

Alcuin Montessori School  
Parent Resource Manual  
MAIN CAMPUS



**Main Campus**

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**Roosevelt Campus**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our community is a child-centered learning environment built on trust in the natural development of mind and spirit.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

We are a community of parents, professionals and children brought together by common goals and values dedicated to an education based on Montessori principles.

Our first major goal is to use these principles to provide children with an excellent education firmly based on life skills; an appreciation of history, literature and the arts; an understanding of nature, the environment and the world; and a mastery of mathematics, language arts and sciences. This knowledge enhances relationships, highlights similarities and contrasts between and among disciplines.

At Alcuin, children are encouraged to discover and reach their full potential. We strive to provide an atmosphere that encourages each child's confidence and curiosity, while teaching them the value of self-discipline, motivation and accountability. Such attributes, when coupled with a sound knowledge base, foster clarity of thought and objectivity when solving problems.

As an educational community, we are accountable for the education of our children. We use collaboration among all constituents, parents and professionals alike, to build a secure and supportive environment in which each child can prepare for his or her future in a rapidly changing world. On a larger scale, Alcuin strives to be an active and responsible member of the surrounding community that includes alumni families, Chicago and its suburbs, our local community, and the national and international Montessori associations.

## **ALCUIN'S PREPARATION FOR LIFE**

*"In Every Child the World Begins Anew" – Maria Montessori*

Respect for one's self, for others, and for the classroom materials are the "ground rules" of a Montessori community. We believe with Maria Montessori that the world's future depends upon how children grow up. This philosophy serves as the cornerstone of Alcuin's focus: commitment to the child.

We strive for a Montessori program in which a child's needs for movement and social interaction, coupled with his equally compelling needs for order, independence and concentration, are fostered and met. Montessori-trained professionals and experienced assistants guide a child to moments of discovery that yield great joy and a sense of dignity as an independent human being.

## HISTORY OF ALCUIN

The idea for Alcuin Montessori School was conceived in 1960, when Oak Park residents Dr. Paul and Mrs. Kathryn Dunn visited what was then the only Montessori school in the United States, the Whitby School in Greenwich, Connecticut. Impressed by what they saw, the Dunns gathered a group of local Oak Park parents to discuss the benefits of a Montessori education.

They agreed with Dr. Maria Montessori's conviction that children in their early years can learn a great deal more than conventional educators believed. Montessori classrooms, with carefully designed educational equipment, lead children to independence and create a life-long love of learning. They were deeply impressed with the method's respect for the individual child's role as creator and explorer of his/her own world.

Alcuin Montessori School was started from these discussions. Named for an English educator of the Middle Ages, Alcuin opened in a rented space at Oak Park's Lowell School on September 6, 1961. Mary Flynn was recruited from the Whitby School to be the first Directress. The pastor of St. Giles Parish donated tables and chairs, while parent volunteers prepared the classrooms. Thirty children between the ages of three and four were pioneer students in one morning and one afternoon class.

By 1967, the school had grown to 150 Primary children and an Elementary class for six-to-nine year-olds was added. The following year, ground was broken for a new building in Oak Park, on the corner of Ridgeland and Randolph.

A facility in Maywood was added in 1971 that provided space for Elementary children up to age twelve. The site included a greenhouse and some sheep that the children cared for as part of their nature study. At the same time, Alcuin added classes for two-year-olds.

In 1979, all of Alcuin's classes moved to a former public school building at 7970 Washington Boulevard in River Forest. Leased from District 90, the building provided a comfortable and attractive facility for Alcuin's approximately 160 students. In the fall of 1997, Alcuin returned to its roots, a central location in Oak Park.

Today, Alcuin offers programs for infants (6 weeks through 14 months), toddlers (15 to 35 months), primary students (ages 3-6), elementary students (ages 6-12) and middle school students (ages 12-14) as well as before and after school care programs. Throughout the years, Alcuin has demonstrated its commitment to children and parents by providing community programs in the arts, parent education workshops and a variety of educational programs for families.

### *Alcuin Montessori School's Non-Discrimination Policies*

*Alcuin Montessori School complies with applicable federal and State laws prohibiting discrimination, including, but not limited to:*

1. *Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.)*
2. *The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.)*
3. *The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (29 U.S.C. 621 et seq.)*

4. *Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq., 2000e et seq.)*
5. *The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.)*
6. *The Illinois School Code [105 ILCS 5], and relevant case law including Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202, 102 S.Ct. 2382 (1982)*
7. *The school does not prohibit hairstyles that are historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, lock, and twists.*

*Parents, teachers, and employees may view the school's asbestos report that is available for viewing upon request*

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The corporation was founded in 1961 to educate children, to conduct and maintain a Montessori school, and to conduct other activities customarily carried out by such a school. Alcuin Montessori School is a board-governed, administration-directed, parent-supported school.

### Board of Trustees

*Board Mission Statement:* The Alcuin Board of Trustees exists to create plans, to set policies and make decisions that will best insure the viability of Alcuin's mission for the current students' children.

The Board of Trustees (BOT) is responsible for the strategic governance of Alcuin. It establishes policies, oversees finances and provides continuity and direction for the school. The Board of Trustees establishes annual goals and sets an agenda based on the long-range strategic plan. The Board of Trustees approves the school's annual budget.

Each year, the trustees and administrative staff meet with Independent School Management, a consulting firm that specializes in independent schools. ISM professionals advise the Board and staff on the school's strategic plan, the board's annual agenda and actions, school operations and the Parent Volunteer Program (PVP). ISM brings knowledge of best practices and current research in the management of independent schools.

The Board is composed of thirteen to eighteen elected and appointed members and the Executive Director who is a non-voting member. Three Board members are elected for one-year terms at Alcuin's All Parent Meeting each spring. The Committee on Trustees manages the board nomination process, accepting nominations from parents, staff and alumni to ensure that board members bring the specific expertise required for the Board's work.

The Board of Trustees meets monthly from August through June. Parents and visitors are welcome to attend the open session portion of the meetings. Board meetings are scheduled on the annual calendar and are announced in the weekly newsletter. Meeting minutes are available in the office.

Board members serve on at least one of seven committees: the Executive Committee, the Finance Committee, the Facilities Committee, the Development Committee, the Marketing Committee, the Committee on Trustees, or the Director's Evaluation and Support Committee. The Board establishes *ad-hoc* task force groups for special purposes and projects as needs arise. Information provided on the Parent Volunteer form helps to identify and recruit committee members with expertise needed. With the exception of the Executive Committee, volunteers need not be board members to serve on these committees

The Director's Evaluation and Support Committee (DESC) advises, supports and evaluates the Executive Director in the implementation of the annual goals. Additionally, DESC functions as a grievance committee for parents. Before approaching DESC, a parent who has a conflict with a teacher must first seek resolution with that teacher. If the parent remains dissatisfied, they may seek resolution with the Executive Director. If the parent is dissatisfied with the Executive Director's decision, they may appeal in writing to the Chair of DESC.

## **Parent Volunteer Program**

Volunteer work is the lifeblood of Alcuin's success and parents are expected to participate. The services and expertise parents provide allow teachers and staff to focus on the children. In addition to helping contain operating costs, volunteer work helps build community at Alcuin.

We are proud of the many opportunities available for parents to be actively involved in our school community. All current parents are required to volunteer ten hours of their time each school year to support Alcuin's mission. The administration, teachers and staff, Board of Trustees, parents and students strongly support parental involvement in all facets of school life.

As part of the registration process, each parent is asked to complete a Parent Volunteer Program form, indicating which volunteer committees are of particular interest. Parents are encouraged to observe in their child's class, attend parent meetings, and take part in parent education events.

Examples of PVP goals are:

- community-building activities
- volunteer opportunities

Examples of PVP Committees include:

- Room Parents
- Door Greeters
- Green Team
- Auction and Gala

Because Alcuin is a tax-exempt organization, all purchases for the school must be made with a tax-exempt letter (available in the Alcuin office). Alcuin will not reimburse for taxes paid. The committee chair, the Executive Director and/or the Business Manager must approve purchases in advance. Forms are available in the school office. Reimbursement requests must be made in the month the expense occurred and be accompanied by the original receipt.

Procedures for this process are as follows:

1. Schedule the event with the Executive Director
2. Prepare a budget for the event
3. Present the budget to the Executive Director for approval
4. Use a tax-exempt form for all purchases
5. Submit original receipts and Reimbursement Form to the Business Manager

## **Development at Alcuin**

*Mission:* The Development Committee of Alcuin's Board of Trustees seeks to advance the school's fundraising efforts and instill in its community a culture of giving with the goal of ensuring a strong future for the school and supporting the strategic initiatives that drive the school forward.



*Fundraising:* Alcuin Montessori has only two annual fund raising events: the Annual Fund and the Auction. It is vital that families commit to participating in both events because tuition does not cover the total cost of providing your child with an exceptional Montessori education. These two fundraising events help cover the gap between tuition and operating costs and ensure the ongoing financial strength of our school.

*Annual Fund:* The Alcuin Montessori Annual Fund is a program in which current parents, former students and their parents, grandparents and friends of Alcuin Montessori School are asked to support the school with annual financial contributions. Annual giving goals are set yearly by the Board, Administration and the Development Committee. Trustees, Faculty and Administration set a strong example with 100% participation and the Annual Fund seeks and has been proud to reach 100% participation from currently enrolled families as well.

All private/independent schools rely on annual giving to pay for special programs and projects that may not be included in the yearly operating budget. Annual giving helps control tuition increases and provides a tax deductible way for current, as well as former families and friends, to support the school. The monies raised from the Annual Fund are used to support the current operation and long term goals of the school.

Families are asked to generously support the Annual Fund in amounts appropriate to their individual circumstances. *When schools seek foundation grants it is critical to show high levels of participation from all members of the community.*

Alcuin Montessori is a non-profit organization and all contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

*The Auction:* The Alcuin Auction/Gala has two major goals: to raise money which will help support the current and long term strategic needs of our school, and to provide a fun-filled event that will bring our busy families together for entertainment and community building.

The Auction is a two-fold event. The first part is an online auction where donations from the outside community and the Alcuin families are presented through an online auction site. Many creative and unique items are auctioned there in a high spirited competition.

The second part of the Auction is the live event. All adult members of our community are encouraged to come and bid -- or cheer on the bidders -- and enjoy an entertaining social evening.

The Auction is truly a whole-community event at Alcuin. The Auction Committee works tirelessly to get great donations from the community and friends. Families who are able often offer vacation homes or special skills they have to be auctioned. The students from each class create classroom projects which are auctioned off at the live event. Many teachers offer their time for special auction items.

As with the Annual Fund, the money raised by the auction is important for keeping our schools current and long term visions viable.

## **Administrative Team**

### ***Executive Director***

The Executive Director is the chief administrative officer and the educational leader of the school. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Trustees and implements the general and financial policies of the board. The Executive Director is responsible for day-to-day school operations, leading the administrative and educational staff in delivering “Education for Life” and advancing Alcuin’s long range strategic plans.

### ***Business Manager***

The Business Manager is responsible for all aspects of finance and operations including budget, billing and collections, purchasing, accounts payable, employee compensation and benefits administration. The Business Manager works with the Executive Director, the Board Treasurer, and the Finance committee to implement the strategic financial plan.

### ***Director of Advancement***

The Director of Advancement focuses on recruitment, admissions, enrollment and registration; as well as the implementation of the annual fund and spring fundraiser, maintains the alumni and friends database and relations and leads the school in advancement efforts. The director also spearheads Alcuin’s internal and external communications, including memos, marketing and advertising materials.

### ***Administrative Assistant***

The administrative assistant answers the phone, extends messages, and provides support and structure for the school office. The administrative assistant also acts as liaison with First United Methodist, coordinating the school’s calendar with theirs. Additionally, the Administrative Assistant manages Time Cards for Day House, assists with supply orders and bank deposits.

## **PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM**

The essence of Dr. Maria Montessori's method is to allow for the development of natural human tendencies and to help children as they adapt to their culture. The curriculum is grounded in the universal laws of human development that include movement, language, order, adaptation, work, self-discipline, exploration, self-perfection, abstract thinking, imagination and creativity. A goal of the Montessori program is to help children think for themselves and to be actively involved in their own education. This is one distinction between a Montessori program and many conventional school programs. The Montessori environment is filled with beautiful and enticing age-appropriate materials.

### **The Montessori Curriculum**

Before age seven, a child's primary relationship with their environment is sensorial. Children develop through their experiences, learning to walk, talk and explore the environment with their senses. They absorb information, concepts and skills from their experiences with little effort, and form a sense of trust and security through the continuity of relationships both in and out of the family. In the Primary programs, children encounter tasks that are sufficiently challenging and interesting, placing emphasis on the process of learning rather than the product of learning.

The Primary child refines the language, motor, and perceptual skills absorbed in earlier development. The organization of experiences and impressions is guided by a multi-sensory approach in language, mathematics, geography, art, science and music. The child refines motor skills, discovers reading through phonics, encounters mathematical concepts through concrete materials and explores geographical relationships and scientific information through manipulating sensorial objects and real life materials.

As children move through age six, they enter the second plane of development, where imagination and reasoning powers are used to gain information. The Montessori Elementary program gives these abilities prominence in the child's learning process, fostering an interest in facts and factual relationships. According to Montessori, this is the time to *sow the seeds of culture*.

Elementary children use concrete Montessori materials to learn abstract concepts, gradually internalizing the concepts and developing the ability to think abstractly. They enjoy working collaboratively and become actively involved in building their community. Elementary students are more socially oriented, eager for more knowledge, and actively seek opportunities to explore.

### ***Approach to Reading, Writing and Literature***

Montessori prepares children at a very early age for reading and writing, using literature to inspire and develop cultural knowledge. Primary children work with phonics by composing stories with moveable alphabet letters even before they can read or write. Self-expression is valued and respected, setting the foundation for critical thinking and creative writing. The young child's developing motor skills support the introduction and the formation of letters. Alcuin utilizes a cursive writing method that proves more natural for Primary children due to the curved lines and flowing non-reversible letters. Children often learn to form letters on the chalkboard before they can read. As the five- and six-year-old child begins to sound out words, reading fluency is encouraged through lessons with functions of grammar and sentence structure.

The Elementary child's reading and writing skills are strengthened through penmanship work, extensive grammar lessons, phonics, sight words and book reading. Children read content materials in geography, history, science and literature, placing emphasis on comprehension, composition and research skills. Alcuin provides an additional reading track that reinforces reading techniques and comprehension through combinations of basic reading books and novels. As children gain independent reading skills, they participate in an expanding literature and writing program that incorporates fiction and nonfiction materials, research and both creative and analytical writing.

### ***Mathematics from Concrete to Abstract***

The goal is the development of the *mathematical mind*, defined as the thinking processes involved with precision, logical thinking, analysis, classification and organization. Primary students work with sensorial materials that prepare them for work with the decimal system and geometry, and establish patterns for analytical thinking. They have concrete experiences with basic operations of the decimal system, linear (1-1000), and skip (2's, 5's, etc.) counting.

Throughout the program, Montessori students use hands-on materials to help make abstract mathematical concepts concrete. The math curriculum introduces students to the fundamentals of algebra, geometry, logic and statistics, along with the principles of arithmetic. In early Elementary work, children work with all four operations using multi-digit numbers, fractions, geometry, time, measurement and counting. As the children work through the Middle School level (seventh and eighth grade), they work abstractly and apply math skills to science and geography work.

### ***Cultural Education***

The geography, history, science and cultural studies curriculum promotes global awareness and appreciation. From the earliest age, children are guided to respect all life forms and acquire sensitivity to the natural environment. Our diversity is celebrated through music, art, literature, specific cultural experiences and language studies.

Science, geography and history are presented to Primary students through language development processes, answering the child's question "*What is it?*" Children classify information and learn the names of plants, animals, places and peoples. At the Elementary level, these subjects serve as the core of an integrated curriculum for research and imaginative learning. Experiments, classification and relationships between concepts provide sources for writing and research. Students begin with the whole and work toward the details, moving from a study of the universe to the basic historical human needs, such as shelter and transportation.

### ***Creative Arts***

Music, art, movement, drama and literature transmit social heritage to succeeding generations. We strive to provide students at all levels with enriched creative experiences. Beginning with a Toddler's access to art materials through the formal art lessons in Elementary, children are encouraged to express themselves through painting, drawing, coloring, and craft projects.

Music begins with exposure to simple songs from the classics to sing along favorites. The Montessori bell materials focus on identifying and matching notes and are designed to develop an ear for notation. Music experiences range from using rhythm instruments to informal group singing to choral instruction. At the Primary level, the children attend a weekly Orff music class. At the Elementary level, we have a tradition of producing and performing a children's opera every other year. We alternate this event with a cultural festival.

Literature inspires creative expression in children of all ages, allowing them to form simple sentence stories at the Primary level and write poems, essays, and plays at the Elementary level.

### **Class Level Programs**

- Infant – 6 weeks to 14 months
- Toddler Class - 15 to 36 months
- Primary Classes
  - ❖ *Primary - 3 to 6 years*
  - ❖ *Primary Extended Day - 5 to 6 years*
- Elementary
  - ❖ *Junior Elementary - 6 to 9 years*
  - ❖ *Senior Elementary - 9 to 12 years*
  - ❖ *Elementary Before and After School Program*
- Middle School
  - ❖ *Adolescents - 12 years to 14 years*
- Day House (Before and After School Care) - 3 to 12 years

### **Program Descriptions**

- The DCFS-licensed **Infant** program, at our Roosevelt Campus, provides learning experiences in an environment that is cheerful, inviting and rich with opportunities to explore. Low shelves and tables make the materials easily accessible to the infant that is mobile, while there is always a hum of conversation from teachers to children. The natural routine in this classroom includes time for feeding, sleeping, exposure to music, outdoor time, and occasional time in our large muscle activity room.
- The DCFS-licensed **Toddler** class is a child-sized extension of the home. Here the children can, on their own initiative, pursue the goal of independence. The beauty and order of the classroom and its materials entice them to touch and explore. Activities focus on the child's developing motor, language, and social skills. The teacher guides and reassures them in their work.

**Primary Programs** encourage children to explore, move and interact socially.

- **Primary Half-Day** is designed for children who are ready for a larger community as they develop social and language skills, motor coordination, perceptual skills and pre-reading and pre-math concepts. The major areas for choice of work are practical life, sensorial, math, language, cultural areas and creative arts.
- The **Primary Extended Day** is designed for Kindergarten age children of five to six years who are ready to *extend* their morning work time. Along with developing academic skills, children are forming cooperative peer relationships and an interest in group projects. These children bring lunch and continue their day until 3:00 p.m.

During the afternoon session, children focus attention on complex and lengthy lessons, specifically involving writing, reading, geography, science and math materials. Self-discipline and independence are expected of children in this program.

### ***Elementary Curriculum***

The **Elementary** curriculum is structured in circles of overlapping, rather than compartmentalized, subjects. Lessons introduced with concrete materials at the Primary level are reintroduced frequently during the Elementary years in an increasingly complex and more abstract manner. Additional materials are used to teach higher level learning concepts.

Literature, history, the arts, social issues, civics, economics, science, mathematics and technology all complement one another in the Montessori curriculum because they are integrated and overlap. One subject *intersects* and meshes with another in a natural way around a specific topic or theme.

For example, when Elementary Montessori students study Africa, many subjects are integrated. Students explore the physical geography, climate, ecology, natural resources, food, shelter, transportation, traditional cultures, customs and language. They might read African folk tales, study African civilizations and endangered species, create African masks and musical instruments, build traditional huts using simple mathematical measurements, learn Swahili expressions and prepare African meals. At the same time, individual skills such as phonics, multiplication tables, spelling, research techniques, punctuation and so on are being developed on an individualized basis or in small groups.

### ***Middle School Curriculum***

The **Middle School** students work side-by-side with adults to tailor their own project-based learning, drawing upon their creativity and personal interests as they respond to rigorous academic and personal expectations. Student-run business projects foster development of real-world responsibility, leadership, financial skills and understanding of the adult world.

Service projects in the classroom, school and broader community encourage development of empathy and civic engagement. Learning extends and community connection deepens on exciting overnight trips to such places as Washington, D.C., organic farms, and outdoor adventure facilities. Evaluations include grades, student-led conferences, and written evaluations, and reflect balanced emphasis on skill mastery, work management, and engagement.

The curriculum includes pre-algebra, algebra, literature, philosophy, history, biology, botany, ecology, chemistry, physics, Spanish, theater and art. The program integrates additional components to foster Education for Life, including studies in micro-economy, physical and creative expression, humanities and occupations, community service and advisory. State standards guide lesson planning. Teachers assess student mastery through projects, papers, tests, and quizzes.

### ***Day House***

The **Day House** is our before and after school care program designed to be a home away from home setting.

All children enrolled in Day House gather together in the same classroom at 7:15 a.m., 11:30 a.m., or 3:00 p.m. Day House 3- and 4-year-olds nap or rest from 1:00-3:00 p.m. while the 5-years-olds are in Extended Day. The program, from 3:00-6:00 p.m., offers a more relaxed setting for all age ranges. These students can continue with Montessori work, or choose from additional materials that stimulate creative play, arts, board games, group projects and cooking/baking. These children also have outdoor playtime and snack and the older children may work on community service projects. The program closes at 6:00 p.m.

### ***Enrichment Programs***

In addition to the creative arts integrated into the academic curriculum, Extended Day, Elementary and Middle School children have weekly lessons in art and music with experienced instructors for each area. Additionally, the Middle School curriculum offers a three-day elective of Spanish. The Primary and Elementary students receive daily Spanish language experiences and lessons. This program is led by a Montessori-trained Spanish Coordinator.

Junior Elementary students go to the Oak Park YMCA weekly for swim lessons. All Elementary and Middle School students receive strength training and participate in soccer, volleyball, etc. utilizing the gym at First Baptist Church.

Teachers organize field trips for small groups or the entire class to enhance an area of study or particular interest of the students. The Montessori *Going Out* program is designed for individuals or small groups to extend their classroom work with first hand experiences in specific areas. These experiences help the children learn how society functions, in addition to developing responsibility for learning and gathering of knowledge through direct resources.

The children often pursue independent research or creative work, which is presented or dramatized for the class or other groups within the school. It is not unusual for the children to write and perform their own short plays or present a science report with visual aids to younger children.

Elementary and Middle School classrooms use computers beginning with basic keyboarding skills and expanding to other aspects of computer technology. The goal is to teach computer literacy skills that link and apply the Montessori curriculum. While the Middle School students use computers and Internet frequently, the use of the Internet in Elementary is determined by the purpose of the project, computer skills, and the social maturity of the child.

### ***Children with Diverse Talents, Intellectual Capacities and Interests***

When necessary, educational or developmental evaluations and recommendations are made through referral services. Your child's teacher will meet with you and the Executive Director to make recommendations and referrals if and when necessary.

### ***Behavior and Discipline Procedures***

Alcuin Montessori School pursues a goal of self-discipline for children through lessons in Grace & Courtesy, peace-making and guided respectful social communication. Teachers role play scenarios with the children, identify situations in which skills can be applied and guide the children toward the successful use of these attributes. We provide children with appropriate and enriching activities, anticipating that children who are engaged in successful work will be more likely to develop responsible behavior.

When inappropriate behavior occurs, the teacher redirects the child to engaging, appropriate activities. If a behavior persists, the teacher guides the child's activities by limiting freedom to

socialize, to work with partners and/or to select an activity or work area. When the child consistently shows appropriate behavior, he regains independence and freedom.

When a child does not respond cooperatively to these procedures, the child is removed from the group, activity, or peers. The child may be assigned a work area, required to stay next to the teacher or, if needed, asked to visit the office for a period of time. The teacher will call the parent to discuss supportive options.

If a child does not respond cooperatively to the second stage process, the staff arranges with the parents for the child to be taken home. Parents may be called to pick-up the child immediately if:

- a) the child bites another person,
- b) the child intentionally and seriously hurts another person,
- c) the child's tantrum is uncontrollable and prolonged, and/or
- d) the child persists in using inappropriate language.

Alcuin sets behavior standards and disciplinary policy based upon the principle that a person's independence and freedom are the result of responsible and self-controlled behavior. All persons and things are to be treated respectfully and courteously, and the needs and good of the whole community. Our goal is for independence with responsibility, and it is the partnership between families and administration that supports these values and makes them possible. The Executive Director of the school reserves the right to dismiss a child or family from the school at any time for any reason.

### ***Ongoing Assessment***

Although Alcuin does not incorporate a grading system for students in Primary through Senior Elementary, assessment of progress is ongoing. Teachers constantly observe, assess and record the children's independent work from the Infant through Middle School levels and are trained to evaluate all aspects of development and maturity. Students are challenged to exceed their own *personal best*, not simply measure themselves against their peers. Teachers present written progress reports at the Parent/Teacher conferences in November and March each year and additional progress reports or conferences are held as needed. An end-of-year report is mailed in June.

### ***Testing Position Statement***

The Elementary and Middle School students from second through eighth grade are tested each spring using the MAP and *TerraNova* tests. The scores provide parents and teachers with a baseline of how the child compares, on a national level, with other children his/her age.

### ***The Teacher's Role***

At each level of the Montessori program, well-organized classrooms equipped with special materials encourage freedom of movement and choice for all students. By setting guidelines for work and behavior, teachers show children how to function within the structure of the curriculum and the classroom community. The pattern for a lifetime of good work habits and a sense of responsibility and cooperation are established.

The teacher is the dynamic link between the child and the environment. The emphasis is on *teaching and guiding* by providing the details of procedures and information so the child can



practice and internalize skills. Through observation, the teacher determines when a child needs further instruction or support and when he is ready for additional challenges. The teacher is responsible for preparing and maintaining the learning environment, and then guiding children toward developmentally appropriate and meaningful activity. The teacher evaluates the children, their work and their developmental progress in order to respond effectively. Teachers also model respect, provide support and serve as peace-makers. As a motivator, the teacher stimulates interest in learning, instilling within the child a basic interest and delight in working with the lessons.

### ***Montessori Teacher Certification***

Montessori certified teachers demonstrate mastery of the Montessori curriculum and theory at the particular age level he/she will teach: *Infant -Toddler, Early Childhood (two and a half - six years), Elementary (six - nine years and/or nine - twelve years) and Middle School*. Teachers learn how to use specifically designed Montessori materials for all subject areas and how to integrate all subjects to create a three-year program for the respective age levels.

Montessori certification programs exist throughout the world and can usually be completed in one to two years, depending on the age level. The programs usually incorporate an internship or student teaching portion which may require the intern to complete a full year practicum in a class. The certification program usually requires the Montessori intern to have completed a Bachelor's degree.

The Montessori teachers at Alcuin have Bachelor's and Master's degrees (or equivalent) as well as American Montessori Society and/or Association Montessori Internationale certification.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

### **Admissions Policy**

Alcuin does not discriminate in admissions, placement or employment on the basis of sex, race, creed, ethnic origin or disability. Alcuin is committed to providing an atmosphere where children of various social, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds may experience an optimal learning situation due in part to the diversity of the student body.

The Alcuin staff will evaluate the needs of each child prior to acceptance to the school.

*Admission priority is extended in the following order:*

- returning students and siblings of Alcuin families,
- children from other Montessori schools, and
- children from new families.

### **Adjustment Period**

Alcuin offers a six-week adjustment period to families with a child entering the school for the first time. The adjustment period allows the family and school time to mutually confirm that our Montessori program meets your child's needs. If during the adjustment period, the Executive Director, teacher and parents agree Alcuin Montessori School does not meet the child's needs, the parent is responsible only for the prorated tuition or a minimum of \$1000.

### **Withdrawal Policy**

If the new family of an Infant, Toddler or Primary age child withdraws for reasons other than those stated above or after the six-week adjustment period, the parents are responsible for the full year's tuition. Parents of new Elementary children and returning families with children at all program levels who withdraw at any time are responsible for the full year's tuition. The \$1000 tuition deposit is always non-refundable and non-transferable. Upon signing the contract, each family is also responsible for the annual tuition.

### **School Policy Regarding Transgender, Gender non-Conforming, and Non-Binary Students and Staff Members**

**The purpose of this policy is to:**

- (1) foster an educational environment that is safe, welcoming, and free from stigma and discrimination for all students and staff members regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
- (2) facilitate compliance with local, state and federal laws concerning bullying, harassment, privacy, and discrimination.
- (3) ensure that all students and staff members have the opportunity to safely experience and express themselves and live authentically.

Note: The right of transgender individuals to accommodations is generally found in legislation but has not been fully interpreted by the courts. Determining appropriate

accommodations must be made on a case-by-case basis depending upon the needs expressed by the student or staff member. The director or designee will work with each transgender, gender non-conforming, or non-binary student and, as appropriate, with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), to manage a student's supports on a case-by-case basis.

## Definitions

These definitions are provided to assist in understanding this policy and not for the purpose of labeling students or staff members. Students and staff members may or may not use these terms depending on their lives and experiences with their gender and/or sexual orientation. School faculty and staff should use the terms that students and staff members use to describe themselves and avoid terms that make these students and staff uncomfortable.

- **Gender:** A socio-cultural concept involving the complex interrelationship between one's body, identity, and expression. Each of these dimensions are distinct and can vary greatly across a range of possibilities. Although gender is typically assumed to align with the sex assigned to a child at birth based on a child's identifiable external reproductive organs, gender and sex are distinct concepts.
- **Gender Identity:** A person's deeply held sense or psychological knowledge of their own gender, which can include being female, male, another gender, non-binary, gender fluid, or no gender "Agender". Gender identity is an innate part of a person's identity. The responsibility for determining an individual's gender identity rests with the individual. Children typically begin to understand their own gender identity by age four, although the age at which individuals come to understand and express their gender identity may vary based on each person's social and familial development.
- **Gender Expression:** The manner in which a person represents or expresses gender to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice, or mannerisms.
- **Gender Nonconforming (Also known as Gender Expansive, Gender Variant, or Gender Creative):** A term that refers to individuals whose gender expression does not follow stereotypical social expectations based on their sex and gender assigned at birth, such as "feminine" boys, "masculine" girls, and those who are perceived as androgynous. Gender non-conforming people are not necessarily transgender or gender non-binary. Cisgender boys and girls whose appearance, style, interests or behavior deviate from stereotypical social expectations may be considered gender non-conforming.
- **Non-binary, Genderqueer, Gender Diverse, or Gender Fluid:** Catch-all terms used for people whose gender identity is not exclusively male or female, including those who identify with a gender other than male or female, or as more

than one gender, or as no gender. The term is not indicative of gender expression or sexual orientation.

- **Cisgender:** An adjective used to describe people whose gender identity aligns with that traditionally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. The term is not indicative of gender expression or sexual orientation.
- **Transgender:** An adjective used to describe people whose gender identity is different from that traditionally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth based on their identifiable external reproductive organs. A transgender girl is a person whose deeply held inner sense of being is female but who was assigned male sex at birth. A transgender boy is a person whose deeply held inner sense of self being is male but who was assigned female sex at birth. The term is not indicative of gender expression or sexual orientation.
- **Questioning:** A person in the process of exploring and understanding what their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression might be.
- **Sexual Orientation:** The inner feelings of who a person is attracted to emotionally, romantically, or physically in relation to their own gender identity. A person may be attracted to others of the same or opposite gender, both genders, neither gender or other genders. Common terms used to define one's sexual orientation are "asexual," "bisexual," "gay," "lesbian," "pansexual," "queer," and "straight," among others. Transgender and non-binary people may have any sexual orientation.
- **Transition:** Steps a transgender or non-binary person takes to align aspects of their life with their gender identity. The term should not be used to imply that a person is changing from one gender to another, as a person's gender remains relatively stable. It is others' understanding of that gender that shifts. What others see as "transition" is an alignment of one or more dimensions of the individual's gender as they seek congruence across those dimensions. Transition is a process that is different for everyone, and it may or may not involve social, legal, or physical changes. There is no one step or set of steps that an individual must undergo in order to have their gender identity affirmed and respected.
- **Gender Affirming Approach:** A framework used to create an environment in which transgender, agender, non-binary, and gender-nonconforming youth are able to live as the gendered (or non-gendered) person they identify themselves to be, and achieve healthy development and social, emotional, and academic success.
- **Student Administrative Support Team:** A group that receives information on a confidential need-to-know basis and is convened to determine the appropriate supports for transgender and nonconforming students. The team should consist of the school director, the student, individuals the student identifies as trusted adults, and individuals the director determines may have a legitimate interest in

the safety and healthy development of the student. The student's support plan shall be kept in the student's health folder and may be shared only with staff members who have a legitimate health, safety, or educational interest in the information.

## **Scope**

This policy covers conduct that takes place in the school, on school property, at school-sponsored functions and activities, including field trips. This policy also pertains to usage of electronic communication including all forms of social media that occurs in the school, on school property, at school-sponsored functions and activities, including on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists, as well as any electronic communication that is directed at a student or community member and which substantially interferes with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school. This policy applies to the entire school community, including educators, school staff, students, parents, and volunteers.

## **Discrimination, Bullying, and Harassment**

Discrimination, bullying, and harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression is prohibited. It is the responsibility of the school and all staff to ensure that all students and staff, including transgender and non-binary students and staff, have safe school environments. The scope of this responsibility includes ensuring that any incident of discrimination, harassment, or bullying is given immediate attention, including investigating the incident, taking age and developmentally appropriate action, and providing students and staff with appropriate resources and supports. In enforcing this policy, the School will consider responses that promote education and prevention and not exclusionary discipline as appropriate. Complaints alleging discrimination, bullying, or harassment based on a student's or staff member's sexual orientation or actual or perceived gender identity or expression are taken seriously and will be handled in the same manner.

## **Privacy/Confidentiality**

Alcuin ensures that all personally identifiable and medical information relating to transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary students and staff shall be kept confidential in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal privacy laws.

All individuals, including, transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary students and staff members have the right to discuss and express their gender identity and expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much to share private information. The fact that an individual chooses to use a different name, to transition at school, or to disclose their gender status to staff or other students does not authorize school staff to disclose a student's or staff member's personally identifiable or medical information. When contacting the parent or guardian of a student, school staff will use the student's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to the student's gender assigned at birth unless the student, parent, or guardian has specified otherwise. (See

“Student Transitions” below.) In the rare instance that the school is legally required to disclose an individual’s gender status, the school will provide the individual an opportunity to make that disclosure themselves, where practicable. School staff should also consult with the student’s parents if the student’s parents are aware of the student’s gender status. This would include providing the student or staff member with any support the individual would need to make the disclosure in a safe and supportive environment.

### **Names, Pronouns, and School Records**

Every student and staff member has the right to be addressed by a name and pronouns that correspond to the individual’s gender identity. Regardless of whether a transgender or non-binary student or staff member have legally changed their name or gender, Alcuin will allow such students or staff members to use a chosen name and gender pronouns that reflect their identity. School staff may privately ask transgender, gender non-conforming, or non-binary students how they want to be addressed in class and in the school’s communication with the student’s parents or guardians. Some transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary individuals may feel most comfortable being addressed by gender-neutral pronouns such as “they/them/ze” or just referred to by their names (without pronouns).

If the student or staff member has previously been known at school by a different name, the school administration will direct school personnel to use the individual’s chosen name and appropriate pronouns. To ensure consistency among administrators and staff, every effort will be made to immediately update student education records (such as attendance reports, class rosters for substitutes, school IDs, transcripts, electronic records, etc.) with the student’s chosen name and appropriate gender markers. Administration will meet with the student/parents/staff to determine their record-keeping preferences and take reasonable steps to respect the preferences of the students/parents/staff. School staff or administrators may be specifically required by law to report a student’s legal name or gender. In those instances, school staff and administrators shall adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such confidential information.

### **Access to Gender-Segregated Activities and Facilities**

With respect to all restrooms and changing facilities, students and staff shall have access to facilities that correspond to their gender identity. Students in Primary/Extended Day and Middle School have access to facilities that are gender-neutral and may request a private space when needed. Students in Jr. Elementary and Sr. Elementary and staff members have access to facilities that correspond to their gender identity or may choose to use a gender-neutral facility located elsewhere in the building. Transgender and non-binary students and staff members should determine which facilities are consistent with their gender identity. Any student or staff member who is uncomfortable using a shared gender-segregated facility, regardless of the reason, shall, upon the individual’s request, be provided with a safe and non-stigmatizing alternative. This may include, for example, provision to use a nearby

private restroom or a separate changing schedule. However, requiring a transgender or non-binary student or staff member to use a separate space threatens to publicly identify and stigmatize the individual based on their gender status and will not be done unless requested by an individual. Under no circumstances will students or staff members be required to use gender-segregated facilities that are inconsistent with their gender identity. Under no circumstances will a student or staff member be required to use separate facilities because they are transgender or non-binary.

### **Overnight School Trips**

In no case should a transgender student be denied the right to participate in an overnight field trip because of the student's gender status. Students shall be permitted to participate in accordance with the gender identity consistently asserted at school.

Accommodations shall also be provided to gender non-binary students and students questioning their gender identity, regardless of whether the student is consistently asserting at school. These accommodations should be assessed on a case-by-case basis and in a manner consistent with the student's support plan. The director or designee shall work with the student and the Student Administrative Support Team to determine the accommodations that will be provided, including room-sharing arrangements, based on the particular circumstances of the trip.

Accommodations shall also be provided to gender non-binary staff and staff members questioning their gender identity, regardless of whether the individual is consistently asserting at school. These accommodations should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The director or designee shall work with the staff member to determine the accommodations that will be provided, including room-sharing arrangements, based on the particular circumstances of the trip.

### **Other Gender-Based Activities, Rules, Policies, and Practices**

As a general matter, Alcuin evaluates all gender-based activities, rules, policies, and practices — including classroom activities, school ceremonies, and school photos — and maintain only those that serve an important educational purpose. Students and staff shall be permitted to participate in any such activities or conform to any such rule, policy, or practice consistent with their gender identity.

### **Student and Staff Transitions**

The school shall accept the gender identity that each student and staff member asserts. There is no medical or mental health diagnosis or treatment threshold that students or staff must meet in order to have their gender identity recognized and respected. The assertion may be evidenced by an expressed desire to be consistently recognized as the sex/gender consistent with their gender identity. Students or staff members ready to socially transition may initiate a process to change their name, pronoun, attire, and access to preferred programs, activities, and facilities consistent with their gender identity. Each individual has a unique process for transitioning.

## Resources

For questions about this policy, please contact Gina Gleason, Director.

### Additional Resources

- Lambda Legal: (312) 663-4413
- Illinois Safe Schools Alliance: (312) 533-2624; [owen@illinoisafeschools.org](mailto:owen@illinoisafeschools.org)
- Lurie Children’s Gender and Sex Development Program: (773) 303-6056; [Jleininger@luriechildrens.org](mailto:Jleininger@luriechildrens.org)
- [Trans Student Educational Resources – Transforming Education](#)
- [National Center for Transgender Equality](#)
- [GLSEN | Championing LGBT issues in K-12 Education](#)

### School Hours by Program

Infant	7:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday
Toddler	7:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday
Primary	8:30-11:30 a.m., Monday through Friday
Primary Extended Day	8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday
All Year Montessori (Primary)	7:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday
Elementary Classes	8:30 a.m.-3:15 p.m., Monday through Friday
Middle School	8:45 a.m.-3:45 p.m., Monday through Friday
Day House (Before and After School Care)	7:15-8:30a.m., 11:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and 3:15-6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

Day House is open on school days, parent conference days, and institute/in-service days. Day House is closed on major holidays such as Columbus Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Break, Dr. Martin Luther King Day, Presidents’ Day, and Memorial Day.

Be sure to check the calendar and Weekly Memo for Spring and Winter Break, and other Day House closings.

### Office Hours

The school office is open from 7:15 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. You may reach your child's teacher by leaving a phone message in the office. Teachers return calls after class hours. Lead teachers email addresses are available on Alcuin’s Web site: [www.alcuin.org](http://www.alcuin.org).



## FEES AND TUITION

### Entrance/Facility Fee

Families new to Alcuin pay a one-time family entrance/facility fee of \$1200.

For new Elementary children, the full fee is due in September of the first year enrolled. For new Infant, Toddler and Primary children, this fee may be paid in two installments of \$500 each, plus a \$30 service charge for each installment, payable on or before September 30 of the first two years of attending Alcuin.

### Deposits and Tuition

Enrollment contracts are due early in March and a \$1500 tuition deposit for each child returning to Alcuin must be made to reserve a space. The deposit reserves a space at Alcuin only if tuition payments are current (i.e., no more than 30 days outstanding). *Tuition Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable and are applied to the year's tuition for the child for which it is made.*

Your child's enrollment contract will be considered **a permanent legal document after you sign it and submit it to the school.** We do offer a grace period from the date that the contract is due in March through May 31<sup>st</sup>. Unless you notify us of a change of plans by May 31<sup>st</sup> after signing, you will be accountable for the full year's tuition regardless of whether or not your child attends Alcuin.

**After the first week of March, all spaces not secured with a tuition deposit will be offered to new families.**

### Billing Tuition

We recognize the need to provide options to meet tuition obligations. Tuition is paid for the academic year and is not tied in any way to the number of days of school in any given month, nor is it reduced due to sickness or vacations. Parents agree to pay the full year's tuition when they sign the Enrollment Contract. However, you may also choose from three payment plans listed below according to your individual budgeting needs.

- Two Payment Plan - Due August 1st and January 1st.
- Four-Payment Plan - Due the 1st of August, November, February and April.
- Nine Payment Plan - Due the 1st of August through May excluding March.

Tuition is paid via the FACTS tuition management web site.

### Late Tuition Policy

The financial stability of the school depends on timely payment of tuition. Payments over 75 days late are reviewed by the Finance Committee and referred to collection and the child(ren) will be dismissed from school effective on the 90<sup>th</sup> day after the original payment was due.

If you are having temporary financial difficulties, please contact the Executive Director or the Business Manager to make special payment arrangements. You are expected to pay your tuition account for the current year in full by May 15. Lack of communication from parents to the Executive Director could jeopardize your child's enrollment.

### **Late Pick-Up Fees**

Prompt dismissal is important for the children, as they become anxious when they are not picked up on time. The staff has responsibilities after dismissal, and are not available to stay with children who do not leave on time.

Parents are charged a *Late Pick-Up Fee* of \$1.00 per minute when the child is not picked up at his/her scheduled dismissal time.

Primary Morning	11:30–11:45 a.m.
Extended Day and Primary Day House	3:00–3:15 p.m.
Elementary	3:15–3:25 p.m.
Middle School	3:45–3:55 p.m.
Afternoon Day House	6:00 p.m.

### **Administration Fee**

Changes made to a payment plan after May 31<sup>st</sup> will result in a \$50.00 administration fee.

### **Financial Assistance**

We believe the primary responsibility for financing a student's independent school education rests with the family. However, we also recognize the need to provide assistance if we are to attract and retain a broad spectrum of students in concert with our guiding principles.

Applications for the upcoming school year are available in December and must be filed with F.A.S.T. by mid-February to keep your child's re-enrollment current. Income tax documents are due in the Business Office by March 1<sup>st</sup>. New families applying for financial assistance should apply and send in tax documents upon receiving a contract.

Financial assistance is awarded to families whose children are enrolled in the *Primary, Elementary, or Middle School levels*. Infant and Toddler programs, in addition to Activity, Catering and Entrance Fees, do not qualify for financial aid awards. Please contact the Business Manager for further information and financial aid packets.

## **ATTENDANCE and ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

Alcuin requires students to attend daily during the entire regular school term.

### **Arrival**

It is important for students to arrive on time for the beginning of the class period. This is a welcoming and social time that helps children settle into their activities.

Morning Day House opens at 7:15 a.m. Please use the Oak Park entrance and escort your child to the Day House room.

Class arrival time is 8:20 - 8:40 a.m. We encourage you to use the carpool service at the Superior Street entrance or younger children may be escorted into the building through the Oak Park Avenue entrance.

**DO NOT PARK OR LEAVE YOUR CAR IN THE CARPOOL LANE.** Parents may drop children off in front of the Superior Street entrance between 8:20 and 8:40 a.m. where a parent volunteer will greet and escort your child into the school. Remain in your car ready to drive forward immediately after your child exits. If you need to leave your car for any reason, please pull out of the carpool lane and into a legal parking space nearby (Euclid Avenue, Chicago Avenue, Erie Street, or Oak Park Avenue.) The Superior Street entrance is used for carpool arrival and dismissal only and is locked at all other times.

The Oak Park Avenue entrance is used for parents accompanying their children into the building. Entrance to the school will be available only through the Oak Park Avenue door during regular school hours and for after-school meetings. Please ring the doorbell for admittance, state your name and come directly to the office to check in.

### **Carpool**

We use a carpool number system to facilitate dismissal. A carpool number is assigned to each family and must be displayed on your car windshield while you are in the carpool line. Children are dismissed as their transportation reaches the school walkway. The prepared numbers are distributed to families at the start of the year. If you do not have one, please contact the office. Carpool numbers other than those issued by the school will not be honored.

**Parents and all designated drivers must be familiar with and follow the carpool procedures to ensure the safety of the children and respect for the community. Read the carpool information you receive with your carpool number carefully. Be sure to provide copies to all relatives and caregivers who are authorized to pick up your child.**

### **Dismissal**

Parents may pick up their children at the Superior Street entrance via the carpool line or walk-up. Be sure your carpool number is displayed in the right front windshield of your car or in your hand if you walk up to the door. At dismissal, teachers will call each child to the door as their car approaches the Superior Street door. The teachers assist the children into their cars, and will buckle children who need help to expedite traffic flow. This system enables us to keep the children safe, the cars moving along, and the traffic congestion to a minimum.

Dismissal times are:

<b>Primary</b>	<b>11:30–11:45 a.m.</b>
<b>Extended Day</b>	<b>3:00–3:15 p.m.</b>
<b>Primary Day House</b>	<b>3:00–3:15 p.m.</b>
<b>Elementary</b>	<b>3:15–3:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Middle School</b>	<b>3:45–3:55 p.m.</b>

Primary Day House and Elementary After School dismissal between 3:15–6:00 p.m. requires parents to pick up children from their respective classroom and sign out. Ring the doorbell at the Oak Park door for admittance.

If you need to pick up your child at any time other than a regular dismissal period, you must come to the office to sign them out. Please enter the building by ringing the doorbell at the Oak Park Avenue entrance.

### **Absenteeism and Late Arrivals**

If your child will be absent, please leave a message with the office or on the voice mail by 8:30 a.m. Please include your child's name, classroom, the reason for the absence and whether it will be all or part of the day. Our Safety Director will call families with absent children who have not called in the absence by 9:15 a.m. All illnesses, especially contagious ones, must be reported as soon as possible. We send *Health Alerts* to families when a contagious illness has been reported in a class.

The Alcuin faculty and staff begin teaching each day promptly by 8:45 a.m. Your child must arrive on time to start the day successfully and to not disturb the remainder of the class. Additionally, in order for your child to fully benefit from our program, we expect regular attendance with no more than 10 absences at any level.

### **Change of Pick Up Notes**

If your child needs to go home with someone other than his/her designated pick-up, please send a note to the office. These release notes help insure the safety of your child. Elementary children who ride the bus, ride their bikes or walk home need to have a Bike/Bus/Walk permission slip on file in the school office in order to be released at 3:15 p.m.

### **Severe Weather & Safety**

In the case of a severe weather situation, Alcuin will be closed if the Oak Park School District 97 schools are closed. Check the Alcuin web site for any school closing information. In case of severe storm or tornado warnings during school hours, all students will be taken to a sheltered area. Fire, tornado and lock-down drills are conducted regularly in compliance with Village and State ordinances. The school will use the contact information that you provided for Alert Now in the event that we need to reach our families quickly with any emergency information.

## CLASSROOM INFORMATION

### Birthday Celebrations

We do not host birthday parties, but rather we celebrate a child's birthday by honoring their place in history, such as making a timeline of his/her life with a picture for each year. We try to celebrate as close to the child's birthday as possible. **It is our policy not to serve cake, cookies, cupcakes or party favors.** Please save these goodies for the at-home party. However, a gift to the class may be made in your child's name. Please discuss the selection with your child's teacher.

If you are having a birthday party for your child, please do not distribute the invitations at school; even if you are inviting the entire class. Please consult your classroom or parent roster for address information to mail or deliver invitations for events outside of school.

### Class Placement

Montessori classes are made up of children of balanced age ranges in each developmental cycle. The best results are obtained when children enter the program as young as possible. We recommend children enter the Primary cycle by at least age three and remain in the Primary and Elementary levels through each three-year cycle.

The Executive Director determines class placement according to class openings and the balance of children already in the class. Class placements are the responsibility of the Executive Director who has knowledge of each classroom's community and needs. Teachers cannot take special requests or discuss placement with parents, and the school does not honor requests for placement from parents. Class placement announcements will be mailed in early July.

### Clothing

To assist in your child's growing independence, purchase clothing with large buttons, big zippers, oversized slip-on boots and attachable mittens. All clothing must be labeled.

Primary Children: Please provide the school with an extra set of clothing in a labeled *Ziploc* bag. Please do not send clothes to school daily or in backpacks. Primary parents: please do not send diapers or *Pull-Ups* to school for your child.

### Holiday Service

The Holiday Service is a childcare program offered on school holidays when the education classes are closed. Children who are enrolled in the Day House program on a regular basis are automatically eligible for any Holiday Service days. This service is not available in conjunction with time card use. The school is completely closed two weeks in December/January for winter break.

### Leaving the Campus

#### I. FIELD TRIPS:

Class Field Trips are excursions related to curriculum studies and the preparation includes content and expectations for appropriate behavior. Prepare the children by reviewing ground and safety rules, in addition to courteous behavior.

Any outing must be scheduled through the office. This includes leaving the building even for a walk around the block. Regular schedules for recess in the park are established annually. Take the office cell phone or a personal working cell phone when leaving campus. Make sure to leave the cell phone number with the receptionist when leaving the campus.

#### PRIMARY EXTENDED DAY

- Limited to 5 per year and approval from Executive Director
- Written permission form required.
- Students travel via chartered bus or walk to local venues.

#### ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

- Limited to 5 per year and approval from Executive Director
- Written permission form required.
- Students travel via chartered bus or walk to local venues.
- Sr. Elementary students may travel via public transportation within the Chicagoland area.

OVERNIGHT EVENTS may occur at school or away from school. Limited to participation by the Senior Elementary Students as follows:

- Nature's Classroom – an annual weeklong event.
- One-night events limited to two per year (on or off campus).
- Scheduled a minimum of two months in advance.
- Parents notified a minimum of two months in advance.
- All children in class or designated group attend with parent permission.

#### PROCEDURES FOR FIELD TRIPS AND OFF CAMPUS OUTINGS

- In August, prepare an annual agenda for class events, field trips, and/or overnight outings
- Designate the month of the proposed event.
- A minimum of two months prior to Overnight events, notify the parents.
- A minimum of one-month/4 weeks prior to event, submit office field trip forms to the Business Manager and Administration
- A minimum of two weeks prior to the event, notify parents and request permission forms.
- A minimum of one week prior to event, confirm receipt of permission form and fees.
- Class Emergency Handbooks and cell phone are to be taken on all outings.

Note: Outings and Field Trips may not be scheduled without sufficient preparation.

MODIFIED to allow public transportation – see Board meetings June 2008 and September 2008.

II. GOING OUT (individual student or small groups of no more than five students leaving campus to conduct additional research or gain first-hand experience for a project)

- Limited primarily to Primary Extended Day, Jr. and Sr. elementary students upon approval by classroom teacher and the Executive Director.
- Limited to the Chicagoland area.
- Provide parents with explanation of the Going Out experience and get "Going Out" permission form
- Supervise the Going Out arrangements and arrange for a chaperone/driver.

- If the trip involves driving by a parent, ensure the driver of the vehicle is currently on the “Approved Drivers” list maintained in the office and has completed the necessary paperwork to be on that list.
- Notify the parents at least one day in advance of them leaving campus.
- Make sure the school receptionist has the information about where the children are going, what time they will be leaving/returning, and how to contact the group.

### **Lost & Found**

The Lost & Found is located on the third floor. Please check periodically to see if any of your child’s possessions are there; unclaimed items are periodically donated to charity. Please label your child’s clothing and possessions to help ensure their return.

## Lunch

Alcuin's policy is to promote grace and courtesy and healthy nutrition through education. Lunch tables are prepared with tablecloths or place mats, napkins, dishes and glasses. In order to develop community manners and respect we request:

- no drinks in thermos bottles, cans, or boxes. We provide organic 2% and skim white milk and water served in pitchers.
- only basic foods, such as protein, fruits, vegetables, grains, or dairy products,
- no sweets or "empty calories" such as chips, cookies, cakes, etc.,
- no chocolate of any kind, whether it be in granola bars, milk, etc.
- no food in squeeze containers, as it is impossible to eat graciously when squeezing food into one's mouth; and
- children eat only the food they bring. Sharing with friends is prohibited because of allergies and parental preferences.

Alcuin stresses the importance of a good diet for a growing child: junk foods, additives, food coloring, hidden sugars, and so on are not only empty calories and devoid of solid nutrition, but are also a low source of energy. Please ensure your child brings only healthy foods to school and respect this policy as a reflection of our respect for the whole child.

Due to severe allergies, our campus is completely nut free. **Do not send nuts, nut oils, nut milks or nut products of any kind to school.**

## Refreshments/School Events

We follow the same guidelines for snack and lunch with an emphasis on grace and courtesy. Sodas and desserts are not appropriate refreshments or dinner choices for the children.

## Primary Day House Clothing and Rest/Nap Needs

The Day House children need an additional set of extra clothing. Send it in a *Ziploc* bag with your child's name and *Day House* written on the bag (no *Pull-Ups* or diapers please).

Every afternoon, three- and four-year-old children have a rest/nap period. The children are not forced to sleep, but they have a quiet rest period on their cots. The rest period is a minimum of 45 minutes and up to 1 ½ hours, depending on the child's ability to sustain group activity throughout the afternoon. All children under 5 years who stay after school longer than three hours are required to have a nap or rest period.

Primary children who nap or rest can bring a small blanket. **DO NOT SEND** pillows due to limited storage and sanitation. Items that do not fit in the child's container will be sent home.

Alcuin provides cots and sheets for nappers. Children bring home sheets and blankets each Friday to be laundered and returned Monday morning. We have a limited supply of sheets and depend on each family to return them in good and clean condition.

All children are required to bring two masks to school every day. Please label your child's masks clearly. Children must have their mask already on upon arrival. Masks will be worn during their transition time and in classrooms when social distancing cannot be achieved. Masks do not need to be worn while outside as long as social distancing is being observed.



## **Snack**

Primary parents rotate snack responsibilities based on a schedule provided by the teacher. Families usually provide a snack once or twice a semester. When it is your turn, the teacher will send home a snack guideline the week before, along with the class laundry. Please return the snack and laundry promptly on Monday morning. Elementary students may bring an extra healthy food item of choice each day for snack. Snack is not served in the elementary classrooms.

## **Time Card**

The Time Card service is a system whereby children may come early or stay after school on an occasional basis. The number of children we can accommodate within the space and for which we have adequate staff limits the service. *The timecard service is currently on pause due to the pandemic.*

*Before School Service:* Accommodates children arriving between 7:15 - 8:20 a.m.

Limits: Primary and elementary students.  
Reservations schedule at least the day prior to use.

*Primary students 11:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.*

We are not able to provide Time Card service for students between 11:30 - 3:00 p.m.

*Primary and Extended Day After School Service: 3:00 - 6:00 p.m.*

Limits: Occasional use only.  
Reservations scheduled at least the day prior to use.  
Space available (maximum number of students per day = 20)

*Elementary After School Service: 3:15 - 6:00 p.m.*

Limits: Reservations scheduled at least the day prior to use.  
Space available (maximum number of students per day = 12)

Elementary students may schedule regular use for shorter time periods as long as we have space available.

### **Procedures for Time Card Service**

- Purchase a Time Card via the office.
- Time Card must have sufficient hours available for the amount of time needed.
- Reserve space in advance by calling the school office.
- Be timely in picking up your child.

Time Card Service use is subject to the above Late Pick-Up/Late Fee assessment.

- Children will not be dismissed from carpool to Day House without Time Card reservations.
- Late fees will be assessed if your child is scheduled for carpool and not picked up on time. We cannot assume your child will attend Day House when you are late. Day House space is limited and without reservations we cannot assure your child a place.
- Children will remain in the school office until someone arrives to pick them up.
- In Case of an Emergency
- Make prior arrangements with other families in the school to take your child at dismissal by adding back up names to your emergency form. Call the school and family prior to dismissal if you realize you will be late arriving.

- Call the school prior to dismissal so we know when you will arrive or identify who will be coming for your child if the person does not pick up on a regular basis.
- Your child will be in the school office until someone arrives to pick-up.

*Late Pick Up* A late fee is assessed when a child is not picked-up at the appropriate dismissal period. The fee is \$1.00 per minute. The pick-up time is recorded in the sign-out book located outside of the classroom.

Class Level	Dismissal Period
Primary	11:30 – 11:45 a.m.
Extended Day	3:00 – 3:15 p.m.
Primary 3:00 Day House	3:00 – 3:15 p.m.
Elementary	3:15 – 3:30 p.m.
After School Day House	6:00 p.m.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Alcuin adheres to the Illinois Department of Public Health's immunization requirements. Proof of required immunizations must be provided before your child enters Alcuin for the first time and throughout his/her enrollment in the school, unless you have a religious exemption letter on file. Medical and Dental Examination forms sent with enrollment confirmation letters must be on file prior to your child's starting date. Copies are available in the office if needed.

### When Your Child Is Ill

Should your child contract a contagious disease, please notify the office immediately. Children with colds should recuperate at home. Children must be free of fever for at least 24 hours before returning to class.

### Emergency Procedures

In case of a medical emergency, every effort will be made to reach you or your child's doctor. If our attempts to contact you fail, we will use emergency facilities at West Suburban Hospital. The signed medical release, which is part of the Emergency Information Form, will insure your child receives prompt attention at the hospital. **It is imperative you notify the office of changes in home address and phone number, parent work numbers, insurance changes and other emergency information.**

### Medication

Occasionally children need to take medicine at school. Alcuin's medication policies are described, as follows, so that we can ensure the safety of all children.

- Medicine must be prescribed by your doctor (including non-prescription drugs). The doctor's written order must accompany the non-prescription medicine and include your child's name and birth date;
- All prescription medication must be brought to school in the original package or an appropriately labeled container with your child's name, prescription number, name of medication, dosage and how it should be administered on the package;
- Over-the-counter medications or home remedies should be brought in with the manufacturer's original label and the ingredients listed, and the child's name on the container.

A signed **Medication Release Form** for any medication to be administered to a child during school hours must be on file in the office. **The school staff will not administer any medication without this signed authorization.** Forms are available in the office.

Parents are responsible for notifying the school of their child's illness. Staff members should find out from the parents the illness from which the student suffers. If the student is ill with anything other than the common cold or flu, the Office Manager should be notified. The following list delineates diseases for which the affected staff and families must be notified:

- Strep throat
- Chicken pox
- Non-allergy-related conjunctivitis
- Fifth's disease
- Foot, hand and mouth disease

## **Policy on Medical Cannabis**

In accordance with Illinois state statute, students may be administered medical cannabis infused products under the following conditions:

- The student is a qualifying patient under the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program Act with a registry identification card. The card must be presented to the school and a copy will be placed in the student's health file.
- The parent/guardian or other designated caregiver must administer the medical cannabis infused product. The parent/guardian or other designated caregiver must have a registry identification card. The card must be presented to the school and a copy will be placed in the student's health file.
- School personnel will not administer the medical cannabis infused product.
- After administering the medical cannabis infused product, the parent/guardian or other designated caregiver must remove the product from the school premises or school bus. The medical cannabis infused product will not be stored on school grounds.

Medical cannabis infused products are foods, oils, ointments, or other products containing usable cannabis that are not smoked.

School officials shall not permit the administration of medical cannabis infused products in a manner that the school official believes would create a disruption to the educational environment or would cause exposure of the product to other students.

A student will not be subject to discipline related to the administration of a medical cannabis infused product in conformance with this policy. No student will be denied admission solely because the student requires the administration of a medical cannabis infused product.

Any request to administer a medical cannabis infused product to a student at school or on the school bus must be in writing and directed to the Head of School.

## **COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS – *Please Read Carefully***

*Will be updated June 2022 – For most recent news, refer to your Weekly Memo COVID*

policies and procedures for staff and children to address serious illnesses, contagious diseases and reportable diseases in conformance with regulations and recommendations are set by the Illinois Department of Public Health's Division of Communicable Disease Control.

### *Recommendations and Preventative Measures*

Preventative Actions for the introduction of respiratory germs INTO Alcuin:

- Post signs outside the entrance restricting entry to anyone with symptoms of illness/respiratory infection.
- Alcuin staff will receive a daily temperature check and health screening before entering the facility at the beginning of their reported work period and maintain records of monitoring.

- Ensure sick leave policies allow employees to stay home if they have symptoms of respiratory infection.
- Monitor children daily for signs/symptoms of COVID-19.
- Exclude any staff or child with symptoms of COVID-19 from the camp setting.
- Each camp group will utilize a different location for drop-off and pick-up to avoid overcrowding of children and parents/guardians in confined spaces.
- Limit parents/guardians to one per child during drop-off and pick-up.
- No outside visitors should be allowed in the camp for activities, regardless of their clearance. However, this does not apply to maintenance/repair workers. For these persons, a log shall be maintained including date/time, name, phone number/cell number, and email. Any maintenance/repair workers will be asked to socially distance to the greatest extent possible and will in all cases be kept apart from the children.
- Alcuin will inform the Oak Park Health Department of COVID-19 cases reported in our program and will stay informed of local developments.

*Preventative Actions for the spread of respiratory germs WITHIN Alcuin:*

- Promptly isolate any staff or child with symptoms of COVID-19, including the use of a procedure mask (as tolerated by children).
  - If the child cannot tolerate a face mask, the staff assigned to that child should wear the facemask.
  - Limit the staff to 1:1 care for children who have been isolated.
  - Follow Alcuin procedures on notifying parents/guardians.
  - Educate parents/guardians on contacting their family physician.
  - Clean/disinfect area after the child leaves.
- Alcuin students will remain with the same lead teacher, assistant, and classmates. The classes will not intermingle.
- Signs will be posted throughout Alcuin describing ways to prevent the spread of germs.
- Hand washing among staff and children will be monitored and enforced. Alcuin staff will clean their hands according to CDC guidelines, including before and after contact with members, and after contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment.
- Hand washing is required every hour when gloves are not in usage;
- Avoid shaking hands as a social greeting.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available both inside and outside of each room.
- Healthy hygiene as is age-appropriate (covering coughs/sneezes, disposing of tissues, handwashing, keep fingers away from eyes, nose, and mouth) will be taught.
- Tissues will be available and any sink will be well-stocked with soap and paper towels for handwashing.
- Trash cans will be positioned for easier discarding of tissues and paper towels for staff and children.
- Intense daily cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched items, including doorknobs, toys, phones, keyboards, mice, and other items identified as frequently handled. Alcuin staff will follow a strict cleaning schedule based on CDC and IDPH guidelines.
- Increased ventilation will be provided by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning.

In the event that an Alcuin employee, student, or parent becomes ill, the following steps must be taken in accordance with CDC and IDPH guidelines. Upon learning of a COVID-19 case in someone who has been at Alcuin, immediately notify IDPH and the Oak Park Health Department. They will help Alcuin administrators determine a course of action for the camp which may include:

- Dismiss children and most staff for a minimum of 2-5 days.
  - This initial short-term dismissal allows time for the local health department to assess the current COVID-19 situation and to work with Alcuin administrators to determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19.
  - This also allows for a thorough cleaning and disinfection of Alcuin.
    - Close off areas used by the individual(s) with COVID-19 and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
    - Use a cleaning and disinfection product that is effective against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and use according to the product label instructions.
    - The local health department will provide Alcuin guidance in the development of messaging to communicate with parents/guardians and staff about the temporary closure of the facility and potential COVID-19 exposures.
- Local health department recommendations for the duration of Alcuin’s camp will be made on a case-by-case basis using the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the specific cases in the community.

In the event a parent/guardian or another household member of Alcuin is diagnosed with COVID-19 and has been told to isolate, the individual in isolation cannot enter Alcuin for any reason. They must utilize an emergency contact authorized by the parent to come pick up the child. If the child has been in close contact with the individual with COVID-19 in the 14 days prior to the household member’s symptom onset, the child is considered a contact and cannot return to Alcuin for the duration of the child’s quarantine period (14 days after the last exposure to the individual with COVID-19).

Staff members who are contacts to COVID-19 cases are to be quarantined. If an Alcuin staff member has been exposed to the virus and has self-quarantined but has not tested positive, the individual must not report to work during the quarantine period (usually 14 days after exposure). Alcuin may continue to operate unless notified otherwise by the local health department or IDPH.

In order to maintain the safety of children and staff:

- Alcuin shall limit all non-essential visitors to the camp.
- Alcuin shall supply personal protective equipment (PPE), including, but not limited to, face masks or face shields and gloves for all staff;
- Staff shall wear a mask or face shield at all times when indoors;
- Non-permeable gloves shall be worn while serving food, diaper changing and/or dealing with wounds. Frequent hand washing is required when gloves are not in usage;
- Children, when tolerable, shall wear a face mask when arriving at and leaving Alcuin, when in hallways, and throughout the day, except when napping, playing outdoors, or eating.
- Families must immediately notify Alcuin if someone in the house tests positive or if the child has been in close contact with a positive case of COVID-19.

### *Hand Washing*

In accordance with DCFS section 407.320, staff and children must wash hands and follow a specific handwashing procedure. Staff is required to assist children not able to wash their hands independently. The COVID-19 emergency demands a continued vigilance in adhering to these guidelines, in addition to the following:

- Employees shall clean their hands according to CDC guidelines, including before and after contact with individuals, and after contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment; and;
- Hand washing is required every hour when gloves are not in usage;
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer shall be placed in every room and at the entrance to every classroom. Hand sanitizer is not an acceptable substitute for soap and running water.

#### *Outdoor Play Space Safety*

Alcuin will ensure a safe outdoor space for children, staff and visitors. This includes, but is not limited to:

- playground space used during Phase III and Phase IV shall be used for one classroom at a time; and
- to the extent possible each group should utilize classroom assigned toys.

#### **Outdoor Activities**

All children who stay for lunch will go outside for outdoor activities. On bitterly cold days, we check with the weather bureau and make a decision about indoor versus outdoor recess. If your child is well enough to come to school, expect that outdoor activity will be a part of the child's day. We cannot accommodate requests to keep children inside during recess time, as there are no adults available to supervise them. Please be sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather outdoors. We will go out on cold days unless the wind-chill temperature reaches zero degrees.

## **Security**

All parents, guests, and visitors are required to report to the school office when entering the building. To maintain safety and security, the school staff must know who is in the building at all times. To enter the building, ring the bell at the Oak Park entrance and identify yourself. When the door is buzzed open, please come directly to the office to sign in. Please do not hold the door open for people that you do not know well to enter the building. Parents who regularly bring or pick up children from Day House may go directly to the Day House classroom, everyone else must come to the office.

## **PARENT COMMUNICATION**

### **Observing**

Observing your child at work is an excellent way to learn about the Montessori method and about your child's social and academic development. Parents are welcome to observe classes from October through the first week in May by scheduling an appointment through the office. Observations are scheduled between 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Please arrive by 8:50 a.m. in order to observe as much of the morning work cycle as possible. You are encouraged to observe often during the school year to gain a broader picture of your child's progress. Observations for other portions of the day are scheduled by request and through confirmation with the classroom teacher.

When you come to observe, please stop at the office first to sign in and to obtain the observation guidelines and materials. Observations are for adults only and are silent. This is not a time to work with your child in the classroom. If your child or other children engage you in conversation, remind them you are doing your own work and you need to be silent. Before you leave, complete the observation form and return it to the office. Your child's teacher will call you after your visit to discuss your observations. Observations are limited to one adult per class per morning.

### **Communication with the Teacher**

A line of communication between you and your child's teacher is always open.

### **Weekly Memo**

The *Weekly Memo* is sent to all families electronically every Thursday or Friday. Please look for this important communication and check with the office if you do not receive one. Submissions for the Weekly Memo announcements section should be received no later than noon on Tuesdays.

### **Parent Conferences**

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year during November and March. Parents are required to attend these two conferences. Prior to the conferences, you will receive an appointment schedule to indicate your preferred conference date and time. We try to schedule appointments to accommodate parents' preferences and so that parents with multiple children enrolled have adjacent appointment times. You are notified in advance of your conference schedule. Conferences are for parents and teachers only; please make other arrangements for your child during the conference. In addition to the November and March conferences, you may request for a conference at any time by calling the office or sending a message to the teacher.



## **Montessori Education Meetings**

Orientation meetings are scheduled at the beginning of each school year. *Please check the calendar for the dates of these and other important school meetings.* These meetings are the first step in forming a partnership between the family and school. We request parents attend Parent Education functions throughout the year, not only to support and understand the Montessori method and the work of the faculty, but also to build community. Check the calendar and Weekly Memo for scheduled events. Parenting classes may also be available on select years.

## **The Montessori Journey**

*Currently on pause due to the pandemic*

Alcuin will host a Montessori Journey yearly for all new parents and interested returning parents. The journey is scheduled on a Saturday before school begins. As a participant, you will be invited to journey through the prepared environments of Montessori. Lessons will be given at each level, and you will have the opportunity to work at each level. See the school calendar for dates and times.

## **Student Records**

Alcuin Montessori School maintains student records based upon current federal and state laws, including attendance records, health records, and academic documentation.

## **Religion**

The environment and curriculum is consistent with the spiritual needs of all children. Alcuin is not affiliated with any particular religion.

## **Alcuin Parent Communication Policy**

For general communication, room parent fliers or any other paper or email communication: Please note that the Executive Director must see and approve any materials (hard copy or electronic) before it is distributed.

The purpose of this communication policy is to identify how the school can answer questions or address concerns that occur over the course of the school year. The most effective way to address them is to handle them at the level at which they occur. If the issue or question involves your child, contact your child's teacher. The teacher will either address your concern, or if necessary, refer you to other resources. If this effort proves unsuccessful, please contact the Executive Director.

If you have questions or concerns regarding billing or tuition payments, please contact the Business Manager who will either address your concerns or refer you to other resources. If this effort proves unsuccessful, please contact the Executive Director.

If you have questions or concerns regarding volunteer opportunities or work on a specific committee, please contact the chairman of the Parent Volunteer Program or the head of a specific committee. Call the front office for relevant contact information.

If, after you have gone through this process, you believe you have a legitimate grievance that has not been addressed satisfactorily, please contact the Director's Evaluation and Support Committee (DESC). The Board has charged DESC with handling all matters involving the guidance, direction and performance of the Executive Director.

Alcuin's procedure for contacting DESC is as follows:

- Submit a signed, written summary of the problem to the chairperson of DESC. The statement should include specific facts, names, dates and a statement explaining your position.
- The DESC chairperson will investigate and study the problem and speak with the parent. At a meeting of the committee the members will determine the action, if any, should be taken.

Once the matter has been reviewed, the DESC chairperson will contact you to advise how the matter is being handled. The matter will be handled confidentially and will not be discussed with others not directly involved in the issue. The DESC committee's decision stands, as there is no appeal process beyond this.

### **HONOR BULLYING, AND DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Alcuin Montessori promotes tolerance and acceptance throughout our school and provides a safe space as a support network for all. We will create an environment in which it is safe for people to express themselves and their individuality without consequence or judgment. We hope to both educate and cultivate an attitude towards others marked by a generosity of spirit and acceptance and welcome all students and families to our community.

This policy was approved on September 13, 2021.

#### **The purpose of this policy is to:**

(1) foster an educational environment that is safe, welcoming, and free from stigma and discrimination for all students and staff members regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

(2) facilitate compliance with local, state and federal laws concerning bullying, harassment, privacy, and discrimination.

(3) ensure that all students and staff members have the opportunity to safely experience and express themselves and live authentically without being bullied, harassed, or discriminated against.

(4) implement straight-forward rules that the students will follow about bullying:

- We will not bully others
- We will try to help students who are bullied
- We will make it a point to include students who are easily left out
- If we know someone is being bullied, we will tell an adult at the school and an adult at home.

(5) Ensure that students, parents, and guardians are engaged in this policy and active in its enforcement.

There should be no end date for bullying prevention activities. Bully prevention should be woven into the entire school community. The Alcuin Honor, Bullying and Discipline policy aligns with the other policies of the school.

## **Our Honor and Discipline System**

At Alcuin, our honor and discipline system is based on accountability and natural consequences. We pursue a goal of self-discipline for children through lessons in grace and courtesy, peace-making, and guided conflict resolution. From the Infant and Toddler program all the way up through Middle School, each teacher is committed to building upon the work done in the class before them. In Infant and Toddler, honor and discipline starts with personal responsibility, as a child learns to walk, to move, and to carry objects by themselves. Their independent exploration creates natural situations where trial and error teach them to self-correct. The Infant and Toddler teachers prepare the classrooms to allow for these instances to naturally occur. In the Primary level, children learn cause and effect. For example, if a child runs with water and spills it, they will be asked to clean it up. They will also learn through their actions that they should not run in the classroom, therefore taking accountability. In Primary, the role of the teacher is to help the child identify a positive behavior as opposed to a negative behavior. This entails finding the solution, whether it is cleaning up a mess or apologizing for an argument with a peer.

In Elementary, children take this a step further in terms of taking accountability for their actions by having more personal responsibility with books and cubbies to care for and maintain. Children have classroom jobs to help raise awareness of the needs of the environment and taking care of their space. They also have jobs such as mediator, which is a position that facilitates and mediates peace talks.

As part of our Peace Education curriculum, which is designed to go hand-in-hand with personal accountability, the children participate in and lead a variety of team-building activities and peace talks. These activities promote community building, which, in turn, allows the children to feel more comfortable with honesty, taking responsibility for their actions, and helping hold each other to the appropriate behavioral standards. Community building and the support offered by both teachers and peers allows for mistakes to be met with support and encouragement to find the right path, as opposed to shaming and punishing.

In Senior Elementary, when tattling is less developmentally common, children are strongly encouraged to take charge of solving social disputes independently by inviting friends for peace talks or mediating peace talks for a friend without teacher involvement. The use of a peace rock (also used in lower levels) creates opportunities for each student, as well as the teacher, to have equal turns for talking and being heard. Through these methods, the teachers are furthermore fostering independence, awareness, and responsibility.

In Middle School, daily community meetings are held during which students are encouraged to bring up issues and to problem-solve as a group. Children often do the work of social negotiation independently, but when needed a teacher will facilitate conversation between students who are having a problem. The focus is always on identifying personal needs and preferences and negotiating shared social space so that everyone's needs are met, as opposed to assigning blame or punishment.

In terms of accountability, natural consequences are based directly on the specific situation. Both teacher and child work together to come up with a reasonable, logical solution to the problem at hand. The teacher guides the child's activities by limiting freedom to socialize, to work with partners, or to select an activity or work area when needed. When the child consistently shows appropriate behavior, they regain independence and freedom. When a child

does not respond cooperatively to these procedures, the child is removed from the group or activity. The child may be assigned a work area, required to stay next to the teacher or, if needed, asked to visit the office for a period of time. The teacher will call the parent to discuss supportive options when necessary.

Cyberbullying is taken just as seriously as physical bullying and will not be tolerated at any level.

### **What Constitutes Bullying**

Bullying is an intentional aggressive behavior that involves an imbalance of power or strength. It is often repeated over time. Bullying can be written verbal, or physical act that a student exhibits toward another particular student. This behavior causes mental or physical harm that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for the other student. Additionally, bullying is contrary to Illinois State law and the policy of the school district within which Alcuin resides.

Please note that "Bullying" includes "cyber-bullying" and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- (1) Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
- (2) Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
- (3) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
- (4) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. "Cyber-bullying" includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section. "Cyber-bullying" also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of the non-sectarian nonpublic school and is consistent with subsection (a-5) of this Section [free exercise of religion].

Nothing in this Section is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

Examples of bullying conduct include:

- Physical violence and/or attacks
- Threats, taunts, and intimidation through words and/or gestures
- Extortion, damage or stealing of money and/or possessions
- Exclusion from peer groups or spreading rumors
- Acts of cyberbullying:
  - o Posting slurs, gossip, or rumors on website or blogs where students congregate
  - o Sending abusive or threatening instant messages
  - o Taking embarrassing photos of students and posting them online
  - o Excluding others from an online group by falsely reporting them for inappropriate language to internet service providers

Bullying and cyberbullying may also include:

- Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
- Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
- Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance;
- Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

### **Behavior and Discipline Procedures and Rules to Create a Safe and Welcoming School Environment**

Alcuin Montessori School pursues a goal of self-discipline for children through lessons in Grace & Courtesy, peace-making and guided respectful social communication. Teachers role play scenarios with the children, identify situations in which skills can be applied and guide the children toward the successful use of these attributes. We provide children with appropriate and enriching activities, anticipating that children who are engaged in successful work will be more likely to develop responsible behavior.

When inappropriate behavior occurs, the teacher redirects the child to engaging, appropriate activities. If a behavior persists, the teacher guides the child's activities by limiting freedom to socialize, to work with partners and/or to select an activity or work area. When the child consistently shows appropriate behavior, he regains independence and freedom.

When a child does not respond cooperatively to these procedures, the child is removed from the group, activity, or peers. The child may be assigned a work area, required to stay next to the teacher or, if needed, asked to visit the office for a period of time. The teacher will call the parent to discuss supportive options.

If a child does not respond cooperatively to the second stage process, the staff arranges with the parents for the child to be taken home. Parents may be called to pick-up the child immediately if:

- e) the child bites another person,

- f) the child intentionally and seriously hurts another person,
- g) the child's tantrum is uncontrollable and prolonged, and/or
- h) the child persists in using inappropriate language.

Alcuin sets behavior standards and disciplinary policy based upon the principle that a person's independence and freedom are the result of responsible and self-controlled behavior. All persons and things are to be treated respectfully and courteously, and the needs and good of the whole community. Our goal is for independence with responsibility, and it is the partnership between families and administration that supports these values and makes them possible. The Executive Director of the school reserves the right to dismiss a child or family from the school at any time for any reason.

Additionally, we expect the children to follow our Behavior and Discipline Procedures and Rules:

1. Respect the people around you by:

- Accepting people for who they are and respecting differences
- Giving them personal space
- Listening when others are speaking or presenting
- Respecting their personal space and items
- Resolving conflicts in a respectful way
- Utilizing empathy in an attempt to see other perspectives

2. Respect the environment by:

- Treating the materials and classroom objects with care
- Taking seriously the job of cleaning the classroom each day
- Saving loud and rowdy behavior for appropriate times

3. Respect yourself by:

- Taking your coursework and learning seriously
- Being safe – stay with Alcuin teachers or parents unless you have made specific alternative arrangements with them
- Asking for things you need from your peers and teachers
- Abiding by the dress code, technology, behavior, and computer guidelines

### **Technology and Internet Usage**

Alcuin Montessori School uses computers to teach the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that students will need as successful and responsible members in the community and as lifelong learners. The school expects those who use the computers to do so in a way that is consistent with Alcuin Montessori School's educational mission and this policy.

Since electronic media change constantly and rapidly, as does the "netiquette" among users, this policy cannot lay down rules to cover every possible situation. Instead, this policy expresses the School's philosophy and sets forth general guidelines to be applied to all users, whether they are students, faculty/staff members, volunteers, or other guests.

Computer and internet use is encouraged for work and research purposes. Computers may be used during independent work time and as needed in class. Non-academic internet and media use are not allowed. Game download is not allowed, and any inappropriate software will be removed. Browser history must be maintained. Music must be school appropriate (no explicit lyrics or content) and only played during non-academic times.

Cyberbullying is taken just as seriously as physical bullying and will not be tolerated at any level.

Cyberbullying may also include:

- Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
- Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
- Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
- Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

In both the real world and the virtual one, common principles apply. As a Montessori school, we advocate and require concern and respect for both persons and materials. Conscientious sharing of limited resources, offering each other space and time for uninterrupted work, attention to grace and courtesy both to peers and neighbors and to those in the wider world, and a careful balancing of society's needs and rules with our personal freedoms and responsibilities are also paramount. Our expectations are the same of the children whether on the computer or in person. Users need to demonstrate a sense of responsibility and may not abuse their privileges.

Students are expected to follow the below rules:

- Do not transmit personal information (home address or telephone number, your age or personal interests, personal photographs, credit card numbers) through email or non-secure websites.
- Any email should be written as if it were a public document that might be read by a third party: embarrassing or private emails can be forwarded or made public to others beyond the user's control.
- Report cyber bullying immediately. Do not erase any messages; they may be needed to take action against the offender. Online threats and insults intended to embarrass, harass, or terrify, even if they occur outside of school hours and off campus, have serious effects on the school community and will be treated as a significant offense.
- Prohibited software and sites: the use of sites that promote hate or violence, sites with adult content, or any other questionable material is prohibited on all school computers, without exception.
- The School has a limited amount of bandwidth for the transfer of information to and from the Internet. Unless specifically approved for a classroom project, access to streaming media (music, video, radio stations) is not permitted.
- Maintain a high standard of civility. No material containing offensive, profane, rude, inflammatory, threatening, violent, sexually explicit, harassing, abusive, or impolite language or images is to be created, viewed, or accessed. In the event that any such material is encountered accidentally, log off immediately and report the event to the classroom teacher and System Administrator.

### *Social Media*

The school may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information to gain access to the student's account or profile on a social networking website. However, the school may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's disciplinary policy; and, the school may require the student to share content in the course of such an investigation.

### **Dealing with Bullying: Reporting, Consequences as Rules**

The school procedures for promptly reporting bullying, including, but not limited to, identifying, and providing the school e-mail address (if applicable) and school telephone number for the staff person or persons responsible for receiving such reports and a procedure for anonymous reporting; however, this shall not be construed to permit formal disciplinary action solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The complaint manager is Gina Gleason, 708.366.1882 ext. 203 (ggleason@alcuin.org).

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the bullying policy includes procedures for promptly informing parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures. Examples of restorative measures may include: teaching students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, and teaching students to serve, build, and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities.

The bullying procedures for promptly investigating and addressing reports of bullying, including the following:

- (A) Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
- (B) Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- (C) Notifying the principal or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- (D) Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the principal or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

The school interventions that can be taken to address bullying, which may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.

School will consider consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying.



The school prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying and will determine appropriate consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.

The bullying prevention and response plan is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.

The bullying policy is posted on the school's existing internet website and is included in the student handbook, and, where applicable, posted where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted in the school, and is distributed annually to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

To assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the bullying policy, actions will include, but is not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. The non-sectarian nonpublic school may use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation must be made available on the Internet website of the school. If an Internet website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

The bullying policy is consistent with other school policies.

Bullying prevention should not be the sole responsibility of an administrator, teacher, or any single individual at school. To be most effective, bullying prevention require rules, training, policies, and activities. Should a child witness bullying or be a victim of bullying, they should promptly report the incident(s) to a teacher, administrator, assistant. The school's main line is 708.366.1882. The executive director's email is: ggleason@alcuin.org. And all teacher emails are first initial, lastname@alcuin.org.

Additionally:

- The school will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within ten (10) school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
- Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- Notifying the principal or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- Consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights and providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the school administrator or designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

Interventions include:

- school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.

Additionally:

- we will prohibit reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying and the consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.
- we will instill consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying.

Finally, should the victim of bullying require counseling, support services, or other programs, we will provide them with a list of resources in the area.

### **To Reduce Bullying**

To reduce bullying, it is important to change the climate and social norms of the school. It must become “uncool” to bully, “cool” to help students who are bullied, and normative for staff and students to notice when a child is bullied or left out. This requires the efforts of everyone the school environment---teachers, administrators, support and enrichment staff, as well as parents and students.

In-service training can help staff better understand the nature of bullying and its effects, how to respond if they observe bullying, and how to work with others at the school to help prevent bullying from occurring.

It is important to make clear that the school not only expects students not to bully, but we also expect them to be good citizens and not passive bystanders if they witness bullying. **Violations will be taken seriously.**

*Data used from the parent satisfaction survey, and the middle school survey, will be used in policy evaluation and necessary changes will be made accordingly.*

*The bullying policy is consistent with other school policies.*

## SUGGESTED READINGS

Suggestions for reading books by Dr. Maria Montessori

*The Absorbent Mind*

The Formation of Man

The Discovery of the Child

The Secret of Childhood

Education and Peace

Education for a New World

To Educate the Human Potential

The Child in the Family

The Child and The Church (Ed. E. M. Standing)

The Montessori Method (Intro. J. McV. Hunt)

The Advanced Montessori Method

Spontaneous Activity in Education

From Childhood to Adolescence

Books about Montessori

Maria Montessori, Her Life & Work - E. M. Standing

Montessori - A Modern Approach - Paula Polk-Lillard

More Than Sandpaper Letters: Montessori in the Home - Doma Petrutis

Other Recommended Books

*Montessori Talks to Parents* series - published by NAMTA

Between Parent & Child - Dr. Haim Ginott

Children the Challenge - Rudolf Dreikurs

The Endangered Mind - Dr. Jane Healy

How To Really Love Your Child - Dr. R. Campbell

How To Really Love Your Teenager - Dr. R. Campbell

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen - Faber & Mazlish

Positive Discipline - Jane Nelson

# Parent Handbook Acknowledgement of Receipt, Understanding and Waiver

## ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY RELATING TO ILLNESS

In conformity with all applicable laws and regulations, Alcuin Montessori School (“AMS”) has elected to resume operations to the extent possible in advance of the containment of SARS-CoV-2 (hereafter referred to as “COVID-19”). Although AMS has taken extensive precautionary measures and preventative steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the fact that COVID-19 is a microscopic pathogen means that AMS cannot guarantee that you (or subsequently those with whom you associate or interact) will not become infected with the virus.

By signing this waiver, you acknowledge the highly contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assume any and all risks associated with exposure to or infection by COVID-19 upon visiting or patronizing the services of AMS in any manner. You further acknowledge that exposure to or infection by COVID-19 may result in injury, illness, disability, or death to you or anyone with whom you subsequently associate. You also understand that the risk of becoming exposed to or infected by COVID-19 at AMS may arise from the actions, omissions, or negligence of yourself or others, including, but not limited to, AMS employees, other AMS patrons, independent contractors, third parties, or the friends, family members, or associates of any of these groups.

Notwithstanding these warnings, you voluntarily agree to assume any and all of the foregoing risks associated with exposure to or infection by COVID-19, and you hereby accept sole responsibility for any injury to yourself or to your successors and assigns for any illness, death, injury, disability, damage, loss, claim, liability, action, or expense of any kind that you or others experience or incur, directly or indirectly, in connection with visiting or patronizing AMS in any manner.

By signing this waiver, you hereby agree – knowingly, voluntarily, and without reservation of any kind – to forever release, discharge, covenant not to sue, and hold harmless AMS and its officers, directors, employees, shareholders, agents, representatives, predecessors, successors, parents, subsidiaries, or affiliates from any legal claim or cause of action of any kind – whether known or unknown – which may arise as the result of actions, omissions, or negligence on the part of AMS that leads to exposure to or infection by COVID-19. Your release of such claims applies to all matters that are in any way related to exposure to or infection by COVID-19, whether sounding in contract, statute, tort, or any other legal theory. Your release also applies whether COVID-19 exposure or infection occurs before, during, or after visiting or patronizing AMS, and regardless of whether a COVID-19 infection can be traced back to an exposure on AMS premises or through contact with an AMS employee or agent.

I HAVE READ THE ABOVE WAIVER CAREFULLY, AND I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK GUIDANCE REGARDING ITS CONTENT FROM ANY OUTSIDE SOURCE OF MY CHOOSING. AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, I HAVE DECIDED TO ACCEPT THE TERMS PROPOSED BY AMS, AND TO KNOWINGLY, VOLUNTARILY, AND WITHOUT RESERVATION RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS AMS FROM ANY AND ALL LEGAL CLAIMS OR CAUSES OF ACTION AS DESCRIBED ABOVE. I ALSO AFFIRM THAT MY EXPRESS DESIRE TO VISIT AMS OR PATRONIZE AMS SERVICES WILL OPERATE AS ANY NECESSARY AND LEGALLY SUFFICIENT CONSIDERATION FOR THE RELEASES PROVIDED HEREIN.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

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