

Student & Family Handbook

What's Inside?

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EVENTS • OVERVIEW •
COMMUNICATION BETWEEN
HOME AND SCHOOL • FAMILY
INVOLVEMENT • PROGRAMS
AND HOURS • TUITION AND
FUNDING • SCHOOL POLICIES •
ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES

2017/18

99 Stafford Farm Hill, Brattleboro, VT 0301
802-257-0500
www.hilltopmontessori.org

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Hilltop Montessori School Calendar for 2017 - 2018

Here are some helpful acronyms we use at Hilltop Montessori School (HMS)

TP = Toddler Program, **CH** = Children's House, **LE** = Lower Elementary (gr 1 - 3), **UE** = Upper Elementary (gr 4 - 6), **MS** = Middle School (gr 7 - 8), **BC/AC** = Before / AfterCare

Refer to the website calendar for any additions or updates : www.hilltopmontessori.org

AUGUST

- 21 Lower School Work Party, 4-6pm
- 22 MS Work Party, 3-5pm
- 28 Student Conferences,
TD, CH & LE Visiting Day
- 29 **First Day of School**

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Family Picnic, 5-7pm
- 4 NO SCHOOL Labor Day
- 5-8 MS Upland - (3 nights)
- 7-8 UE Pinnacle Trip (1 night)
- 14 **Parent Meeting, CH & UE, 5:30-6:30pm, TP, LE, & MS 6:30-7:30pm**
- 21 Peace Day & Rosh Hashannah
(*NO ABSENCES COUNTED*)

OCTOBER

- 6 HALF DAY Grandparents and Special Friends Day
- 8 Harvest Festival
- 9 NO SCHOOL Fall Foliage,
No AC
- 12 **Parent Meeting, 6:30-8pm**
- 19 HALF DAY - Parent Conferences,
AC available
- 20 NO SCHOOL - Parent
Conferences, AC available
- 27– Nov 2 Annual Fund Week

NOVEMBER

- 3 NO SCHOOL Teacher In-Service,
No AC
- 16 **Parent Meeting 6:30-8 :30pm**
- 21 Stone Soup
- 22-24 Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER

- 5 **OPEN HOUSE 9-11am**
- 19-20 UE Museum
- 20 Cookie Swap
- 21- 29 December Break

JANUARY

- 1 New Year's
- 2 NO SCHOOL In-Service Day
- 3 Students Back
- 15 MLK Day NO SCHOOL
- 31 **OPEN HOUSE 9-11am**

FEBRUARY

- 3 **Parent Meeting**
- 19 - 23 February Break
- 26 In-Service Day

MARCH

- 15 HALF DAY - Parent Conferences,
AC available
- 16 NO SCHOOL - Parent
Conferences, AC available

APRIL

- 16 - 20 Spring Break
- 23 NO SCHOOL Teacher In-Service Day

MAY

- 1 **Parent Meeting 6 pm**
- 25 Grandparents & Special Friends,
Noon Dismissal for all
- 28 NO SCHOOL Memorial Day

JUNE

- 7 Final Day of School for Lower
School / Field Day & Bead
Ceremony
- 8 Final Day of School for Middle
School and **Graduation 6pm**
- 25 SummerFun begins

HILLTOP MONTESSORI SCHOOL TRADITIONS AND EVENTS

Specific dates and times are posted on the Hilltop website;
www.hilltopmontessori.org click on "Calendar" or the school calendar, page 6.

AUGUST

Community Work Party

The Community Work Party brings families, teachers and students together to prepare the classrooms and campus for the new school year. This is the perfect opportunity for new parents to meet the Hilltop Community and for returning families to reconnect after the summer. It's fun and makes a huge impact in a few short hours.

Parents paint, move furniture, garden and clean – whatever is needed – so please wear work clothes that can get messy. Food will be served and kids are invited to play outside (adult supervision provided).

SEPTEMBER

Elementary & Middle School Conferences for Families

Parents of students new to Elementary and Middle School meet with faculty before school starts to set goals for the year and get to know each other better. Elementary conferences include parents and teachers. Middle School conferences include parents, teachers and students.

Visiting Day for Students New to the Toddler, Children's House and Lower EI Programs New students in Toddler, Children's House and Lower EI (Grades 1, 2 & 3) are invited to stop by the classrooms and visit along with a parent to become familiar and secure with their new environment. Plan to spend 10 – 20 minutes in the room between 9 -10am.

Visiting Day for Returning Students in the Toddler Program and Children's House Returning Students are invited to stop in and spend 10 – 20 minutes in the room between 10:00 and 11:00 am. This time is with parents and is an optional, informal visit to become reacquainted.

Sixth Grade Hike Upper Elementary

As leaders in the UE classroom community, sixth graders gather before the start of school with a hike to begin the year.

The First Day of School

LE, UE and MS students attend for the full day 8:30 am – 3:00 pm or until their scheduled dismissal time or those staying for After Care.

TP and CH students attend a 3-day orientation period schedule with the last day of the week being the first full day.

For students enrolled in Before Care, the program begins the second week of school.

Bagel Lunch Wednesdays and Pizza Day Fridays

Students are invited (but not required) to sign up for Bagel Lunch served on Wednesdays or Pizza Lunch served on Fridays. Children’s House students staying beyond 12 noon on Wednesday or Friday can participate as well. Pizza and Bagel Lunches are billed for the year in October. Pizza is offered and coordinated by the school administration. The Bagel Lunch Program is implemented by Middle School students as one of their fundraising businesses. Lunch options and cost information will be sent home during the first week of school.

Hilltop Family Picnic

Join the Hilltop Montessori School community for an early evening picnic. Pack a blanket; bring a dish to share and utensils for your family. Connect with old friends and make some new ones.

Middle School Upland Odyssey

The Middle School students and faculty start the year with a community-building 4-day odyssey (Tuesday – Friday during the second week of school) to their outdoor classroom. Students will be cooking, living, and learning in the outdoor classroom as well as getting to know their new community. Students will return Friday to Hilltop in time for normal pick up at 3:00 pm.

Upper Elementary Pinnacle Trip

On Thursday of the second week of school, Upper Elementary students will leave directly after school and head to Tom Griffith’s house at the base of the Pinnacle, in Westminster West, VT. Students have dinner at Tom’s house and then head up the hill. After unpacking their sleeping bags in the three-sided cabin at the top of

the Pinnacle, students spend the evening looking at stars, playing games, and telling stories. Friday morning students head back down to Tom's house for a day of games and fun. Students will arrive back at Hilltop in time for normal pick up at 3:00 pm.

September Parent Meeting

The Year Ahead and Supporting Home to School Life

This is an evening meeting for all parents to learn about the upcoming year's curriculum, program, expectations of students, and ways to be involved in your child's education. Program times will be split so parents with children in more than one program level can attend both orientations or parents may split up and attend different program levels. Childcare will be provided — please reserve childcare at the front desk.

International Peace Day Celebration/September 21

Students and staff celebrate with others worldwide for a day of peace through song, readings, a peace dove procession, and a moment of silence. This school-wide celebration includes pairing of the "Peace Buddies," an endearing and community building Hilltop tradition.

Soccer Programs/LE, UE, MS/September through late October

Soccer will run from September through late October. Hilltop offers co-ed soccer skill building for Lower Elementary students and co-ed teams for UE and MS students who play games with other area schools. Whether your student is a beginner or advanced soccer player, they will surely enjoy this serious but fun sports opportunity.

After Care and After School Enrichment Programs (ASEP)

Programs for different age groups, Toddler, Children's House & Elementary will be extending hours of childcare and providing enriching activities, such as Circus Arts, Cooking, SSAT Prep, Spanish, and much more!

Hilltop Montessori School recognizes the need that families have to extend care after the regular 3 pm school day. We also appreciate the opportunity to enrich students' lives with new experiences and additional activities. To meet these needs and goals, we offer two overlapping programs during the after school period from 3 pm to 5 pm. Enrollment is required for both at re-enrollment or the start of the year.

All School Gathering (ASG)/9 - 9:20 am

Students and staff gather weekly beginning at the end of September for 15 – 20 minutes to share stories, learning, and events from the classrooms and sing with our wonderful music teacher, Jay Cook. Parents are invited to join in the audience for this gathering, and to have coffee with the Head of School beforehand.

Student and Classroom Photo Day

Class photos are taken late September or early October and families can purchase individual photos of their children and a class photo.

OCTOBER

The Annual Fund

A Hilltop Montessori School education is possible for many children because the school keeps the tuition as low as possible. In fact, even full tuition payments do not cover the total cost of educating each child. On average there is a \$1,000 gap between tuition and actual cost. This is common practice of independent schools: fundraising makes up the difference. Instead of the school asking each family to pay more tuition, families choose the tax-deductible contribution fitting their financial ability each year. 100% participation inspires the foundations who preferentially offer grants to independent schools most supported by their community. Making up 3% of the annual budget, the Annual Fund supports all facets of Hilltop. Every dime contributed to the Annual Fund serves Hilltop students by further enriching our strong programs, whether it is a new set of knobbed cylinder blocks for the Children's House, tickets to Sturbridge Village for Upper Elementary students, or computers for the Middle School.

Children's House Parent & Child Work Shares

Children are invited to bring their parents to school in the morning to show parents what they're working on and learning. Students are excited to have a parent's undivided attention and endorsement of the work they are doing at school. Since the classroom can get crowded we suggest one parent attend and alternate the dates.

Lower Elementary Parent Work Shares

Once a month at the end of the school day, Lower El parents are invited to come into the classroom for a work share. In the first half hour, children will show their

parents works that they are currently doing; the second half hour will be for parents, and will often feature a lesson on a Lower EI subject, with time for discussion afterwards. Complimentary childcare provided.

October Parent Meeting

Montessori Outcomes - Discussion with Alumni

High School students, college students and young professionals who attended Hilltop Montessori School, for middle school or starting in pre-school, return to share their Hilltop experiences. How did their education at HMS prepare them for their subsequent education and for life? Parents of our current students as well as prospective parents are encouraged to attend this event. Faculty will also be in attendance.

Parent Conferences / October and March

Parent conferences are scheduled for Thursday, an early release day, and Friday, a no school day. Upper Elementary and Middle School students attend the conference with their parents. Parents will be invited to sign up for conferences through an online system. Child Care will be provided for no charge during your conference time, and is available for a fee both the Thursday afternoon and all day Friday.

Teacher In-Service Days

In addition to days in August before school begins and a two-day retreat in June, staff and faculty have in-service days throughout the year usually on the Monday after holiday breaks or a full day on Friday (see the school calendar on the website for all dates). From preparing the classroom environment to professional development, these are important days for all of the faculty to be available and they help improve and enhance the academic programs at Hilltop.

Middle School Harvest Festival at the Putney School

This is a wonderful and important fundraising event for the Middle School trips. All families are invited to join us for the fabulous community event at The Putney School in Putney, VT.

Hilltop is one of many and our tent will be selling our famous homemade soups, baked goods, hot coffee, and cider.

Middle School Community Programs / Younger Mentoring / Elderly Companions / October - December

Seventh grade students work with Children’s House and Lower Elementary students one morning a week and eighth grade students form a relationship with an elder from one of the resident institutions in town during this six week program.

Grandparent/Special Friend Day/October & May

Twice a year we invite grandparents and special friends to visit in the classroom with their grandchild or special friend and attend an All School Sing. The first is held in the fall on the Friday before Columbus Day and the second on the Friday before Memorial Day weekend. Those traveling long distances can choose a time of year that works best for them.

November

November Parent Meeting

How to Understand and Reduce Anxiety in Children

with Paul Foxman, Ph.D.

Join us for an evening with psychologist and anxiety expert, Dr. Paul Foxman, PhD, Founder and Director of the Center for Anxiety Disorders in Vermont, and author of *The Worried Child* and *Dancing with Fear*.

- How, why and when anxiety develops in children
- The different forms of anxiety
- What parents can do to reduce stress and anxiety
- When and how to refer for professional help
- Managing children’s media exposure

Dr. Foxman will wrap up the evening with time to answer your questions.

Stone Soup

On the Tuesday before Thanksgiving break the entire student and faculty join to prepare the soup, set the tables and share in the fall harvest as one big family. We also encourage students to bring in non-perishable foods for a local food pantry.

December

Elementary Present Making Day (the last day before break):

Parents and friends are invited to help elementary students create hand-made crafts for gifts.

Upper Elementary Museum

Students present their projects in a museum format to family and friends.

JANUARY

Winter Sports Programs/January/February

The winter sports program takes place on Thursdays for six weeks during January and February. Kindergarten students have ice skating lessons at Living Memorial Park. Lower Elementary students may choose skating at the park, downhill skiing/snowboarding at Mt. Snow (starting at grade 2) or cross-country skiing or snowshoeing at the Brattleboro Outing Club (BOC). Upper Elementary and Middle School students have the option of cross-country skiing or snowshoeing at the Brattleboro Outing Club or downhill skiing/snowboarding at Mt. Snow. (see page 39 for details)

Financial Aid Applications due January 15

More information about our Financial Aid Program on page 44.

FEBRUARY

Montessori Night

The Parent Education Nights are designed to deepen parents' understanding of the Montessori Curriculum at all program levels. Whether it is Math, Language, Culture or some other focus of the curriculum, parents are able to visit different program levels to experience lessons provided by the head teachers. The evening culminates in a Q & A hosted by a panel of faculty from all programs.

All parents are strongly encouraged to attend this.

Re-enrollment

Re-enrollment information for the coming school year is sent to parents in

February. The deadline for re-enrollment of current students is mid-February. At this time all forms included in the enrollment packet as well as the annual \$500 tuition deposit, payment method and schedule, must be completed and returned to confirm enrollment. In order to be considered for a financial aid award, the re-enrollment contract(s) must be submitted on the due date. Should the financial aid decision be unacceptable to you, you may elect to cancel your contract and receive full refund of your tuition deposit.

Clay Class/Pottery for Children’s House Olders February and March

Clay class with Bonnie Stearns takes place one afternoon a week for 5 weeks at her local studio. Bonnie often integrates clay exploration with classroom studies, using pottery work to deepen children’s understanding of mammals, dinosaurs, Native American storytelling pieces, picture frames, or wind chimes.

Upper Elementary Poetry Performance

A presentation of poetry and music written and composed by Upper Elementary students.

MARCH

New Student Applications

Applications accepted starting October 1, the deadline for new students to complete the admissions process is March 1. Applications submitted after March 1 will be considered as space is available.

APRIL

Middle School River of Spirit or Civil Rights Odyssey (sometime between middle of April and the first week of May)

The Odyssey is a culmination of the Middle School’s extensive humanities study, *“What does it mean to be Human?”*

Upper Elementary Play

Each year Upper Elementary students write and produce an original play and share it with the entire Hilltop Community.

Young Children’s Art Exhibit

Art from the HMS Children’s House goes on display at The River Garden in downtown Brattleboro during the Month of the Young Child community event.

Eighth Grade Apprenticeships Program/April/May

Eighth graders spend one morning a week as an apprentice in a local business or service agency.

MAY

Hilltop Green Up Day / May

Hilltop participates in the long-standing Vermont tradition of Green Up Day on the first Friday of May each year. The Hilltop community takes this opportunity to clean up the garbage and debris that has accumulated on our campus and roadways. Students spend part of their school day caring for their outdoor classrooms by picking up trash, clearing trails, sweeping sidewalks, weeding garden beds, etc.

Middle School Performance

This performance is a student-created reflection of the curriculum’s concepts and ideas. Families from all programs are encouraged to attend and see the MS students in action.

Moving Up Night - What lies ahead for your child and yourself.

Whether your child is moving up to a new program or becoming an older member of the classroom community, the coming year holds with new roles and responsibilities. Join the faculty in each program for a presentation and discussion.

Student Moving Up Days / CH, LE, UE & MS/May

Moving Up Days are designed to help students prepare and transition to the next program level, from Toddler to Children’s House, Children’s House to Lower EI, Lower EI to Upper EI and Upper EI to Middle School. Students participate in various activities designed to help them become better acquainted with the new environment, older students and teachers. Dates and more details will be provided by classroom teachers.

Spring Grandparent / Special Friends Day

Twice a year we invite grandparents and special friends to visit in the classroom with their grandchild or special friend, attend an All School Sing and join us for lunch. The first is held in the fall and the second on the Friday before Memorial Day weekend. Those traveling long distances can choose a time of year that works best for them.

Upper Elementary Museum

Students present their projects in a museum format to family and friends.

Tag Sale

You know what they say, one person's junk is another person's treasure. This seems to be the theme of the Hilltop Multi-Family Tag Sale! Start saving those good quality items you no longer want or need. This event is evolving into a wonderful community party.

JUNE

Upper Elementary end of year field trip/Early June

To celebrate the end of the year, UE students enjoy a 3-day (2 overnights) camping trip.

Middle School Spring Upland Odyssey

The Middle School students and faculty end the year with a 3-day odyssey to their outdoor classroom campus. Students will be cooking, living and learning in the outdoor classroom.

Field Day and Bead Ceremony

Field Day is an all-school event with sack races, running races, obstacle courses, balloon toss and much more. After field day we all join together for the Moving Up Bead Ceremony where students welcome younger children into their program.

Hilltop Montessori Graduation/second Friday in June at 5:30 pm

All families are welcome to the Hilltop Montessori graduation ceremony. This event sums up each graduate's individual experience and is a wonderful community celebration. We are not only celebrating the great passage of the eighth graders but also the tremendous work and growth of all the students.

OVERVIEW

School Mission Statement

Hilltop Montessori School's mission is for students to attain responsible independence.

1. Students will come to awareness of their unique task in and responsibility to the care of self, community, and the Earth.
2. Students will come to realize the fullness of their intrinsic academic and creative potential.
3. Students will come to maturity and integrity according to their individual rhythm, pace, and style.

Core Themes

The Educational Partnership

Honest, open communication forms the basis of the educational partnership among teachers, students and parents. Members of the Hilltop community believe that it is the responsibility of each individual to be respectful and caring of each other and of the world in which we live.

The Montessori Curriculum

The Montessori curriculum fosters inquiry and exploration. Teachers committed to Montessori principles serve as role models and guides in a multi-disciplinary curriculum that requires initiative, problem solving skills and the personal integrity to work to one's fullest capacity.

The Prepared Environment

Each child is given the freedom and permission to learn directly from a thoughtfully prepared environment. The responsibility to make choices instills in students self-discipline, independence, and joy in the learning process.

The Collaborative Learning Community

In Hilltop's multi-age classrooms students are encouraged to develop, share, and acknowledge individual strengths and skills. Learning is a collaborative process in which students inspire, motivate, teach and, above all, respect each other.

The Potential of Each Individual

On an intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual level students are guided and supported as they strive toward fulfilling their individual potential. By respecting a child's unique voice and learning style, teachers foster self-confidence and a willingness to take risks. Student assessments measure the personal growth of each individual in the academic and social context.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Hilltop Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, or disability in the administration of its educational policies, admissions, scholarships and other school programs. The school affords each of its students its full range of social, academic, and athletic opportunities.

Accreditation and Affiliations

The school is an independent school as defined by Vermont statute pursuant to Title 16, Section 166(b) and is a member of NAMTA, (North American Montessori Teachers Association), AMS, (American Montessori Society) Full Member School, Montessori Schools of Massachusetts and Montessori Schools of New Hampshire.

Child Care Consumer Line 1-800-649-2642 a toll free number in Vermont to get information about child care provider license, accreditation or STARS rating. Website is <http://dcf.vermont.gov/childcare/parents/consumer-line>

School History

Hilltop Montessori School was founded in 1972 by a group of parents who wanted a quality pre-school experience for their children. Housed for the first three years on a hilltop at West Village Meeting House in West Brattleboro, it was aptly named Hilltop Nursery School Inc. The school opened with an enrollment of 20 pre-schoolers and a head teacher who happened to be Montessori trained. There was intense parental involvement on every level, from building shelves, cleaning bathrooms, making snack for the week, to subbing in the classroom and serving as administrative board members. Thirty years later some of the shelves in the primary classroom, built by the founding families, are still in use, and parental involvement remains essential to the success of the school. From that humble beginning the school has grown and expanded, adding a kindergarten in 1975

and an elementary program in 1984 and utilizing spaces throughout Brattleboro for its fledgling campuses.

By 1990, with the enrollment at 72, two classrooms were needed for what were grades 1-4 and by 1991 Hilltop had grown enough that it moved to buildings at the Austine School for the Deaf.

No sooner had Hilltop's first class of sixth graders graduated in the spring of 1993, than mumbling about continuing Hilltop through middle school began. In the fall of 1994 the Middle School opened its doors to 14 sixth and seventh graders, in the space at Center Congregational Church that Hilltop had vacated several years earlier. Finally, in the fall of 1997, the middle school moved into renovated space right upstairs from the rest of the school in Vermont Hall at Austine.

Though it had flourished, Hilltop Montessori School had never owned its own campus. For 16 years the school occupied 13,000 sf on two floors in a building owned by The Austine School for the Deaf. As good as the quarters had been, Hilltop's programmatic needs began to outgrow this space and the Board began searching for a permanent home.

After exploring over 30 sites throughout the Brattleboro area, Hilltop Montessori School found its field of dreams. To buy, build, and relocate took the concerted effort of every Hilltop supporter. It is an effort that assures that a Hilltop Montessori education will be available to many future generations of children. In 2009 after an intense period of planning, fundraising, and building, Hilltop Montessori School moved to the current location on Summit Circle.

With the start of the 2014 school year, the final phase of the new campus was completed with the addition of The Arts Barn: a music, theater and gymnasium space. This same year our youngest children were enrolled in the first year of Hilltop's Toddler Program, when a vision held for many years was fully realized.

Today there are 130 – 140 students enrolled in the Toddler through grade 8 programs. Hilltop is located at 99 Stafford Farm Hill, situated on 43 acres within a five minute drive of downtown Brattleboro and easy reach of the interstate.

The commitment to Montessori philosophy, originally a twist of fate, is very much at the heart of Hilltop's mission: to develop confident, independent learners who,

like their parents, value their involvement in the Hilltop community and recognize their responsibility to the community at large.

Family Goals and Expectations

Families play a huge role in the success of their children's educations. We appreciate your hard work and commitment to Hilltop, and in turn want parents/grandparents/guardians to understand what makes Hilltop unique and exceptional.

Hilltop hopes ...

- 1.** That families commit to learning as much as possible about the Montessori approach to be able to support their child in his or her day-to-day school life (see reading list, page 32).
- 2.** That families commit, as part of this education, to observing their child in class during workshares.
- 3.** That families sign up and attend scheduled conferences.
- 4.** That families attend informational/educational events clarifying expectations and deepening knowledge of Montessori philosophy.
- 5.** That families, as best they can, be willing to support the values and expectations their child experiences at school. This means that families have a value system that is enough in alignment with that of the school so that the child is not in conflict. [*With credit to Judi Orion, NAMTA Journal, Spring 2006]

Visiting and Observation

We welcome parents, relatives, and friends to visit the classroom to observe the children at work. To make your visit as pleasant and productive as possible for all, here are some guidelines to help bring the children's Montessori experience into clearer focus.

While visiting please...

Respect the quiet and order of the morning work cycle time. Talk quietly with your child about his/her work, yet be sure to allow your child to do the work on his/her own.

Focus your attention on observing your child and save visiting with other adults for outside of class time.

Observe how your child interacts in the classroom...

...with the materials

...with other children

...with the teachers

Let your child be the leader and show you how s/he begins the day, what s/he is working on and how s/he goes about making these independent choices.

Observation Windows: Hilltop strongly encourages parents to observe children in the classroom environment. As you focus your observation, it is important to be as non-distracting to your child as possible. Because the 3-6 year old children are very aware of parent visits, observing the Children's House classroom your child is NOT IN from the hallway is recommended, especially in the first half of the year.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

Good communication is an essential component of a positive school experience. Parents and teachers are partners in the education process. The school encourages parents to ask questions, express concerns, visit and volunteer. The teachers are always ready and eager to work with families to provide a clear understanding of a child's needs and progress, and to link the child to the learning environment.

Weekly School Newsletter

Classroom news will be sent via email on Fridays and published on the school website: <http://www.hilltopmontessori.org>. This is an **important source of information** about upcoming Hilltop and community events, and includes articles about the various programs.

Community flyers, announcements and events may be posted on the Community Bulletin Board in the front lobby. These items are often also included in the school newsletters.

Website / www.hilltopmontessori.org

Hilltop's website provides general information about the school, as well as a school calendar (click on "calendar"), weekly newsletters, and announcements of school closings. Classroom specific events will also be posted throughout the year.

School Calendar

The school's yearly calendar on page 6 of this handbook delineates the school year's basic structure. In addition the school provides the Public Access Calendar available on our website by going to www.hilltopmontessori.org and clicking on "calendar". The Public Access Calendar will be your source for all school-wide and classroom-specific events and school closings. It will be updated on a regular basis.

Communication with Teachers

Direct communication with teachers is often the best way to more fully understand the work of the child. Sometimes a quick question and answer, or story of the day, at pick-up or drop-off can be good communication, but often other means/times are better. At arrival and dismissal, teachers are responsible

for oversight of children and not able to give a conversation with a parent their full attention. Often an email or meeting at another time is the best form of communication. Please know that the Head of School has asked to be cc'ed on any correspondence of a significant nature regarding a curricular or student question or issue. In most cases, this will be a passing "cc" just to keep the Head of School informed about topics of interest to parents and teachers. In some cases, it is useful background or input to a topic that might require more attention. So please cc the Head of School yourself on such correspondence, or expect to be cc'ed in a reply from a teacher, as the Head of School needs to be included in all significant correspondence.

School Contact Information

Hilltop Montessori School
99 Stafford Farm Hill
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

**Hilltop's Phone System:
for emergencies, press "9"**

Main phone number:

802-257-0500

Fax number: 802-254-2671

Website:

www.hilltopmontessori.org

Proper Lines of Communication

Contact ...

Head of School / Tamara Mount / phone ext 2

tmount@hilltopmontessori.org

for matters related to...

school policy and procedures

school mission and goals

Board of Trustees

financial aid awards

Front Desk Person / Administrative Coordinator,

Rebecca Fontaine / phone ext 0 / frontdesk@hilltopmontessori.org

for matters related to...

attendance

After School Enrichment Programs

conference schedules

parent contact updates

school forms

student medications

school mail

student schedules

Business Manager / David Nordstrom / phone ext 4

busadmin@hilltopmontessori.org

for matters related to...

- tuition payment and billing
- after care and other charges
- expense reimbursements
- check requests

Admissions Director / Lauren Campbell / phone ext 1

lcampbell@hilltopmontessori.org

for matters related to...

- enrollment applications
- transfer of records
- financial aid applications
- admissions materials for a friend or family marketing and outreach

Development Director / Roselle Garro / phone ext 3

rgarro@hilltopmontessori.org

for matters related to...

- fundraising events
- press and media
- donations

Facility Manager / Kegan Refalo / phone ext 8

krefalo@hilltopmontessori.org

for matters related to...

- facility rentals
- facility access

Before & After Care

contact the front desk for care requests or changes

Rebecca Fontaine / phone ext 0 or frontdesk@hilltopmontessori.org

before 4pm, after 4pm please contact Mariam or Jessica directly.

Toddler and Children's House Before & After Care Director /

Mariam Diallo phone ext 6 and by cell phone 802-275-6069

mdiallo@hilltopmontessori.org

Elementary After Care Director / Jessica Thomas / phone ext 7

and by cell phone 802-380-3395

Classroom Teachers / Program Directors

for matters related to...

- curriculum
- student progress
- classroom observation
- transition to the next level
- referral to specialists
- classroom events
- attendance issues
- high-school application process

For Classroom voicemail during school hours,

call the school at 257-0500,

when the system answers...**press 5 then:**

"1" for Children's House / Birch Room / cmatthews@hilltopmontessori.org

"2" for Children's House / Willow Room / jsellers@hilltopmontessori.org

"3" for Lower Elementary / kkjellberg@hilltopmontessori.org

"4" for Upper Elementary / tgriffith@hilltopmontessori.org

"5" for Middle School / pdedell@hilltopmontessori.org

"6" for Toddler Program / epennell@hilltopmontessori.org

"7" for Learning Specialist / wlynde@hilltopmontessori.org

Teachers and students will not be called to the phone during school hours. If you need to get a message to your child during the school day, please call the front desk and your message will be delivered. If your message needs immediate attention please contact the front desk, 257-0500 and press "0" or frontdesk@hilltopmontessori.org.

If you would like to schedule a time to talk with a teacher, please leave a message on the classroom voicemail or by e-mail. Messages are checked periodically and you can expect to hear back within a 24-hour period.

Administration & Teacher Contact Information

Toddler Program

Ellie Pennell (Director)
epennell@hilltopmontessori.org
802-558-1985

Amanda Rupard (Assistant)
arupard@hilltopmontessori.org
802-579-2078

Marco Yunga Tacuri (Assistant & After Care)
myunga@hilltopmontessori.org
802-490-8055

Children's House

Birch Room

Cheryl Matthews (Director)
cmatthews@hilltopmontessori.org
802-257-4592

Serina Keppel (Assistant & Early Education Partnership Program Director)
skeppel@hilltopmontessori.org
802-579-6470

Willow Room

Jonathan Sellers (Director)
jsellers@hilltopmontessori.org
609-468-0756

Rebecca Baiser (Assistant)
rbaiser@hilltopmontessori.org
415-722-8279

After Care

Mariam Diallo (CH Assistant & Before / After Care Program Director)
mdiallo@hilltopmontessori.org
802-275-6069

Emily "Emy" Blohm

(After Care Assistant)
eblohm@hilltopmontessori.org
518-618-5274

Madeline "Maddy" Johnson

(After Care Assistant)
mjohnson@hilltopmontessori.org
207-412-3237

Jessica Thomas (Elementary After Care) jthomas@hilltopmontessori.org
802-380-3395

Elementary Director

Dan Filler
dffiller@hilltopmontessori.org
413-727-5246

Lower Elementary

Kerstin Kjellberg
kkjellberg@hilltopmontessori.org
802-451-6167

Patrick Burke

pburke@hilltopmontessori.org
802-251-0303

Amelia Fontein

afontein@hilltopmontessori.org
802-282-2845

Upper Elementary

Tom Griffith

tgriffith@hilltopmontessori.org
802-387-5694

Jennifer Hed

jhed@hilltopmontessori.org
802-387-5041

Learning Specialist

Wendy Lynde

wlynde@hilltopmontessori.org
802-257-0944

Middle School

Paul Dedell (Director)

pdedell@hilltopmontessori.org
802-348-7735

Finn Campman

fcampman@hilltopmontessori.org
802-380-1479

Nora Gordon

ngordon@hilltopmontessori.org
802-536-5037

Becky Eisenhandler

beisenhandler@hilltopmontessori.org
203-824-3272

Music and Physical Education

Jay Cook (Music)

jcook@hilltopmontessori.org
802-275-7307

Mace Sebby

(Physical Education Director)
msebby@hilltopmontessori.org
802-380-8859

Administration

Tamara Mount

(Head of School)
tmount@hilltopmontessori.org
257-0500 **ext 2** or
802-246-7983

Rebecca Fontaine

(Administrative Coordinator)
frontdesk@hilltopmontessori.org
802-257-0500 **ext 0**

Lauren Campbell

(Admissions Director)
lcampbell@hilltopmontessori.org
257-0500 **ext 1** or
802-380-3890

Roselle Garro

(Development Director)
rgarro@hilltopmontessori.org
257-0500 **ext 3**

David Nordstrom

(Business Manager)
busadmin@hilltopmontessori.org
802-257-0500 **ext 4**

Kegan Refalo

(Facility Manager)
krefalo@hilltopmontessori.org
802-257-0500 **ext 8** or
cell 248-974-6475

Board of Trustees

The role of the Board of Trustees is to determine and oversee policies that support the mission of the school and to ensure the school's fiscal stability. This includes hiring and evaluation of the Head of School, appointing standing and ad hoc committees, overseeing facility use, fundraising and strategic planning. Equally important, Board members serve as ambassadors for the school community, help parents feel comfortable, and refer their concerns or questions to the proper channels.

Steve Iams, Board Chair, Leadership Team, steveniams@gmail.com

Martin Humfeldt, Incoming Board Chair, Leadership Team, Treasurer, martin.humfeldt@commonwealth-dairy.com

Rich Wolfe, Outgoing Board Chair, Leadership Team, richard.r.wolfe@gmail.com

Vanessa Long, Secretary, vanessalong4881@gmail.com

Members at Large

Marti Anderson / marti.r.anderson@gmail.com

John Barrengos / jbarrengos@putneyschool.org

Sandra T. Campbell / sandra.thomas.campbell@gmail.com

Peter Fayroian / pfayroian@nmhschool.org

Alix Fedoruk / alixf@mac.com

Rochelle Garfinkel / rochellegarfinkel@gmail.com

Sarah Grasso / grassosc@aol.com

Kim Lier / kim.lier@gmail.com

Travis C. Shine / Incoming Treasurer / travis.c.shine@ampf.com

School Closings or Cancellations

Hilltop follows the WSESU school closing policy for snow days.

Cancellation of school will be announced in the following locations:

1. local radio stations by 7:00 am
(WTSA 96.7FM, 1450 AM or WKVT 92.7 FM, 1490 AM).
2. posted on the date in the Public Access Calendar at our website, by going to www.hilltopmontessori.org and clicking on "calendar" and at www.sover.net by clicking on "School Closings".
3. An email will also be sent to all families and staff.

Other school functions will be cancelled in the same manner when necessary with as much notice as possible.

In the event of a two-hour delay, school will start at 10:30am and early morning care will be cancelled. In case of early closing of WSESU schools, all attempts will be made to keep the school open. The after school program is sometimes shortened or cancelled. Notifications will be sent by email. In the event of 5 or more snow and/or emergency days throughout the school year, these days will be made up at the end of the school year.

Emergency Plan

Hilltop is part of the Emergency Plan for the State of Vermont and the Brattleboro Emergency Operations Center. The plan will be implemented as directed by either office depending on the situation. In the event of an emergency, check the following places for information:

- Our answering service: 802-257-0500
- Our website: www.hilltopmontessori.org
- The primary source for information during an emergency will be the local radio stations (WTSA 96.7FM, 1450 AM or WKVT 92.7 FM, 1490 AM). Plans include Cancellation of School, Shelter-In-Place, Precautionary Transfer, and Evacuation
- Vermont State Information Hotline: 211

Hilltop is also part of the "Town of Brattleboro and Brattleboro Schools Emergency Response Plan." In developing this plan, Hilltop administrators have worked with local responders to ensure advance planning and coordination with all parties.

Parents need to supply the school with a three-day supply of any medication a student might need in case the school is directed to Shelter-In-Place, Precautionary Transfer, or Evacuate. Parents must provide the school with up-to-date contact information that the school may use in case of emergency.

Parent Conferences / Student Assessments

Parents of students who will be entering Lower EI, Upper EI and Middle School will have a family conference before school begins. Upper EI and Middle School students are included in the conferences with parents and teachers throughout the year.

Formal parent/family conferences are held twice yearly for all students. Conference days are marked on the school calendar and all efforts should be made to adhere to the schedule provided.

There is a written year-end assessment for a child's last year in the Children's House. Elementary and Middle School students will receive written assessments at the end of each semester.

Additional copies of this information may be requested by parents.

Parent Concerns

Parents are encouraged and expected to call, send a note or meet with teachers if they have concerns or questions. Often a 5-minute mini-conference can clear up misunderstandings about behavior, expectations and homework, or clarify a classroom routine. Please know that the Head of School has asked to be cc'ed on any correspondence of a significant nature regarding a curricular or student question or issue. In most cases, this will be a passing "cc" just to keep the Head of School informed about topics of interest to parents and teachers. In some cases, it is useful background or input to a topic that might require more attention. So please, cc the Head of School yourself on such correspondence, or

expect to be cc'ed in a reply from a teacher, as the Head of School needs to be included in all significant correspondence.

Parents are always invited to set up a formal conference with the classroom teachers if they have more serious concerns about their child. If the issue is not resolved, parents should express their concerns to the Head of School. Usually a joint conference with the teachers and Head of School will be scheduled at that time to work towards resolution.

Parent Grievance Policy

- Grievances with a teacher or program should be directed to the Teacher and Program Director (who shall keep the Head of School informed).
- Grievances with a Program Director should be directed to the Program Director and the Head of School.
- Grievances with the Head of School should be directed to the Head of School and the Board President.

The Head of School shall keep the Board President fully informed as to any significant grievances brought to the Head of School's attention.

1. Grievances should be resolved, if at all possible, by the parties involved.
2. If unresolved, however, the Head of School shall have full authority to finally resolve grievances concerning Teachers, Program Directors or Programs.
3. The Leadership Team of the Board of Trustees (current chair, incoming chair, and outgoing chair) will review any grievance with the Head of School or any unresolved grievance referred to the Board by the Head of School and resolve the same or make appropriate recommendations to the Board.
4. A Grievant may appear in person, with the Head of School in attendance, before the Leadership Team.
5. The Leadership Team will take the grievance into consideration and will later contact the party with their recommendation or action if any.

6. If the Leadership Team recommends full board deliberation, the Board will take the grievance under consideration.
7. The Grievant may then present their grievance to the full Board.
8. The Board will take the grievance under consideration and will later contact the party with their recommendation or action if any.

Parent Reading List

The Hilltop Montessori School offers parents a lending library of education books and articles for loan. All books must be signed out at the front desk and returned.

Recommended reading on Montessori Education

Lillard, Angeline Stoll (2005). *Montessori the Science Behind the Genius*

Lillard, Paula P. (1996). *Montessori Today*

Lillard, Paula P.; Jessen, Lynn L. (2003). *Montessori from the Start*

Montessori, Maria. (1948). *To Educate the Human Potential*

Montessori, Maria. (1949). *The Absorbent Mind*

Montessori, Maria. (1973). *From Childhood to Adolescence*

Schmidt, Maren. (2009). *Understanding Montessori: A Guide for Parents*

Standing, E. M. (1957). *Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work*

Wolf, Aline D. (2009). *A Parents' Guide to the Montessori Classroom*

Useful Website:

The Michael Olaf Montessori Company: www.michaelolaf.com

Duffy, Michael. (2008). *Math Works: Montessori Math And The Developing Brain*
A book that gives parents an insight into the Montessori math materials. The benefits, how they affect the growth of the child's brain and how they prepare him for the future

Duffy, Michael & D'Neil. (2002) *Children of the Universe*

This first complete book on Cosmic Education explains Maria Montessori's overall plan for the elementary curriculum.

Duffy, Michael, and O'Neil. (2012) *Supporting Intrinsic Motivation in Montessori Students*

This latest book explains why self-motivation is so important for our students and

how the Montessori method at school and home helps to support independent learning.

Many of these books are described and can be ordered through the NAMTA website at <http://www.montessori-namta.org/NAMTA/geninfo/recommbooks.html>

Recommended Reading in Support of a Montessori Education

Faber, Adele, and Elaine Mazlish (2001). *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk*

Kohn, Alfie (2006). *Unconditional Parenting: Moving from Rewards and Punishment to Love*

Kohn, Alfie (1993) *Punished by Rewards*

Dweck, Carol (2006) *Mindset*

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Family involvement is necessary for Hilltop to succeed on every level: educationally, financially and, most importantly, as a model community for our children. That's why there is an expectation that all families be involved families. (We use 10 hours a year as a guideline—of course many of our families contribute much more.)

Families participate in everything from carpooling for field trips, working on the playground, weeding flower beds, to community activities and fundraising events.

Classroom Family Coordinators Family Coordinators help teachers find chaperones and drivers for field trips, coordinate volunteers for activities, and participate in all-school events. They are not expected to be the sole volunteers, but to help reach out to other families and oversee classroom events. Two families per classroom serve as family coordinators.

Program Events Families are asked to participate in community activities and in fundraising events. The support of families as volunteers and as fundraisers is a defining characteristic and ensures that Hilltop Montessori School is a lively, vibrant and stable community. Along with the commitment to enroll at Hilltop comes the implicit agreement that parents will take an active role in supporting the school community in one necessary form or another.

Other Ways to Contribute

Events Hosting events, setting up or preparing food and greeting guests are some of the roles needed to support the series of community events or parent education workshops that are offered throughout the school year.

Fundraising Parents are needed throughout the year to plan and coordinate the activities of yearly Hilltop fundraising events, such as the Annual Fund. These events involve a range of tasks from working on a decorating committee to soliciting food donations, for example. Please consider joining an event committee – it's fun and a wonderful way to help Hilltop. Contact Roselle in the Development Office for more information, rgarro@hilltopmontessori.org

Chaperones for Sports

Winter sports programs in January and February: Downhill Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Ice Skating, Coaching and refereeing after school team sports.

Building and Grounds We welcome families who are interested in gardening, carpentry, painting or other fix-it activities to maintain the health and growth of the school environment.

Fundraising

Giving The philanthropic spirit helps us preserve our tradition of excellence while ensuring a strong financial future for the school. For this reason, each family is expected to participate in fundraising. The level of giving is not as important as the commitment to giving. We value – and need – gifts and participation at all levels.

Annual Fund Week A Hilltop Montessori School education is possible for many children because the school keeps the tuition as low as possible. In fact, even full tuition payments do not cover the total cost of educating each child. On average there is a \$1,000 gap between tuition and actual cost. This is common practice of independent schools: fundraising makes up the difference. Instead of the school asking each family to pay more tuition, families choose the tax-deductible contribution fitting their financial ability each year. 100% participation inspires the foundations who preferentially offer grants to independent schools most supported by their community. Making up 3% of the annual budget, the Annual Fund supports all facets of Hilltop.

Every dime contributed to the Annual Fund serves Hilltop students by further enriching our strong programs, whether it is a new set of knobbed cylinder blocks for the Children’s House, tickets to Sturbridge Village for Upper Elementary students, or computers for the Middle School.

HILLTOP PROGRAMS AND HOURS

Program Overview

Toddler Program: 18 – 36 months, 5 half or full days, Hours: 8:30 – 11:30 am or 2:30 pm with After Care until 4:00, or 5:00 pm.

Children’s House Program: Ages 3 - 5

Ages 3 – 4, Hours: 8:30-11:45 am, with extended dismissal available to 2:45 pm with After Care until 4:00, or 5:00 pm. Children are in this program if they have turned 3 or 4 before September 1.

Kindergarten Hours: 8:30-2:45 pm, with extended dismissal available to 4:00 or 5:00 pm. To be eligible for kindergarten a child must be 5 before September 1.

Lower Elementary: Grades 1 - 3 Hours: 8:30-3:00 pm

Upper Elementary: Grades 4 - 6 Hours: 8:30-3:00 pm

Middle School: Grades 7 - 8 Hours: 8:30-3:00 pm

Morning drop off time for CH, LE, UE & MS is 8:15 - 8:30 am

Toddler drop off time is 8:30 - 8:45 am

Before/After Care and After School Programs

Hilltop Montessori School recognizes the need that families have to extend care before and after the regular 8:30 - 3 pm school day. We also appreciate the opportunity to enrich students’ lives with new experiences and additional activities. To meet these needs and goals, we offer two overlapping programs during the after school period from 3 pm to 5 pm.

Before/After Care – Toddler / Children’s House & Elementary

We offer Before Care, 7:40 - 8:15 am and After Care extending the regular school day at 3 pm until 4 or 5 pm, for Toddler, Children’s House and Elementary students.

What are the costs and how do I sign up? The After Care program is charged with a flat fee of \$250 per month, or hourly at \$10/hour or Drop-In Rate at \$15/hour.

What schedule options do I have? You may choose 3 – 4 pm or 3 – 5 pm. Your weekly schedule may include any weekday and we encourage consistent weekly schedules. All add-on times must be requested 24 hours in advance, must be confirmed by contacting the front desk in person or by email to

frontdesk@hilltopmontessori.org. Be aware that we may be full and unable to add your child to the After Care list.

Who can join? Only students enrolled in Hilltop Montessori School can participate in the Before & After Care Program.

Toddlers and Children's House After Care - These younger students will have After Care in the classroom or library for snack, followed by activities outdoors or in the gym. Snack will be provided for these students.

Children's House students will spend their time outside on the playground, or inside the Arts Barn doing age appropriate games and activities, including gymnastics and yoga. The toddlers will be able to continue in their own familiar toddler-sized space.

Elementary After Care - Lower and Upper Elementary students - These older students will meet outside or in the Arts Barn space. They will have a snack together that they have brought from home. (If signed up for After School Enrichment Programs, students will leave at 3:30 pm and go to their specific After School Enrichment Program.) Others will do gardening, hike trails, or be on the playground in good weather. They will also have the possibility of indoor crafts and games in the gymnasium.

Middle School Before and After School Agreement - Students are welcome to arrive as early as 8:00 am and stay after school to work until 4:00 pm. MS students arriving before 8:00 am or staying after 4:00 pm may need to wait in the front lobby of the main building when MS staff are not present.

After School Enrichment Programs (ASEP) age appropriate programs for all ages - After School Enrichment Programs provide activities for students in age appropriate programs. These programs include sports teams, foreign languages, and other enrichment activities offered by local experts. Offerings will change with the seasons and will aim to offer a variety of types of activities to different student age groups. Fall offerings will include soccer, cooking classes, Spanish, PSAT prep, and more.

When do these programs run? The specific programs will start at 3:30 pm, after a snack (provided for Toddlers and Children's House, brought from home for Elementary and Middle School) and a little down time with the After Care

students. The time from 3:00-3:30 pm will be covered by the program fee and will enable the programs to start with rested, well-fed participants! The specific programs will typically run from 3:30 to 4:30 pm.

Who can join? Any student can join in an age appropriate program. These classes are open to students from other schools too! The 3:30 pm start time enables additional community participation.

How will I be billed? ASEP have a specific program fee for each multi-week program which can be paid by check or billed.

When can I sign up and when do they start? All families will receive a form to sign up for ASEP the first week of school. The programs will start the second week of school.

After School Athletics / Elementary and Middle School

After school sports are offered seasonally through the school year. These programs are optional and there is a fee in addition to the school tuition.

Soccer takes place during September and October for LE, UE and MS students

Basketball is offered during the winter for UE and MS students

Ultimate Frisbee is offered during April and May for UE and MS students

SummerFUN

During five weeks in the summer, Hilltop is transformed into an exciting summer camp. Enrollment is open to the larger community. Information about SummerFun goes home in April and is available on the school website, www.hilltopmontessori.org.

Winter Sports Programs

Kindergarten, Elementary and Middle School

The winter sports program takes place on Thursdays for six weeks during January and February. Kindergarten students have ice skating lessons at Living Memorial Park. Lower Elementary students may choose skating at the park, downhill skiing/snowboarding at Mt. Snow (starting at grade 2) or cross-country skiing or snowshoeing at the Brattleboro Outing Club (BOC). Upper Elementary and Middle

School students have the option of cross-country skiing or snowshoeing at the Brattleboro Outing Club or downhill skiing/snowboarding at Mt. Snow.

New this year, Winter Sports Drivers/Chaperones will sign up using **SignUp.com**. We will use the school van, supplemented with parent drivers to Mt. Snow, reducing the cost of renting a big school bus. This will both reduce the cost of Mt. Snow Winter Sport option and will require more commitment from parent drivers. Parent involvement with Winter Sports is necessary in order for these programs to run, signing up early in the year helps us plan accordingly!

Fees for Winter Sports are included in tuition except for a premium for downhill skiing and snowboarding.

Detailed and updated information will be sent home before the programs begin.

Getting To and From School

Families must identify all persons responsible for pick-up on “**The Consent for Dismissal Form**” to be completed at the start of each year. Changes to those responsible for pick-up must be in writing. For their safety, students will not be released to anyone other than those listed in the Consent for Dismissal Book at the front desk unless we have been notified in writing.

For any adult who comes to Hilltop Montessori School to pick up a child, should that adult appear under the influence of drugs or alcohol or otherwise impaired to the degree that the Hilltop staff suspect they cannot drive safely, we will:

1. Tell the parent our concern, and ask them to arrange for someone else to come to pick up the child.
2. Call the other parent or adult contact for the child to be picked up.
3. If met with resistance, call 911 for assistance.

If You Are Picking Your Student Up Early:

1. Notify the front desk (ext 102) or leave a message at the front desk.
2. Meet your student in the lobby.
3. Sign him/her out in Early Release Book at the front desk.

If your student is coming in late for any reason, please let us know in advance by phone (phone ext “0”) or in the message book at the front desk.

If your student will not be in school for any reason, you must call the school (phone ext "0") or leave a message in the book at the front desk.

Morning Drop Off:

Late morning arrivals must check in at the front office.

If your child is sick please let the office know by 9:00 am.

Parents intending to leave Toddler, Children's House or Lower Elementary students before 8:15 am must be signed up for early morning care in advance.

Please notify the front desk of any changes in the day for your child (for example, who is picking up or early pick up).

Afternoon Dismissal (for full day students):

All parties, staff included, must strive to be punctual in the pickup process, as the art of dismissal here at Hilltop – from a time and motion and civility perspective – is completely dependent upon the community-at-large respecting one another's schedules and commitments and obligations.

Toddler Program release is at 11:15 - 11:30 am and 2:30 - 2:45 pm. Students will be ready for your arrival at the designated released times.

Children's House release is between 2:45 - 3 pm, also from the playground. Students picked up late, after 12 noon or 3pm will wait in the front lobby until the parent arrives.

All Pick Ups for Toddler and Children's House - We ask that you promptly leave the playground with your child at pick up. While we appreciate the camaraderie and community that hanging out on the playground brings, we need to keep the lines of supervision and responsibility clear.

Both **Elementary and Middle School** programs will be released at 3 pm for pick up in the circle. All parents, if not part of a carpool or picking up siblings in multiple programs, are asked to drive directly to the circle (waiting patiently in the queue as necessary) where students will be ready to be released into your care. **Please park in the parking lot when picking up students in carpools and siblings in multiple programs.** Elementary students picked up late, after 3:10 pm, will wait in the front lobby until the parent arrives.

For safety, non-carpool students will only be allowed to enter cars at the circle. Each student must check out with teacher on duty before departing. If a student is delayed for any reason, the teacher(s) on duty will provide an explanation and

direct you to park until the student arrives. **No pick up or drop off in front of Middle School – please use the circle at all times.**

The speed limit is 15 mph everywhere on campus and at all times.

- Please use caution at all intersections – particularly at the Middle School / Barn cross walk and around the Barn corner as you turn left to the parking lot.
- **Please park only in the parking lot;** this means no parking next to the middle school, along the tree line behind the barn, no parking in the circle at any time (it is a marked fire lane and the fire department checks regularly).
- No parking on the grass (particularly in the area between the middle school and the barn).

Driving and cell phones are a hazardous mix. Cell phones should not be used at all on campus during drop off and pickup, and an extra reminder is offered to not talk or text and drive.

Lastly, we encourage No Idle policy while waiting to pick up students.

THANK YOU for helping us to make this logistical challenge work.

TUITION AND FINANCIAL AID

Tuition rates are set on an annual basis. There is a \$500 non-refundable deposit required upon enrollment which goes towards the tuition and will be reflected in our payment schedule. The payment due each month or quarter is an installment on the annual amount and is not the tuition for that specific month. Prorated tuition charges will be calculated for students entering the school during the school year. **Tuition includes fees for a basic winter sports fee. All required fees are part of the tuition. An additional premium is charged for students who choose the downhill skiing or snowboarding at Mount Snow, lunch, Before and After Care programs or After School Enrichment Programs.**

Payment Plans

Tuition may be paid annually, semi-annually, quarterly or monthly and the method of payment includes direct payment, scheduled credit card payments or check according to the terms outlined in the financial contract. Checks should be made payable to Hilltop Montessori School, Inc.

Late fee

All payments are due on the first of the month, and there is a late payment fee of \$25.00 per child per program if payment is received after the 10th day of the month it is due. Payments are applied to outstanding balances before current charges. The school reserves the right to deny admission of the student to the facilities of the school if payments are overdue by more than 30 days.

Accounts Receivable Policy

Tuition payments are payable on those dates selected in the Enrollment Contract. If payments cannot be made according to the terms of the Enrollment Contract, families are expected to initiate communication with the Business Manager.

If the school and the parents are able to agree on a revised set of terms, in writing and signed by all parties, then those terms will replace the original terms and become part of the Enrollment Contract.

No credit or refund is provided for unused days, snow days or sick days.

Re-enrollment is dependent upon being in compliance with the terms of the current Enrollment Contract.

The school reserves the right to suspend or expel any student(s) for so long as any payment default continues and/or in the absence of a mutually acceptable revised Enrollment Contract.

Progress reports and transcripts will not be released while any payment default exists.

The exercise by the school of any of its remedies, as noted above or otherwise, shall not affect its right to exercise any other remedies, and does not change the payment obligations under the Financial Contract. Any decision by the school not to enforce a particular remedy does not mean that they have given up the right to exercise it later.

Withdrawal

If a child is withdrawn from the school at any time, the family is contractually responsible for the full year's tuition. A child new in the Children's House who is withdrawn or dismissed during the four-week trial period is responsible for the registration fee and pro-rated tuition and fees. In the event of school cancellation there is no refund for tuition or fees.

Financial Aid

At Hilltop Montessori School, we are always striving to increase all types of diversity within our student body, including economic. We recognize the sacrifices and prioritizing of education that many of our families need to do to make this educational experience and community available for their families. We also have several programs that we work with to coordinate and facilitate so families have financial help in meeting the tuition. About half of our families receive state, federal, or school tuition assistance. While half of our student families pay the full tuition, many of these families do get help from extended family members, often grandparents.

We expect families to make every effort to see that all possible sources of funding have been explored and/or secured by the family before HMS will grant aid to a student. Our expectation is that both parents will contribute to their child's education to the best of their abilities. In cases of divorce or separated families, the assets and earnings of both natural parents are considered. If extended family members have means to contribute, that should also be taken into account.

All financial aid is based on the financial need of the student's family. This need is determined by looking at the income, assets, and size of the family. All families must apply each year, whether or not they have received aid in the past. All applications for financial aid are kept strictly confidential by Hilltop and School and Student Services (SSS). The financial aid committee consists of the Head of School, the Business Manager, and the Admissions Director. The committee reviews only COMPLETE applications for aid and discusses the information with the family if more information or clarification is necessary. Deadline for Financial aid applications is January 15, applications will be considered after this date on a rolling admissions basis.

While a substantial percentage of the School's budget is allocated to financial aid, Hilltop cannot fund all students who apply and qualify for financial aid.

Please note that Hilltop does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, creed, disabilities, sexual orientation, handicap status, national origin or ethnicity in administration of its admission policies and financial aid programs.

Applying for Financial Aid at Hilltop Montessori School

We partner with School and Student Services (SSS) offered by NAIS (the National Association of Independent Schools) in our financial aid process. To begin your financial aid application, complete SSS's Parents' Financial Statement (PFS), use the school code of 1435 and submit your most recent tax documents, including all schedules and forms to SSS online (sss.nais.org)

Financial Aid Timeline

November thru January: *Financial Aid applications open online from SSS.*

January 15: *Financial aid applications due to SSS (not the school) **complete with all most recent tax documents, forms and schedules**, current and prospective parents must submit yearly applications and meet the deadline to be considered in the first round of grants.*

Mid March: *Financial aid grants are mailed to current and accepted families.*

April 1: *Signed financial aid grant letters due back to Hilltop from families.*

Other Funding Sources

Publicly Funded Prekindergarten - Hilltop Montessori School participates and partners with the school districts which support publicly-funded pre-kindergarten education for 3 and 4 year olds in Vermont. The funds are available to all families living in a participating area, regardless of income level. Funds will be credited to your account and reduces the family contribution to tuition. It is the responsibility of each family to fill out the application and mail it directly to the district.

Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program - The Child Care Financial Assistance Program is designed to help eligible families pay for child care for children birth through age 12. Sliding scale awards are made to income-eligible families qualifying under one of the following service needs:

- Parents working or in school and falling within income guidelines;
- Families with a level of stress that creates an at-risk situation;
- Families who are self-employed or have recently started a business;
- Families seeking employment;
- Families with parents who have documented physical or mental health needs;
- Families with children substantiated as abused or neglected and under the care of protective services.
- Parents participating in training activities through Economic Services Reach Up program.

To learn more, see if you might be eligible, and apply online for Child Care Financial Assistance, visit the [Child Care Financial Assistance](#) website.

Vermont's Tuition Voucher System

Many smaller Vermont towns do not operate a local elementary or middle school. Students in these towns are eligible for a voucher to choose from among public or non-religious independent schools in other towns. Under the voucher system, the "sending" towns pay tuition directly to the "receiving" schools. Contact your school district for voucher eligibility.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Dress Code

Families and students at Hilltop Montessori School are expected to demonstrate the willingness to belong to the community in many ways. One way is to acknowledge the dress code, as well as the spirit and intention that underlie it.

A guiding framework for all decisions concerning matters of how to dress should be that neither messiness nor provocativeness is an appropriate fashion statement for our learning environment. At all program levels it is imperative that children be dressed for comfort, movement, and physical activity rather than style. At HMS students should dress in a manner appropriate to the occasion and weather. The policy includes, but is not limited to, the following:

General Guidelines

All students must have a pair of indoor footwear (one pair only!) specifically for use at school. Indoor footwear will remain at school during the school year. Acceptable types of footwear include sneakers and plain slippers, or Crocs. Unacceptable footwear includes boots, socks, shoes with high heels, oversized slippers, shoes that flash, or have a character theme.

- Hats and head wear (for other than cultural or religious reasons) are not allowed indoors.
- All clothing should be neat, clean and without holes. Ripped, torn, or tattered clothes may not be worn. Clothing should be worn so that underwear is not exposed. Skirts and dresses should at least be at fingertip length or longer. Clothing should be free of distracting characters or commercial themes.
- Clothing displaying distracting, inappropriate or offensive wording or images or that advertises alcohol or drugs may not be worn.
- Proper attire is required for PE class, be it in or outdoors. This includes gym shorts or loose fitting athletic pants, a t-shirt or temperature appropriate, loose fitting top, socks and indoor only sneakers (non-marking). Students will only be allowed to participate in a PE class if they are appropriately dressed.
- Hats, mittens / gloves, boots and snow pants are necessary for winter recess for all students.

Nutrition (lunches, snacks, birthdays, festivals)

At HMS good nutrition plays an integral role in your child's day. Please pack healthy, low sugar foods in reusable containers whenever possible. Proteins, fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains help students have the energy and focus to succeed at school. Hilltop is now a **PEANUT AND TREE NUT FREE SCHOOL** (see details on next page)

General

- Candy, gum, high sugar snacks, juice and other flavored drinks will be sent home for your child to enjoy after school.
- We are unable to heat individual meals.
- Water is available at all times and will be served at snack and lunch.

Snack

Snack is provided for children in the Toddler and Children's House programs and for those children who are enrolled in the Toddler and Children's House After Care programs.

All Elementary and Middle School students need to bring their own snack. These older and bigger children need high protein, nutritious food and lots of it. There may be a group snack provided for the whole class on birthdays, other celebrations, and some special lessons. But, most days, students will rely on their snack brought from home to keep up their energy level during the morning work cycle. Please have students include extra food in their lunch box for them to have as a mid-morning snack and after school if they are staying past 3 pm.

Lunch

- Students in the Children's House who stay after 12:00 should bring their lunch and place it on the carts to go into the refrigerators provided.
- All Elementary and Middle school students should bring their lunch.
- CH, LE, UE and MS may sign up for pizza lunch on Fridays and bagel lunch on Wednesdays for a fee. Students can sign up for pizza or bagel lunch through the front desk during the first week of school.
- TP students may sign up for Bagel Lunch. Bagel lunch is administered by the MS students and the front office as one of their fundraising activities.

- All students come together for lunch in their classrooms. Students set their rooms up for lunch, begin the meal together, and have time for leisurely discussions. This is seen as an opportunity to foster respect for each other and for the environment in which they share a meal.

PEANUT AND TREE NUT FREE SCHOOL

Our school has multiple students in almost all classrooms with life threatening allergies to peanuts/tree nuts. Some students have such a high sensitivity to the peanut/tree nut protein that even a trace amount from a known peanut/nut product is ingested can result in a life threatening anaphylactic reaction. The most serious reaction being respiratory difficulties, blockage of the airways, which if not medicated immediately, can lead to death.

Each student with an allergy will have an anaphylaxis management plan that will reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents (e.g. peanuts/tree nut protein) in the classroom and common school areas.

The plan is designed to ensure that students at risk are identified, strategies are in place to minimize the potential for accidental exposure and staff and key volunteers are trained to respond in an emergency situation.

To provide the minimized allergen environment we need the support and cooperation of all, the parents/guardians and the school community. Students are asked to bring lunches and snacks free of peanuts and tree nuts and products that may contain peanuts/ tree nuts such as muffins, granola bars, etc. We ask you to read food labels, checking for peanut/nut ingredients prior to sending food to school. Truly, this is a life saving measure. If you have caregivers who provide your child(ren) with lunches or snacks we encourage you to share this information letter with them.

We realize this request may require added planning and effort on your part when packaging your child's lunch and snacks, however, we wish to express our sincere appreciation for your support and cooperation in making our school a safer environment for all.

Things To Bring To School and Share

Children often request to bring a sharing item to school. Things found in nature, flowers and small plants are welcome, as are things of interest to the class (e.g.,

cultural or scientific artifacts or objects). If you have any doubt, call and check with your child's teacher. We encourage sharing that is positive: combat characters and warlike toys should stay home. It is important that parents take home a child's sharing in the afternoon.

Celebrations

Birthdays in Children's House - Children are welcome to participate in a birthday walk at opening circle. In the past, some parents have jotted down a notable event that happened during each year of the child's life (i.e. starting to crawl, first words, etc.) If the birthday child wants to share a treat with the class, he or she can provide a healthy snack for the day. Some healthy suggestions are: muffins, the child's favorite fruit, vegetables, rice cakes, crackers and cheese. Any child whose birthday is in the summer months is welcome to celebrate their birthday in June before the school year ends or their half birthday in the winter.

Birthdays in Lower Elementary - Classrooms celebrate a child's birthday with a special ceremony. Please jot down one or two significant things that you can remember from each year and send it in along with the treat of your choice. If you wish to send a birthday treat, please observe the school nutrition guidelines and the classroom teacher's request. We encourage creative thinking and healthful choices when deciding on a birthday snack. Please check with your child's teacher to clarify the classroom procedure. Please remember we are a Tree and Peanut Free School. Please avoid bringing birthday party invitations to school to give out. They are easily misplaced and those children who do not receive one feel left out.

Birthdays in Upper Elementary and Middle School - Students may share a low sugar, healthy treat with the classroom community or donate an item to the classroom, (i.e. new ping pong balls!)

Holidays - Given Vermont's cultural homogeneity, Hilltop seeks to expose its students to customs and celebrations of other cultures. Families are strongly encouraged to share with the school any special family or cultural customs. The children will also celebrate the familiar holidays (Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, Valentine's Day), but every attempt is made to see these celebrations as one part of the cultural quilt.

Campus Policies

Dogs - All dogs must be on a leash while students are on campus to ensure the safety of the community. In addition, please be respectful of the campus and clean up after your dog.

Smoking - Hilltop is a smoke-free environment; smoking is not permitted.

Cell phones -We ask that you not use cell phones on campus or driving to campus.

General Computer Guidelines

Computer/Internet Acceptable Use Policy

The Hilltop Montessori School uses computers as one way of enhancing its mission to teach the skills, knowledge and behaviors students will need as successful and responsible members in the community, and as life long learners.

Computers provide opportunities to explore resources for information and communication. In order to make these resources available to everyone, the school expects those who use the computers will do so in a way that is consistent with the Hilltop Montessori School's educational mission and this policy.

With the rapidly changing nature of electronic media, and the "netiquette" which is developing 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 students, staff/faculty members, volunteers, and guest ('users').

Respect the computers and the network: Keep them safe and undamaged; use limited resources responsibly; keep your network login password secure, and use the computers for educationally appropriate purposes.

Respect your peers: Be careful and considerate of other users and their work; respect the rights and privacy of others by not accessing private files and/or their accounts; keep to your own folders, work, and files; and view, save, or send only messages and pictures of which we all might approve.

Respect creative minds and their creations: Give due regard to copyright laws and their coverage of text, program code, music, or video; use only legal software, shareware, or freeware on the school machines.

Keep us all safe and informed: Personal information, like personal addresses, credit card numbers, etc., should not be transmitted through e-mail and non-secure websites. Do notify the System Administrator immediately, if by accident, you encounter materials that violate rules of appropriate use; we all need to help each other.

Keep yourself informed: ASK if you do not understand any of these rules, or if you are unsure about whether or not they apply to what you want to do.

Netiquette: As in all forms of communication proper etiquette is expected.

Be responsible: You will be held accountable for your actions and lose privileges if the rules are violated.

Privacy

Users have no expectation of privacy with respect to their school-provided computers. All computers and software are educational tools and property of Hilltop Montessori School. As the owner of the computers, the Hilltop Montessori School retains the right to monitor, view, or access at any time the viewing/ accessing of:

- Internet activities
- E-mail activities and accounts
- Network activities and accounts
- All data and/or software stored on desktop, laptops, and disk. All e-mail should be sent as if it were a public document that might be read by a third party. Users should not put anything in an e-mail that the user would be ashamed of seeing in the "Wall Street Journal" the next day. The reason for this is that embarrassing or private e-mails can be forwarded or made public to others beyond the user's control (hence third party). Nothing should ever be included in an e-mail that might subject the sender or the school to embarrassment or legal action.

Outside laptops/computer

Laptops and computers that have not been issued by Hilltop Montessori School are not permitted to connect/ log on to the school's network unless there is permission from the System Administrator.

Storage

Users may save and store data generated for school related purposes using their designated folder for their classroom.

Copyright/License Agreements

The law forbids illegally reproducing copyrighted material. Users must comply with all software licenses and copyrights. Users shall not install any software on Hilltop's computers or download or copy any software from these computers or the Internet. Users shall not agree to any end-user license agreement without express permission of the System Administrator.

Inappropriate Language or Images

No material containing offensive, profane, violent, sexually explicit, harassing, abusive or impolite language or images is to be created, viewed or accessed. In the event any such material is encountered accidentally, it shall be reported to the System Administrator immediately.

Use of the Internet

All student Internet access at the school is filtered by a firewall. The filtering software attempts to block possibly objectionable sites. No filter is perfect. Logs are maintained of all Internet traffic and instances where the filter has blocked a website .

***Students may NOT access their personal Internet-based e-mail accounts, such as Yahoo, Hotmail, AOL,etc, at school for any reason. Streaming video, music, chat and gaming is also prohibited.

Violations

Access to the computers/laptops owned by the Hilltop Montessori School is a privilege not a right. This privilege may be restricted and/or revoked at any time for use not consistent with the educational goals of the school.

Electronics

While on campus students are not permitted to use personal cell phones, electronic gaming and communication devices, MP3 players (iPods and the like), or laptop computers. Permission for usage of electronic devices may be granted by faculty only under special, academic-related circumstances. **Parents are also asked to refrain from using cell phones when on campus.**

Student Conduct

The school aims:

- To balance the freedom and responsibility of the individual with the need for cooperation, order, restraint and goodwill within the group.
- To provide an environment where the young person will experience encouragement, affirmation and community.
- To ensure for each student physical and psychological safety.
- To enable each student to develop a high standard of moral integrity gained through growth in self-discipline.
- To help students grow into mature, responsible adults.
- To maintain a high standard for student behavior that reflects positively on self, family, school and community.
- To nurture each student with loving firmness, respect, and fairness.

The School expects each student:

- To treat others with dignity and respect.
- To treat him/herself with that same respect.
- To respect both work and property of others and to bring only necessary materials to school.
- To have consistent attendance and punctual arrival.

In the event that a student fails to observe the above expectations, the following notes describe the approach and procedures for working with the student. The school reserves the right to modify these procedures as it sees fit:

- 1.** In the event of minor misbehavior, student and teacher discuss the issue cooperatively to resolve the problem. At times an individual's minor misbehavior may be considered by the classroom community because of its impact on the life of the class.
- 2.** Chronic misbehavior is reported to parents by the teacher(s) and the Head of School is informed.
- 3.** Major misbehavior, especially that involving injurious behavior, is taken to the Head of School. The Head of School and parents, along with teacher(s), and student, as appropriate, meet to resolve.

In the event of major or chronic misbehavior a student may be excluded from school, suspended or expelled.

The school expects full parental cooperation in all aspects of the student's life at Hilltop. All rules apply before, during and after school, and at all times on school sponsored outings.

Attendance

Consistent attendance and punctual arrival is important for the individual student's experience and for the educational experience of the community.

Students arriving after 8:30am (8:45am for the Toddler Program) are considered late. When a child has been late or absent more than five times the teachers will inform the Head of School who will contact the families. **The number of days absent and tardy will be reported on Student**

Assessments. Should attendance and punctuality become a problem for an individual student or the community, the above actions will be taken.

Major misbehavior

The school considers the following to be major misbehavior:

- interference with the rights of others, including physical abuse (such as hitting, punching, kicking, or biting), verbal abuse (such as teasing, taunting, threats or intimidation), bullying (such as physical aggression, social alienation, verbal aggression and intimidation);
- damage to, abuse of, or stealing any school or personal property;
- possession, use or sale of drugs listed in the current Federal Controlled Substances Act;
- possession, use or sale of alcohol, tobacco substances, or inhalants;
- possession, use or sale of weapons or explosives;
- use of obscene, profane, suggestive, or intimidating written or verbal language;
- repeated disruptive or uncooperative behavior;
- conduct committed off-campus and outside school hours that is illegal or reflects negatively on the school; and
- misuse of computer/Internet/e-mail privileges.

The school is committed to working together with the student and the family on issues of conduct. We use restorative practices as a part of the Montessori Peace Curriculum. At the same time, Hilltop Montessori School reserves the right to dismiss any student at any time if in its sole judgment the student's continued

presence at the school is detrimental to himself, to others or to the community as a whole.

Harassment and Bullying

Hilltop Montessori School takes a strong stand against harassment and bullying. A safe and civil environment in school is a prerequisite for all student learning, and the school takes seriously any behavior that interferes with a student's sense of safety and security or the school's ability to educate its students in a respectful, peaceful environment. Demonstrating civility and respect and not tolerating harassment or bullying is expected of all members of the Hilltop Montessori School community.

It can sometimes be hard to tell the difference between teasing, harassment, and bullying. Teasing usually involves two or more friends who act together in a way that seems fun to all the people involved. Often there is some reciprocity, with students teasing each other back and forth, but it never involves physical or emotional abuse. It is possible for teasing to get out of hand – and feelings to get hurt – yet still not constitute either harassment or bullying.

Harassment is defined as gestures, words, or acts (whether written, verbal, graphic, electronic, or physical) that are reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic. The definition of harassment is three-fold:

- 1.** substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more students;
- 2.** adversely affecting the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities because the conduct, as reasonably perceived by the pupil, is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive as to have this effect; and
- 3.** being based on a student's actual or perceived distinguishing characteristics or on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have such characteristics.

Often, but not always, bullying is harassment taken to the next level. Dan Olweus, generally recognized as a pioneer and founding father of research on bullying problems, says that "a person is bullied when he or she is exposed,

repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself." This definition of bullying includes three important components:

- 1. aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions;
- 2. a pattern of intentional behavior repeated over time; and
- 3. an imbalance of power or strength.

Many behaviors that do not rise to the level of harassment or bullying may still be prohibited by school rules and common courtesy. Any disrespectful behavior, including bullying and harassment, will result in the actions described above involving the teachers, parents, and the student.

Weapons Policy

Per the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 any student who brings a weapon to school shall be referred to a law enforcement agency. Based on conferral with the law enforcement agency, the Head of School may suspend or dismiss the student from the school.

Medical

Immunizations

Every child must have had all immunizations appropriate for his/her age by September 1. If the child has not been immunized for medical or religious reasons, parents are required to submit a signed statement. **As of July 2016 the philosophical exemption is no longer accepted by schools in the state of Vermont.** Please consult your health care provider for a compliant vaccination schedule.

Medical Release Form

Parents are required to sign the medical release form prior to the start of school.

Accident Reports and First Aid

Staff members will administer minor first aid or emergency treatment only. In case of more serious illness or injury, staff members are authorized to call a rescue squad and the child’s physician, in addition to the parent(s) or guardian. State regulations require that a staff member fill out an accident form if a child

has an injury and parents will be asked to sign this form. Parents and students are expected to carry accident insurance for themselves and their children.

Communicable Diseases: The Head of School and the state Public Health Office should be notified of any communicable disease or condition in the student or his/her immediate family, or anything of this nature to which the child has been exposed.

Head Lice: Preventing head lice is a community effort. We request that:

1. Families inform the school of any cases in their family.
2. Families treat their child responsibly and provide appropriate treatment prior to returning to the class.
3. Students who have been affected return to school when they have been fully treated. Continued efforts should be made by parents to be secure in the knowledge that their child will not affect the classroom.

Our current policy offers a website <https://identify.us.com/idmybug/head-lice/index.html> as the most up-to-date, best source of treatment options and information pertaining head lice.

Ticks: Hilltop follows the guidelines provided by the State of Vermont Dept of Health. Ticks will be removed unless parents specifically instruct otherwise.

24-hour / fever policy: Hilltop requires that sick children be kept home. Twenty-four hours must lapse without a fever from the start of an antibiotic before a child can return to school. Parents are requested to notify the school of any absence by 9:00 AM.

Rash: If your child arrives at school with an unidentifiable rash, itching or eye infection the child will be sent home unless the school has received a physician's diagnosis.

Medication at school

Medication forms, available at the front desk, include the name of the medicine, dosage, time of administration and refrigeration requirements. Staff members will not administer medication without a completed medication form. All medications must be in their original containers. This includes over-the-counter medication, aspirin or other pain relievers and prescription medications.

All medications and accompanying form(s) must be left at the front desk or in the classroom First Aid Pack.

Child Abuse and Neglect: Staff members are “mandated reporters” under Vermont state law. “Any mandated reporter who reasonably suspects abuse or neglect of a child shall report in accordance with the provisions of section 4914 of title 33 within 24 hours of the time information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect was first received or observed.”

ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Toddler and Children’s House (18 – 36 months, pre-school / kindergarten):

Parents are encouraged to set up a time to observe the classrooms and visit with the Head of School and Admission Director. The best way to understand how a Montessori classroom functions is to schedule a 60 minute tour and visit between 9:00 am and 11:00 am Monday through Friday. We strongly recommend that for this initial visit you come without your child so that you are free to observe and ask questions.

Toddler and Children’s House applicants and their parents will also be invited to visit in the classroom during a morning in late January/early February.

Children who have turned 3 by September 1 are eligible for the first year program; 4 by September 1 for the second year program and 5 by September 1 for kindergarten. Completed on-line application forms along with the non-refundable \$50.00 application fee places your child on the enrollment roster. Once we receive an application we will call to schedule a student visit. Parents will be notified of acceptance as of March 15. Acceptance is based on openings, and an overall balance in each classroom.

Lower Elementary (grades 1 - 3) and **Upper Elementary** (grades 4 - 6)

Parents should arrange a time to visit the classrooms and meet with the Admission Director and Head of School. This preliminary visit generally takes an hour; however, you may observe in the classrooms for as long as you wish. As part of the application process a day will be scheduled for your child to visit in the classroom. In addition to the parent visit, the completed on-line application

form and the \$50.00 non-refundable fee must be submitted prior to the student visit. Families will be notified of acceptance by March 15.

Acceptance to the elementary program at Hilltop Montessori is dependent on several factors. While gender and age balance are important in a mixed age classroom, more critical is the child's learning style. In a self-directed classroom students must be able to work independently and with focus.

In addition to the parent and student visit, records from your child's current school should be submitted to the office. Families will be notified of acceptance by March 15.

Middle School (grades 7 - 8)

Parents wishing to observe the middle school program should contact the school and set up a time to visit with the Head of School and Admission Director. Parents will be invited to observe morning meeting at 8:30 am and spend time in the classroom observing and meeting with the teachers. It will be important to schedule a time for your child to spend two days in the classroom as well. The completed application form and the \$50.00 nonrefundable fee must be submitted to the office prior to the student visit.

Two visits are scheduled with prospective middle school students. The goal is to ensure that there is a mutual understanding of the balance between freedom and responsibility in the middle school program. It is also critical that the student is comfortable with and excited by the demands of independent learning.

In addition to the parent and student visit, records from your child's current school should be submitted to the office. Families will be notified of acceptance by March 15.

Admission Decisions

The Head of School, Program Directors and Admission Director make up the admission committee. When we have openings in a program and/or grade the school accepts those students who, in the opinion of the school, will have successful experiences in the program and will enhance the learning community for which they are applicants.

We have a rolling application process. As openings develop we look to the

applicants who have completed the admissions process to fill the placements available. Availability in the programs is always changing and we encourage all to visit and apply.

Generally, applicants will be given priority in the following order:

- 1. Qualified siblings of students continuing at Hilltop Montessori School
- 2. Qualified students with previous Montessori experience
- 3. All other qualified applicants

DIRECTIONS TO HILLTOP MONTESSORI SCHOOL

From 1-91 North or South, Exit 2 turn right off ramp onto VT Route 9 West; turn left at Creamery Bridge to Guilford Street and continue on Guilford Street about 1 mile, take a right at Summit Circle. Take the first left on Stafford Farm Hill.



