physical literacy and active outdoor play, rest time for children who require it and based on their developmental needs.

We know that children flourish in all areas of development when they are in supportive, caring and responsive relationships with adults whose focus is on the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of all children. This is the foundation of our program.

Our Programs:

Toddler Program: (18 months to 3): Our toddler program offers many opportunities for children to grow learn and explore in a respectful and nurturing environment that supports their needs. The various activities help toddlers develop a sense of independence and responsibility, to refine their fine and gross motor skills and to develop strength, coordination and balance. This work will be continued as they progress to the Casa classroom.

Casa Program: (3 to 6 years)

Children learn from each other and naturally acquire social and academic skills. The classroom is orderly and provides the freedom for each child to work according to his/her needs. The classroom operates on the principle of freedom within limits which is based on core Montessori beliefs – respect for each other and for the environment.

OUR GOALS

To promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children: GPMS understands the importance of physical and mental health and wellness. We strive to exceed all health and safety requirements of the Ministry of Education and local government bylaws. We will promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of each child by providing a clean and safe environment, nutrition based on the Canada's Food Guide, limited transitions, eliminating any environmental issues that may cause undue stress to the child, unnecessary disruptions to play and reducing hazards that may cause injury. Each child's individual needs are valued and accommodated when possible. Our close connection to the outdoor natural environment supports intentional learning related to health, safety, nutrition and well-being.

To support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, childcare providers and staff:

GPMS works with families and their children as a team. We promote a sense of belonging for children and their families by creating positive interactions and encouraging collaboration. GPMS is committed to providing nurturing relationships that help children feel inspired and connected to adults and to each other. GPMS aims to ensure that families have the support of available, affordable, safe, reliable, high quality licensed care for their children which ensure parents peace of mind while their children are in our program. Respect, care, empathy, trust and integrity are core values in all our interactions with children, families and the staff.

To encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate:

We understand that self-regulation (defined as the child's ability to gain control of bodily functions, manage powerful emotions, deal with and recover from stress and maintain focus and attention), lays a foundation for long-term physical, psychological, behavioural and educational well-being. GPMS is committed to working together with the children and families to create a healthy sense of self, incorporate opportunities to support self-care and promote self-regulation skills. We will encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate. We will assist children in the develop of communication skills and problems solving skills, so they become competent in using multiple forms of communication (words, sign language, and body language) to recognize and express their emotions.

To foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry:

We believe that every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind and senses. The environment is where learning is fostered and takes place. Our Montessori environment is rich with materials and resources for children to use as they construct ideas, try out hypothesis, make choices and explore new and interesting concepts. The children are also provided with the opportunities for instructed play when they imagine, observe, investigate and collaborate. Just as important as the materials in the environment are the people. Our Educators are highly trained professionals, and everyone is committed to making the child's experience at GPMS a positive and memorable one.

To provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences:

We all learn best when we are engaged and interested in an experience. GPMS creates environment and experiences that support learning, individual development and engagement. Through observation, Montessori and Early Childhood Educators develop a deeper understanding of children's learning style, interests and perspectives. They use that information to plan and create a positive learning environment that is based on the interests of the child and supported by all the adults in the school environment. Our programs offer children ample opportunity to explore new ideas and expand old ones. The role of adults in our child- centred environment is to enhance the children's experiences, not to take over. Adults prepare the environment, support ideas, provide resources and materials, help children reflect on what they know and think, and provide emotional support and encouragement.

To plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported:

All GPMS Montessori and Early Childhood Educators are reflective practitioners who learn about children through listening, observation, documentation, and discussion with others, families in particular, to understand children as unique individuals. Based on regular observations of the children's activities and interactions we plan a program that stimulates the interests and encourage inquiry. We provide a variety of activities, both active and quiet, which meet the needs of the developing child regardless of the level of need and development. We will make changes in our environment and program as the children's interests and developmental needs change.

To incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and consider the individual needs of the children receiving child care:

Our daily schedule at is designed in response to the diverse abilities and interests of the children. In addition to both indoor and outdoor play, special attention is paid to active, quiet time and rest/sleep periods. Our focus on each child's diverse needs and preferences as well as parental directions; supports both children's well-being and sense of belonging within our school community.

To foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children:

Same as children, the families are also competent and capable and curious and rich in experience. We believe that parents are the most important people in a child's life, and we work closely with them to achieve the best care for

their child. GPMS aims to foster outreach, engagement and communication with families about our program and their children's learning experience. We believe that families are experts on their children. Sharing knowledge is integral to the success of each child. We know that our partnership with our families help our program to best meet the needs of the children.

To involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff:

Local community partners play an important role in our GPMS community. It is one of our core values at GPMS to foster collaborative and co-operative relationships among all of our partners. We are committed to involving local community partners and to engaging those partners in supporting our children, families and staff. We view the community as a valuable resource and engage the community partners to plan and create learning opportunities for our students, their families and the Staff. We also seek out opportunities to share our knowledge and resources. We appreciate the many relationships with community partners that ultimately enhance the well-being and positive learning for children, family and our Staff.

To support staff and others who interact with the children at a GPMS in relation to continuous professional learning:

Just as our children are recognized as lifelong learners, so are our Staff. GPMS will provide ongoing opportunities for educators to engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice and to support continuous professional learning. All Staff will build a climate of trust, honesty and respect in the workplace, working collaboratively in order to provide a safe, secure, healthy and inviting environment for all children and their families. We are committed to building and maintaining healthy professional relationships that encourage growth and offering support and mentorship.

To document and review the impact of the strategies set out in clauses on the children and their families:

Observation and practice of documentation help to create a holistic picture of children's experiences, development and learning. GPMS recognizes that pedagogical documentation is a way for our program educators to learn about how children think and learn. Documentation makes learning visible to others, allows for interpretation and encourages educators to be co-learners alongside both children and families. The documentation helps the adults to better understand children's perspectives and ideas, to plan for activities that are meaningful to each child and prepare environment where children are encouraged to revisit their ideas and to further explore their knowledge.

English as a Second Language

In a world of relocation, GPMS often enrolls students with English as their second language. We will work with parents to make sure that ESL students are comfortable and successful in the classroom and fully functioning in the English language.

Religious Affiliation

Gibbons Park Montessori School is not affiliated with any religious organization.

School Policies and Procedures

Code of Conduct

The staff and administration of GPMS work collaboratively with students and parents in setting appropriate standards for conduct and in maintaining high standards in this regard. Reinforcing positive student conduct contributes to the continual evolution of a culture of mutual respect amongst all members of the GPMS community. Student conduct must respect the rights, maturity, dignity and emotional and social health of all individuals.

When conduct issues do emerge, staff work together with parents and children to develop a fair and equitable resolution that supports students' growth and development. Children learn that freedom and discipline coexist.

The core expectations of the classrooms are:

1. Respect yourself

2. Respect others

3. Respect the environment

Students are provided parameters in which to work, and when a child tests the environment outside of these parameters the child is gently reminded of the guidelines and how it affects themselves as well as other students. Classroom behaviour and expectations are modelled daily by all teaching and administrative staff. The classroom teachers are responsible for the primary intervention in disciplinary situations occurring in the classroom, on the playground or at locations off-site.

Redirection is the first approach to discipline.

If after these redirections and opportunities to practice improved behaviour the student does not meet these expectations, the child is brought in close to the teacher and shadows that staff member for a period.

If the behaviour continues repeatedly, the child engages in a private conversation with the staff member allowing the child the opportunity for a better understanding of how to correct the behaviour.

If undesirable behaviour persists, the Principal is involved and if necessary, parents may be contacted. For offenses of a more serious or repeating nature (i.e. fighting, threats, vandalism, bullying) the Principal may suspend the student. Parents are notified both verbally and in writing of the incident and the suspension.

Non-discriminatory Policy

GPMS does not discriminate in enrolment, hiring practices or in the care of children based on race, colour, creed, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, or religion.

Admission Procedures

A school tour and an interview will be arranged to familiarize you and your child with the surroundings, answer your questions, and complete registration forms prior to enrolment.

The Registration Fee, Application Fee, the Deposit of one month's tuition (Applies to June) and Post-dated cheques for the balance of the tuition should be submitted at the same time.

Although enrolment in Gibbons Park Montessori School is a commitment for the entire school year, the annual tuition fees may be paid monthly (by a series of cheques dated from September 1 to May 1, per term (payments due on September 1 and January 1) or annually (payment due on September 1).

Our only source of income is through your annual tuition and we ask that you please adhere to our established fee schedules and policies.

Enrollment Forms - [Appendix](#)

Acceptance for Enrolment

At the time of acceptance, the parent will have one week to provide: **The Registration Fee, Application Fee, the Deposit of one month's tuition (Applies to June) and Post-dated cheques for September to May** and confirm acceptance. At this time, this enrolment agreement shall constitute a legally binding contract between the parent and the school and **deposit** becomes non-refundable.

Registration

Upon receipt of a finalized Application package, Registration fee, Activity fee, deposit, and post-dated cheques the registration will be deemed complete.

Tuition fees

The parent agrees to pay the school the tuition fees as stated on the fee information.

The parent is required to pay the tuition in 10 equal instalments (1 deposit that applies to June 2027 and 9 monthly payments on the first day of each month: September to May). Planned and emergency days off such as weekends, statutory holidays, professional development days, Thanksgiving, Christmas/Winter Break, Spring Break, Easter, and other circumstances (bad weather closure, power/water outage, other emergencies including sickness outbreaks, staff shortage due to illness) are all a part of the academic year.

Tuition Fees – 2026-2027

Base Fees:

• REGISTRATION FEE (for NEW applicants only)	160
• ACTIVITY FEES:	
For NEW and RETURNING TODDLER students	200
For NEW and RETURNING CASA students	300

FULL SCHOOL YEAR TUITION (in 10 equal **MONTHLY** installments)

TODDLER * tuition includes lunch fee

Full Program 9 a.m.—4:00 p.m.	2075 per month
Half Day 9 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (limited spaces)	1670 per month

CASA * tuition includes lunch fee

Full Program 9 a.m.—4:00 p.m.	2000 per month
Half Day 9 a.m.—12:00 p.m. (limited spaces)	1565 per month

For families with 2 children child registered for the same academic year, a **10% discount** is offered on the lowest monthly tuition fee (before additional fees i.e., lunch and extended hours).

MONTHLY FEES FOR EXTENDED HOURS (paid in advance)

- | | |
|--|------------|
| • Extended Morning 8:00 a.m.- 9 a.m. | 110 |
| • Lunch Supervision (for half day Casa students) 12:00 p.m. - 1 p.m. | 110 |
| • Extended Afternoon 4:00pm - 5:00 p.m. | 110 |

Late Pick up fee: **\$30** fee will be charged for late pick-up from Extended Hours. Repeated late pick up of three times may result in suspension from the Extended Hours program

Non-Base Fees:

FEES FOR OCCASIONAL HOURS

Each single hour or part thereof (not prepaid as above) **\$15**
Childcare fees for extended hours are not discounted. Occasional hours must be paid the month they are used, and the school must be informed in advance.

***Cheques not honoured when tendered for payment will incur a \$20 charged to your account to cover charges assessed against NSF by the financial institution.**

Please Note: Our fees are subject to increase from year to year and will be posted no later than January 31st

Payment can be made in the form of a cheque or e-transferred to: info@gibbonsparkmontessori.com

Opting Out of CWELCC (\$10/day)

GPMS has decided to opt out of the CWELCC. We reserve the right to opt in at a later date if the agreement is beneficial to our school, employees and families and will not cause any degradation to the quality of our staff and program

Withdrawal Policy/Refunds

Early withdrawal for vacations or other reasons will result in the loss of the deposit, activity fee and registration fee. **The school requires ONE MONTH written notice of withdrawal or tuition for the month following the student's departure will be required.**

We must receive written notification by August 1 if your child will not be attending in September, otherwise full fee will be charged for September.

The school reserves the right, but is not obligated to, refund tuition in cases where the administrator deems it inadvisable for the child to continue. All decisions by the school on possible refund or partial refund are final and non-negotiable.

A parent may withdrawal their child from the school prior to **June 30, 2026**, with a refund of post-dated cheques **minus registration, activity fee and deposit**. Withdrawals after **December 31, 2026, will receive no refund.**

No refund of fees will be offered due to absence of a child due to illness, family, vacation, family holidays or any other circumstances (bad weather closure, power/water outage, other emergencies including sickness outbreaks, staff shortage due to illness)

Early withdrawal for vacations or other reasons will result in the loss of the deposit and registration fee. The school requires ONE MONTH written notice of withdrawal or tuition for the following month will be required.

Phasing in / Probation period

Parents of new students will be contacted in August for 'phasing in'. Your child will be welcomed into a warm, calm and orderly environment in which all children are free to learn and explore within the social limits of the classroom. Phasing in new students promotes their sense of security, helping them to make the transition from home to school. All new students have a probationary period of 30 days during which time, in the rare cases that the school deems that the child is not ready for our environment, the school can deny admission. **In such a case, all cheques (aside from Registration Fee and Activity Fee) will be returned.**

Waiting list policy

If you would like your name to be added to our waiting list, please provide the following information:

- Parents first and last names
- Best contact telephone number(s) and or email addresses
- Your desired start month
- Your child's name
- Date of Birth (unborn children may be added to the list with expected month and year of birth)

There is no fee required to be placed on the waiting list.

Children are added to the waiting list in order of application, however, at times, this may not determine the order accepted. We must ensure proper variation of ages, boys/girls, full time/part time which may, at times, cause us to accept students out of order based on enrolment needs.

Normal priority sequence will be:

- Sibling of enrolled student
- Child of staff member
- Outside applicant - full time
- Outside applicant - part time

Families will be contacted as soon as a spot becomes available via email or phone. They will be given a set amount of time to respond with their acceptance after which another family will be contacted. Acceptance after being contacted is first come first serve.

To complete acceptance of the spot, we would require:

- Complete application package
- All fees and deposits
- Postdated tuition cheques for the year

Child and Family Records

As part of our licensing regulations, GPMS is required by law to collect and keep up-to-date records about each child and his/her Family including:

1. An application for enrolment signed by a parent of the child
2. The name, date of birth and home address of the child
3. The names, home addresses and telephone numbers of the parents of the child
4. The address and telephone number at which a parent of the child or other person can be reached in case of an emergency during the hours when the child receives child care
5. The names of persons to whom the child may be released
6. The date of admission of the child
7. The date of discharge of the child
8. The child's previous history of communicable diseases, conditions requiring medical attention and immunization records or Statement of Medical Exemption or Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief
9. Any symptoms indicative of ill health
- 9a. A copy of any individualized plan for allergies and other medical conditions
10. Authorization for Medication Administration
11. Written instructions signed by a parent of the child concerning any special requirements in respect of diet, rest or physical activity
12. A copy of any written recommendation from a child's physician regarding the placement of a child for sleep
13. Enrollment Questionnaire ("Getting to know your Child", "Getting to know the Parents")
14. Attendance records
15. Accident Reports
16. Child's Symptoms of Illness Record
17. Police Record Checks
18. Curriculum Record
19. Parent –Teacher interview records
20. Progress Reports/ Curriculum Record Keeping Folders
21. OSR (if transferred from another school)

CONFIDENTIALITY and RELEASE of INFORMATION

- Confidentiality of student and family information is always maintained. Information regarding students or families will not be shared with other families.
- Child and family information is seen only by those staff who need the information to provide services and to ensure the individual needs of children and families are met.
- Information about a child's allergies and medical needs will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of the child, except when information must be

disclosed for the purpose of implementing the procedures in this policy and for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

- The information will be shared with the provincial licensing inspector and the municipality for inspection and quality compliance reasons only. The medical officer of health is permitted to inspect the records and copies of relevant records will be provided to the medical officer of health on request.
- GPMS will not share personal information about you or your child with anyone outside the agency unless we have your permission or unless we are required to share information by law.
- Access to a child's records without parental consent may only be given to officials of the following: 1. Coroner's Office 2. Courts in response to a warrant or court order 3. Ombudsman 4. Authorities vested in provincial or federal statutes 5. The Minister of Education and officials to whom he/she has delegated the authority (e.g., program advisors).
- Upon completion of the CASA transition information; including Progress Reports and the OSR (Ontario School Record) will be transferred to receiving Elementary Schools.
- Parents are not required to provide consent to the release of personal information concerning their child as a condition for enrolment.
- The written consent of a parent will be a requirement prior to the release of personally identifiable information to third parties.
- The written consent of a parent will be a requirement prior to the release of any information through internal and/or social media (e.g., posting pictures in the school newsletter and/or on school website and/or Facebook)
- The written consent of a parent will be obtained before a child's personally identifiable information is released to an outside researcher and/or a child participates in any research project conducted at GPMS.

(Full Child and Family Records Policy: [Appendix](#))

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy

GPMS will ensure that any child receiving child care at our school will only be released to the child's parents/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization for. GPMS will not release any children from care without supervision. GPMS must be made aware of any change to the arrival or dismissal of the children to ensure their safety.

Arrivals

Young children depend on a regular routine for their own sense of security. Therefore, we recommend that you establish a fixed time to pick up and drop off your child. Good-byes should be brief and cheerful to promote the child's sense of independence. In the interests of safety, please make the staff aware of your child's presence in the school or the yard when dropping your child off. A staff member will be there to greet you at the school's entrance or at the gate of the playground. Punctuality is important since latecomers disturb the continuity of the class, miss important lesson time and often find it harder to settle down.

Late Arrivals or Absentees:

Please notify the school prior to 10:00 if your child is arriving late or will be absent for the day. Please notify via phone, email or using the Remind App. If the child's absence is not communicated to the school, the staff will contact the parents until an explanation as be provided.

Dismissals

GPMS will only dismiss children into the care of their parent/guardian or an authorized individual.

If someone new will be picking up your child, please provide written authorization to the school prior to dismissal. Any person who is unknown to the staff member dismissing the child will be asked to provide photo identification prior to the release of the child.

Children will be dismissed either from their classrooms or from their playground. A teacher will be at the gate or entrance to greet you and dismiss your child. Once your child is released to your care the teachers are no longer responsible for your child. Please ensure that your child is following school rules during this time. Children are not to enter or leave the building without a parent.

If you intend on using extended hours, please call the school as early in the day as possible to notify staff to ensure proper staff—child ratios.

Late Pick-up

Please be on time. There is no grace period for pick up times. If children are here after their arranged pick-up time, they will join the extended hours program and parents will be billed accordingly.

If you are going to be late please notify the school via phone, e-mail or through the Remind app.

1. Regular day program children should be picked up at or before 4:00 unless extended hours have been arranged. Please keep in mind that 4:00 is the end of shift for some of the staff.
2. The school closes and the staff leave the building at 5:00pm
3. **If your child is signed up for aftercare the latest arrival to the school should be at 4:55pm.**
4. If an emergency arises on a rare occasion, the pick-up person is expected to notify the school as soon as possible and make alternate arrangements for someone else to pick up the student by the designated time. Please inform the school in writing of any new person picking up your child.
*anyone new to the school will be asked to present photo ID
5. Late Pick-up fee of **\$30 fee** will be charged for each late pick-up from Extended Hours.
6. If late pick up is a repeated problem, the supervisor and parents will meet to try to address the problem. If irresolvable, then 2 days' notice may be given, and termination of extended hours will be required.

(Full Safe arrival and Dismissal policy: [Appendix](#))

The School Experience

What to bring on the first day of school

ALL Students

- backpack with a complete change of clothing
- Extra socks and underwear (casa)
- few grocery bags or other (for soiled or wet clothes)
- Reusable and labelled water bottle
- 1 pair of **INSIDE** shoes (Velcro or shoes the children would be able to put on/take off themselves). Please label.
- 1 pair of OUTDOORS (outdoor shoes will not be permitted in the classrooms). Please label.
- sunhat and sunscreen

Additional TODDLER class items

- Blanket for nap time
- SMALL Pillow for nap time (optional)
- Fitted sheet for cot
- Stuffed animal for nap time (optional) - quiet ones - no rattles or talking toys please :)
- Picture of themselves for their cubby
- Picture of family (optional)
- For changing diapers, wipes, creams
- **Several changes of clothes: tops** (both long-sleeved and short) **pants** and **socks**

School Calendar 2026-2027

The Statutory Holidays, March Break, Winter Break and PD Days (also available at gibbonsparkmontessori.com)

*Field Trips and special events will be announced as confirmed and posted in the Newsletter/Remind App/website/ on the calendar in the school foyer.

- **September 8– FIRST DAY of school year**
- **October 12 – Thanksgiving (no school)**
- **October 26- PD Day (no school)**
- **December 18 – PD Day (no school)**
- **December 21- Jan. 2 – Winter Break**
- **January 15 - PD Day - Parent-Teacher Meetings (no school)**
- **February – Family Day**
- **March 15-19 – March Break**
- **March 26 – Good Friday**
- **March 29– Easter**
- **April 16 – PD Day**
- **May 24 – Victoria Day**
- **June 4 – PD Day (no school)**
- **June 24 - LAST DAY of School Year**

Days and Hours of Operation

Gibbons Park Montessori School operates from Monday to Friday.

Extended hours are available both before and after school and we are happy to meet your time tabling needs. You are welcome to reschedule your extended hours whenever your needs change. If you expect to use this service on a regular or even semi-regular basis, it would be to your advantage to sign up in advance for our monthly rate. Otherwise, occasional extended hours will be billed at the hourly rate.

**** Please note:** The school is closed promptly at 5:00 and we ask that all parents respect this and arrive on time and - as the teachers will have your child ready -not linger unnecessarily as teachers must close up the school. We are happy to have your child show you the school and work during normal hours, however, we cannot accommodate this at 5:00 pm. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

Our hours are from **8:00 a.m.** to **5:00 p.m.** with the following options:

Extended Morning 8:00 a.m.- 9 a.m.

Lunch Supervision (for half day Casa students) 12:00 p.m. - 1 p.m.

Extended Afternoon 4:00pm - 5:00 p.m.

Parking & Car Idling

Plenty of free parking is available in the Gibbons Park parking lot adjacent to the school. Please **closely supervise** your children in the parking lots and when crossing the street to school as it is a public lot, and some may not think to look for children when driving through.

In an effort to first and foremost provide a safe and clean environment for our children, parents are to ensure that their vehicles are parked and turned off during arrival and departure times.

Front Door at GPMS

For security reasons the school door is locked at all times. Please ring the bell to enter.

Snow Closure

In the event of severe weather, we may find it necessary to cancel school. Announcements are typically made by 6:30 a.m. on radio and TV. You can also call the Thames Valley District School Board to check for a recorded message or their website www.tvdsb.ca. The Thames Valley School Board “**snow closures**” apply to Gibbons Park Montessori School - in the event that the all the Thames Valley Schools are closed, all GPMS classes - part-time and full-day will be cancelled. There may be other occasions where we close due to weather independently to ensure the safety of our staff and students. We will email all parents before 7 am on these days.

No refund of fees or makeup days will be offered due to the snow/bad weather closure.

Cold/Hot Weather Alerts

GPMS will follow the guidelines of Environment Canada/ Middlesex London Health Unit regarding extreme weather conditions. In the event of heat or cold weather alerts, we will shorten or remove our outdoor playtime following the recommendations provided by Middlesex-London Health Unit.

Power Outage

In the event of a power outage longer than two (2) hours, parents will be contacted via phone or email and asked to pick up your children until the heat and/or power can be restored. No refund of fees or makeup days will be offered due to power outage closure.

Field Trips and Special Guests

Each year, the students participate in a series of exciting educational and cultural field trips which complement the curriculum. They may visit local libraries, museums, galleries and historical sites, attend musical, theatrical and dance performances and participate in various environmental and physical education programs. During all trips, the individual ratios of each program will be the same as during regular school hours.

Trips are announced at least several weeks in advance for Parents information and involvement via school website, school newsletter, school bulletin board and Remind App. Parents are welcome to come along on these excursions. All parents and volunteers must have a clear vulnerable person check to be able to join the children on the field trip.

Gibbons Park Montessori School also hosts visiting artists, parents and members of the community who share their special interests and talents with the students. Parents are encouraged to give suggestions for field trip destinations and/or visitors to GPMS staff.

(Full Field Trip Policy: [Appendix](#))

Outdoor Playtime/Nature walks

Full day children will go outdoors for 2 hours every day weather permitting (school playgrounds or nature walks within the community and in the Gibbons Park). Only days when it is raining, or the Health Unit advises us that it is unsafe, will we remain indoors for playtimes. Please send your child with appropriate clothing **every day**. No child will be permitted to remain indoors during normal outdoor playtimes. If your child is ill or for any reason cannot go outdoors, it is your responsibility to keep him at home that day or pick him up for playtime. Due to new Ministry regulations, we will be having two designated outdoor playtimes during the day. This will require children to have **2 sets of outdoor clothing** to ensure that they are dry and comfortable during the winter months.

An authorization form, in the registration package, acknowledges parental permission for a child to leave the premises for neighborhood on walks within the community and visits to the park.

During playtime and nature walks, the individual ratios of each program will be the same as during regular school hours).

(Full Playground Safety and Supervision Policy: [Appendix](#))

School Shirts and Bags

Gibbons Park T-shirts are required wear for field trips, where they help us keep track of our own group. One T-shirt and one canvas school bag will be given to the student on the first day of school. Additional T-shirts and bags may be purchased from the staff during the school year.

Gibbons Park canvas bags are used to take readers home and should be brought back with the reader the following day. They are also used to take finished work home on Fridays. Please return the empty bags on the following Monday.

Videos

Occasionally, children's videos may be viewed in the classrooms. If movies or videos are to be shown it will be related to the monthly topic and reflected on the classroom monthly calendar. Parents may contact the classroom teachers if they wish to discuss the content of the movie.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are times of recognition and celebration. At Gibbons Park Montessori School, birthday children are honoured with a special ceremony. On such occasions, the birthday child may want to show photographs and talk about special events in his or her life or share a special birthday snack with the class. If you can, please send in a photograph of your child at birth and around each birthday, up to the present.

In order to avoid hurt feelings, please mail all birthday party invitations. **NO BIRTHDAY INVITATIONS WILL BE HANDED OUT AT SCHOOL UNLESS THE ENTIRE CLASS IS INVITED.** The school would be happy to provide a class list with phone numbers and email addresses. If you prefer to keep your own phone number or email unlisted, please let us know as soon as possible. **As well, please do not send any “loot bags”, toys or treats to be sent home with the children in the class.**

Diversity Statement/Holiday Policy

The diversity plan at GPMS is one that is open and respectful toward all people. The school provides an environment that is multicultural and reflects the families served, with an acceptance toward differences in skin colour, ethnicity, socio-economic status, physical and learning abilities, family lifestyle, religion, gender, and cultural practices. A proactive approach is used toward biases to help children develop an awareness of stereotyping and prejudice as seen in their everyday lives. The school is committed to providing a culturally relevant and anti-bias environment. In keeping with this commitment, holidays are acknowledged and regarded respectfully as each child shares his or her family traditions; however, holidays are not celebrated in our program.

Halloween

Our Halloween celebration is in the morning (we want to be sure that the half-day children can participate. All PM program children are welcome to come in the morning, stay for lunch and their regular program). The children and staff will be coming to school in costumes. Halloween can be a lot of fun for children, as they love to dress up. However, it can sometimes be frightening for a child to see familiar people dressed so differently. We would like all the children to enjoy this day, so here are some guidelines we have set up for their costumes.

When choosing a costume with your child:

- Make sure that it is comfortable and allows for freedom of movement.
- Make sure that it does not limit or obscure their field of vision.
- We do not allow masks at school as they often frighten the little ones and obscure vision.
- Weapons are also not permitted (even though they might seem to go with their costume).
- Costumes that are likely to promote violent or threatening behaviour are also not permitted.
- Be wary of those plastic costumes that tie around the neck, they tend to rip very easily, and if the cape gets caught on something, a child can choke.

Parents should send a change of clothes as we will be changing back into our normal selves after the party.

The Halloween Party includes: Costume Parade, Pumpkin Carving, Story Time (Fall, Harvest, Seasonal changes in nature, Halloween safety, Games and Crafts, Special Snacks.

Emergency Drills

Emergency and evacuation drills are held on a regular basis to acquaint staff and children on procedures to follow in the event of a disaster such as a fire.

Clothing and Possessions

Montessori philosophy stresses the development of the child's autonomy. With this in mind, we request that you send your child to school in clothing with fasteners that he or she can handle independently. The clothing should be appropriate for physical activity, the season and the weather. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that the child will be warm outdoors. Please keep in mind that we take children outside every day unless it rains, or the temperature drops below -10° Celsius.

A complete change of clothing should also be left at school for your child, as well as extra hats, mitts and socks.

A pair of non-skid, rubber-soled slippers or indoor shoes is also a necessity.

Please label your child's clothing and possessions to help us keep track of them. We are not responsible for lost, soiled or stained clothing. Any unmarked and unclaimed clothing will be donated to charitable organizations at the end of each school year.

Please do not send toys to school. They are a source of distraction and can easily get lost or broken, causing distress to the child. Please do not send jewelry and accessories: they can also be distracting and are choking hazards. Objects to be shared with the class should be educational and suitable for group discussion. Items from the world of nature or from different countries and cultures would be a good choice.

Volunteers, Students and Staff from Outside Agencies

Periodically, we train students from high schools, colleges and universities and are always in need of skillful volunteers. Students, volunteers, or staff from outside agencies will always be supervised by an employee and never permitted to be alone with any child or group of children who receive care at GPMS. Students, volunteers, and staff from Outside Agencies will not be counted in staff to child ratios.

GPMS' written policies and procedures regarding volunteers, students and staff from outside agencies that set out the roles and responsibilities of the GPMS Supervisors and supervising employees; and the roles and responsibilities of volunteers and students (Full policy: [Appendix](#)).

Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC)

GPMS requires that all employees, students and volunteers must obtain a **Vulnerable Sector Screening Check** which includes a criminal reference check prior to commencing employment and interacting with the children. GPMS Supervisors must see the **original document** and will keep a copy in the individual's file.

If you are a London resident you can apply in person at [601 Dundas Street](#) or online:
<http://www.policysolutions.ca/checks/services/london/>

Under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEY), all individuals in full-time or part-time employment, volunteer positions and student placements will be required to complete **an annual Criminal Offence Declaration** (COD). The Criminal Offence Declaration is to be signed by all individuals and submitted to GPMS Supervisors annually no later than 15 days after the anniversary date of the previous VSS or COD.

The new Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) is **only required every 5 years**.

(Full Police Record Check Policy: [Appendix](#)).

Health/Nutrition and Safety Policies

Immunization

No child may attend the school without providing up to date **immunization records** OR submitting a completed Statement of Medical Exemption or Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief form (forms available at the school office). In the event of an outbreak of any reportable communicable disease (Chicken Pox, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, etc.) any children or staff exempted from immunizations will be sent home. All immunization and exemption forms and health records are kept in child's file, which is maintained by GPMS Supervisors.

Individualized Plan for a child with medical needs

Gibbons Park Montessori School develops an individual plan for any child that may require additional supports or accommodations due to a chronic or acute medical condition. This plan is developed by the GPMS Supervisors, Parents/Guardians and in conjunction with any regulated professional the Parents/Guardians believe should be consulted.

The pre-enrolment and on-going reviews of each individualized plan by Staff, students and volunteers will support the child(ren)'s ability to participate in our program (while on the school property, off-site on a field trip or during an evacuation) and will provide Staff with all necessary information to deal with any medical situation pertaining to the child.

This individualized plan will be reviewed with the child's Parents/Guardian's annually and whenever any changes in the child's condition occur.

If there are any changes to the current needs of a child or the need for special training requirements the Parents/Guardian will be asked to update their child's individualized plan and book a time to train the Staff.

The individualized plan will be placed in the child's school file, classroom Emergency Binder and displayed in all the rooms of the school.

The individualized plan will include:

- Picture of the child
- Child's personal Information
- Health Care Professionals contact information
- Emergency Contact Information
- Medical condition history
- Details of the medical need, symptoms to look for in the event of a reaction/emergency
- Steps to be followed to reduce the risk of worsening this condition
- A description of the procedures to be followed in the event of an allergic reaction or other medical emergency
- Location and expiry date of medication (such as EpiPen® or asthma inhalers).
- A description of any medical devices used by the child and any instructions related to its use (such as orthopedic insoles/arch support, stabilizing braces, EpiPen® asthma inhalers, equipment for the management of Diabetes etc.)
- A description of the support that will be made available to the child while in GPMS
- Any additional procedures to be followed when child with a medical condition is part of an evacuation or participating in an off-site field trip
- Completed Administration of Prescribed Medication Form
- Procedure for Occurrence of Seizures if applicable

Medical Emergencies

All GPMS staff are trained in First Aid and CPR. Minor cuts, bruises, and scrapes will be treated with soap, water, and a bandage and parents will be notified upon their arrival at school for pickup. Documentation of injury, treatment, and parental notification will be made on an Accident Report Form. Parents will receive a copy of the

Accident Report Form and will be asked to sign it. The original will be kept at the school in the child's file and a copy will be given to the parent.

In case of a serious injury or emergency, staff will call 911 and may administer appropriate first aid.

Staff will notify the parents immediately of any head injury, nosebleed, dental injury, or other serious injury and treatment given. If staff members are unable to reach a parent, they will call the second emergency contact number listed on the Child Emergency Information Update Form.

Accident/Injury reporting

If a child is injured an accident report will be made describing circumstances of the injury and any first aid administered. A copy of the report will be provided to a parent of the child.

(Accident/Injury Report Form: [Appendix](#))

Injury Prevention

We are proud to provide a closed and secure with safety as a paramount concern for the school, the parents and children we serve. Hazards are monitored daily and every consideration and effort is made to maintain a facility that is free of hazards for our children and parents. Indoor and outdoor play times are carefully scheduled and supervised by the staff during the school day. Older and younger students play at different times or on different playgrounds for safety's sake. Staff follows school safety practices to ensure safe play occurs for all the children.

Sunshine/Smog/Sunscreen

We are aware of the harmful effects of the sun's rays, poor air quality and heat stress. To protect our students from these conditions we:

- limit outdoor play to cooler times of the day, such as early in the morning and late in the afternoon.
- shorten the required one hour morning and afternoon outdoor playtimes when necessary due to weather condition.
- Encourage the children to drink water regularly during outdoor play (at least every 15-20 minutes).
- provide shaded areas for the children to play and rest in during outdoor playtime.
- Parents provide and label a sun hat and sunglasses (optional) for the children to wear during outside play time. These items may be left in the child's cubby.
- Parents should apply an appropriate waterproof sunscreen at home prior to sending your child to school.
- The sunscreen will be reapplied by the staff before after lunch and after school playtime.

Nutrition

Gibbons Park Montessori School provides:

- Hot lunch (Catered by Growing Chef's) on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
- **Friday:** Pizza Pizza Lunch (cheese pizza, yogurt, seasonal fruits or vegetables)
- Nutritious morning and afternoon snacks

We accommodate Vegetarian, Gluten Free, Dairy Free, No Pork/No Beef diets/restrictions

Snack Menu (sample)

Week 1:					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM Snack	Fruit Cheese Slices	Unsweetened Applesauce Graham Crackers	Yogurt Fruit	Veggies Naan Bread	Cinnamon Apple wedges Multigrain Cheerios
PM Snack	Veggies Hummus Pita	Mini Bagels Cream cheese Veggies	Raisin Toast Carrots	Whole Grain Crackers Fruit	Veggies Cheese slices

Week 2:					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM Snack	Unsweetened Applesauce Rice crackers	Whole wheat Bread Low sugar Fruit Spread	Granola Bars Fruit	Oatmeal Cookies Yogurt	Veggies Hummus
PM Snack	Veggies Cheese slices	Veggie sticks Yogurt dip	Yogurt Graham crackers	Whole grain Bagels Fruit	Fruit Cheese slices

Lunch Menu (sample)



6 Sweet potato and black bean taquito Salsa Garden salad Corn Oatmeal cookies	7 Beef bolognese Whole grain pasta Vegetables and dip Broccoli Apple wedges V: Lentil bolognese	8 Turkey sausage and kale frittata Roasted sweet potato Green bean salad Pineapple V: Kale frittata	9 Pork schnitzel Mashed potato Peas Water melon V: Falafels	10
13 White bean pasta primavera Cucumbers Rutabaga Cantaloupe	14 Italian sausage Rice Pilaf Braised cabbage Granola bars V: Black bean patties	15 Cornmeal chicken fingers Roast potato Seasonal vegetable Honeydew V: Tofu nuggets	16 Beef sloppy joe Whole wheat bun Carrot sticks Cauliflower Fruit salad V: 3 bean sloppy joe	17
20 Victoria Day	21 Sausage and pepper pasta Kale caesar salad Vegetables and dip Cheesecake cups V: Pepper and lentil pasta	22 Beef stroganoff Mashed potato Asparagus Pear wedges V: Eggplant stroganoff	23 Turkey meatloaf cupcake Scalloped potatoes Seasonal vegetable Yogurt parfait V: Lentil meatloaf	24
27 Spinach Lasagna White bean and corn succotash Seasonal vegetable Chocolate macaroons	28 Pulled pork Whole wheat bun Spinach salad Cauliflower Watermelon V: 3 bean sloppy joe	29 Beef chili Cornbread Braised radish Apple wedges V: Vegetarian chili	30 Honey mustard chicken thighs Rice Stir fried carrots Strawberry crumble V: Honey mustard tofu	31

Monday to Thursday: Lunch provided by Growing Chefs'



Friday: Pizza Pizza Lunch (cheese pizza, yogurt, seasonal fruit or vegetables)

Food Restrictions and Allergies

If your child has **food allergies, special dietary needs or preferences**, you **must** notify the GPMS office and your child's classroom teacher as soon as possible.

The London Middlesex Health Unit restricts us from serving food to children that has not been prepared in a Health Unit-approved kitchen. We therefore request that you not send food with your child to school. On the other hand, if your child has special dietary needs or must eat food alternatives, you must supply all necessary food items, presented in containers clearly marked with your child's name.

It is common to have children who suffer allergic reactions to certain foods. The outcome of this may be serious. Be sure to advise us when your child has any type of food allergies or food restrictions. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to keep Gibbons Park Montessori School informed of any allergy that has become progressive in nature. We offer an "Allergy-Safe" environment for Nut allergies but cannot guarantee that other potential allergens will not be present in our lunches due to them being prepared offsite.

Please send appropriate snacks if your child cannot have the snacks provided at school (i.e. gluten free, or other allergies that will not allow your child to have enough of the provided snacks). We can store bulk items with your child's name on them and let you know when more are needed.

ANAPHYLAXIS POLICY and Procedures

Purpose

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that can be life-threatening. It requires avoidance strategies and immediate response in the event of an emergency. These policies and procedures are intended to help meet the needs, to minimize the potential for accidental exposure and save the lives of children with severe allergies and provide relevant and important information on anaphylaxis to parents, staff, students, volunteers and visitors at GPMS.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for an anaphylactic policy for child care centres. The requirements set out in this policy align with Sabrina's Law, 2005.

Note: definitions for terms used throughout this policy are provided in a **Glossary** at the end of the document.

Individualized Plans and Emergency Procedures for Children with Life-Threatening/Anaphylactic Allergies

- Before attending GPMS, the Supervisors/designate will meet with the parent of a child to obtain information about any medical conditions, including whether the child is at risk of having or has anaphylaxis.
- Before a child attends GPMS or upon discovering that a child has an anaphylactic allergy, an individualized plan and emergency procedures will be developed for each child with anaphylaxis in consultation and collaboration with the child's parent, and any regulated health professional who is involved in the child's care that the parent believes should be included in the consultation (the form in [Appendix A](#) will be used for this purpose).
- All individualized plans and emergency procedures will include a description of symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction that are specific to the child and the procedures to be followed in the event of an allergic reaction or other medical emergency based on the severity of the child's symptoms.
- The individualized plan and emergency procedures for each child will include information for those who are in direct contact with the child on a regular basis about the type of allergy, monitoring and avoidance strategies and appropriate treatment.
- All individualized plans and emergency procedures will be made readily accessible at all times to all staff, students and volunteers at GPMS and will be kept/displayed in:

1. Child's file in the school office

2. Kitchen (displayed)
 3. Emergency binder in the backpack in the child's classroom
 4. All GPMS classrooms (displayed)
- All individualized plans and emergency procedures will be reviewed with a parent of the child **annually** and **whenever any changes in the child's condition occur** to ensure the information is current and up to date.
 - Every child's epinephrine auto-injector must be carried everywhere the child goes.
 - Parents will sign a consent form allowing GPMS to display individualized plans and emergency procedures
 - It is recommended that Anaphylactic children wear Allergy Awareness Jewelry at all times identifying their condition (e.g. "Shine a light teal bracelet" from FoodallergyCanada.ca)

Strategies to Reduce the Risk of Exposure to Anaphylactic Allergens

The following strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents must be followed at all times by employees, students and volunteers at the GPMS:

- Do not serve foods where its ingredients are not known.
- Do not serve items with 'may contain' warnings on the label in a room where there is a child who has an individualized plan and emergency procedures specifying those allergens.
- Ask the caterer to provide the known ingredients for all food provided. The ingredients will be reviewed before food is served to children to verify that causative agents are not served to children with anaphylactic allergies.
- In cases where a child has food allergies and the meals and snacks provided by the child care GPMS cannot meet the child's needs, ask the child's parent to supply snacks/meals for their child. All written instructions for diet provided by a parent will be implemented.
- Ensure that parents label food brought to GPMS with the child's full name and the date the food arrived at the school, and that parents advise of all ingredients.
- Where food is provided from home for children, ensure that appropriate supervision of children is maintained so that food is not shared or exchanged.
- Encourage parents who serve foods containing allergens at home to ensure their child has been rid of the allergens prior to attending the GPMS (e.g. by thoroughly washing hands, brushing teeth, etc.)
- Do not use craft/sensory materials and toys that have known allergens on the labels.
- Share information about anaphylaxis, strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to known allergens and treatment with all families enrolled in GPMS.
- Make sure each child's individual plan and emergency procedure are kept-up-to-date and that all staff, students, and volunteers are trained on the plans.
- Refer to the allergy list and ensure that it is up to date and implemented.
- Update staff, students, and volunteers when changes to a child's allergies, signs and symptoms, and treatment occur and review all updates to individualized plans and emergency procedures.
- Update families when changes to allergies occur while maintaining the confidentiality of children.
- Update or revise and implement the strategies in this policy depending on the allergies of children enrolled at the GPMS.

Additional Strategies (GPMS)

- Children and staff **MUST** wash their hands before eating and/or serving food.
- Children with food allergies will be highly supervised during meals and encouraged not to share food, utensils or containers.
- Table surfaces where children will be eating meals and snacks shall be properly disinfected before and after use.

- Food will be placed on a paper plate, napkin, or wax paper rather than in direct contact with a desk or table.

Additional strategies (Parents)

- Ensure their child has and wears a medical identification bracelet.
- Provide 2 auto-injectors to be taken on field trips to the remote locations.
- Teach their child (developmentally appropriate):
 - 1) to recognize the first signs of an anaphylactic reaction.
 - 2) to know where their medication is kept and who can get it.
 - 3) to communicate clearly when he or she feels a reaction starting.
 - 4) to carry his/her own auto-injector on their person (e.g. fanny pack); not to share snacks, lunch or drinks.
 - 5) to understand the importance of hand washing

Communication Plan

The following is our communication plan for sharing information on life-threatening and anaphylactic allergies with staff, students, volunteers, parents and families.

- Parents and families will be informed about anaphylactic allergies and all known allergens at GPMS through a letter, an email, Parent Handbook and School Newsletters. Information regarding the food or causative agents to be avoided will be provided.
- GPMS Parents will be informed not to bring foods that contain ingredients to which children may be allergic.
- A list of all children's allergies including food and other causative agents will be posted in all cooking and serving areas, in each classroom, and made available in any other area where children may be present.
- Each child with an anaphylactic allergy will have an individualized plan and emergency procedures that detail signs and symptoms specific to the child describing how to identify that they are having an allergic reaction and what to do if they experience a reaction.
- Each child's individualized plan and emergency procedures will be made available and accessible wherever the child may be present while receiving child care.
- The caterer, individuals who collect groceries on behalf of GPMS and/or other food handling staff, where applicable, will be informed of all the allergies at GPMS, including those of children, staff, students and volunteers. An updated list of allergies will be provided to the caterer as soon as new allergies are identified. The supervisor or designate will communicate with the caterer about which foods are not to be used in food prepared for GPMS and will work together on food substitutions to be provided.
- GPMS will communicate with the Ministry of Education by reporting **serious occurrences** where an anaphylactic reaction occurs in accordance with the established serious occurrence policy and procedures.
- This communication plan will be continually reviewed to ensure it is meeting the needs of GPMS and that it is effectively achieving its intended result.

Additional measures

- A copy of this Anaphylaxis Policy shall be included in GPMS Parent Handbook which is available to all families before (school tours for prospective families) and upon registration. A copy of the Parent Handbook is always available on the Resource Shelf at the front door.
- Placards illustrating the use of EpiPen and Twinject Auto injectors shall be posted in all the GPMS classroom and the kitchen.
- The posters illustrating the use of EpiPen and Twinject Auto injectors will be placed behind the Individualized Plans and Emergency Procedures displayed in all the GPMS classroom and in the Emergency Binders.

Drug and Medication Requirements

- Where drugs or medications will need to be administered to a child in response to an anaphylactic reaction, the drug and medication administration policy will be followed including the completion of a parental authorization form to administer drugs or medications.
- Emergency allergy medication (e.g. oral allergy medications, puffers and epinephrine auto-injectors) **will be allowed to remain unlocked** or carried by children with parental authorization so that they can be administered quickly when needed.
- Where a child has written permission to carry their emergency allergy or asthma medication, **precautions will be taken to ensure that these medications are not accessible to other children** (e.g., in cubbies or backpacks that are unattended).
- Auto injectors must be provided to GPMS staff in a clearly labeled zip- lock bag with the child's name on the outside and the date of the medication's expiration.

Training

- GPMS Supervisors will ensure that the supervisors/designate and/or all staff, students and volunteers receive training from a parent of a child with anaphylaxis on the procedures to follow in the event of a child having an anaphylactic reaction, including how to recognize the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and administer emergency allergy medication.
- Where only the supervisor/designate has been trained by a parent, the supervisor/designate will ensure training is provided to all other staff, students and volunteers at GPMS.
- Training will be repeated annually, and any time there are changes to any child's individualized plan and emergency procedures.
- A written record of training for staff, students and volunteers on procedures to be followed for each child who has an anaphylactic allergy will be kept, including the names of individuals who have not yet been trained. This will ensure that training is tracked, and follow-up is completed where an individual has missed or not received training. The form in [Appendix B](#) may be used for this purpose.
- The Individual Plans and Anaphylaxis Policy are reviewed by the Staff, volunteers and students every 3 month.
- In addition, each year an awareness session is conducted by GPMS for all staff which includes:
 - ✓ Identification of the storage area(s) for auto injectors, inhalers and other medication
 - ✓ Review strategies for reducing the risks of anaphylactic causative agents within the school
 - ✓ Review of information on auto injector placards
- The individual plan for a child with anaphylaxis and the emergency procedures contained therein will be reviewed by all employees before they begin their employment and every 3 months afterwards.
- All GPMS Staff is certified in Standard First Aid and CPR/AED(C). The training includes immediate response in the event of an emergency of Respiratory Distress/Anaphylactic shock.
- All GPMS Staff full time staff have Food Handler Certification.

Confidentiality

- Information about a child's allergies and medical needs will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of the child, except when information must be disclosed for the purpose of implementing the procedures in this policy and for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Additional Policy Statements

Field Trip/Nature Walks Requirements

- Emergency allergy medication will be brought on all nature walks, field trips, evacuations, and other off-site activities. If the school field trip is to the remote location, parents will be asked to provide 2 epinephrine auto-injectors.
- If it's planned that the field trip organizers provide a snack/lunch BUT cannot guarantee that it is allergen free, GPMS will provide an allergen free snack/lunch to the child/ren with allergies.
- The child with allergies will be closely supervised while eating by GPMS Staff (not by any volunteer).

Returning medication for discharged children

The parents of children discharged from GPMS will be notified by email and a phone call and asked to pick up the emergency allergy medication from the school within a week. If the medication is not picked up - the GPMS supervisors will ensure that the efforts made to return the medication have been documented in on the child's Enrolment Form, and the drug or medication will be returned to a pharmacist for proper disposal.

Procedures to be followed in the circumstances described below:

Circumstance	Roles and Responsibilities
A. A child exhibits an anaphylactic reaction to an allergen	1. The person who becomes aware of the child's anaphylactic reaction must immediately: i. implement the child's individualized plan and emergency procedures. ii. contact emergency services and a parent/guardian of the child, or have another person do so where possible; and iii. ensure that where an epinephrine auto-injector has been used, it is properly discarded (i.e. given to emergency services, or in accordance with the drug and medication administration policy). 2. Once the child's condition has stabilized or the child has been taken to hospital, staff must: i. follow the child care centre's serious occurrence policies and procedures. ii. document the incident in the daily written record; and iii. document the child's symptoms of ill health in the child's records.

Circumstance	Roles and Responsibilities
B. A child is authorized to carry his/her own emergency allergy medication.	1. Staff must: i. ensure that written parental authorization is obtained to allow the child to carry their own emergency allergy medication. ii. ensure that the medication remains on the child (e.g., fanny pack, holster) and is not kept or left unattended (e.g. in the child's cubby or backpack); iii. ensure that appropriate supervision is maintained of the child while carrying the medication and of children in their close proximity so that other children do not have access to the medication; and iv. Where there are safety concerns relating to the child carrying his/her own medication (e.g. exposure to other children), notify the centre supervisor/designate and the child's parent of these concerns, and discuss and implement mitigating strategies. Document the concerns and resulting actions in the daily written record.

Glossary

Anaphylaxis: a severe systemic allergic reaction which can be fatal, resulting in circulatory collapse or shock. Symptoms can vary for different people, and can be different from one reaction to the next, including:

- Skin: hives, swelling, itching, warmth, redness, rash
 - Breathing (respiratory): coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain/tightness, throat tightness/swelling, hoarse voice, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms (runny nose and watery eyes, sneezing), trouble swallowing
 - Stomach (gastrointestinal): nausea, pain/cramps, vomiting, diarrhea
 - Heart (cardiovascular): pale/blue colour, weak pulse, passing out, dizzy/lightheaded, shock
 - Other: anxiety, feeling of “impending doom”, headache, uterine cramps, metallic taste in mouth
- (Source: <http://foodallergycanada.ca/about-allergies/anaphylaxis/>)

Causative Agent (allergen/trigger): a substance that causes an allergic reaction. Common allergens include, but are not limited to:

- eggs
- milk
- mustard
- peanuts
- seafood including fish, shellfish, and crustaceans
- sesame
- soy
- sulphites which are food additives
- tree nuts
- wheat
- latex
- insect stings

Epinephrine: A drug used to treat allergic reactions, particularly anaphylaxis. This drug is often delivered through an auto-injector (e.g. EpiPen or Allerject).

Staff (Employee): Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff).

Licensee: The individual or corporation named on the license issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the child care centre.

Parent: A person having lawful custody of a child or a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a child of his or her family (all references to parent include legal guardians but will be referred to as “parent” in the policy).

Guideline for Lunches and Food Brought from Home

- Children with extreme allergies that GPMS cannot accommodate will be asked to bring their own food from home.
- GPMS staff will ensure that parents **CLEARLY label** food brought to GPMS with the **child’s full name** and **the date** the food arrived at GPMS and **the name of the item**.
- GPMS staff will ensure that parents advise of **all ingredients** and **instruction for storage**.
- All written instructions for diet and storage provided by a parent will be implemented.
- The food will be administered to the child **from the original container** or package and **in accordance with any instructions** on the label and any instructions provided by the parent
- Where food is provided from home for children, ensure that appropriate supervision of children is maintained so that food is not shared or exchanged.
- Encourage parents who serve foods containing allergens at home to ensure their child has been rid of the allergens prior to attending GPMS (e.g., by thoroughly washing hands, brushing teeth, etc.)
- Lunches should include a nut free nutritious, well-balanced meal that meets the requirements set out in Canada’s Food Guide.
- Staff at GPMS can provide parents with copies of Canada’s Food Guide and suggestions for healthy snacks upon request.
- The following lays out the responsibility of parents and staff when food is brought from home including bag lunches:

Parent and Guardian’s Responsibilities

- The bagged lunch adheres to Canada’s Food Guide.
- Lunch is provided in a labelled lunch bag with **an ice pack** as they are not stored in the refrigerator.
- Foods that may have come in contact with nuts are not allowed in the child’s lunch.

Staff Responsibilities

- All surfaces will be cleaned with a cleaning solution prior and after the children have their lunch. (The cleaning solution is approved by Public Health)
- Staff will ensure the children wash their hands before assisting children with their lunches.
- Staff will ensure children wash their hands prior to eating lunch.
- Staff will monitor lunches to ensure food arrives at the school that contains nuts or has the warning sign “may have come into contact with nuts”.
- An alternate lunch will be provided if a child forgets their lunch. A courtesy call to the parent or guardian will be made and the food served will be recorded in the daily log.
- Staff will encourage children not to share lunches.
- Staff will closely supervise any child that has a life-threatening allergy by sitting next to them or across from them during lunch time.

- Staff will monitor each child's lunch and ,should a child's lunch consistently not adhere to Canada's Food Guide then they will work with the parent to provide sample menus.
- Sample lunch ideas/websites will be available at the school to support families.
- Staff will monitor each child's lunch, and should a child's lunch consistently not adhere to Canada's Food Guide then they will work with the parent to provide sample menus.
- Sample lunch ideas/websites will be available at the school to support families.

"Snack Basket" Project and Treats

Baked Foods for classroom parties, celebrations or snacks (Snack Basket Project) that are brought by families, must be pre-packaged or prepared at a **NUT FREE (all nuts, not only peanuts)** commercial store (for example, muffins/cupcakes from a grocery store bakery that declares "**nut free**" not just "**peanut free**"). **WHOLE Fruits and Vegetables are always welcome! We will wash and cut them.**

We cannot accept any items that say "may contain traces of nuts or tree nuts" on the ingredient list so please read all ingredient lists thoroughly to avoid disappointment.

Due to concerns regarding allergies, homemade or home baked snacks are not allowed.

Sleep/Rest

The need for actual sleep and the need to rest will equally be respected. Parents will be consulted about their child's rest/sleep requirements at the time of enrollment, whenever there is a developmental move to another group or any time upon parental request and their contributions will be respected (full Policy: [Appendix](#))

Water Bottles

Children may bring their own labelled **reusable** water bottle. Fresh drinking water is readily available to refill throughout the day. GPMS undergoes annual water testing procedures (Ontario Regulation 243/07).

Daily Health Checks

To maintain a good standard of health, a daily health checks will be made on each child at arrival, throughout the day and at the pickup time. It is necessary to have alternate arrangements made for your child in the event your child is ill. Should your child become ill during the day, they will be supervised away from the other children. The parent/guardian will be notified immediately to pick up the child. Children should not return to the school until they are ready to participate in all aspects of the program including outdoor activities.

(Full Policy with procedures and frequency of the checks: [Appendix](#)).

Sickness

In the interest of good health for all of us throughout the year, we cannot overemphasize the importance of keeping sick children at home. A child should **NOT** be brought to school with symptoms such as:

- **fever of 37.8 degrees Celsius (100.04°F) within the past 24 hours**
- **diarrhea (within the past 48 hours)**
- **vomiting (within the past 48 hours)**
- **greenish nose discharge**
- **yellowish eye discharge**
- **pink eye**
- **difficult or rapid breathing**
- **cough lasting over a week**
- **sore throat with a fever or severe coughing**
- **undiagnosed skin rashes**
- **severe pain or discomfort**
- **untreated head lice (can return when all nits are removed)**
- **untreated scabies**

- symptoms of contagious stages of chicken pox, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, or diphtheria
- unusual appearance/behaviour: unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, difficult to wake, confused, excessive crying or irritable for 4 or more hours.

Children with the following symptoms should be excluded from school unless they are under the care of a physician, and the physician has approved in writing their return to school.

- Skin rashes, excluding diaper rash, lasting more than one day
- Swollen joints or visibly enlarged lymph nodes
- Elevated oral temperature
- Blood in urine
- Other conditions may be determined by the School Supervisor on an individual basis.

If your child is on antibiotics, please keep in mind that penicillin and similar drugs require at least 24 hours to take effect. **Children must be fever-free without medicine for 24 hours before they may return to school. Children also need to be free from vomiting and diarrhea for 48 hours before returning to school. When your child returns to school after having been ill it is expected that he/she will participate in the full program including physical education and outdoor play.**

Fever

Parents or designated Emergency Person will be notified any time their child has a fever of **37.8 degrees Celsius (100.4°F)**. We will require the child to be picked up from school as soon as possible.

We realize that this causes an inconvenience for parents. However, we believe it's necessary for the continued well-being of GPMS children and staff. We need your help in preventing the spread of contagious illnesses. **Please arrange alternate care for your sick child and provide for prompt pick-up if your child takes ill while at school.**

Children are able to return to school if fever free without medications and are well enough to cope and participate in ALL school activities including physical education and outdoor play.

If your child is too sick to go outside on any given day, he or she should be kept at home.

Contagious Diseases / Exclusion Regulations

In every case of an infectious illness in the family, parents must inform the school within 24 hours. Even if the child is kept at home, the school must be made aware of the infection in order to warn other children's families. Likewise, the staff will notify you whenever your child has been exposed to an infectious illness.

Please keep in mind that this is only a partial list. In case of doubt, please consult your physician and/or Middlesex-London Health Unit at 519-663-5317 or www.healthunit.com.

Disease	May return to school
Chicken Pox	When fever free without medication
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	When yellowish discharge is not present and 24 hours after medication
Diarrhea / Vomiting	After 48 hours if fever/symptom-free without medication
Fifth Disease	Not contagious after rash appears; children may return to school
German Measles (Rubella)	After 7 days from appearance of rash
Impetigo	24 hours after treatment begins
Influenza	After 24 hours if fever/symptom-free without medication <i>*Please note: in special situations, during flu seasons, this time at home may increase to a 48-hour symptom-free period. If in doubt regarding proper procedure, please consult the Middlesex-London Health Unit at 519-663-5317 or www.healthunit.com.</i>
Measles (Rubella)	After 4 days from appearance of rash
Meningitis	When doctor's permission obtained
Mumps	After 9 days or until swelling subsides
Strep throat	24 hours after starting antibiotics

Viral Hepatitis	When doctor's permission obtained
Whooping Cough	5 days after starting antibiotics

Head Lice Policy

- Please notify the school immediately if your child has head lice.
- Home treatment should include a type of medicated shampoo or recommended lice treatment of the head.
- Personal belongings should all be treated as well.
- **Every effort to remove all nits with a metal NIT FREE * lice comb is absolutely essential before returning to school. Repeat daily until there are no nits.**
- **Your child may return to school when the lice have been treated and no further signs appear (live lice and nits).**
- After initial treatment, regular follow-up treatments should occur over the course of several weeks to eradicate the lice.
- Checks for head lice are made at school on an as-needed basis.
- We recommend that all Parents check their child's hair and scalp weekly, preferably after the weekend, on Sunday evening.

Metal NIT FREE LICE Comb can be purchased from:

- Beaver Brook Pharmacy, London
- amazon.ca
- Lice Squad, London

Administration of Drugs

The staff can administer medication that has been prescribed by a doctor, but only when authorized to do so by the child's parent/guardian. If a child is on such medication, the parent/guardian is asked to sign the Medication Authorization Form and detail the times and amounts of the medicine to be given.

Staff will not administer medication that is beyond the expiration date on the label and is not in its original container with details about the medication. Staff will only administer medication if the prescription is in the exact name of the child enrolled at GPMS and the Medication Authorization Form has been correctly filled out.

Over the counter medication will only be given/administered if there is a consent form on file signed by the parent/guardian. In addition, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide us with a labeled unexpired bottle.

Medication will be dispensed only if the following criteria are met:

1. Medication must be in its original container from the pharmacy.
2. The medication must be clearly labeled and must have the child's name on it, for which it is to be administered.
3. All medication must be kept in a locked box, either in the fridge or on the cabinet shelf.
3. A parent/guardian must sign the Medication Authorization Form, which gives the staff of GPMS the authorization to administer the medication and give proper details of the dosage amount, times to administer and the duration of administering the medication.
4. A designated staff will administer the medication and will record the time, dosage and comment if necessary.
5. When possible, another staff will witness the administration of the medication and both staff will initial the Medication Authorization Form.
6. Non-prescription drugs will only be administered with written consent from the child's parents.

In addition, non-prescription drugs must be within their expiry date and have the child's name clearly labeled. The Medication Authorization Form must be filled out, as explained above.

Medication is not to be left in the coatroom, the child's lunchbox, and the backpack or classroom area. Please give the medication directly to a staff member and fill out the authorization form.

(Full Drug and Medication Administration Policy: [Appendix](#))

Hand Washing Practices

Hand washing sinks are provided with easy access to comfortably **warm water, soap and disposable towels**. Adults and children are encouraged to wash hands frequently throughout each day, after toilet use, blowing a nose, as well as before and after snacks and meals. Children are taught how and why they must frequently wash their hands. Art and outside activities are times when additional hand washing is needed. GPMS staff is aware of this important health practice and monitor the situation helping the child according to what is developmentally appropriate and timely for the smooth operation of each classroom and the school.

Animals at the School

The school follows *Recommendations for the Management of Animals in Child Care Settings* from Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Link:http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/reference/Recommendations_For_The_Management_Of_Animals_In_Child_Care_Settings_2018_en.pdf

Smoke/Vape -Free- School

In accordance with the Smoke Free Ontario Act (2005 c.18, s.9): no person shall smoke tobacco, hold lighted tobacco or vape in any enclosed public place or enclosed workplace. This includes GPMS' Obligations:

1. To ensure compliance with this Act.
2. To ensure that smoking/vaping is prohibited in the school (including classroom, hallway or washroom), or within 3 metres of the building, and in any outdoor location where individuals may be seen by children at play.
3. To ensure that smoking/vaping is prohibited in the presence, or within the view, of the children when staff/students and volunteers are on an excursion with Dover Gardens
4. To include a statement regarding the policy in the staff Policy and Procedure binder.
5. To review the policy with all staff, students, and volunteers, before they commence employment, and every year thereafter, and to ensure that the policy is signed annually.
6. To inform GPMS families of this policy, via the GPMS Parent Handbook.
7. To post any prescribed signs prohibiting smoking/vaping throughout the school, including washrooms and all school entrances and exits.

Safe Drinking Water

All the taps are flushed daily. Flushing is recorded (time date, and signature of the person flushing the system) every time. These records are to be kept for six years. Annually between May 1st and October 31st, an independent water laboratory will test the water. If a notice of lead exceedance is received, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Environment (Action Spills Center) and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services will be contacted within 24 hours. All directions of Public Health would be followed.

Emergency Management Policy and Procedures

GPMS has Emergency Management Policy and Procedures that all Staff will follow in the event of an emergency. **The Emergency Management Policy and Procedures** document that includes the detailed plans for all Emergency situations is available in the [Appendix](#) on the Resources Shelf by the front door and in the school office.

This policy provides clear direction for staff and licensees to follow to deal with emergency situations:

- Lockdown
- Hold and Secure
- Bomb Threat
- Disaster Requiring Evacuation including Fire, Flood, Power Outage
- External Environment Threat (gas leak, oil spill, forest fire)
- Natural Disaster (Severe Thunderstorm, Tornado and Major Earthquake)
- Utilities and Maintenance Emergencies
- Serious injury or Illness

In all cases, staff will exercise critical judgment to maximize the safety for themselves and others.

1. In the event of an emergency that requires us to evacuate the school - we will call **911** and take all the children to our Emergency Shelter at **81 Victoria Street**.
2. Our first priority is to get them away from the danger as safely as possible and as quickly as possible.
3. We will take with us **First Aid Kits, All Medication** and the **Emergency binders** with contact information.
4. Parents and/or Emergency persons will be notified of an emergency by a posting on the centre door, a call-in voicemail, email, phone call and/or media release depending on the emergency situation.

The procedures set out steps for staff to follow to support the safety and well-being of everyone involved. Clear policies and procedures will support all individuals to manage responses and responsibilities during an emergency, resulting in the safest outcomes possible.

Staff members will ensure that children are kept safe, are accounted for and are supervised at all times during an emergency situation. For any emergency situation involving a child with an individualized plan in place, the procedures in the child's individualized plan will be followed.

TRAINING

- All GPMS staff members are trained in health and safety procedures.
- Our **emergency evacuation plan** and **lockout procedures** will be tested at least twice a year.
- GPMS staff completes Threat Ready Safety Training every 2 years.

PARENTS COOPERATION: It is Parents' responsibility to inform the school of any changes in ALL Contact Information that were provided at the time of enrollment.

Behaviour Management

Positive and Prohibited Practices

Young children benefit from an affirming approach that encourages positive interactions with other children and with adults, rather than from a negative or punitive approach intended to manage unwanted behavior. Research from diverse fields of study show that children who attend programs where they experience warm, supportive relationships are happier, less anxious and more motivated to learn than those who do not. Experiencing positive relationships in early childhood also has significant long-term impact on physical and mental health, and success in school and beyond. The GPMS Program Statement sets out approaches that support positive interactions

between children, families, staff and the community. The following policy applies to children enrolled in our program. Children that are not presently enrolled are not able to participate in our program. While any child that is not enrolled is present, they are the responsibility of their parent or adult that they are with.

The policies have been complied according to The Child Care and Early Years Act.

Role modeling is seen as best process to preparing children to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, which is achieved through encouraging the use of verbal communication in an open, honest manner. We believe that a quality program will work as preventative measure in regard to prohibited practices. A program that is age appropriate has lots of activities and has a balance between stimulating and quiet, is conducive to learning and appropriate behavior. A program that is relaxing yet enriching, has a variety of activities but is not overwhelming, is challenging yet has opportunity for success will work towards this goal. Ensuring that children are active, stimulated, challenged and have opportunity for success while consistently seeing adult conduct themselves appropriately will foster happy developing children.

Behavior management practice should be:

1. Used in a positive and consistent manner.
2. Implemented as soon as possible after the inappropriate behaviour.
3. Appropriate to the developmental level of the child.
4. Related to the inappropriate behaviour.
5. Designed to assist the child to learn appropriate behaviour.
6. Discussed with the parent(s)/guardians if a difficult situation arises with the child.

Permitted Methods of Positive Practices: Methods of positive practice used at GPMS are as follows with the best interest of the child and their individuality always in focus:

1. Giving positive reinforcement of desired behaviour – both verbal and non-verbal
2. Giving positive verbal reminders about inappropriate behaviour.
3. The consequences of an undesirable action should be made understandable to the child by the staff. A clear warning will be given so the child can choose to stop the inappropriate behavior.
4. Ignoring inappropriate behaviour (where appropriate)
5. Resolve/Reason – In a controlled voice, explain in simple language the inappropriateness of the behavior displayed.
6. Natural Consequences – follow through with natural consequences, e.g. if he/she continually throws sand, he/she will not play in the sandbox.
7. Redirect – If the behavior continues, the staff shall redirect the child to an alternate activity.
8. Channeling the child's energy to another area (diversion).
9. Remove * – If The behavior continues, the child shall be removed from the situation for a limited supervised period. Staff should always consider the exact purpose for using this method and what is intended to accomplish.
10. A discussion and explanation will follow all disciplinary methods where appropriate.

* Note: If time out is used, it should be used only for children over two years of age. The maximum time-out period should be no more than one minute for each year of age up to a maximum of five minutes.

Prohibited Practices

The following forms of behaviour management shall not be permitted by anyone- staffs or parents on the premises of GPMS:

- a) corporal punishment of the child;
- b) physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;

- c) locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures.
- d) use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding;
- f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Anti - Bullying Policy

The students and staff at GPMS have a right to teach and learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. The purpose of the anti-bullying policy is to identify bullying behaviour and to help students develop strategies to solve problems in a non-violent manner.

Bullying is not fighting or quarrelling. It is hurting for the purpose of seeing another person upset or in distress. People who bully, have intent to harm. Bullying behaviour involves a power differential.

Bullying behaviour of any type is unacceptable and will be dealt with firmly and promptly.

Bullying behaviour may appear as:

Verbal Abuse: Name calling, making fun of someone who says something wrong or different, or bossing others around. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social difference, or personality. Two commonly used forms of abuse are nicknames and physical threats. The latter can be used to extort or steal property from another person.

Physical Abuse: Bullying behaviour in this instance often incorporates pushing, shoving, kicking, punching, etc.

Exclusion: May include ignoring, gossiping or spreading rumours which result in the isolation of an individual from a group setting.

Bullying behaviour may take place: in the school, outside the school, to and from school.

Usually the bullying behaviour takes place where an authority figure is out of sight, including situations beyond the school facility.

Strategies to deal with or Reduce Bullying

Be firm and clear. Look the bully in the eye and tell her/him to stop

Do not fight back. Get away from the situation

Try to reach an adult as quickly as you can

Keep on speaking up until someone listens

Do not blame yourself for what has happened

Role of the School

The school will, as part of its curriculum, create an awareness of bullying behaviour and encourage appropriate ways to behave towards others.

Role of the Parents

Be aware of changes in your child's behaviour that may indicate difficulties at school.

Do not encourage your child to fight back. It only makes the situation worse. Instead, encourage appropriate assertiveness and practical self-preservation.

Do not let the situation persist for an extended period of time without intervention. It is not a normal childhood behaviour or "phase" and it will not go away by itself. Parents must not hesitate to inform the school about bullying activities.

Encourage your child to talk. He/she may be ashamed, scared or think that it is their fault.

Reporting/ Monitoring

It is a requirement that all staff, students and volunteers annually review and sign the **Behaviour Management Policy**. The policy will be reviewed with the Director/Supervisor upon hiring and annually thereafter, with the signed statement forming part of the Policy Review file.

In cases of extreme injury to another child, children or staff, parents will be notified by a staff member. Staff members will take into account the developmental level of the child, the intent of the action, and the reaction of the child to the staff's behaviour management strategies in an incident report that is kept in the child's file.

The school is committed to not excluding a child based on behavioural challenges. Our commitment is to assist parents in seeking professional supports to aid the child in participating in the program. Staff members will complete a Social Development Workbook and seek parental consent to share the information with external agencies. The school will work collaboratively with parents and external agencies to create and implement strategies for the child.

Staff members, Students, and Volunteers will be monitored by co-workers, supervisors, and Directors on a daily basis. Periodic classroom observations by Directors will also serve this purpose.

Serious Occurrence

GPMS has a plan to deal with any serious incidents that may affect the health, safety and well-being of children, report these serious incidents to the Ministry of Education, track and follow up on.

What type of incident is considered to be a serious occurrence?

A serious occurrence is defined under the CCEYA as:

1. the **death of a child** who receives child care at a licensed home premises or child care centre;
2. **abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect** of a child while receiving child care at a child care centre;
3. a **life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness** of a child who receives child care at a child care centre;
4. an incident where a child who is receiving child care at a child care centre goes **missing or is temporarily unsupervised**, or
5. an **unplanned disruption of the normal operations** of a child care centre that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving care at a child care centre.

Child Abuse/Neglect - Reporting

Ontario Law requires that teachers and administrators report all cases of suspected child abuse to the London Department of Social Services immediately. The educator's job is to only report, not to investigate or decide. Criminal penalties can and have been applied when educators do not follow this law by reporting suspected cases of abuse.

Parent Communication and Involvement

Orientation/Education

Our size and informal atmosphere make it easy to maintain ongoing open communication about your child's well-being. For lengthier discussions, you are always welcome to arrange a private meeting with your child's teachers. Formal parent-teacher conferences are scheduled regularly and a comprehensive report on your child's progress in all areas is prepared annually. You should also be aware that extensive records are kept detailing your child's progress from day to day. Orientation evenings and social get-togethers provide an opportunity for you to share your ideas, gain insight into your child's school day, get to know the teachers better and become more familiar with Montessori methodology.

- There is always a phasing in meeting for new families at the beginning of the Fall semester. This is a great time to meet the teachers and ask questions.
- There are 2 ``**Take Your Parents To School ``Days** during the school year

- There are **Toddler/ CASA** “Moving Up” meetings in early Spring. We will also hold a meeting for those considering what to do for their child’s **Kindergarten year**.
- ***The school also runs a lending library for parents who are interested in learning more about Montessori philosophy.***

Although most of your child’s work is done with the Montessori materials in the classroom, now and then finished work will be sent home on Friday. This is a valuable opportunity for you to share in your child’s accomplishments. When readers are sent home, we request that they be returned the next day in the canvas school bag.

Family Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are an important part of our program. Formal parent/teacher conferences are scheduled once a year for children enrolled in all programs. Parents or the teacher may request an additional conference if needed, at any time. If a child is having special problems at school, or something unusual happens at school, the parent(s) will be notified.

School Newsletter

That GPMS regularly publishes a monthly newsletter to provide parents with information and keep them informed of important events. At the end of each month, the school newsletter is **emailed** to all the parents. The newsletter is also displayed on the bulletin board in the front hall. Please make sure that the school has your current email address.

Parent Directory

Having contact information at your fingertips helps busy families stay connected. You will be able to contact other GPMS Parents directly if you for example: want to have a play date with a friend in the class, are planning a party for your child and need to know addresses in order to send out invitations, invite other Moms and /or Dads for a social event in your neighborhood, make new friends if you have just moved into area, etc. **Please note:** Teachers will not hand out any invitations at the school (protecting the feelings of those not invited). The Directory will also include Toddler and CASA Programs email contacts for all Parents-Teachers communication.

Parents Issues, Feedback, Conflicts and Complaints

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the home child care agency licensee and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

Definitions: *Licensee:* The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each home child care agency it operates (i.e. the operator). *Staff:* Individual employed by the licensee

General: Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our home child care agency and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our staff and home child care providers. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our home visitors are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction. All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by The GPMS and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 2. business day(s). The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process. Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

Confidentiality: Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, home child care providers, other persons in the home child care premises, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Conduct: The GPMS maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the home child care agency head office.

Documentation: All correspondence and concerns will be recorded, dated and signed. Complaints are a standing agenda item on the GPMS Supervisors regularly scheduled meetings

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child: Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

Parent Survey: To ensure that the policies and procedures being implemented by GPMS are meeting the needs of the families enrolled in the programs a confidential survey is completed and distributed annually. Suggestions from parents may be reflected through programming and scheduling.

Suggestion Box: Suggestions may also be made by the parents through "Suggestion Box" located at the front door

Escalation of Issues or Concerns: Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally to the GPMS Supervisors or in writing to info@gibbonsparkmontessori.com

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act., 2014* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 must be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch. Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

Contacts: Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or childcare_ontario@ontario.ca

PROCEDURES

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Provider, Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
Program-Related E.g: schedule, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, menus, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to - GPMS Staff directly - or - the GPMS Supervisor (<i>Licensee</i>).	- Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised; or - arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within 2 business days. Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:
General, Agency- or Operations-Related E.g: fees, placement, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to: - the GPMS Supervisor (<i>Licensee</i>).	- the date and time the issue/concern was received; - the name of the person who received the issue/concern; - the name of the person reporting the issue/concern; - the details of the issue/concern; and - any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral. Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.
Provider-, Staff- and/or Licensee-Related E.g: conduct of provider, home visitor, agency head office staff, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to - the individual directly (GPMS Staff member or GPMS Supervisor (<i>Licensee</i>)). All issues or concerns about the conduct of the provider or staff that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the agency head office as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.	Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within 2 business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing. Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.
Related to Other Persons at the Home Premises	Raise the issue or concern to - GPMS Staff directly - or - the GPMS Supervisor (<i>Licensee</i>) All issues or concerns about the conduct of other persons in GPMS premises that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the agency head office as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.	
Student- / Volunteer-Related	Raise the issue or concern to - the GPMS Staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student - or - GPMS Supervisor (<i>Licensee</i>). Note: All issues or concerns about the conduct of students/volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the GPMS head office as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.	

Changes in the Home

In the event that a significant change occurs in the home that could cause distress in the child, parents should inform the teachers as soon as possible. Common causes of distress include parent(s) being away from home for an extended time, a new person living in the home, illness of a family member, an accident or death in the family, a new caregiver, moving, the death of a pet, parents' separation, or divorce. **All information will be regarded as strictly confidential.**

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of student and family information is maintained at all times. Information regarding students or families will not be shared with other families. Please be aware that information may be shared with appropriate authorities if needed, including Licensing, Health Unit (Immunizations Info or communicable disease info), Department of Social Services and Police Departments. Upon completion of the CASA transition information; including Progress Reports and the OSR (Ontario School Record) will be transferred to receiving Elementary Schools. (Child and Family Records Policy and Procedures – [Appendix](#))

Receipts / Taxes

At the beginning of the calendar year you will receive a form reporting your annual childcare expenditures for the applicable tax year.

Contacting the School

Call: **519-660-8731** Fax: **519-660-8731** Email: info@gibbonsparkmontessori.com

Office Hours : **Monday-Friday 8:00-3:30.** . Please call or email to make appointments.

Copyright © 2024 Gibbons Park Montessori School 29 Victoria Street, London, Ontario, N6A 2B1 Telephone: (519) 660-8731

Parent Handbook **APPENDIX** that contains our current Enrolment Package and full versions all of GPMS Policies is available to the current and potential families on the **Resources Shelf** by the front door and in the office.

Any changes to the school policies will be shared with parents/guardians.