

August 1, 2010

Dear Parents,

We are pleased to welcome you and your child(ren) to Sunset Hills Montessori School for the 2010-2011 school year. The staff has been busy planning for the new school year- some staff members have attended workshops; some are attending teacher-training programs; and some have been designing and making materials. All have been preparing to create the best possible environment for your child(ren). Below and enclosed you will find a lot of information necessary to ensure a smooth start to the new school year.

All forms must be in a child's file by September 1, 2010. It is critical for the safety of the children that the staff is fully informed about all allergies, medical concerns, persons authorized to pick-up a child, as well as any other conditions affecting a child's care. The September 1st deadline allows us the time to clarify any issues concerning the child's care. The deadline also makes it possible to compile allergy and dismissal lists and have them available to the entire staff before school starts.

Your child will not be allowed to start school until his or her forms have been accepted, staff informed of your child's needs and the office has had time to update allergy and dismissal lists.

Save the date, part 1: A chart with the dates and times for meet-and-greets, orientation sessions and back-to-school nights is enclosed. The start of Sunset Club for the new school year and the start of the regular school schedule are included. Please check the chart and transfer all relevant dates and times to your organizer, calendar, computer, etc.

- Meet-and-Greets are for parents and children to attend together to meet the teachers and see the classroom. Both new and returning families are welcome. Please note that the Pre-Primary Meet-and-Greet is on a different day than Primary and Elementary Meet-and-Greets.
- First-day Orientation for Primary children is reserved for those who are new to the school, and children who are moving from Pre-Primary to Primary. On Orientation Day, parents will accompany their children to the lobby where the children will shake hands with Mrs. Minarik and then be escorted to their classrooms by staff members. Please see enclosed memo regarding separation issues.
- Orientation for Pre-Primary children is a multi-day experience. Pre-Primary families will receive a separate letter detailing the guidelines for easing the toddler children's transition from being at home, in home-based care, or daycare, to a school environment.
- The first day of school for **all** children is Wednesday, September 8, 2010.
- Back-to-School nights are for parents only. Back-to-school nights are for both new and returning families.

Arrival and Dismissal:

- A general chart detailing the arrival and dismissal times is enclosed.
- Please refer to your enrollment contract for the appropriate arrival and dismissal time for your child(ren).

Kiss and Ride:

Kiss and Ride will begin on the first full day of school, Wednesday, September 8th. Please refer to the kiss and ride map and procedures sheet for further details. If you are participating in the pre-primary transition schedule or elect to park and walk in with your child, please park in the upper portion of the school parking lot (by the entrance) or on Ridge Heights Road. Cars in the kiss and ride lane will be moving in and out of the lot from 8:30-9:00 am. Please use caution if you are parking and/or walking.

Cell phones:

Except in the case of an emergency, cell phone use is barred during drop off and pick-up times. Please put your call on hold or arrange to call back the person to whom you are speaking. It is important that you take a few moments to concentrate on saying good-bye or greeting your child.

Allergies, intolerances and sensitivities: The emergency form asks you to list “allergies or intolerances to medications, foods, etc.” The etc. includes, but is not limited to, problems with bees and other stinging or biting insects, mold, tree or grass pollen, latex, dry erase markers, scents, and cleaning products. Many children and adults are highly allergic or sensitive to scents. Please be aware of the scents you wear in the form of lotions, powders, perfumes, colognes, after-shave lotions, soaps and fabric softeners. Please limit or exclude these scents from your person while at school.

Tuition Payments

Please refer to the payment schedule that was mailed along with a copy of your signed contract. Should you have any questions, please call Kristie Meixner at (703) 476-7477.

Clothing:

Please refer to the Parent Handbook for complete details of the clothing policies at SHMS.

A few key points are:

- If a child does not yet tie his/her own shoes, he/she must wear shoes with Velcro closures. Please let your child begin to practice putting on his/her shoes independently.
- Each child must keep a pair of slippers at school for indoor wear. Slippers should be as plain as possible; no large character heads. Crocs may be worn as slippers.
- Crocs and flip flops may not be worn on the playground
- All clothing worn to school should be designed in such a way as to afford the child the greatest amount of independence while caring for him or herself.

Labels:

All clothing, backpacks, lunch bags and nap items must be labeled with the child’s name. Please refer to the Parent Handbook for more details.

Save the date, part 2:

You will receive a copy of the school calendar during the first week of school.

Here is a sneak preview of events that will be taking place in the month of September:

The PTA will be hosting Coffee Socials the afternoon of September 3rd and the morning of September 8th.

First PTA meeting for 2010-2011 is September 15th. A time will be listed on the school calendar and website.

Elementary Lake Fairfax Day and Cookout is on October 1st.

The Back-to-School Celebration/Picnic sponsored by the PTA is September 25th from 10:00 am to 12 noon.

We are very excited about the coming 2010-2011 school year. The faculty and staff look forward to a wonderful year as partners with you in the education of your child(ren). Thank you for choosing Sunset Hills Montessori School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Eileen Dowds Minarik".

Eileen Dowds Minarik
Head of School