

MWS 2026-2027 Parent Handbook

Montessori Weaver School
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Our Vision:

Montessori Weaver School strives for academic excellence in a nurturing environment that employs Maria Montessori's holistic approach to education which fosters intelligence, confidence, independence, and joy.

Our Mission:

Our mission is to help create a better world by providing children with broad educational opportunities. We are dedicated to creating a community that instills peace, order, courtesy, respect, and a love of learning.

The Curriculum:

The Montessori classroom is prepared in such a way that the children work freely and independently after the teacher gives a formal lesson. Mixed-age grouping encourages the children to teach and learn from each other. The teacher's role is one of observer and guide as the children progress at their own pace. Uninterrupted work cycles are a critical part in allowing the child to master each skill. The carefully prepared environment includes specially made materials for specified developmental skill progression. Each area of the classroom indirectly trains students for proficiency in the main areas of traditional studies through real-life, hands-on exercises.

The Faculty and Staff:

The faculty and staff have been carefully chosen for their education, experience, and love for children. We share a common vision for children's care and seek to provide a feeling of comfort and safety for the children through predictability and open communication with their home. Our teachers have a passion for the Montessori Method and want to share it with each enrolled child. All employees have had the required background checks with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation for the assured safety of our students and the confidence of parents.

Montessori Weaver School

2026-2027 Parent Handbook

School Calendar:

The academic calendar is distributed at the beginning of the school year and can be found on the school website.

Weather Related School Closing:

MWS will not necessarily close even if the local public school systems are closed. Parents will be notified through their child's teacher's Seesaw account of any school closing. The school will close when we believe the incident risks are high and expect that parents will make the final decision about their child's safety and availability for attendance. If the school should need to close midday due to inclement weather, parents will receive notification through the SeeSaw app or direct text message and students are to be picked up in a timely manner.

Emergency Pick Up Authorization:

If the parent cannot personally come to get the child, we can only release the child to a person listed on the emergency pick-up form. This is a strict policy for the safety of the children, so careful consideration should be given when completing this form. Only persons who have the parent or guardian's permission to pick up their child at any time should be listed on this form. (If there is a one-time pickup approval, such as for a playdate, this information should be communicated to the child's teacher or the director.) All delegated persons should come with a photo ID for verification. The emergency pick up authorization form is to be in each child's permanent record. If there is a change in information during the school year, please notify the school.

Absences & Illnesses:

Parents are asked to message the child's teacher or the director to let us know if the child will be absent. This will enable us to plan classroom events and to keep other parents informed since many childhood illnesses are contagious. Children may not be in attendance under the following conditions:

- elevated temperature*
- diarrhea*
- nasal drainage of any color other than clear
- sore throat or persistent rattling cough
- vomiting*
- contagious illness

Montessori Weaver School 2026-2027 Parent Handbook

- any health condition that the teacher or school believes to be unhealthy for the child or other exposed children

***A CHILD WITH THESE CONDITIONS MAY NOT RETURN TO SCHOOL UNLESS SYMPTOM FREE FOR 24 HOURS WITHOUT MEDICATION.**

Head Lice:

Students may not attend school if live lice are present on the scalp or body. Students with nits present on the scalp may return to school after treatment has been administered. The returning child must bring a note from a medical provider confirming that the child is lice-free. Parents who have knowledge of a student with lice or nits are required to notify the school. We will inform MWS families while keeping confidential the identity of the child who is infected.

Administration of Medication:

Non-prescription medication will be administered only when the following information, in written form, accompanies the medicine:

- child's name
- name of medicine
- dosage
- time to be given
- parent signs and dates a medication authorization form

Prescription medicine will be administered only when the following conditions are met:

- medicine is brought to school in original container
- a note from the prescribing physician stating the patient's name, dosage, time to be administered, and possible side effects OR pharmacy-printed information accompanies medicine
- parent signs and dates a medication authorization form

MWS reserves the right to refuse the responsibility of administering medicine for any reason. If this occurs, we will accommodate parent visits during the school day for that purpose.

Immunization Forms:

Either an up-to-date TN Immunization Verification Form, a signed statement from the pediatrician of immunization delay, or a signed letter from the parent stating personal or religious reasons for declining immunization is required for each child at enrollment.

Montessori Weaver School 2026-2027 Parent Handbook

Accident Report:

Incidents of physical injury to the child will be documented by the attending staff. Details of how the injury occurred, first aid measures taken, and a signature of the attending staff member will be sent home that day or the parents will be notified by a direct text, call, or email message. In the case of a serious injury, the parents will be contacted immediately.

Emergency Care Authorization Form:

In accordance with state requirements, a parent-signed form authorizing emergency medical care is to be included in each child's permanent record. We will, however, make every attempt to notify parents before or while making this decision.

Fire Drills:

A fire drill is scheduled once a month to acquaint the children with the evacuation procedures. Tornado, Lock-Down, and Shelter in Place drills are also practiced on a routine basis. These drills are handled in a way that is comfortable for the children and assures their feeling of safety.

School Visitors:

At times, there may be visitors on the school grounds while students are present. Parents of current students may come in to meet with their child's teacher. Occasionally, a family or community member may be invited to speak to students about a particular topic such as family heritage connected to another country. The director and teachers are always observing these presentations. Parents interested in our program may tour the school during school hours and are accompanied by a director during their observation time. Specialists (such as occupation therapists or speech therapists) may meet with our students on school grounds with parental permission, and the school will retain background checks with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation for those specialists. None of these specialists are contracted by the school; the contract is between the child's parents and the specialists.

Rarely, a maintenance issue may need to be addressed while children are in attendance. When this occurs, a director will remain with the maintenance provider for the duration of their time at the school.

Montessori Weaver School 2026-2027 Parent Handbook

Toilet Training:

All children will arrive at school in underwear or pull-ups. Children still wearing diapers will not be enrolled. Students are free to go to the bathroom without asking permission and are also reminded throughout the day. Situations will occur when teachers are needed to assist a student, but it is expected that all children will be experienced and independent with removing and replacing their clothing.

Rest Time:

Rest cots and linens will be provided by the school. The cots will be regularly sanitized, and the linens will be regularly washed. All students who are younger than 4 at the start of the school year and do not dismiss by 12:30 will rest on a cot after eating lunch. Children who rest at school may bring a small, washable comfort item that remains at school for the year.

Lunch & Snack:

Students bring their lunches from home. State regulations mandate that lunches be balanced, nutritious meals representing the five food groups. Candy, gum, sugary sweets, and carbonated drinks are not to be sent. A list of acceptable and unacceptable foods to include in lunches will be given to all parents.

Because Montessori encourages age and ability-appropriate independence in all children, food should be sent in containers that are most manageable for small hands. The school is not equipped to refrigerate or heat lunch foods.

The school provides one or two daily snacks (depending on time of dismissal) to children without dietary restrictions. Those needing specific foods will be provided with snack containers to be filled at home. There are several choices which teachers may select from when filling individual containers, including goldfish crackers, butter cookies, vanilla wafers, saltine crackers, Cheerios, cheese, fresh fruit, and raw vegetables. Sugary snacks will not be served.

Clothing:

At least one complete change of clothing is to be kept at school, and all items should be labeled. Children who come to school dressed in layers can adjust the amount of clothing to be more comfortable indoors and outdoors. Appropriate clothing for playing outdoors is expected since we enjoy our playground and garden daily, weather permitting.

Montessori Weaver School 2026-2027 Parent Handbook

Independence with clothing is part of the Montessori approach. Belts, one-piece clothing, and lace-up/tie shoes that require adult assistance take away the excitement children feel when they do for themselves. Highly decorated (superhero, princess, blinking, etc.) clothing is distracting and should be kept for wearing when not at school.

Each child will keep a pair of soft, comfortable, slipper-type shoes at school for wearing indoors and a pair of rain boots for outdoors. These should be clearly labeled with the child's name. A raincoat that stays at school is also recommended.

Disruptive Items:

Items such as (but not exclusive to) clothing, shoes, jewelry, hairstyle, nail polish, tattoos, and face painting that cause a disturbance for any child's learning experience are not permitted MWS. If the concern can be resolved at school, we will do so. If not, parents will be notified to assist in making the correction.

Personal Items from Home:

We will have times of group discussion on cultural objects for children to share relevant items from home. We value educational items that are interesting and contribute to the subject; however, children may not bring toys to school. If a toy is brought, it will be put in a safe place until the end of the day when it will be returned to be taken home.

Birthdays:

In the Montessori environment, we have a simple but meaningful birthday celebration where the birthday child walks slowly around a candle representing the sun and the teacher verbalizes significant events of the child's life during that year. That child may bring a picture of himself at each year of his life and a birthday treat to share with classmates (both optional). The teacher has a list of appropriate treats for this occasion and will share that list with the parents as the birthday approaches. *Invitations to the child's birthday party may be distributed at school only if every child in the class is invited.*

Communication:

We recognize the importance of communication between home and school for children's success, parents' comfort, and teachers' understanding. Parents will be provided with their child's teacher's cell phone number and email address. Your child's teacher will also provide a link to the Seesaw app so that you can see photos of your child's day. You can send and

Montessori Weaver School 2026-2027 Parent Handbook

receive text messages through the app. The director's contact information is also listed at the end of this document.

If you would like to reach out to other MWS families, please visit the MWS website and click on the "Parents Only" section to access a password protected directory of our families with contact information.

Arrival:

Between 7:00 and 8:30, a teacher will meet each child at his/her vehicle to assist and escort the child into the building. Our parking lot allows for the uploading of two to three vehicles at a time. The most successful drop-off routine is for the parent to say a cheerful and brief good-bye and then to leave with the confidence that the child will separate willingly. Linger makes separating more difficult for everyone. If the child is not able to separate according to this plan, the parent may park in one of the parking spaces parallel to the school and walk the child to the door where a teacher will meet them.

Dismissal:

Dismissal times are written as "by" 12:30, 2:30, or 4:30. That is the latest that a child may stay at school. Pick up later than the contracted time will incur a late fee of \$30.00 for every five minutes or a portion thereof.

*If a custodial parent picking up a child appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that staff members feel the child might be placed at risk if dismissed, the school is required to release the child. However, local law enforcement and the Department of Children's Services will be called immediately. Children will not be released to impaired persons that are not the custodial parent even if that person is listed on the Emergency Contact/Pick up Form.

Car Seats and Seat Belts:

We will not knowingly release a child to a car without proper restraints. Tennessee law requires that children eight years or younger be properly secured in an age and weight appropriate child restraint device.

Montessori Weaver School

2026-2027 Parent Handbook

Admissions:

No person shall be discriminated against based on race, color, religious belief, or national origin. Applications are accepted throughout the year for enrollment in the upcoming years. Enrollment is based on balancing gender and age in our multi-aged classrooms and the philosophical fit between family and school. A pre-enrollment visit is required.

Kindergarten Enrollment:

To be enrolled in Kindergarten at MWS, the child must be 5 years old by August 15 of the enrollment year. If it is requested by the parent, and observation and assessment indicate both academic and social readiness, a child who will turn 5 between August 16 and September 30 of the academic year *may* be allowed to enroll as a Kindergarten student.

Tuition and Fees:

The school is funded through the collection of tuition and the fees. MWS does no fundraising. Attendance options and the corresponding tuition rates are listed on the school website. All monies paid to the school are non-refundable. MWS charges a \$100 one-time application fee. Once a child has been accepted, parents pay a \$200 enrollment fee for each year the child is enrolled. Children in the primary classrooms who will be eligible for kindergarten the next school year may choose to participate in a daily kindergarten prep class for a fee of \$500/year. Parents of children in the lower elementary classrooms will be charged a supply fee of \$750/year.

Tuition is due on the 10th of each month July-April. A late fee of \$100 is assessed on the 16th of the month if the tuition payment has not been received. Tuition not being paid by the 20th of the month may be grounds for dismissal. A fee of \$50 is assessed for returned checks. If you have a concern about tuition payment, please contact the director(s) prior to the tuition due date so we can work together reach a solution.

MWS Attendance Policy (Elementary students only: Kindergarten and older):

State compulsory attendance laws In Tennessee specify that children between the ages of 7 and 17 are required to attend school each day unless there is a legitimate reason for their absence. Excused absences are those absences with a valid reason that have been communicated to the school by the parent and accompanied by appropriate documentation. Written documentation supporting reasons for absences must be submitted to the school within 5 days of the student's return to school. Excused absences include:

- Personal illness or injury

Montessori Weaver School 2026-2027 Parent Handbook

- **Illness of immediate family member**
- **Death in the family**
- **Extreme weather conditions**
- **Religious observances**
- **School-sponsored activities**
- **Summons, subpoena or court order**
- **Circumstances which in the judgment of the director create emergencies over which the family and/or student has no control**
- **Family travel that has previously been approved by the director(s)**

Unexcused absences are those absences without a valid reason or documentation. If a student accumulates 5 or more unexcused absences, the director(s) will schedule a meeting with parents and a written plan for improving attendance will be created at the meeting. Parents may also be asked to meet with the director if there are excessive excused absences or excessive tardy arrivals. Elementary students must arrive by 8:00 a.m. or will be marked tardy. *Prompt arrival and consistent attendance are vital for elementary students to develop skills and meet their potential.*

Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused at the discretion of the director(s). The director(s) will ensure that daily attendance is recorded for each class. The student's parent or guardian should provide a written note explaining the absence upon the child's return to school. MWS will accept a written note from a parent verifying a student's illness for up to 5 accumulated days per semester, for a total of 10 days during the school year, after which a note from the child's healthcare provider will be needed. Any time your child is seen by a healthcare provider due to illness causing absence from school, please request a note. The written documentation from the healthcare provider or parent/guardian must include the reason for the absence, date(s) of absence, and the signature of the healthcare provider or parent/guardian.

Please note that the instructional school day for kindergarten students at MWS is 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (though students may arrive as early as 7:00 a.m. and parents may select either the by 2:30 or the by 4:30 dismissal time). A kindergarten student must be in attendance for at least 3 hours (between 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.) to be counted present for the day.

Please note that the instructional school day for students in first grade and above at MWS is 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (though students may arrive as early as 7:00 a.m. and stay as late as 4:30 p.m.). Families of students in first grade may pick up 3:00-3:15 or opt for the by 4:30

Montessori Weaver School 2026-2027 Parent Handbook

dismissal. A student in first grade or above must be in attendance for at least 3.5 hours (between 8:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.) to be counted present for the day.

Discipline:

MWS offers a firm and caring discipline policy consisting primarily of redirection and natural consequences. Loss of privilege and placement close to a teacher will be used if necessary. A simple verbal re-direction is usually all that is needed. Any consequences are consistent with the age of the child and the action/infracton. Corporal punishment is not used under any circumstances. We offer positive guidance by being good role models for the children and giving them the skills and guidance to become independent individuals who take responsibility for their own choices. MWS students are encouraged to be respectful of themselves, their environment, and others around them.

Dangerous/Disruptive Behavior:

MWS will make every attempt to help a child with any behavioral issues that may surface. However, the policy for persistent disruptive or dangerous behavior is as follows:

In the event a child exhibits persistent dangerous or disruptive behavior that is not solved by the usual means, we will meet with the parents twice to discuss the issue and possible acceptable solutions. If the child's behavior continues after the second meeting, the school has the option of discontinuing enrollment or continuing to attempt to solve the behavioral issue. In the event a child's behavior poses a danger to himself or others at MWS, the parent may be asked to pick up the child as soon as possible, and no meetings are required to discontinue enrollment.

Confidentiality of Student Records:

The practice of maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written records is part of the ethical principle and professional behavior of our school. Student records may consist of, but are not limited to: attendance, health and emergency information, assessments, developmental and academic progress, accidents, parent authorizations, and correspondence documents. Parents and guardians have the right to review these records directly related to their child during a scheduled appointment with a staff member present. Others who may review these records include MWS staff and accrediting agencies such as the Department of Education and the Department of Human Services.

**Montessori Weaver School
2026-2027 Parent Handbook**

Grievances:

Any parent having a concern is to feel comfortable expressing that concern to a staff member. If that person cannot properly address the concern, he/she will bring it to the attention of a person who can. If the parent is not satisfied with that response, do not hesitate to contact the directors who can be reached through the following ways:

Email: montessoriweaverschool@gmail.com

School phone: 615.895.9139

Cell phone: 615.545.2086 (Joye Weaver), 615.364.4259 (Lara Montgomery)