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## Welcome

We are so glad you are part of our school family! Thank you for your commitment to your child's future. In this handbook, you will find our policies and procedures, as well as other helpful information about our school. We are dedicated to maintaining a world-class Montessori school for your family and the future generations of Central Texans. Welcome to our community.

**Hours & Days of Operation:** Salado Montessori is open Monday through Friday from 7:30AM to 5:30PM. See our calendar for months of operation and holidays.

**About this Document:** The Salado Montessori Parent Handbook and the Salado Montessori Enrollment Contract are to be construed together and incorporated with one another. By agreeing to the Terms and Conditions of the Enrollment Contract, you are also agreeing to the Terms and Conditions of the Parent Handbook stated herein.

Parents are notified immediately of policy changes in writing.

**Mission:** Salado Montessori prepares each child for a life full of creativity, happiness, independence, success, and leadership using the educational philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori: "to follow the child's natural curiosity." Our students will gain a deep understanding of both self-reliance and the inter-relatedness of all life and they will develop the foundational building blocks necessary for them to achieve their own life goals while making a positive contribution to their community.

**Vision:** To provide excellent Montessori education for children ages 3 to 15.

**Goals:** Our attention is on the five areas of Montessori focus: practical life skills, sensorial development, language, mathematics, and culture. Salado Montessori's long-term goals include: To prepare Primary students for success in any school environment, but retain Primary students through Elementary; To prepare Elementary students for success in any Middle School setting but retain students through High School; To produce students who possess a deep sense of confidence and pride in their work; To produce people who have a life-long love of growth, personal development, and commitment to excellence; To provide all students with an appreciation and understanding of music, mathematics, language arts, science, engineering, movement, art, and interpersonal relations (etiquette and grace).

**Philosophy:** We emphasize independence, freedom within limits, and respect for a child's natural psychological, physical, and social development.

**Values:** Peace, Independence, Humility, Gratitude, Love of Learning, Compassion.

**Character:** Interdependency and self-reliance work hand-in-hand; our students learn mastery of both.

## General Information

Salado Montessori provides equal employment opportunities and equal participation opportunities to all its employees and students without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, ethnic origin, physical ability, age, gender identification, sexual orientation, or marital status.

Salado Montessori is located at 10880 FM 1670, Salado, TX 76571.

**Accreditation:** 'Montessori' refers to a method of education and a philosophy of life. It is not a copyright-protected name or a franchising program. Our guides (teachers) hold an Association Montessori International (AMI) diploma. Salado Montessori will be seeking an AMI school recognition. Salado Montessori will also gain accreditation through the National Council of Private Schools.

**Funding:** Our school is a 501(c)(3) non-profit institution. Startup was provided through personal and business contributions and small business loans. Long term funding comes from tuition and donations. Our primary focus is on keeping debt to a minimum. When affordable borrowing becomes available, it may be utilized to expand the facilities.

**Fundraising:** In addition to tuition income, Salado Montessori relies on contributions to the annual fund and other fundraising efforts to meet operating expenses and keep tuition at a competitive rate. Fundraising ideas are encouraged, and all volunteers for fundraisers are always welcomed and appreciated. We rely on fundraisers for scholarships, classroom enrichment, school and program enhancements, to maintain steady growth, and to help with forecasting as we plan for the future.

**Facilities:** We have begun by remodeling the existing structure at 10880 FM 1670 and over the coming years will add new construction as needed to allow us to accommodate students up through High School.

**Legal Structure:** Salado Montessori is currently registering with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) corporation, and is incorporated as a Texas Not for Profit company. Jake McClure currently serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors for Salado Montessori.

**Licensing:** Salado Montessori is licensed through the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS). Parents may review a copy of the Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and the most recent Licensing inspection report as well as information on the child abuse hotline and the TFPS website at any time during our operational hours. This is all on file and available in a binder for review in the office. The DFPS Child Care Licensing Office in Temple can be reached at (254) 939-3561 and their web address is [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us).

**Board of Directors:** Salado Montessori is overseen by a board comprised of parents and community members. Please see our website for a list of our current board members. The board meets to discuss operations, finances, fundraising and other issues of concern.

## Admissions

**Non-Discriminatory Policy:** Salado Montessori, Inc., provides equal employment opportunities and equal participation opportunities to all its employees and students and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ethnic origin, physical ability, age, gender identification, sexual orientation, or marital status. in administration of our educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-administered programs.

Employment and enrollment are granted to those who submit a timely application and is based on space or position available.

**Exclusion:** Salado Montessori, Inc., strives to be an evolving Montessori teaching community, fostering the unlimited potential that lives within each of us. We celebrate the unique gifts of each member of our community and attend equally to the education of the heart as well as the mind. In promoting social justice, global awareness, and peace, we do our very best to accommodate those with disabilities. However, being privately owned does have the disadvantage of not being equipped to accommodate certain needs and we are therefore unable to provide care for some individuals.

**Right to Refuse:** Salado Montessori reserves the right to refuse a contract or to terminate a contract, of any student that the school feels it is incapable of serving or if due cause has been determined after careful consideration. Due cause is defined as a violation by the student or parent of any of the policies stated in the Operational Policies and in the Parent Handbook, severe behavioral concerns, or failure to comply with the enrollment and financial policies herein.

**Enrollment Procedures:** World-class Montessori Schools design their admission process to find families looking for a unique educational experience. Our goal is not to fill openings, but rather to gather together children who will blossom within a Montessori setting.

To achieve this, the following process will be followed:

### 1. TOURS

**Adult Tour:** To begin your enrollment process, schedule a tour of Salado Montessori. Tours are available Thursdays during office hours. This is a time for Parents/Guardians to see the facilities, ask questions, and discuss enrollment options.

You will be invited to fill out an Enrollment Application at this time. The Enrollment Application may be downloaded on our Forms page or picked up in person during your visit. Please submit one form per child and include the non-refundable \$100 application fee with each form.

**Child Tour:** The child tour is an opportunity for your prospective student to see the classroom. Ms. Webb, Director of Salado Montessori, will assess your child's readiness to join our community by working with the prospective student in the classroom and discuss your enrollment options. If we are at full capacity, your child will be placed on a waiting list.

## 2. OBSERVE

Prospective parents are strongly encouraged to observe the classroom prior to their child joining the class.

## 3. Complete ENROLLMENT PAPERWORK

Once your Enrollment Application has been received and your child has been accepted, you will be invited to complete the enrollment paperwork in the Admissions Packet.

The Admissions Packet must be accompanied by the \$500 New Family Fee.

## 4. New Student Parent/ Teacher CONFERENCE

Parents only will meet privately with our Lead Guide for more information about classroom procedures, expectations, and objectives. Most often, New Student Parent/ Teacher conferences are scheduled in August or before the student joins the class.

## 5. MEET the Teacher

This is a one-on-one time for the student and the Lead Guide. The Lead Guide will show the child around the classroom and give a few lessons to help familiarize the child with some of the materials. Giving these lessons before school begins helps prepare the child for their first day of school.

Decisions for admission will be made by the guide and the Director.

The yearly enrollment process begins in the Spring with re-enrollment for current students. Returned contracts will be accepted in the following order:

1. Currently Enrolled Students
2. Employee's Children
3. Siblings of Current Students
4. Children on the Waiting List

**Required Paperwork:** Many forms are required for a child's enrollment. These are available in person or for download on our website at [www.saladomontessori/forms](http://www.saladomontessori/forms). The following paperwork is required:

- Enrollment Application
- Parent Commitment Form
- Health and Human Services Admissions Information Form (Hearing and vision required for student who turn 4, 5 & 6 before September 1<sup>st</sup>.)
- Parent Volunteer Program Agreement
- Use of Images Permission

We are unable to accept incomplete registration packets: registration packets that do not include all required forms and fees will be returned but may be resubmitted when complete.

Additional paperwork not required, but requested:

- TDFPS Food Allergy and Emergency Plan (if applicable)
- Texas Education Agency Ethnicity and Race Data Form (you may choose to decline submission of this form)

The Salado Montessori Parent Handbook and the Salado Montessori Enrollment Contract are to be construed together and incorporated with one another. By agreeing to the Terms and Conditions of the Enrollment Contract, you are also agreeing to the Terms and Conditions of the Parent Handbook.

**Tuition & Fees:** In addition to tuition, fees are assessed to cover operational costs, as applicable. Please see the Schedule of Fees and Tuition insert for current amounts.

All tuition and fees may be paid in one annual payment or in ten monthly installments. The fees include:

1. Waitlist Fee: This is a one-time, non-refundable fee that is submitted with a Letter of Intent in order to hold a place for your child once the first class is filled.
2. New Student Enrollment Fee: This is a one-time, non-refundable fee that is submitted with the enrollment application.
3. New Family Fee: Upon acceptance, this is a one-time fee due with the admission packet for the first child enrolled. If a new family changes their mind about enrollment, the fee is refundable within ten days of receipt. If two children are enrolled simultaneously, only one New Family Fee is due.
4. Returning Student Admission Fee: This is an annual, non-refundable fee that is submitted with each returning student's re-enrollment form.
5. Sibling Admission Fee: This is a non-refundable fee that is submitted with the admission packet of new student that is the sibling of a current or former student.
6. Supplies and Materials Fee: This is a non-refundable fee to be used for classroom materials and needs.

7. Parent Volunteer Program Option: Families are asked to contribute 20 annual volunteer service hours. Parents may opt out by paying a \$20 per hour fee or \$400 per year, divided biannual installments of \$200 due at the beginning of each semester. This fee is fully refundable if parents fulfill the required 10 hours of volunteer work per semester. Volunteer activities help familiarize parents with the Montessori method and help keep our costs low. Projects include: building improvements, landscaping projects, playscape improvements, gardening projects, laundry, janitorial assistance, minor administrative tasks, etc.
  
8. Annual Fund: In addition to tuition income, Salado Montessori relies on contributions to the annual fund and other fundraising efforts in order to meet operating expenses and keep tuition at a competitive rate. The annual fund provides a critical source of income that is necessary to enhance our programs and facilities, maintain steady growth, and help with forecasting as we plan for the future. We strive for 100 percent participation from our parent community in the Annual Fund. We ask for a yearly tax-deductible gift of \$500 per family and understand that some families may be able to contribute more and some will feel more comfortable giving less. All gifts are greatly appreciated, no matter the amount. You may choose to contribute in monthly installments with your tuition payments, or you can choose to give once yearly.

**Billing:** Tuition is due no later than the first day of each month. A \$25 late payment fee will be charged in the event the payment is received after the 3rd of the month. Communication with the office is necessary with tuition payment issues.

**Refunds:** No refunds are given for vacations, inclement weather, emergency closures or absences.

**Withdrawal:** Salado Montessori must be notified in writing four weeks in advance of the date the child is to be withdrawn. A \$100 withdrawal fee will be assessed in the event four weeks written notice is not given.

# The School Day

PRE-SCHOOL/HALF DAY (3-4 Yr. Old)	8:30 – 12:00
KINDERGARTEN / EXTENDED DAY (5-6 Yr. Old)	8:30 – 3:00

## A Typical Day:

- 8:30 – 8:45 Children arrive (it is extremely important for children to be on time)
- 8:30 – 11:30 Morning work period
- 11:30 – 12:00 Recess
- 12:00 – 12:15 Half day dismissal
- 12:00 – 12:30 Lunch
- 12:30 – 3:00 Afternoon work period/
- 3:00 – 3:15 Extended day/Kindergarten dismissal

**Arrival:** Please drop your child off between 8:30 and 8:45 using the carpool line.

If you arrive after 8:45 you must enter through the North door. Please be prompt when dropping off your child. It is very important that the children arrive with adequate time to prepare for the day before class begins. This will enable them to participate fully in the morning classroom activities and prevent distracting the other children.

**Late Arrival:** If you have medical appointments or other special circumstances that will cause your child to arrive at school after 8:45, please notify your lead guide 24 hours prior to the late arrival, via the guide's email address, or call the office.

**Pick-Up:** Dismissal is from 12:00 to 12:15 for Half Day and 3:00 to 3:15 for Kindergarteners. Children will wait until their parent's car drives to the front of the line. Again, we are asking parents to remain in their car and drive up to the pick-up area and a Salado Montessori staff member will bring your child and assist them into the car. Should you not arrive before 12:15 or 3:15, you will receive a phone call. After the first late pick-up, a \$1 per minute fee will apply.

**Early Pick-Up:** If you need to pick your child up prior to the end of the regular school day, please notify your lead guide 24 hours prior to the late arrival, via the guide's email address, or call the office.

**Attendance:** Research and observation show that children who are prompt and consistent with their attendance have the best opportunity for academic and social success in the classroom and beyond. To put it in Montessori terminology, consistent and prompt attendance helps normalize children and classrooms.

Please notify the school in the event of any absences. When possible, we ask that you schedule extended travel during our long breaks. If you must schedule travel or other activities that will take your child out of school for more than a day, or if a situation arises that call for your child to be out for a day or part of a day. Please notify us as soon as possible. This will help your child's guide to plan accordingly. **Communication is a key factor.**

The start of the year is an important transitional time. Please do not plan activities or travel that will cause absences during this time unless you absolutely must.

Absences due to illness are considered unexcused without a note from a parent or a doctor. We may ask for a doctor's note when health related absences or tardiness become chronic. Other absences or tardiness are considered unexcused when prior notice has not been given. Kindergarteners (age 6) will be considered truant without notification of absence.

If there is chronic absence or tardiness, we will schedule a conference with you, your child's guide, and our Director to discuss steps to address attendance issues. We understand that life may throw a curve ball and will make exceptions when the circumstances merit them.

**Release of Children:** Children will be released only to parents or authorized representatives. Only those individuals designated on enrollment information will be allowed to pick up your child. Please provide names and phone numbers for any people who are authorized to pick up your child or children. We will ask to see a photo ID if we are unfamiliar with the person picking up your child or if your child does not recognize the person. We will call you to ask permission to release your child to anyone not already authorized. If you are sending someone to pick up your child, please tell them to join the carpool line and have their photo ID ready. Please make sure you communicate to the school in writing (email, text, or handwritten note) who will be picking up your child. If your child is going home with someone not on our list, such as a friend after school, the office must have permission in writing from the parent. Last minute phone calls from a parent for emergency situations are acceptable.

**Visitors:** Any visitors to Salado Montessori can only gain access via the North Door, which will be locked and only opened from the inside. Visitors must communicate to our staff what the purpose of the visit is or whom they are coming to see and provide identification.

All approved visitors will be required to sign in the Visitor Log, by the North Car Port entrance. The following information will be logged:

- Date
- Time in
- Time out
- Name of visitor
- Reason for visit
- ID checked

During their visit, we ask visitors to:

- Wear a visitor badge which should be displayed clearly at all times.
- Familiarise themselves with the emergency evacuation procedures. These are displayed near all fire exits from the premises. A member of staff will alert the visitor if we are expecting a fire alarm test.
- Remain clearly visible to a member of staff at all times while they are on the premises.
- At no time should a visitor enter the children's toilets or rest area.

**Field Trips:** Each parent is asked to accompany their child and drive their child. If the parent requests another parent to drive, we will ensure that each child has their personal car seat left at school with the child's name on it and that all drivers leave a copy of their Driver's License and Insurance at the office. At all times, there will be a ratio of 1 adult for every 6 students.

**Snack:** Two to three times per semester each family will take provide snack for their child's class. The items needed will be communicated the Thursday before by the lead guide.

**Lunch:** Parents are responsible for providing lunch for their child. Items that require refrigeration will need to be placed in an insulated lunch bag with a Blue Ice pack. Please use a thermos to keep food warm if necessary.

Please send a nutritious lunch for your child each day. To develop proper nutritional habits, lunches should consist of multiple items so that your child may make choices about what to eat.

These items should be healthy items that your child enjoys eating. Please include wholesome foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, brown rice and other whole grains, healthy fats, quality proteins. Your child will be expected to eat the majority of food provided for them in their lunch box. Please adjust this quantity to be appropriate for your child's individual eating habits. Water will be provided in the classroom, so no drinks should be sent.

Non-nutritional items - including candy, chips, cookies, granola bars, fish crackers, pudding, juice boxes and soda, or other pre-packaged items with significant amounts of sugar and other chemicals - are not allowed. If such items are brought to school, they will be sent home unopened.

Salado Montessori supports conservation of resources and strives to teach environmental stewardship. We teach the children to 'reduce, reuse, recycle.' Please pack your child's lunch in reusable containers, such as sandwich boxes and thermos bottles.

Heating food is time consuming. If you choose to send food that needs to be reheated, please limit the microwave requirements to one minute.

## Discipline

The positive model of discipline within our Montessori setting is self-discipline, where concentration, focus, and independent learning happen without contention or interruption. Children are respected, and misbehavior is handled with positive approaches. Salado Montessori follows positive discipline guidelines by using positive reinforcement, redirection and other forms of positive behavior management. It is also our policy that we will handle ALL discipline situations that may arise with the children while they are on the Salado Montessori campus.

Families of Salado Montessori students are expected to foster and promote the virtues present in Montessori curriculum. Families agree not to disrupt, interfere, or interrupt school programs, school activities or the classroom setting. Long term failure to do so may result in the termination of a student's enrollment.

**Behavior Policy:** Salado Montessori uses natural and logical consequences to support children in maintaining the classroom ground rules. We do not use corporal punishment, verbal abuse, or other intimidating means of discipline. Our intention is for our children to never be humiliated or ridiculed in any way. Please keep in mind, this policy also applies to parents. Children may not be yelled at, spanked or threatened to be spanked while at Salado Montessori. Instead, we follow Maria Montessori's Three Levels of Discipline. Classroom discipline is centered on a basic concept of respect; respect for each other and respect for the environment. Within reason, behavior problems will be worked out in the classroom. Students will receive verbal reminders of rules when they are broken.

Montessori guides are trained to respond to misbehavior in the following ways:

- The child's behavior is specifically addressed with respect and firm boundaries. Their character is never evaluated.
- Opportunities are provided for the child to express and define their feelings. Active listening is an essential tool used by all guides to validate the child's feelings while clear boundaries are communicated.
- The guide sets the tone for bringing the child into calmness by focusing on logical consequences rather than using harsh words or sudden reprimands.

The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal, and this self-possession is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly and logical manner. Studies have shown that exterior order and peace help to bring internal order and peace. One classroom concept is that children choose work they are capable of doing and are free to use materials as long as they wish without interference from others. This helps avoid or alleviate some discipline problems that might be present in other environments.

On occasion, we may be faced with a particularly difficult disciplinary situation. If a parent is asked to pick up their child because the behavior is persisting, the child will be removed from the classroom and wait in the office. When the child returns the next day, the guide will briefly meet with the child and parent before the child can return to the classroom. Any limitations for the child will be discussed at that time.

When behavior becomes disruptive to the class and continues over time, the guide will schedule a conference with the parents. Together, a course of action consistent with our principles will be planned. Parents, guides, and the child will work harmoniously and vigilantly together to support the child's development.

There may be times when other professional resources will be requested in order to serve the child's best interests.

Hitting, kicking, or other physically aggressive behaviors by a student toward a guide or classmate will result in an immediate phone call to the parent to retrieve the child from school for the rest of the day and to schedule a conference within three days.

For serious infractions or in the event that recurring problems cannot be resolved in a mutually beneficial way, it may become necessary, and we reserve the right, to ask the child to leave the class. Temporary suspension from school will be a last resort measure to impress upon a student the need for self-discipline and cooperative behavior. If this occurs, the child cannot return to school until a conference with the parents, guides and administration takes place. Ultimately the Lead Guide will determine the balance their class requires to function in an optimal manner and we request that parents deal directly with their child's guide. Parents are expected to respond promptly to the guide's request for a meeting when there is a problem with inappropriate behavior.

Actions that will result in the immediate suspension of a student include:

- Extreme physical violence against another student, staff member, animal, or self.
- Willful destruction of the classroom environment or any school property.
- Other extremely aggressive behavior that disrupts the classroom activities.

Salado Montessori, Inc., reserves the right to place a child on probation and eventually to dismiss the child from school should such an action be warranted. Dismissal from the school will be considered only when all other attempts to work with a student have failed. In the event a student is dismissed at the school's discretion, no tuition payments or parts thereof will be refunded.

The following behaviors are prohibited by ALL persons: corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking pinching, and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear; threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom; abusive or profane language; any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment; and any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing or isolating a child.

If a parent has concerns regarding another child's behavior, we ask that you discuss your concern with the appropriate guide. Under NO circumstance will parents be allowed to approach a child or their parents in an effort to deal with a situation while at the school. We consider this method as wholly inappropriate and it will not be tolerated. Failure to abide by this policy may result in banishment from the school campus and all school related activities.

**Biting Policy:** An occasional biting incident is normal. However, if chronic biting develops and it is determined that the child would be better served in a smaller group setting, you may be asked to remove your child from the school until the problem is under control.

**Department of Family Protective Services Discipline and Guidance Policy:**

Discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child
- Appropriate to the child’s level of understanding
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control

Our caregivers will only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child’s age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child’s age.

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child
- Hitting a child with a hand or an instrument
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age

## Student Health & Wellbeing

**Illness Policy:** Please do not send your child to school when any of the following symptoms are present: fever of 100°F or higher, rash, uncontrollable cough, excessive mucus, discharge from the eyes, diarrhea, vomiting, or severe sore throat.

Children with any symptoms of illness should not be sent to school. A sick child does not have the physical or emotional stamina to participate in school activities. In addition, keeping your ill child at home minimizes the spread of communicable disease and demonstrates respect for other children and their families.

If your child appears too ill to function normally in the class or develops any of these symptoms during the school day, you will be notified via phone and are expected to pick your child up as soon as possible. Your partnership is requested in keeping sick children home when they are sick. Please allow at least 24 hours of fever free health before returning to school

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness please notify the office via email or call during operating hours (8:00AM – 4:00PM).

If there is an outbreak of a contagious disease at the school, parents will be notified by the guide or Director immediately. Please let the office know if your child has been diagnosed with any communicable diseases, as we are required to report these types of illnesses back to the State.

If your child has been exposed to a contagious disease they should be kept home, and their condition should be reported to the office. Strep throat, pinworms, conjunctivitis, impetigo, measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever, head lice, etc. are among those conditions categorized as “highly contagious”.

For the prevention of contagious diseases, we will meticulously disinfect all learning materials, surfaces, textiles, floors, doors, bathrooms, food service supplies, and any other commonly used item.

Children will receive clear instructions in effective hand washing and covering their mouths when coughing and sneezing.

**Lice:** Head lice are a common problem in any school, and the Health Department has classified the carrying of lice as one of the conditions warranting exclusion from class until treatment has been administered. If we find it necessary to do a school-wide check and your child is found to have head lice, you will be notified immediately, and your child will need to be picked up and treated before returning to school. A staff member will check your child's head before re-admitting them to the classroom.

**Medical Emergencies:** Staff members are trained in CPR and standard First-Aid procedures and will offer those treatments when needed.

For an injury that requires the immediate attention of a health-care professional, staff will:

1. Contact emergency medical services by calling 911
2. Begin CPR if necessary
3. Notify the parent specified on your enrollment application. If that person cannot be reached, we will begin contacting those listed as emergency contact persons in the student's file.
4. Staff may take the child to the nearby Baylor Scott and White Clinic after they have ensured the supervision of all other children.
5. Contact the physician or other health-care professional identified in the child's record

**Please be sure we have your daytime phone numbers and emergency contacts, so we may contact you or someone you designate in the event of an emergency.**

**Immunizations:** The Texas Department of Health requires that every child have the minimum state vaccine requirements. Please be sure to have your child's physician complete and sign up to date vaccine records before they start school.

Conscientious objectors to immunizations may choose to be exempt from immunizations for one of the following two reasons:

1. Their physician recommends against immunizations on medical grounds.
2. Their parents' sign an affidavit mandating release based on religious or personal beliefs.

Should there be an outbreak of a disease that is preventable by immunization; those children not immunized will be barred from attending school, per state mandates.

It is the policy of Salado Montessori to comply with the reporting requirements of confirmed communicable diseases as required under Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 81.042. Salado Montessori is not in a position to diagnose or disseminate any medical conditions of any students. No medical information about any students will be disclosed to anyone other than that student's parents or legal guardian.

**Vision and Hearing Screening:** Vision and Hearing Screenings must be completed for children who are four years old before September 1. All four, five and six-year-old children must submit the results to the office for the child's file.

**Medications:** We understand that your child may need to take occasional or regular medications. Whether your child becomes ill and needs to have short-term medicine administered or has a regular prescription that must be taken during the school day, a parent must report this to the office and fill out an Authorization for Dispensing Medication form.

The following procedures apply to all students:

- Parents must complete and sign the Authorization for Dispensing Medication form for any Salado Montessori employee to administer a short-term or therapeutic dose medication. This form is available on our website, [www.saladomontessori.com/forms](http://www.saladomontessori.com/forms) or in the Director's office. Long-term medications require a one-time note from your physician stating the type of medication and the condition that makes it necessary.
- All medication, prescription or over-the-counter must be taken to the office. Do not put medication of any type in your child's lunch box or backpack. Prescription medicines must be sent in the original container clearly marked with your child's name, the doctor's name, and the prescription dosage and expiration date. Do not send medicines of any type in Tupperware containers, envelopes, plastic bags, foil, plastic wrap, etc. Nonprescription medicines must be sent in the original container, clearly labeled with your child's name. Your written instructions, signed and dated, should accompany the medicine.
- Speak to your child about the importance of taking the medicine.
- When your child is through with their course of medication it must be picked up from the office or it will be thrown away.

**Clothing:** Young children should come to school in clothing that is comfortable. Dress your children in clothing they can easily take off to go to the bathroom and put on again by themselves. We do not recommend belts, suspenders, or overalls unless your child has mastered the skills necessary to wear these items. Rubber-soled closed toed shoes are recommended because they are easy to run and play in, and do not come off easily. Also consider that the heels of boots may accidentally hurt other students, and crocs or flip-flops can be awkward to run in.

Light-up clothing, lunch boxes, or backpacks can be very distracting in the classroom as well as clothing, lunch boxes, or backpacks with TV or Movie characters displayed. We are asking that these not be worn or sent to school.

Jewelry often gets lost or broken at school, so it should be left at home.

Let the weather be your guide. In cool weather, please send your child in an outer wrap and cap. Caps are very important in cool weather, as 50 percent of our body heat is lost through the top of our head.

Students will need to have at least one change of clothing. Please bring a set of clean clothes the first day in a labeled Ziploc bag. Please be sure to replenish clothes when they are used (wet clothes will be sent home in a plastic grocery bag). Please send a new set of clean clothes the very next day. As weather changes, you will need to provide weather appropriate changes.

If by any chance your child comes home in emergency clothes that belong to the school, please return them to the school the next day, as the school may need them for another student the next day.

Please label all sweaters, jackets, shoes, stockings, and personal belongings. Please check each day that your child leaves school with their belongings and lunch container. Items left at the end of the school year and not reclaimed will be donated to a local charity.

**Allergies:** Please make sure that your child's guide is aware of any allergies that your child might have and be sure that all allergies are listed on your child's application form.

**Food Allergy Awareness:** The CDC reports that 4 in 100 children have a food allergy. Food allergy is a potentially serious immune response to eating specific foods or food additives. Eight types of food account for over 90% of allergic reactions in affected individuals: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, soy, and wheat. Reactions to these foods by an allergic person can range from a tingling sensation around the mouth and lips and hives to death, depending on the severity of the allergy.

Please check in with the guide before sending any food for snack and lunch to ensure you are aware of food allergies present in our classroom community.

**Child Abuse:** Child abuse and neglect can happen anywhere. Please understand that failure to report the abuse or neglect of children is a crime in the state of Texas. We are bound by law to report any suspected abuse. The child abuse hotline is 800-252-5400. If you know of, or even suspect, child abuse or neglect, report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services immediately.

## Safety & Emergency Procedures

**Inclement Weather:** Generally, Salado Montessori will follow Salado Independent School District procedures. SISD calls several television and radio stations and reports their policy, which is then reported to the public. Stations include: KCEN Ch. 6, KWTX Ch. 10, KXXV Ch. 25, WACO - FM (100), KCKR-FM (95.7), KWTX-FM (97.5), KBRQ-FM (102.5), KWTX-AM (1460), KRZI-AM (1580), KEYR-FM (92.9), and KBCT-FM (94.5). [www.saladoisd.org](http://www.saladoisd.org). NOTE: If SISD begins school two hours late, then Salado Montessori will begin class at 10:30. In some cases (if the weather seems very severe), Salado Montessori may opt to NOT follow the SISD procedures and will call in our own preference to the television and radio stations. If you do not hear or see anything on TV or radio, or receive an email from us, then please follow SISD schedule.

When it comes to the safety of our children, please use good common sense when choosing to drive on icy roads or during tornado warnings. Your children will NOT be counted absent if you choose not to get on the street.

**Shelter in Place:** Students and guides will shelter in place in the event of severe weather. While sheltering in place, the designated area is the office bathroom. All children and staff will remain in this area and wait for further instruction. If a shelter-in-place is declared, we strongly discourage parents from coming to the school until instructed to do so.

Parents will be notified. Local authorities and media will also be contacted. Depending on the circumstances, communications may be limited: even if the school phone lines remain open, they will be tied up if there are multiple calls that come in at the same time. In case of a campus evacuation, no one will be available to answer phones. Our first priority in the event an emergency is to ensure that children and school staff are safe. Our second priority is to contact parents to keep them informed.

**Campus Evacuation:** In case of a fire, students would evacuate the Salado Montessori schoolhouse and go to the Southeast corner of the property, closest to the FM2484/FM1670 intersection. Guides will take the school directory, attendance book, and portable first-aid kit. All parents will be notified. In case of further off-campus evacuation, students will be walked to the Amy's Attic on FM2484 and parents will be notified.

**War Time Conditions:** In extreme cases in or around the school, Salado Montessori may close the school in favor of seeking the safety of our homes. If in doubt, please call the school and check your email. If we find it necessary to close the school efforts will be made to contact the parents first, and then their emergency contacts, to pick up their children. If the conditions are severe, all the students and staff members will be congregated in the main schoolroom in the center of the schoolhouse until all children are picked up.

**Lockdown:** In the event of an emergency at Salado Montessori, the Director will make the decision as to whether to perform a lockdown in the school. A lockdown is defined as the restriction of movement during the time of a potentially serious violent incident that would endanger the lives of students and staff.

In the event of a lockdown the Director will:

- Call 911 and stay on the line to provide information requested by the 911 operator
- Follow directives of police once they arrive

In all cases, staff will exercise critical judgement to maximize the safety for themselves and others. If staff, volunteers and students are inside the school they must:

- Remain in the classroom or go to the classroom and close the door.
- Lie on the floor away from doors and windows.
- Remain on the floor until further directions are given

If staff, volunteers or students are on the playground outside the school:

- Move as far away from the building as possible.
- Remain outside until further directions are given.

If students need to be evacuated, the staff members will guide them to Salado Montessori's evacuation site: Amy's Attic, on 2484. Once everyone has safely reached the evacuation site, parents/guardians will be contacted to pick-up their children.

If the problem is not corrected before the beginning of the next school day, parents/guardians will be contacted and will need to make other arrangements for their children for the day. Salado Montessori will remain closed until the school building is safe, and the issue is resolved.

**Intruders:** All staff and volunteers must be aware of the procedures in the event of an intruder being identified on the premises. It is the priority of Salado Montessori to maintain the safety of the children in our care as well as our own safety. An intruder is an individual who has not followed visitor procedures and may or may not be a safety hazard to the setting.

Any member of staff or volunteer who observes an individual who appears suspicious or out-of-place should either approach the individual (if safe to do so), ask for their name and purpose on campus OR should contact the Director for assistance.

The person approaching the suspicious individual must determine if the person poses a safety hazard or just needs to be made aware of the school's visitors' policy.

While determining the status of a visitor, every effort must be made to ensure children in our care are safe, feeling secure and where possible, continuing to be engaged in their current activities. If need be the children must be given reassurances as to their own and others safety and wellbeing.

Procedures for intruders posing a safety hazard:

- Politely greet the intruder, identify yourself and ask the purpose of their visit. Having a member of staff close by to secure the door and for support if needed.
- Explain that all visitors must sign in.
- If the intruder becomes agitated and refuses to leave the building peacefully endeavour to calm the person whilst trying to gain the attention of your fellow staff member to call the police.
- If the intruder persists, the children and staff will gather in the classroom away from the windows and doors. The attendance book and phone will be taken with them, and they will stay there until the police arrive.

- If the person leaves before the police arrive do not attempt to detain them.
- If the person does not leave before the police arrive. Explain to the officers what has happened, so they can deal with the intruder and find a cause for arrest.
- A member of staff in the office will telephone Chelsey Webb, Director, and then contact all parents concerned.

#### Procedure if intruder is armed:

- All staff will be alerted, and the police contacted immediately.
- Staff will try to remain calm, diverting the intruder as far away from the children as possible.
- The children and staff will gather in the class room away from the windows and doors. The attendance book and phone will be taken with them, and they will stay there until the police arrive.
- If the intruder shows a weapon try to remain calm, do not try to disarm them, and reassure them that it is not necessary for them to use it.
- Once the police arrive, make them aware of where the intruder is and any weapon you may have seen, describing the intruder and reporting anything relevant the intruder may have said.
- All staff and children should remain where they are unless directed otherwise by the police.
- A member of staff in the office will telephone Chelsey Webb, Director, and then contact all parents concerned.

**Outdoor Safety:** If the safety of the children/staff is threatened during outside play the following procedure will be put into play.

- The staff member or volunteer who identifies a threat will raise the alarm by clapping for the children to line up immediately, and as quickly as possible get the children back inside the school building, as the situation denotes.
- The most senior member of staff outside, at the incident, is responsible for sweeping the outdoor area for children.
- All other staff must act as quickly as possible to lead the children to a place of safety whilst not endangering themselves, the most likely place being back into the schoolroom, where the children will be assembled quickly and calmly, and attendance will be taken.
- A member of staff will close the window blinds.
- The last member of staff entering the building will lock the door and close the door blinds.
- A member of staff in the office will telephone the police and Chelsey Webb, Director, and then contact all parents concerned.

**In any event there will be a thorough investigation of the incident and all the staff involved will make a report. Chelsey Webb, Director, will inform the police and the parents of the incident and the subsequent investigations. Our security procedures will be reviewed and updated immediately.**

**Gang Free Zone:** Salado Montessori is a gang-free zone. Gang-related criminal activity or engaging in any organized criminal activity a violation of law, prohibited within 1000 feet of the school and subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

As parents, please stay aware of our surroundings. If you suspect gang or drug related activity is occurring, please call 911.

For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

## Parent Involvement

**Parent Commitment:** Salado Montessori is a wonderful environment in which children succeed because of their parental and community support. Because parent involvement is crucial to the success of your child and our school, we require parents make the following commitment to their child and to our school:

- Ensure your child attends school with regularity
- Ensure your child arrives at school between 8:30 and 8:45 daily
- Attend the Parent Orientation Meeting held at the beginning of the school year (or otherwise scheduled)
- Participate in the Observations and Parent-Teacher Conferences each semester
- Participate in the Parent Volunteer Program
- Abide by the school policies and procedures as outlined in this Parent Handbook

**Parent Orientation:** A parent orientation is held at the beginning of every academic school year to discuss our policies and procedures as well as going over any questions or concerns.

**Observations:** You are encouraged to learn more about the Montessori Method by scheduling an observation at any time during our operational hours. Observations are scheduled after the first six weeks of school in order to give guides and students a chance to settle into a rhythm and become comfortable in their classroom environments. By observing your child in their class, you will better understand their work and how you may best support them at home. Observations are arranged via phone or in person.

We ask parents to observe a minimum of twice a year, held just before the parent/guide conferences.

**Conferences:** Conferences are a vital part of your child's education. They provide you with opportunities to meet one-on-one with your child's guide to discuss their progress and to gain a better understanding of the Montessori materials and process. This is also a time for the guide to share ideas and information about how to use the Montessori method at home.

We schedule conferences twice a year, in the late fall and in the spring. It is important that you schedule a conference and then arrive on time. Please call your guide in advance if you are unable to attend the conference.

If at any time during the year you would like to meet with your guide or the Director, please schedule an appointment ahead of time either via email, phone, or in person. Your child may visit our After-School Care program free of charge when you come for a conference.

**Parent Volunteer Program:** We encourage you to give generously of your time and talents in support of the many things that will make our school outstanding. Parent participation is integral to the spirit and day-to-day operations of our school community. The goal is to keep costs lower by doing some of the work ourselves. We depend on parent help in many areas throughout the year and our success is directly connected to how well we work together as a community.

We require that our families devote 20 hours of volunteer time per school year. Those hours will make a huge impact on our fundraising efforts, campus appearance and improvements, and overall sense of community. You can be involved with fundraising or events, provide classroom help (making materials, dusting, laundry, dishes), campus & building improvements, gardening & landscaping, playground construction and maintenance, office help, newsletters, etc.

The need is plentiful, so we encourage our families to give as much of their time as is possible. Please check our newsletter for upcoming volunteer opportunities and be sure to log your volunteer hours in our Parent Volunteer Log.

**Parent Education Library:** We have dedicated shelves in the school office with books about education, parenting, and the Montessori philosophy of education. We also have several Montessori periodicals on hand. These resources are available for you to check out and return.

**Issuing Grievances:** In the event that you have a concern about your child or a school policy or procedure please speak first with your child's Guide, so the concern can be addressed. If this proves to be insufficient in solving your issue, please speak with the Director. It is our sincere hope and ultimate goal that all issues and concerns will be dealt with promptly and appropriately by the school faculty or administration, but if a parent or family member is further dissatisfied with the administrative response, we encourage the matter to be brought before Board of Directors. This may be scheduled by requesting, in advance, time at their regularly scheduled meeting.

**Procedures for Parent Notification:** Parents will be notified by phone for the following reasons: injury, illness, permission to give medications, pick-up person not on the list, or behavioral issues.

Parents will be notified via email and/ or handout for the following reasons: school events, volunteer opportunities and general information. Our regular e-newsletter will include this information and will be available in paper format in the school office upon request.

## Miscellaneous

**Toys and Games:** Please explain to your child that they may not bring toys to school, including play jewelry, make-up and other valuables. These items may be lost or cause challenges with the other children. Toys, including MP3 players and e-tablets, brought to school will be kept in the office and given back at the end of the day.

**Show-and-Tell:** Children often like to bring things from home to show their friends. Encourage items found in nature, such as flower, seashell, feather, fossil, arrowhead, or insect in a jar.

**Pets and Animals:** When there is a resident pet at the school, we are required to have a veterinarian's statement of good health on file. If you want to offer a pet to your child's classroom, please consider the amount of care and attention the pet may need and discuss your ideas with the guide. The decision for or against a pet in the classroom is the guide's. If your child wants to bring a favorite pet to class for a day, you will need to speak directly to the guide well in advance.

If the school chooses to bring another animal under its care you will be notified via email. Should we have visiting pets in the classroom, licensing rules and regulations will be followed.

All animals kept at the school are maintained at the highest levels of cleanliness. As per State requirements, any necessary paperwork for the animals owned by the school is on file in the office.

**Homework:** The Montessori environment is rich with daily experiences. Because students manage their own work every day, there is no need to “practice” such skills at home. For Montessori students, homework comes in the form of the student’s desire to continue working on areas of interest that began in class.

Also, Montessori students are expected to be contributing members of their families, which means taking on responsibility for some household chores. Thus, “homework” becomes replaced by “the work of the home.”

**Birthdays:** The celebration of your child’s birthday is very important, and we want the day to be special. Many families enjoy sharing a birthday treat with the class. This is an opportunity for parents to be creative with the emphasis on nutrition and fun. Because there are children at the school whose parents do not allow sugar at any time, we cannot distribute treats containing sugar (apart from fruit and honey). If you opt to bring a treat for the class, please speak directly to your child’s guide or the Director to arrange the time for the snack and to discuss what the snack will be.

Birthday snacks may include: popcorn with salt and oil, fruits, seeds and nuts, paleo muffins/fruit breads/cupcakes/cookies, frozen fruit pops. While we do not endorse the paleo diet, there are many blogs and other easy online resources that contain delicious and nutritious treat suggestions that contain no dairy or simple sugar.

Please do not distribute birthday party invitations at school unless you include every child in the class.

Please remember that your child must have prior authorization to go home with another child, even for a birthday party.

**Teacher & Staff Gifts:** Teachers and staff at Salado Montessori are not permitted to accept cash “tips” or gifts, except for small, personal tokens of appreciation. If you feel the desire to give a small gift, something made by your child is a particularly charming way to say thank you.

**Holidays and Staff Development Days:** Staff development days, vacations, and holidays will be observed as listed on the school calendar. Salado Montessori observes major holidays. We also recognize less widely known ones. While we have no religious affiliation, we encourage the children to become aware of the various cultural and religious beliefs and customs celebrated throughout the world.

**Cell Phones:** Cell phones are for emergency purposes only and if they MUST come to school, they should be kept in the child’s backpack always. If a child is using a cellphone at any time during the school day without prior authorization from their guide, it will be kept in the office and given back at the end of the day.

Cellular phones are an interruption and distraction, not only to our teachers but also to children’s concentration. We ask that all visitors refrain from using their cellular phones.

**Photographs and Publicity:** Photographs of our students may be taken frequently for use in our own online newsletter. Photographs of our students and school community may occasionally be taken by local media to be used in newspapers, magazines, brochures, and other publicly available materials. Your permission for photographs including your child to be used without compensation is indicated on the Use of Images Permission Form.

**Office Telephone:** The school office phone may be used by students and parents on occasion, but this should be kept to a minimum.

**Change of Information:** If you have changes to name, address, phone number, emergency contacts, release-to information, please let us know. This information goes into our school database and is given to the class guides, so they can have updated information at all times.

**Breast-Feeding:** A mother is entitled by law to breast-feed her baby in any location in which the mother is authorized to be. Mothers are welcomed to breast-feed their children at any time in the classroom. Salado Montessori provides a comfortable, clean area in the office bathroom if the mother chooses to breast-feed privately.

