aidan
MONTESSORI
SCHOOL

Parent Handbook
2023-2024

Aidan Montessori School • 2700 27th Street, NW • Washington, DC 20008 • 202.387.2700
www.aidanschool.org

Table of Contents

Table of Contents 1
General Information 4
- Message from the Head of School 4
- Mission Statement 4
- Statement of Philosophy & Objectives 4
- Diversity Statement 5
- Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy 5

Faculty & Staff 5
Board of Trustees 6
Parent Association 6
- Who are we? 6
- What do we do? 7
- How can you participate? 7
- Volunteer Opportunities 7
- Parent Association Activities 7

Educational Programs 8
- Class Structure 8
- Student Transitions 10
- Requesting Teachers 11
- Student Assessment 11
- Classroom Observations 12
- Parent-Teacher Conferences 12
- Support Services Team 12
- Library 13
- Aidan Program for Families (APF) 13
- Community Service 14

School Operations 15
- Getting to School 15
- School Hours 15
- General Arrival & Dismissal Schedule 15
- Campus Map 18
- Locations 19
- Driving to School 19
- Arrival & Dismissal Procedures 19
- After School Programs (ASP) 22

Attendance, Tardiness, & Vacations 23
Snow Days & Inclement Weather 25
Health & Safety 26
Security & Visitor Guidelines 34
Emergency Preparedness 34
Classroom Procedures 36
Field Trip & Goings Out Policies 41
Going Outside in Weather Extremes 42
Teacher & Staff Gifts 42
Code of Conduct 42
Parent Conduct: 42
Zero Tolerance 44
Students Conduct: 45
Volunteering at Aidan 46
Communication 47
Emails 47
Emergency Text Messaging System 48
Aidan Website 48
Consistency and Honoring Privacy Preferences 49
General Communication 49
Social & Digital Media 50
Parent Portal & Class Websites 50
Admission & Transitions 50
Sibling Admission Preference Policy 50
Applying Out 51
Special Procedures for Graduating Students 51
Business & Finances 51
Tuition Payment Plans 51
Enrollment Agreements 52
Receipts/Statements 53
Financial Aid 54
Tuition & Fee Schedule and Financial Disclosure 54
Employing Aidan Staff Outside of School 54
Giving at Aidan 55
The Aidan Fund 55
Auction to Fund Students 56
Capital Campaigns 56
Records Retention and Management 56

Policy 56
Definitions 57
Electronic Records 57
Inquiries 58
Records Retention Schedule 58
Upcoming Year at-a-Glance 61
August/September 61
October 62
November 63
December 64
January 64
February 65
March 65
April 65
May 65
June 66
Ongoing Activities 66
Background Information 67
A History of Aidan Montessori School 67
Corporation, Accreditation, & Associations 67
A Brief Guide to Aidan's Accrediting & Collegial Organizations 68
Guidelines from The Association of Independent Maryland Schools (AIMS) 69
On the Handbook 72
Revision Policy 72
Revision Date 72

General Information

Message from the Head of School

We are so delighted to join in partnership with you in supporting your children to reach their optimal potential. At Aidan Montessori School, we are committed to working as Dr. Montessori herself did: giving children freedom within a prepared environment, observing, and responding to their needs. With highly trained faculty beside them, your child will have no obstacles to working within a fully-implemented Montessori environment.

This handbook is a resource for you. It provides our policies and guidelines for our community. But it also contains information that will help you learn about your child. We consider this handbook a living document, one that we will revise and add to as we grow in community. You will have access to this document digitally, so you can always stay on top of changes. And we will inform you when we make changes you should know about!

At Aidan, children are active participants in their own learning. Adults are there to support and guide as needed. And parents are welcome members of the community, to observe, to share knowledge, and to continue to learn alongside their children. We are pleased you have joined our Aidan community!

—Jamie Rue

Mission Statement

Aidan's mission is to help children realize their full potential and become independent, self-motivated, personally and socially responsible citizens of the world. We do this by following the principles of Montessori education and by cultivating a community centered on curiosity, respect, humanity, and peace. We embrace diversity, striving to maintain an inclusive, equitable environment, where every individual feels a genuine sense of belonging.

Statement of Philosophy & Objectives

Aidan begins with a deep respect for children as unique individuals. We are concerned about the development of the whole child—social and emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual. An underlying purpose of an Aidan Montessori School education is to aid the child in independence and self-formation by creating an environment that can unlock the inherent potentials and intelligences within each child. We:

- Embrace the Montessori pedagogy, which is based on universal principles of child development, as sound theory and practice for teaching and learning;

- Look to current accepted research to inform our evolving understanding of human development. Recognize the many differences in learning rates and styles;
- Believe in individualizing each child's school experience for the fullest development of their potential. Embrace the concept of a multi-age, three-year age span classroom community as optimum for academic, social, and emotional learning;
- Believe that the dynamic classroom requires a sufficient gathering of children to operate effectively; and
- Value cooperation over competition and believe that each child's work and behavior should be evaluated on their inherent capacity rather than by comparison.

Diversity Statement

"The needs of humankind are universal. Our means of meeting them create the richness and diversity of the planet. The Montessori child should come to relish the texture of that diversity." — Maria Montessori

At Aidan Montessori School, we embrace and celebrate the diversity of our world. Our differences—including those of culture, race, ethnicity, religion, age, family structure, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomics, learning style, and world view, among others—form and inform a rich environment that is a crucial part of educating our children on their path to maturity and global citizenship. Our interactions across our entire community are characterized by guiding principles of respect, equity, justice, inclusion, belonging, humanity, peace, and personal responsibility.

We oppose discrimination and consciously recognize the value of diversity throughout our hiring practices, admission and financial aid processes, classroom composition, professional development, community, and classroom activities.

Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy

Aidan admits students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Aidan does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender identity, or sexual orientation in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, financial aid programs, athletic programs, and other school-administered programs.

Faculty & Staff

Aidan is proud of its AMI-trained classroom faculty, dedicated support staff, and accomplished specialty faculty and administrators. For a full and up-to-date list of all Aidan

employees, please see our website (www.aidanschool.org). There you will find names, faces, titles, and contact information, as well as a profile for each employee detailing their qualifications for their post.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for setting the mission, establishing overall policy, and ensuring the financial stability of Aidan Montessori School. Through the selection of a Head of School, the Board assures implementation of the policies it has adopted.

A full and up-to-date list of Aidan's current Board members can be found on our website.

Board members serve staggered two-year terms. In addition, the Head of School serves as an ex-officio, non-voting Board member. The Committee on Trustees is responsible for developing and considering individuals for Board membership. The full Board votes annually to fill any vacancies and to elect officers for the following year.

Aidan's current Board of Trustees consists primarily of current parents, alumni parents, and friends of the school. More significantly, Board members are administrators, educators, writers, fundraisers, lawyers, engineers, financial planners, business owners, planners, consultants and problem solvers. While the Board strives for diversity in the backgrounds and skills of trustees, all members share a common commitment to maintain the character, philosophy, and fiscal health of Aidan Montessori School.

The Board works through standing committees: Executive; Advancement; Trustees; Finance; Buildings and Grounds; and Access, Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity (ADIE). The Board authorizes other committees, such as Strategic Planning, and special task forces to study specific issues that arise. Parents who are not Board members have served on Board committees. The Board holds regular meetings during the school year. Actions of the Board are reported to the parent body at large through letters from the President of the Board of Trustees or the Director of Communication.

Parent Association

Who are we?

When you enroll your child at Aidan Montessori School, you automatically become a member of the Parent Association (PA).

You can find an up-to-date account of the Parent Association's leadership on our website.

What do we do?

The Parent Association mobilizes and coordinates parent volunteers and resources for the support of the school.

The PA holds regular meetings open to all parents, at which upcoming school activities are discussed and planned. The PA works closely with school administrators, faculty, and staff.

The PA has a presence at many events throughout the school year. Every parent is needed to help Aidan thrive. Please participate!

Aidan's Assistant Head of School for Operations serves as liaison between the PA and the administrative staff and also provides support for the PA Officers, assisting them with logistics and publicity.

How can you participate?

Attend a PA meeting and/or respond to a call for volunteers sent out in School Communications. Be sure to visit the Parent Association page on Aidan's website to find out how you can get involved and please contact one of the PA Officers if you have an idea or a suggestion.

Volunteer Opportunities

We want to include as many parents as possible in volunteer activities. For this reason, we try to avoid having a volunteer serve in the same position for more than three consecutive years. For Committee Chairs, the ideal arrangement is for one Co-Chair to be a veteran of the prior year, while the other Co-Chair is new. This allows for the transfer of institutional knowledge while opening up opportunities for leadership. Room Parent and Committee Chair assignments are subject to approval by the Head of School.

All parents, especially when volunteering, are expected to abide by the Aidan Code of Conduct outlined in this Parent Handbook. The Aidan community depends heavily on parent participation, and the atmosphere of trust and respect here at Aidan is maintained by the professional and courteous behavior of our volunteers.

Please see our website for more information about the Parent Association—and thank you for participating!

Parent Association Activities

- Book Fair

- Community Service
- Fall Festival
- Parent Association Meetings & Coffees
- Pizza Fridays
- Play Date in the Park
- Popsicles in the Park
- Room Parents & Gatherings
- Spring Fling
- Teacher Appreciation Week

Educational Programs

The Montessori philosophy, as defined by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), is an educational approach rooted in the belief that children are naturally curious, capable, and eager to learn. It emphasizes creating an environment that fosters independence, self-directed exploration, and respect for each child's unique developmental journey. This philosophy encourages educators to be guides, observing and understanding each child's needs, interests, and abilities and facilitating their growth through individualized learning experiences. Through the Montessori approach, children are empowered to become confident, self-disciplined, and lifelong learners who contribute positively to their communities and the world.

Class Structure

Montessori classrooms are thoughtfully designed to create an environment that promotes independent learning, self-discovery, and holistic development. Several key elements characterize the class structure in Montessori class structure:

- ***Mixed-Age Groups*:** Montessori classrooms typically consist of mixed-age groups, often spanning a three-year age range. This setup encourages peer learning, collaboration, and the development of leadership skills.
- ***Prepared Environment*:** Montessori classrooms are meticulously prepared with various age-appropriate, hands-on materials designed to engage the senses, promote exploration, and facilitate learning through concrete experiences.

- ***Work Periods:*** Montessori classrooms follow a flexible daily schedule with uninterrupted work periods. Children can choose activities based on their interests and developmental needs during these periods.
- ***Individualized Learning:*** The Montessori approach recognizes the unique pace and style of each child's learning journey.
- ***Freedom Within Limits:*** While children are given the freedom to choose their activities, this freedom is balanced by certain limits and responsibilities. Children are taught to respect the needs of others, the environment, and the materials, fostering a sense of responsibility and consideration.
- ***Peace Education and Conflict Resolution*:** Montessori classrooms emphasize developing social skills, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution. Children are guided in peaceful communication, empathy, and problem-solving, creating a harmonious and respectful community.
- ***Role of the Teacher:*** Montessori teachers, often called "guides," play a pivotal role in the classroom. They observe, assess, and provide subtle guidance to foster independent thinking and problem-solving.

Aidan's classrooms are divided into the following levels:

Young Children's Community (YCC)

- Ages: 18 months - 36 months - *upon readiness*
- Aidan has a capacity for 12 children, with one AMI-trained Montessori teacher and two assistants.
- Half-Day and Full-Day Program.
- The Full-Day program offers nap time.

Primary Level

- Ages: 2.5 years - 6 years - *upon readiness*
- Aidan has a capacity for 20-26 children, with one AMI-trained Montessori teacher and one assistant.
- Full-Day Program.
- Nap is available for younger children.

Elementary Level - Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary

- Ages: Lower Elementary - 6 years to 9 years (1st to 3rd year) - *upon readiness*
- Ages: Upper Elementary - 9 years to 12 years (4th year to 6th year)
- Aidan has a capacity for 20-25 children with one AMI-trained Montessori teacher and one assistant.
- Full-Day Program.

Specials

In addition to the Montessori Education and classroom lessons, Aidan offers an additional educational experience that includes Art, Music, Physical Education (PE), and a Language Program. Integrating these subjects into the Elementary Program provides the students with a well-rounded education that nurtures their creativity, exposure, physical well-being, and linguistic abilities.

Student Transitions

Transition Process - *Students moving from one program to another*

Upon observing a child's evident readiness and clear indicators of advancement to the next level, their teachers will indicate a well-defined action plan. This plan will be communicated in conjunction with the Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management and the Assistant Head of School for Faculty and Curriculum.

Subsequently, the teacher will promptly relay the news to the parents and discuss strategies to facilitate a smooth and successful transition to the next program level.

Parents should be aware that placement and transition to a new program level of the school at Aidan might not precisely replicate a graded program in conventional education. A September 30 birth date cutoff determines placement in most public and private, and independent schools. For example, a first-grade student must be six years old by September 30, or they must attend kindergarten. At our Montessori school, placement is based on the child's readiness.

Please note that transitions almost always have financial differences in tuition.

Outplacement for Graduates

Upon reaching the milestone of their 6th grade and final year, parents will be invited to engage in a meaningful discussion with both the Head of School and the Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management. This dialogue aims to facilitate a seamless transition within our educational community and provide guidance on potential placement in other schools.

For graduates, adherence to the Applying Out Process, accessible through the Parent Portal, is imperative. This process has been meticulously designed to ensure a smooth and organized procedure as your child progresses to the next phase of their academic journey.

Requesting Teachers

Aidan is fortunate to have an entire faculty of outstanding and highly accomplished educators. Therefore, we do not accept parent requests for specific teachers. Placements will be made at the sole discretion of Aidan Montessori School. Enrollment Contracts entered into with the school are not contingent upon classroom placement or personnel.

Student Assessment

Montessori assessment approaches celebrate each student's uniqueness and provide a comprehensive view of their development across various domains, including academic, social, emotional, and practical life skills. Teachers observe and evaluate progress daily and carefully record the lessons presented. Transparent Classroom is used internally across all levels to track, record and report on student achievement.

Progress Reports

Progress Reports are a comprehensive and individualized assessment tool that provides detailed information about a student's development, growth, and achievements. Unlike traditional report cards that assign grades, Montessori Progress Reports offer students' progress across various domains, reflecting the child's unique strengths, challenges, and areas of growth.

- Children in the Young Children’s Community will receive ongoing informal assessments.
- Primary students will receive one written Progress Report at the end of the school year.
- Elementary students will receive a written mid-year Progress Report in January and another one at the end of the school year.

Testing

While Montessori education generally eschews standardized testing, grades, and ranking, Aidan Montessori School administers standardized testing only to Upper Elementary in the fall and spring. Third-year students in Lower Elementary take the tests as practice. Tests are used to:

- Give the children experience using computer-administered, standardized tests.
- Prepare the children for other external testing (as a life skill).
- Help teachers and administration to identify curricular areas that might need support.
- Identify academic areas of focus for students.

Classroom Observations

Observations allow you to get to know your child's everyday experiences in the Montessori setting. They help you learn more about how your child is growing and developing and confirm that you've made an excellent choice for their education. To sign up for observations, simply email the classroom teacher and the Assistant Head of School for Faculty & Curriculum.

Please note that observations won't occur ***in the first six weeks of school,*** allowing time for routines to settle and children to adjust. Observations will continue until early May, and they'll depend on your child's teacher and your child's readiness for this kind of experience.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are a chance for parents and teachers to chat about the child's school, progress, and how they're doing at home. They are held twice a year, in the fall and spring, on Thursdays and Fridays. On those days, Primary and Elementary students don't have regular classes, and the Young Children's Community still has class on Thursdays.

These meetings can be in person or on Zoom. If attending a conference in person, childcare is available for current Aidan students for the duration of the scheduled conference.

Support Services Team

Counseling

Aidan's School Counselor supports the work of Primary and Elementary teachers in providing the optimum learning environment for each child. Sometimes, a teacher and administrator

may request that a Counselor work with an individual child and their parents. Parents may also directly ask for support from the School Counselor.

Learning Support Specialist

The Learning Support program at Aidan Montessori School has been meticulously crafted to offer supplementary assistance to our students. Through personalized attention in one-on-one and small-group settings, we strive to cater to individual learning requirements

Our dedicated Learning Support Specialist collaborates closely with both our faculty and families to gain a comprehensive understanding of each student's unique needs. Additionally, they are proficient in discerning relevant community resources to enhance the support system further. They also interpret and translate the outcomes of Standardized testing and serve as the primary liaison for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Please note that the Learning Support Specialist and Teachers do not provide parents with a diagnosis and cannot assess learning disabilities.

Diagnostic Evaluation

To provide appropriate classroom support, the School may request and/or require that parents seek diagnostic evaluation(s) of their child through outside professional services. This may include but is not limited to psycho-education evaluation, motor-sensory evaluation, language assessment, and hearing and/or vision testing. The school requires parents to follow through with requested assessments and fully disclose the results in a timely manner. Not fulfilling this requirement may impact the child's eligibility for re-enrollment in the subsequent year at the school.

Library

The Aidan Library is for students, faculty, staff, and parents. Books and periodical resources support the curriculum of the Montessori classroom environment. The Librarian sets the policies and procedures regarding the check-out and return of books. The Aidan Library gives students a first experience in research; it is meant to supplement, not replace, family use of the public library. Parents also may use the library to make selections for their children.

Aidan Program for Families (APF)

The Aidan Program for Families (APF) creates a forum to establish relationships that support and empower parents as they embrace the changes that come with a dynamic family life. As such, Aidan offers assistance to our families in establishing and sustaining an optimum loving and supportive home environment that is also guided by Montessori pedagogy. All adults in the lives of the children—parents, grandparents, caregivers—are invited to participate in the

exchange of information and ideas interweaving the principles of Montessori pedagogy with current research on child development.

These programs foster a harmonious and interdependent relationship between home and school, expanding our educational reach beyond the classroom and directly into your hands. The discussions and presentations place the responsibility to learn and become informed about Montessori theory and practice in your hands since you are your child's first and most influential educator. Topics are chosen so as to be relevant to today's families as they relate to the intricacies of raising children in the 21st century. Check *School Notes*, *This Week at Aidan* and the APF page on the Aidan website for details and schedules about APF events!

Opportunities This Year

- New Family Orientation
- Elementary Parent Information Classes (EPIC)
- 30-Minute Montessori
- Caregivers 101
- Guided Tour with Wine & Cheese
- The Montessori Journey
- Montessori Works for Primary & Elementary

Community Service

Service to others is an important part of Montessori philosophy. As a school, we aim to serve those in our immediate neighborhood of the District of Columbia as well as members of our global community. Each of the individual classroom communities nurtures an ethic of caring. Some classes, inspired by their students, undertake projects that evolve from particular natural disasters and/or special interests.

The Community Service Committee of the PA organizes charitable efforts throughout the year. For example, Aidan has an on-going relationship with the Bright Beginnings Family Development Center serving homeless families in DC and with So Others Might Eat (S.O.M.E.), which provides food and other services for the extremely poor citizens of our city. Our community is also in partnership with the Office of the Clean City's Adopt-a-Block initiative, cleaning up 27th Street.

Parents are encouraged to involve their children in these drives and events. We also encourage families to model generosity and to talk with and to read to their children about

giving to others. Information can be found on the Community Service page of the Aidan website.

School Operations

Getting to School

Smooth arrival and dismissal is crucial to the well-being of the Aidan community and to our relationship with the neighborhood. We need your cooperation and understanding! Please explain the Arrival/Dismissal policies and procedures to all caregivers who drop off or pick up your child. **Your signature on the enrollment contract indicates your willingness to follow all of Aidan's policies and procedures. Refusal to comply is considered a violation of the Aidan Code of Conduct.**

School Hours

School Office: 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Half-Day Young Children's Community: 8:15 AM-11:15 AM

Full-Day Young Children's Community: 8:15 AM-3:00 PM

Primary: 8:30 AM-3:00 PM

Lower Elementary: 8:00 AM-3:45 PM

Upper Elementary: 8:00 AM-3:45 PM

After School Program (ASP): 3:00 PM-6:00 PM (Primary) & 4:00 PM-6:00 PM (Elementary)

General Arrival & Dismissal Schedule

Arrival

8:00 AM: Upper & Lower Elementary Arrival

8:00 AM: Upper & Lower Elementary Classes Start

8:00 AM-8:15 AM: Young Children's Community Arrival

8:15 AM: Young Children's Community Classes Start

8:15 AM-8:30 AM: Primary Arrival

8:30 AM: Primary Classes Start

When siblings have different arrival times, we provide "Gap Care," which allows you to drop all siblings off at the earliest arrival time at no extra charge. When the child with the earlier arrival is absent, Gap Care is not an option for the other child(ren).

For arrival after 8:30 AM, please stop by the Reception Desk so that a staff member may accompany your child to class thereby minimizing any interruptions to classes already in progress.

Early Arrival

If you arrive by car before 8:00 AM you may wait in the curb lane. If arriving on foot, you ***must*** wait with your child outside the school until the school doors open at 8:00 AM.

Late Arrival

Our staff return inside the building once arrival concludes at 8:30 AM. If you arrive after 8:30 AM, please park your car legally and walk your child into school. If your child arrives after 8:30 AM, please check in with the Receptionist so that a staff member can walk your child to class thereby minimizing disruptions to the class that is already in progress. Upper Elementary students arriving after 8:30 AM must report to the Receptionist and not enter through the playground.

For arrival after 8:35 AM, please escort your child to the main entrance and stop by the Reception Desk to sign your child into the building. If your child is chronically late to school, you will be contacted by the school. Please be on time!

Dismissal

11:15 AM: Half-Day Young Children's CommunityDismissal

2:45 PM-3:00 PM: Full-Day Young Children's Community Dismissal

2:45 PM-3:00 PM: Primary Dismissal

3:45 PM-4:00 PM: Lower Elementary Dismissal

3:45 PM-4:00 PM: Upper Elementary Dismissal

When siblings have different Dismissal times, we provide "Gap Care" allowing you to pick up all siblings at the later dismissal time. When one sibling is absent, you must pick up the other child at the regular time—the Gap Care arrangement does not apply. When utilizing this service, be considerate of your younger child by picking up at the front end of the dismissal window so as to minimize their wait. Young Children's Community and Primary students with an Elementary sibling are welcomed to Gap Care from 3:00 PM-3:45 PM.

Early Dismissal

If for any reason you must pick your child up early, please let your child's teacher know in advance AND you must also let the office (202-387-2700) know. Upon your arrival to the school, you must come into the School Lobby to sign your child out. Your child will meet you in the lobby.

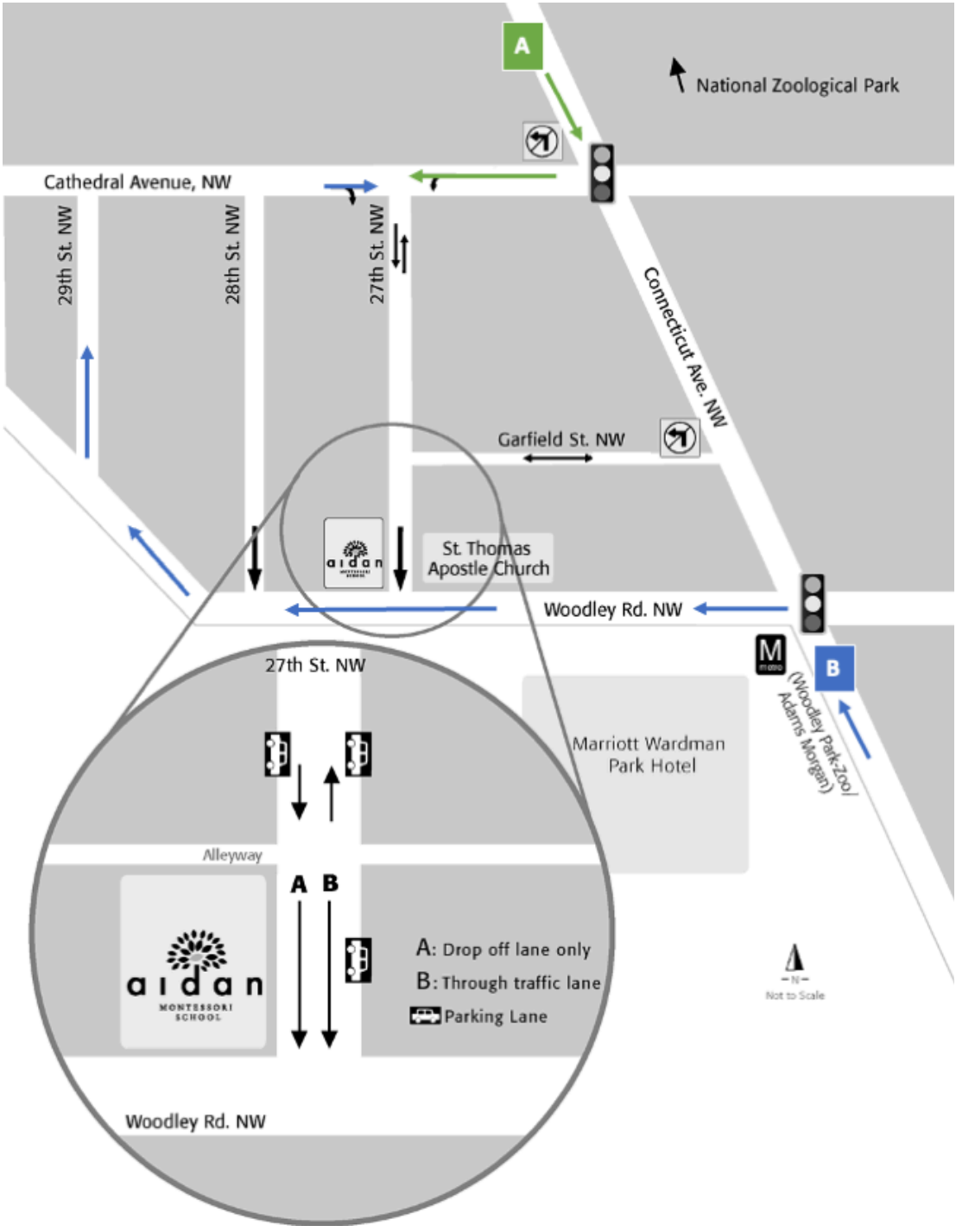
Late Pick-Up

If you are going to be late, please notify the office. Your children worry, as we all do!

Families whose children have not been picked up by the end of the program dismissal time will be charged a late fee. This is $10 for the first ten minutes, changing to $35 for pick-ups that are more than 10 minutes late. You will be billed through Veracross for any and all late fees, so please be sure to pick up your child on time and let your caregivers know that they must do the same.

Children, except for YCC, who have not been picked up by the end of their Dismissal window (oldest sibling) will join the After School Program (ASP) and you will be charged the appropriate fee.

Campus Map


A
National Zoological Park
Cathedral Avenue, NW
29th St. NW
28th St. NW
27th St. NW
Connecticut Ave. NW
Garfield St. NW
St. Thomas Apostle Church
Woodley Rd. NW
M
B
(Woodley Park-Zoo/ Adams Morgan)
27th St. NW
Marriott Wardman Park Hotel
Alleyway
A B
A: Drop off lane only
B: Through traffic lane
Parking Lane
Not to Scale
Woodley Rd. NW

Locations

Please note that while all faculty and most staff at Aidan work on-campus at our main address, several of our administrators work at our Annex, located at 2627 Connecticut Avenue, NW. These include the CFO, Business Manager, Director of Communications, and Marketing, Director of Advancement, and Media Designer and Publication Assistant.

Driving to School

- Heading south on Connecticut (toward Dupont Circle), turn right on Cathedral (not Garfield) and left on 27th Street.
- Heading north on Connecticut (from Dupont Circle towards the Zoo), turn left on Woodley Road at the arrow, pass Aidan, turn right on 29th, then right on Cathedral, then right again on 27th Street. (You cannot turn left onto Cathedral from Connecticut heading north.)
- You cannot make a turn onto 27th Street from Woodley Road, as 27th Street is one-way heading south (only one direction in the block in front of the school campus). You may ***not*** use the alley behind the school or next to the school for arrival and/or dismissal.
- After dropping your child off, you may turn left (towards Connecticut) or right (towards Garfield) onto Woodley Road from 27th Street.

Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

We ask that parents stay outside of the school building for arrival and dismissal, unless dropping off the weekly snack for their child's class or there is an emergency.

Arrival and Dismissal require that safety and courtesy be in the forefront of everyone's minds. You may drop off and pick up children by car or on foot.

On Foot

You are welcome to walk your child to school from home or the Metro. If you plan to drive to Woodley Park and then park before walking your child in, park your car legally: not in front of hydrants, in crosswalks, in no parking zones, nor behind the school. If parked along 27th, please turn off car engines and refrain from idling.

By Car

Join the car line on 27th Street at your specified time. See the procedure outlined below.

Please follow the traffic flow diagrammed on the Campus Map above, obey the rules outlined below and comply with all requests made by Aidan staff or traffic officers:

- The Car Line forms at the curb lane in front of Aidan's entrance and continues down 27th Street. Enter the car line from Cathedral Avenue, ***please do not join the line from the alley or Garfield Street.***

- Pull over as far to the right as possible and turn on your hazard lights while waiting so cars coming down the street can pass. Please do not block any crosswalks or alleys.

- Cars will be called into the curb lane by an Aidan staff member or a traffic officer. If you pull up in line before your scheduled Arrival/Dismissal time or if the line is too long, you may be asked to drive around the block. Please be understanding. Kindly share these procedures with anyone who may be picking up your child.

- Please pull as close to the curb as possible when parking in front of the school, and do not drop children off from the middle of the road. Fill all available space when parking. Please don't stop at the first available spot when dropping off your child(ren). Instead, pull forward and/or drive to the last available spot so we can maximize space for all families.

- Please remain in your car. Aidan staff will help your child into or out of the car even if you have two children. If you would like to assist your child up the stairs, then please legally park in the neighborhood and arrive on foot.

- An Aidan staff member will assist your child into and out of cars and car seats. At Arrival, please have lunch boxes, backpacks, and coats ready, not in the trunk. Note: Car seats or booster seats are required by District law for all children under 8 years old. At Dismissal, Aidan staff cannot place your child in a car without proper seating, including a seat belt for older children. In such cases, parents will be instructed to legally park their car and retrieve their child on foot.

- We love connecting with our community; however, to ensure swift and safe arrival and dismissal process, please refrain from chatting with other drivers and Aidan staff during these times

- After dropping off or picking up, cars must exit onto Woodley Road.

Release Permission

Aidan Montessori School is authorized to release a child only to their parents or guardian, unless we receive in writing the names of other people permitted to pick up your child or your child has permission to leave campus at the end of the day without being accompanied by an adult. If your child is going home with someone not on our list, such as a friend after school, the School Office must have permission in writing/email from you. Please send such emails to your child's teacher and Aidan's Office Manager (l.fincham@aidanschool.org). Last minute phone calls from a parent for emergency situations are acceptable.

While we appreciate that it can be tempting to make spontaneous plans with other families at dismissal, we ask that you please do not make playdates at the curb or in the car line. If you have not made arrangements in advance, step away from the front of school or pull both vehicles into a legal parking space away from the curb lane and make your arrangements privately so as not to cause any inconvenience to the other drivers or our neighbors.

If you are part of a carpool, be sure to notify the driver who is scheduled to pick up your child in the event your child is ill, that they are going home with someone else, or that they are bringing home a guest.

Along with Health and Emergency Forms, you are required to sign permissions that allow your child to participate in field trips, neighborhood excursions off campus for classroom and ASP walks, going beyond the school grounds for recess, Physical Education and Discovery Programs, and Elementary "Goings Out" programs where appropriate. The permission waiver information contains details for supervision and notification. These waivers can be found on Aidan's website under "Parent Forms" and in the Magnus Health Portal. Your child will leave campus and go beyond the school grounds only if these permissions are signed. Going off campus is relevant depending on the age of your child and you may decide not to let your child participate. Recess and Physical Education is primarily conducted at the Marriott lawn along with other trips to local field locations. Various other Discovery programs include traveling to a sports field, the Zoo or library and other nearby locations, always accompanied by several adults.

Car Seat & Stroller Storage

Car seats and strollers left at Aidan for pick-up must be folded and stored at the bike rack near the bottom of the front stairs. Please label them. Aidan is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

After School Programs (ASP)

The After School Programs at Aidan (ASP) are designed to provide a safe, comfortable, and engaging environment for Primary and Elementary students after their Montessori work period.

In the afternoon, our Director of Auxiliary Programs prepares an after-school environment so that children can be independent and enjoy choosing age-appropriate materials, games, art media, etc. Students can eat a snack, participate in activities, and enjoy each other's company in play. Parents supply snack on a rotating basis, similar to the classroom. When the playground is available, children go to the outdoor environment for supervised play. ASP personnel are sensitive to the needs of children at all ages and stages of development in creating activities. They guide and encourage independence, positive choices, and collaborative play that fosters positive social relationships.

Discovery Program

Aidan's after-school Discovery Program is a chance for students to explore interests beyond Aidan's regular curriculum. For a fee, parents can enroll students from Primary to 6th year in foreign languages, art workshops, music workshops, informal sport and athletic programs, and various crafts. Discovery should not be considered "additional lessons" but rather an optional, relaxed opportunity to socialize and try something new. Space is limited, so parents are encouraged to enroll as soon as they receive the Discovery offerings in the fall, winter, and spring from the Director of Auxiliary Programs.

ASP Contract

Parents of Primary and Elementary children who need regular after school care are advised to sign an ASP contract for the year through the ASP Registration Page found on Aidan's Veracross Parent Portal. An annual contract is a considerable savings (33%) from the drop-in rate. Partial week plans (a minimum of two days required) are available and are charged on a prorated basis. Once you have enrolled in ASP through the registration link, you will be billed through Veracross based on the payment plan that was selected for tuition. Selection of a 10 payment plan will be adjusted to account for the number of billing periods remaining at time of sign up, i.e. August 1 sign up equates to 8 payments.

ASP Drop-in

Aidan offers the use of the After School Programs on an as-needed basis for currently enrolled Primary and Elementary students only. To enroll your child in ASP, click on the

Student Logistics form in the Veracross Parent Portal to make a day adjustment (i.e. late drop off, early pickup or ASP Drop In)

You will be billed through Veracross after sign-up.

ASP sessions run from 3:00-6:00 PM for Primary children and 4:00-6:00 PM for Elementary children. The fee for use of part or all of each ASP session is $48 (3:00-6:00 PM) & $35 (4:00-6:00 PM) per child.

Late ASP Pick-Up

If a Primary child is picked up from ASP after 3:15 PM, the family will be billed $15 for the first ten minutes and $40 should the family be more than ten minutes late. If an Elementary child is picked up from ASP after 4:15 PM, the family will be billed $15 for the first ten minutes and $30 should the family be more than ten minutes late. For each child picked up from ASP after 6:00 PM, there is an immediate charge of $40. In addition to the $40 charge, for each child picked up after 6:00 PM, parents will incur charges of $2/minute. Therefore, the charge for one child will be $42.00 at 6:01 PM, $44.00 at 6:02 PM, etc. Please call 202-816-0976 if you know you will be late so we can reassure your child. A phone call does not absolve you from the fee.

Attendance, Tardiness, & Vacations

Regular attendance is an important part of the Montessori experience and promotes better school performance. Attendance records are kept as part of each child's file. Excessive absenteeism will be discussed with parents and is required to be reported to the DC Child Licensing authorities for children who are subject to compulsory education. Every effort should be made to avoid scheduling vacations when classes are in session.

Attendance Policy

Because Aidan Montessori School resides within the District of Columbia, it is subject to the regulations of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). Aidan Montessori School has established the following Attendance Policy in order to be in compliance with mandated regulations:

- Teachers and the Office Manager keep track of student absences by way of the online absence form that parents fill out as well as by way of our online tracking and reporting software: Transparent Classroom.

- All absences of students must be reported to the School by the student's parent/guardian within five days of the absence, but preferably on or before the day of the absence.

- Student absences, early dismissals, late arrivals, extended absences, and drop-in requests for ASP may all be submitted through the "Students Logistics" form in the Veracross Parent Portal.

It is important that parents understand that the School is required to report to OSSE should a student:

- Be absent (unexcused) from school for ten days (see list of excuses below).

Families should be aware that there are potential legal implications when a report has been submitted to OSSE.

At Aidan Montessori School, reasons for absences being excused include the following:

- Participation in a School-approved activity;

- Illness;

- Family emergency;

- Religious purposes;

- Absence resulting from disciplinary actions—short- or long-term suspensions;

- Extended illness or health conditions.

In the event of multiple unexcused absences, parents can expect the following measures from the school:

- 3 unexcused absences: a call from your child's teacher.

- 6 unexcused absences: an email from your child's teacher.

- 10 unexcused absences: a formal warning and meeting with the Assistant Heads of School, Head of School, Director of Inclusion & Belonging and/or School Counselor to identify an action plan.

- 15 unexcused absences: report filed with OSSE and families are placed on probation.

Families with excessive absences, regardless of whether they are unexcused or excused, may meet with the Head of School and/or put on probation at the School's sole discretion. The School also reserves the right to withhold re-enrollment in the event of excessive absences.

Tardiness

We value the importance of punctuality in creating a positive and effective learning environment for all students. Being on time for school and classes is a respectful and responsible behavior that contributes to a successful educational experience. We ask all students and families to adhere to the following guidelines:

- ***Arrival Time***: Students are expected to arrive at school before the designated start time according to their level.
- In cases of ***unforeseen delays***, we kindly request parents or guardians to communicate with the school office to notify us of the situation.
- ***Tardiness Consequences:*** While we understand occasional tardiness can happen, consistent lateness may disrupt the learning experience. Upon excessive tardiness, the school will take a collaborative approach by holding a respectful meeting involving the Head of School, Assistant Head of School for Faculty and Curriculum, and/or School Counselor. This meeting will focus on working together to create an effective action plan.

Your commitment to promptness plays a significant role in fostering a positive and enriching educational environment for your child, the school, and the Aidan community.

Family Vacations

It is difficult for a child to miss school for an extended time for any reason. Obviously, a child must stay home when sick. However, a family vacation while school is in session should be avoided. In the final year of Primary and at the Elementary level, many Montessori lessons are given in small groups, even if a child is absent. Lessons can be long and complex, and it is not possible to present the new concept or skill with the same level of detail to a child who has missed the initial presentation. And, since Aidan does not rely on workbooks, it is not possible to send students off with a week of work. Please plan vacations to coordinate with the school calendar on our website.

Snow Days & Inclement Weather

Please note that we make our own decisions about whether to close or delay school and do NOT follow the District of Columbia public school system. Any decision to amend a school

day is not taken lightly and is always made with consideration for the safety of all members of the Aidan community.

Please opt into emergency text messages from the school (see the Communication section of this document for instructions) or go to Aidan's website (www.aidanschool.org).

In the event that Aidan opens on a delayed schedule, Half-Day YCC children may attend for an abbreviated day or stay home at the family's discretion.

Health & Safety

COVID-19 Risk Acknowledgement & Consent

In 2020, the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, was declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization and other governmental authorities. COVID-19 is believed to spread primarily by aerosol droplets; and, as a result, federal and state health agencies recommend various measures to mitigate the risk of contracting the virus.

The School communicates, on an ongoing basis, the measures that it has taken and will continue to take to mitigate the risks of the virus. Some of these measures include policies for the use of personal protective equipment such as masks, periodic testing, cleaning and sanitizing protocols. The School has informed parents that it will continue to monitor this situation and will implement additional measures as necessary.

Given the nature of the virus, parents understand there is an inherent risk that their child may become infected with COVID-19 due to their attendance at School. Parents hereby acknowledge and assume the risk of their child becoming infected with COVID-19 at School.

Parents understand that possible exposure to COVID-19 during attendance at School may result in their child becoming infected with COVID-19, becoming a symptomatic or asymptomatic carrier of the virus or infecting other persons at School or home or other settings. Parents further recognize that any person who receives a positive diagnosis or is a close contact of someone who receives a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 may encounter masking at school, medical care, hospitalization and other potential medical complications.

Parents understand that the School has implemented protocols that require their child to adhere to certain practices, designed to mitigate the risks of contracting the virus. The School has communicated to me the importance of these protocols. Parents acknowledge our shared family responsibility to promote and adhere to these protocols in order to reduce the risks of contracting or spreading the virus at School. Parents have discussed this with their child to the extent appropriate for the child's age and maturity and will continue to emphasize adherence to these protocols.

The School has implemented reasonable preventative measures designed to mitigate the risks of contracting or spreading the virus at School. Parents understand all the potential risks and would like their child to attend the School. By sending their child to School, parents understand the potential risks and consent to their child attending Aidan Montessori School.

Routine Vaccinations

DC continues to place emphasis on its Immunization Attendance Policy, which has been in place for several years. The school will continually monitor the status of each child's vaccination compliance throughout the year. If we notice that your child has become noncompliant with any of their vaccinations, there will be a notice sent via email, with the information you need about what actions need to be taken, and help on how to take them. Once this notice is sent out, you will have 20 school days to present an updated immunization certification.

The school will do its best to confirm receipt of this notification and help you with any questions you have. If this is not attained within the timeframe listed above, your child will be temporarily excluded from school until the school receives confirmation of immunization certification compliance.

A link to DC's required immunizations for school-age children can be found here.

The DC Department of Health (DC DOH) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) continue to express that vaccination is the most important thing one can do to prevent severe illness that can accompany COVID-19 and other preventable diseases. Aidan supports and strongly encourages vaccines for all age-eligible children.

COVID-19 Vaccination

We will continue to follow the guidelines of the DC DOH as it relates to COVID-19 protocols and vaccination requirements. Our partners at OSSE have provided us with some helpful information via email:

> "At this time, the COVID-19 vaccine will be required for all students of an age for which there is a COVID-19 vaccination fully approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). At this time, the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is fully FDA approved for individuals 16 and older, so only students 16 and older must receive the COVID-19 vaccine before the start of school or submit a medical or religious exemption from COVID-19 immunization (D.C. Law 24-85). A student turning 16 has 70 days to come into compliance from their birthday, and when the FDA grants full authorization of a COVID vaccine for younger students, they also will have 70 days to come into compliance."

As the status of "fully approved" moves to lower-aged students, we will alert the community.

Vaccination Exemptions

(For all vaccinations, including but not limited to the COVID-19 vaccine)

If you are planning on your child having a medical or religious exemption for any routine vaccination, you must reach out to your local Department of Health (DC if you live in DC, MD if you live in MD, or VA if you live in VA) in order to receive an exemption form. Please read the criteria for an exemption in this DC law (§ 38–506).

In addition to the updated form, the DC DOH has also changed the process in which these forms are handled. The School, including myself, does not have access to or the ability to handle these forms. The DC DOH is the main point of contact for anything involving these forms. Forms are to be requested from and returned directly to DC DOH at doh.immunization@dc.gov. The school will receive the notification of completion directly from the DC DOH.

Religious Exemption forms may be returned via email to doh.immunization@dc.gov. Forms may also be returned in-person Monday-Thursday, 8:15am to 4:45pm at:

DC Department of Health
Immunization Division, 3rd floor
Community Health Administration
899 North Capitol Street NE
Washington, DC 20002.

If you have any questions or comments, please submit your questions to doh.immunization@dc.gov or call 202-576-7130.

When the time comes that a COVID-19 vaccine becomes fully FDA approved and it is a requirement for your child to be vaccinated to attend school, the process above will be used for any religious or medical exemptions needed. The exemption form has been updated to include the COVID-19 vaccine.

Records

All records listed below must be submitted to Aidan via Magnus Health in order for your child to begin school. If we do not have this information, we will not allow your child to attend class. Copies of the forms are all available through the Magnus Health Portal, Aidan's website, and Veracross Parent Portal.

1. **Emergency Contact and Medical Information:** This should include emergency phone numbers and emails for parents, who is allowed to pick up your

child, and any allergy or other important medical conditions. A request for this information will be emailed to you in the summer.

2. **Current DC Medical Forms for Child**: This includes immunization records and must have your doctor's original signature, not a stamped signature. DC also requires Aidan to have the following three forms on file for each student, including YCC children: DC Emergency Medical Authorization Form, Registration for Child Receiving Care Away from Home Form, and Travel and Activity Authorization Form. These forms can be found in the Parent section of our website. Please contact the office with questions.

3. **Current DC Dental Assessment Form**: This is required for all children 3 years and older. This form is available in the Parent Section of the website.

4. **Aidan's Consent and Waiver Forms.**

5. **A copy of your child's COVID-19 vaccination card.** If not already indicated on your child's immunization records.

6. **Guardianship, as appropriate**. If necessary for your family situation, please make sure the school knows who has guardianship of your child.

Absences & Illness

Parents should notify the School when their child is absent by completing the Student Logistics form found on the Veracross Parent Portal. Student absences, early dismissals, late arrivals, extended absences, and drop-in requests for ASP may all be submitted through this form.

When completing the form, please indicate if your child has a communicable disease if they are absent due to illness.

In case of an absence due to a communicable disease or an illness of more than five days' duration, a note from your child's physician is required before the child can be readmitted to the classroom. **A child must be free of fever (over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit as per the CDC's recommendation), vomiting, and/or diarrhea for 24 hours without the assistance of medication before they can return to school.**

Please be considerate of others in your child's class. **It is imperative that you keep your child at home if they are sick.** We ask parents to err on the side of caution when considering whether to send their child to school should they show any signs of illness or discomfort. Do not send your child to school if they have a fever (of 100.4) or are "coming down with something."

If your child becomes ill at school, we will call you to come and take your child home as soon as possible, preferably within 30 minutes, and they may not return the next day if sent home due to fever, vomiting and/or diarrhea. A child must be free of fever, vomit and/or diarrhea for 24 hours prior to returning to school. Additionally, any child beginning a course of antibiotics for a contagious illness should wait 24 hours after initiation before returning to school.

If your child goes home because of illness, they may not return to school that same day for afternoon or evening activities such as the Discovery Program or ASP.

Regardless of all other factors, a child should not attend school if their health is such that it interferes with their ability to participate in the life of the classroom.

COVID-19 Guidelines

The CDC has announced updated guidance for respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, RSV, and the flu. Aidan will adhere to this new guidance as it relates to our current policies regarding COVID-19. The CDC no longer recommends a mandatory isolation period of 5 days for a positive COVID test. However, if an individual is experiencing symptoms they must stay home until the symptoms have improved and they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the help of medication.

Symptoms

We ask that you keep your child home from school if they are experiencing symptoms of a respiratory or gastrointestinal infection. This includes, but is not limited to, a cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea. Per the CDC, testing is recommended for people with symptoms of COVID-19 as soon as possible after the symptoms begin.

Members of our community will be denied entry to the school building, or asked to be picked up from school, if any of the following symptoms are present:

- Temperature over 100.4°F
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- They are experiencing any other symptoms that is interfering with their ability to participate in the life of the classroom

- Symptoms include, but not limited to: chills, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, fatigue, nausea, runny nose or congestion

The school is at liberty to deny the entry or ask for students to be picked up from school based on their own judgment, and may feel the need to send children home for any one symptom. If your child is high risk or particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 as defined by the Centers for Disease Control, please notify the School.

Exposure

Precautions regarding COVID exposures and masking will be at the discretion of our families and the exposed individual. The school will continue to notify the community when cases of COVID arise, but we will no longer enforce mandatory masking or testing.

Communication After a COVID-19 Diagnosis

The School requests that all families and staff notify the School immediately of any positive COVID-19 diagnosis so that we can inform the communities impacted via email. Families directly affected by the case will be made aware of possible exposures to infection, masking requirements, and timelines, but the identity of infected persons will be kept confidential.

The School is required to report cases of COVID-19 to the District of Columbia's Department of Health when there have been 25 or more cases stemming from one school-related event.

Returning to School After Being Diagnosed with COVID-19

Individuals may return to school following a positive test when, for 24 hours, symptoms have been improving and they have been fever free (without the use of fever reducing medications).

When returning to school and normal activities the CDC recommends taking added precautions such as taking additional steps for cleaner air, hygiene, masks, physical distancing, and testing.

If an individual returns to school before the fifth day following their positive test they will be asked to wear a mask through cay 5 while indoors. Taking precautions for those 5 days can help reduce the risk of spreading the infection. After this 5-day period, an individual is much less likely to be contagious.

Lice

If head lice or nits are discovered on a student, we will send that student home and notify all parents in the class that a child with lice has been in the class. We will carefully check all

students in the class where lice were found, as well as the classes of that student's siblings and ASP, if necessary.

Students may return to school the day after receiving a lice treatment.

Medication Policy

Sometimes it is necessary for a child to take medication during the school day.

Prescription medication must be brought to the Nurse's Office by an adult in the original and unopened container (medications may not be sent in a lunch box or backpack). A pharmacist will fill the prescription in two containers if requested. The prescription medication must be accompanied by a Medication Authorization Form stating the current date, dosage, and time the medication should be given, dates of administering the medication, and whether the medication should be returned at the end of each day. The Medication Authorization Form must be signed by the physician and parent. Medication Authorization Forms are available online and should be submitted to the School via the Magnus Health portal or app.

Non-prescription, "over-the-counter" medications of any kind (which include but are not limited to fever reducers, pain medications, cough syrup or drops) cannot be taken at school unless accompanied by a Medication Authorization Form signed by the child's physician. The medication (unopened and in the original container), and the Medication Authorization Form, as described above, should be given to the School Nurse's Office by an adult.

For any parents who would like sunscreen, bug spray, and/or other lotion/diaper cream, to be used on their child while at school, please observe the following procedures: Aidan's "Permission for Topical Application" form must be completed for each child. The desired products must then be placed in a clear plastic bag along with the permission form. The bag and all products must be clearly labeled with your child's name and should be delivered directly to the Nurse's Office.

Please make sure to try the product on your child at home first. Aidan is not responsible for any adverse reactions to the products provided by families. Children will not be allowed to share any products nor will the School provide products for the children to use. If the sunscreen and/or bug spray are a different brand than what is on the permission form, an additional form will need to be filled out. The school will only administer the products that are written on the form.

If your child has a medical condition or allergies and requires routine medications, please contact the School Nurse to arrange a specific medical treatment plan for your child and procure a signed Medication Authorization Form.

For a student who is severely allergic and requires an Epi-pen, please provide two Epi-pens, an Action Plan for Anaphylaxis, and a Medication Authorization Form to Aidan. We strongly encourage families to provide two Epi-pens so that one Epi-pen can be stored in the child's classroom, and the second Epi-pen in the Nurse's Office. If only one Epi-pen is provided, it will follow the child. If the Epi-pen is administered, we will call 911, and the parent will be notified.

When parents disclose an allergy or food sensitivity to the school, we inform the teacher and indicate the allergy on the snack guidelines. We also include this information on the Snack Reminder notices for parents.

Food Allergies

Aidan requires that families not send in food/snacks containing peanuts or peanut by-products for the safety of children who are severely allergic. These children may experience life-threatening anaphylactic reactions to peanuts or peanut by-products. Please be sure to check labels and ingredients.

While focusing on making the School as safe as possible for children, the School cannot guarantee the total absence of peanuts or peanut products in foods that are brought to campus by every child or staff member. We strongly encourage the family of any child with known peanut allergies or any type of severe food allergy to contact us regarding allergy action plans and practices to promote food safety. Lists of allergies and food sensitivities will be distributed by class, and severe allergy lists will be distributed to the community for the safety of the children. Please respect these sensitivities when supplying snacks. If a food item containing peanuts or peanut by-products is found in a child's lunch, it will be sent home uneaten with a note explaining that it is not appropriate for school consumption.

Severe Allergy List

At the beginning of the year, the School sends a list of severe food allergies to appropriate personnel within the school. Personnel will make parents aware of which allergies are present in the room, while maintaining medical confidentiality. We want all parents to be aware of all potential severe food allergies at the school. Awareness is a HUGE part of our efforts to keep children safe, especially when selecting snacks for their classroom communities. Students in classrooms where there are no allergies are still required to not bring in foods with peanuts as an ingredient due to the potential of cross-class contamination.

Full Class Snacks

All ingredients or class snacks brought in by parents must be approved by the teachers before they can be brought on campus and given to the children. A list of preferred/recommended items will be shared with parents from the classroom teacher at the beginning of the year. When in doubt, please contact your child's teacher.

Security & Visitor Guidelines

The main entrance doors are locked all day and monitored by the Receptionist and our Security Officer. In order to enter the school, parents, volunteers and visitors must ring the doorbell and be buzzed in after being viewed on a television monitor. Visitors must sign in at the Receptionist Desk, and wear their visitors badge while in the building. If your child arrives after 8:30 AM, they must check in with the Receptionist, and a staff member will walk your child to class to minimize interruptions to classes already in progress. The playground gates are kept closed except during Arrival and Dismissal, when teachers and staff are accepting or releasing students.

Parents, and any other visitors, are asked not to enter the building, or go to a classroom, unless approved by the School. Visitors must contact the School in advance and wait outside until granted entry. Based on the event, and/or the hospitalization rates in DC, Aidan reserves the right to ask parents/visitors for proof of COVID-19 vaccination, to take a rapid/at-home test within 24 hours of their visit, to fill out a health questionnaire, and/or wear a mask as they see fit.

For anyone coming into the school, we ask that they wear a mask if they are experiencing any mild COVID-like symptoms. For anyone experiencing moderate to severe symptoms, awaiting the results of a COVID test, or diagnosed with COVID-19, we ask that you reschedule your visit.

As stated in the Arrival/Dismissal Section, Aidan Montessori School is authorized to release a child only to their parents, unless indicated as an authorized pick up on the student forms or we receive in writing the names and phone numbers of those people permitted to pick up your child. Pick up authorizations may be emailed to your child's teacher and the School Office Manager.

If your child is going home with a friend after school, the School must have permission from you—last minute phone calls from a parent for emergency situations are acceptable, but permission in writing via email is preferred.

Emergency Preparedness

The safety and security of our students and staff is a top priority at Aidan Montessori School. We continually strive to ensure that all of our faculty and staff are aware of the school's emergency preparedness procedures, which we review annually and conduct safety drills and training as deemed appropriate.

The school monitors and evaluates any potential threats to safety and security on an ongoing basis. Our on-site security officer patrols the perimeter of the school daily. Outside of the

standard arrival and dismissal times, the school entrances are secured throughout the day and cameras are used to monitor these entry points.

Guidelines to Follow in the Event of an Emergency or Crisis

1. A notice and procedures will be posted on the school's website (www.aidanschool.org) and emailed and sent through our Remind.com text notification system, if possible. Follow instructions carefully.

2. In some emergencies (a fire, for example) the children may be walked to a safe location where you can pick them up. Information will be posted on the website and disseminated by way of our text notification system.

3. We have several safe locations, and in the event of an emergency evacuation, families will receive a notification from the school with additional details on how to safely retrieve your child.

4. If we are required to "shelter in place" at Aidan, we have provisions and procedures, and we are completely prepared to do so.

5. In some cases, FEMA may tell us not to leave our building or location, or we may be told to allow no one to enter our building. Please know that your child's well-being and safety are our highest priority.

6. Your child will never be left without an adult. If you are unable to pick up your child during a crisis or emergency, they will be safely cared for until you can be reunited.

7. **Keeping all records up to date in our office is critical**—including cell phone numbers, email, and those individuals you allow to pick up your child. Consider carefully your list of those to whom we can release your child in a crisis/emergency.

8. Respond immediately to any requests for items or information related to our emergency plan.

9. Keep the school's telephone number and website handy at home, at work, and in your car.

10. The school has a supply of emergency clothing, food, and water for all the children in the school and at the Saint Thomas Apostle Church, across the street. If your child has dietary restrictions or medication requirements, you should supply the school with two bags containing a 3-day supply of special foods or medications.

If you have further questions or concerns, please contact the Assistant Head of School for Operations to discuss them.

Classroom Procedures

Food: Lunches, Snacks and Food Allergies

Lunches

At Aidan, our mission is to holistically nurture every child's growth—encompassing their social and emotional well-being, intellectual prowess, physical vitality, and spiritual connection. In our pursuit of fostering vibrant minds and healthy bodies, we draw inspiration from the pioneering insights of Dr. Maria Montessori. She recognized the profound correlation between nutrition and cognitive function, advocating for the preparation of nutritionally rich foods to equip children.

Food is a special part of our community, just like in cultures worldwide. It brings people together, and we use it to teach kindness and respect. Sharing food helps us make friends, practice Grace and Courtesy, and celebrate and honor each other.

Guidelines for Lunch Preparation:

- Lunch is brought from home. As appropriate, allow them to be a part of the preparation process. When given lessons and (supervised) access to kitchen tools, children can pack most of their lunches themselves. Assisting in food preparation builds independence and responsibility, refinement of motor skills, and development of an increased attention span.
- Aidan is a Peanut Free Environment—please read labels carefully and check with your child's teacher for any other foods to avoid in the event of a severe allergy within the class!
- We will provide water. Please don't send any other drinks.
- Avoid sugary food such as candy and desserts.
- Microwaves and refrigerators are not available for children. Please make sure hot lunches are in thermos containers, and/or lunch boxes have an ice-pack for things that need to stay cold.
- As a reminder, small round and tube-shaped foods can be choking hazards for our younger students (Primary and YCC ages). **Grapes, cherry tomatoes, cherries, carrots, hot dogs, sausages, and olives must be cut in half prior to being sent in for lunch.**
- Please try to use reusable containers as much as possible. Utensils, plates, and napkins will be provided.

Our licensing organization requires that we NOT tell the children in which order they must eat their food. We will also return the uneaten portion of lunch to you so that you know what an appropriate size lunch is for your child.

Snack: YCC, Primary, & ASP Students

Preparing and serving snacks and meals in a communal setting provides an invaluable opportunity for children to learn cooperation, experience community, and develop various life skills. Here's how:

- ***Cooperation*:** Collaborating with peers to prepare snacks and meals encourages teamwork and collaboration. Children learn to work together, share responsibilities, and contribute their individual efforts towards a common goal. This cooperative environment fosters a sense of unity and shared accomplishment.
- ***Social Skills:*** As children engage in food-related activities, they naturally practice social skills like communication, sharing, and empathy. They learn to take turns, express preferences, and negotiate decisions, all of which are crucial for successful social interactions.
- ***Responsibility:*** Involving children in food preparation and serving responsibilities instills a sense of responsibility. They learn that their contributions matter and are essential for the group's well-being. This sense of duty can extend beyond mealtime into other aspects of their daily lives.
- ***Respect for Others:*** Serving meals and snacks involves considering others' needs and preferences. Children learn to be considerate and respectful by accommodating dietary restrictions, sharing resources, and waiting patiently for their turn.
- ***Practical Life Skills:*** Food-related tasks provide practical life skills that are transferable to various contexts. Children develop fine-motor skills while spreading butter, pouring drinks, and using utensils. These skills enhance their independence and self-sufficiency.
- ***Sense of Belonging:*** Participating in communal meal preparation and sharing creates a sense of belonging and connection. Children understand that they are part of a group that supports and cares for one another, contributing to their emotional well-being.
- ***Cultural Awareness:*** Preparing and sharing meals from various cultures exposes children to diverse culinary traditions. They learn to appreciate different foods and the cultural significance behind them, promoting open-mindedness and cultural awareness.
- ***Grace and Courtesy:*** Mealtimes provide a platform to practice grace and courtesy lessons, such as saying "please" and "thank you," waiting for others before starting to eat,

and using utensils correctly. These practices foster good manners and respectful behavior.

- ***Confidence Building:*** Successfully participating in food-related activities boosts children's self-confidence. They see the results of their efforts, feel a sense of accomplishment, and become more willing to engage in other tasks and challenges.

Each YCC and Primary family is asked to contribute food for their child's class. You may also be asked to send in specific baking ingredients and some fresh flowers. If your child is enrolled in ASP, you will be asked to provide snack foods for the group, usually twice a year

If providing snack places undue financial hardship on your family, you cannot participate or have any last-minute difficulties, please contact your child's teacher directly or the Director of Inclusion and Belonging.

Please use the following guidelines in conjunction with the Snack Schedule provided for your child's class. All of this information can be found on your child's class portal.

Guidelines for Snack:

- Please leave your box/bag of snacks with a staff member at drop-off. Please label the box/bag with your teacher's name.
- **Quantity:** Each classroom size and needs vary, therefore, please ask your child's teacher for approximate amounts.
- ***Allergies:*** Aidan is a Peanut Free Environment—please read labels carefully and check with your child's teacher for any other foods to avoid in the event of a severe allergy within the class.
- ***Suggestions:*** Fresh fruit and vegetables (apples, melon, carrot sticks, etc.), cheese, crackers, bagels, bread, cream cheese, or other spreads are some suggestions. We highly recommend purchasing seasonal fruits and vegetables by visiting Farmer's Markets around DC.
- We highly recommend you bring something unique to your family's culture or traditions. It allows opportunities for your child to prepare it at home, and also talk about it with their community.
- Please **do not** send cookies, cupcakes, individual snack cups, juice boxes, grapes, hot dogs, popcorn, soda, or candy of any kind.

Snack: Elementary Students

Elementary families are to pack an extra food item in their child's lunch to be used as a snack each day. We recommend something simple, quick, and easy to consume.

Food Allergies

Aidan requires that families not send in food and snacks containing peanuts or peanut by-products for the safety of children who are severely allergic. These children may experience life-threatening anaphylactic reactions to peanuts or peanut by-products. Please be sure to check labels and ingredients.

Teachers will provide additional information to families on ingredients to avoid when providing lunch/snack due to severe allergies within the classroom.

Celebration Food Guidelines

Birthdays

At Aidan Montessori School, we acknowledge the gift of the life of each person in our community. During the school day, your child partakes in a special celebration to honor their life. On this day, the child may bring a *special snack* to share during the course of the morning with their peers. We highly encourage you to take this opportunity to shop and prepare the snack at home together with your child.

No cupcakes, cake, or sweets are allowed. Please adhere to the snack guidelines above for reference.

Each classroom will provide specific information regarding how birthdays are acknowledged in their communities.

Celebrating Cultural Holidays

Aidan is a non-sectarian and non-denominational school and recognizes that though many holidays cross cultural boundaries, some of our families either do not observe or do not observe in the same way as others. We acknowledge that understanding these differences and appreciating the richness within our community is paramount to our children's education; therefore, we welcome the chance to have you share your heritage.

Please contact the Director of Inclusion and Belonging and your child's teacher for information regarding visiting a classroom for culture and heritage celebrations.

We recognize that food plays an important role in celebrating many cultural traditions. Families are welcome to bring a special healthy snack to share provided that meets the following guidelines:

1. Coordinate with your child's teacher on an appropriate day/time and check in about foods to avoid due to severe allergies in the classroom.

2. Adhere to our healthy food/snack policies and guidelines (no sweets or food containing peanuts or peanut by-products)

Party Invitations

Please do not send invitations to school to be distributed. In a small school, being inclusive is so important. Being left out can be devastating to a child. While you may be inclined to invite the whole class, doing so may be impractical, and most children do better with a smaller group. A good rule of thumb is to invite the number of children which corresponds to the age of your child - 3 guests for a three year old; 8, for an eight year old, in addition to family, of course. Allowing the child to choose their guests, while Montessori in principle, requires parental guidance and has the potential of hurting a child who is not invited.

It is best if children do not discuss a party that is coming up or a party that they have been to because other children may feel excluded. Please ask your child to refrain from discussing social events during the school day.

Note: Toddlers are different. For them a small party with one or two children is preferable, and they do not share information with each other in the same way as the older children.

Clothing & Shoes Guidelines

- **Young children should wear clothes so they can manage themselves when going to the bathroom.** Suspenders, sweaters outside of overalls, tights or small buttons are difficult for children to manage themselves. Pants with elastic at the waist are often easier than pants with snaps or belts. We are willing to assist your child, but they are very pleased when they can say, "I did it myself!"

- **Please label** all garments your child wears to school. This includes coats, sweaters, hats, gloves, boots, indoor shoes, underwear, etc.

- **Extra set of clothes!** For Primary, we suggest a complete set of clothing, including underwear and socks, must be kept in the child's box. For YCC, we request multiple sets of clothing, depending on each child.

- No commercial prints, characters, objects, exciting or distracting decals on any clothing item or lunchboxes, as they are a distraction.

- No dress-up or special occasion outfits unless part of a special classroom or cultural celebration.

- **Shoes:** Aidan strongly recommends sending children to school in athletic shoes

(sneakers). Primary and Elementary children can participate in Outdoor/Physical Education only if they are wearing athletic shoes with laces or Velcro fasteners. Shoes that children can take on and off independently are highly encouraged. No light up shoes, roller skate shoes, dress-up shoes, clogs, flip flops, hiking boots, or cowboy boots. Crocs and sandals are okay, but given that they do not provide much support, they are not preferred.

- All clothing should be weather appropriate for being comfortable when outside. We like to go outside even if it's raining or snowing! There's a wonderful Norwegian saying – "*Det finnes ikke dårlig vær, bare dårlig klær!*" which translates to "There is no bad weather, only bad clothes!"

- The school has a limited supply of "extra clothes." If your child comes home wearing something unfamiliar, please wash these and return them to school promptly.

Naps

For nap time, children's mats will be spaced out to maximize the distance between them. As recommended by the DC Department of Health, children who choose to wear masks will remove them while they are napping. Napping takes place in the classroom.

Toys

Toys are a distraction from classroom work and should not be brought to school. Also, please check pockets for unfamiliar items. These may be important parts of Montessori materials and need to be returned to school.

Lost and Found

The Lost & Found Basket is kept in the foyer between the entry doors. Feel free to check it as it is convenient for you.

Help us reduce the number of items in our Lost & Found by ensuring that all coats, jackets, sweaters, hoodies, sweatshirts, hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, socks, shoes, water bottles and bags are clearly labeled in some way. Be sure to do this at the change of seasons and when new articles are purchased.

Field Trip & Goings Out Policies

Field trips and Goings-Out take place in Elementary and are planned in conjunction with the students and teachers to support and complement the curriculum. Aidan's Consent and Waiver forms for leaving campus are completed by the parents as part of the emergency contact information request during the summer. Permission from the parents is required for

participation in the trips. Families will be notified in advance of each trip by their child's respective teachers.

Transportation is by foot, Metro, or the Aidan School Bus. We ask that all elementary students that reside in DC participate in the Kids Ride Free program. Information regarding Kids Ride Free is distributed at the beginning of each academic year. Current laws for car seat and seatbelt safety are followed. Children must be properly seated in a child safety seat until they turn 8. Parents sending in car seats in order to enable their child to participate in a field trip is imperative. Children eight and over must wear seat belts at all times. No child will be allowed to sit in the front seat. Parents who drive on field trips are required to have a copy of their driver's license on file with the Office.

The School may cancel a trip if there are not enough adult chaperones.

Parent chaperones must keep their cell phones on and within reach during field trips. In the event of an emergency, chaperones must heed the instructions from the Aidan staff with them. If not accompanied by a staff member, chaperones must call the school and follow their instructions.

Going Outside in Weather Extremes

All children enrolled at Aidan Montessori School shall go outdoors for recess, walks, PE class, and ASP unless the air temperature and/or the wind-chill factor is below 25° as reported by the National Weather Service for Washington, DC, at the time of said outdoor activity. Plans will be made for age-appropriate indoor movement and play.

Decisions around exposing children to extreme heat and diminished air quality may be made at the discretion of School leadership in conjunction with recommendations from the local and federal governments.

Teacher & Staff Gifts

At Aidan we greatly value the dedication and hard work of all our teachers and staff in creating a nurturing learning environment for our students. While gestures of appreciation are welcomed, we believe in maintaining transparency and fairness across all levels. Please contact your child's Room Parent for guidance around teacher and staff gifts.

Code of Conduct

(Code of Conduct, Grievance and Disciplinary Protocols for Parents and Students)

Parent Conduct:

Families with a child enrolled at Aidan become part of our Aidan Community. This community thrives because we all agree to treat each other with grace, courtesy, and respect. Your signature on the Aidan Contract indicates your willingness to abide by the following guidelines:

Privacy

Please help us maintain the mutual trust and respect we all need to keep our community healthy by safeguarding the privacy of children, parents, and staff. Passing on confidential, damaging or harmful information is not acceptable.

Conflicts

Conflicts between parents or parents and staff should be addressed in a calm and private manner, preferably in person and with a respectful note. Phone calls and emails should not be used to express anger, frustration or criticism. Meetings are to be held by appointment or at a mutually convenient time.

Etiquette

Aidan teachers, staff and parents are all expected to strive for high standards of etiquette and behavior. Commitments should be honored, criticism should be constructive and genial, and "thank you" should be frequent. Parking and traffic laws must be followed, and Aidan's neighbors should be treated with the utmost respect. Using proper etiquette is good for our community and for our children – we should model the very best behavior for them.

Communication

When a parent has a question, concern or grievance, they should make every effort to bring their issue to the appropriate person, as outlined below:

Whom to Contact:

For Program, Student and Classroom issues:

First: Child's Lead teacher

Second: Assistant Head of School for Faculty & Curriculum

Third: Head of School

For General School Operations and Policy issues:

Assistant Head of School for Operations

For questions about the Montessori pedagogy:

Assistant Head of School for Faculty & Curriculum or Head of School

For questions about finances and billing:

Chief Financial Officer

For questions about health and health policies:

School Nurse

For questions about admissions:

Director of Admissions & Enrollment Management

For questions about diversity, equity, inclusion, and access:

Director of Inclusion and Belonging or Head of School

The use of broadcast emails and/or social media to contact fellow parents about sensitive issues involving Aidan policy, teachers, staff or students is inappropriate and may be grounds for probation or dismissal.

Note: Aidan's Board of Trustees is NOT charged with the oversight of day-to-day school management. When faced with questions about such issues, Board members will pass those concerns on to the Head of School, as is "best practice" for Trustees in independent schools.

Zero Tolerance

Some behavior is grounds for immediate dismissal from the Aidan community, including:

Sexual Abuse/Assault

Sexual abuse/assault is illegal and will not be tolerated. Allegations of abuse or assault will be thoroughly investigated and offenders will be dealt with appropriately. This applies to all employees, parents, students, volunteers, and subcontractors.

Discrimination

Discrimination or harassment of any person in the Aidan community on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, familial status or structure, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, disability, source of income, and place of residence or business is counter to our values and our mission, and will not be tolerated. Allegations of discrimination will be thoroughly investigated and violators of Aidan's Non-Discrimination Policy, found in the Parent Handbook, will be dealt with appropriately. This applies to all employees, parents, volunteers, and subcontractors.

Parental behavior determined by the School, at its sole discretion, to be egregious may result in immediate termination of the enrollment contract(s), or non-renewal of enrollment(s) at the sole discretion of the School. Termination of an enrollment contract does not dissolve the family's financial responsibility to the School.

Students Conduct:

Our community expects students to:

- Respect themselves.
- Respect others.
- Respect the environment, the property of the school, and the property of others.

The Zero Tolerance Policy stated in the Code of Conduct for Parents also applies to students as developmentally appropriate, which ensures that the action taken is appropriate to the age and stage of the child.

There are times when a student may exhibit repeated behavior that is troubling or harmful to themselves, other students, the school's physical environment, or other members of the Aidan community. The school retains the right to remove students from the school at the sole discretion of the Head of School (see enrollment contract).

Below is a list of actions that the school might use to address students' behaviors. This list is not exhaustive, nor is it necessarily sequential; any of these steps may be taken at any time:

- Immediate verbal correction and/or redirection of behavior in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- Call or email to parents.
- Student visit to administrator.
- Conferences with parents between teacher(s), parents and administrator.
- Individual Behavior Plan developed with the School.
- Requirement of seeking counseling, specific diagnostic testing, or full evaluation at the parents' expense.
- Timeline for assessing the success of the Individual Behavior Plan.

- Student Behavioral Contract.
- Probation: A student's continued enrollment will be contingent upon their adherence to the Individual Behavior Plan and the Aidan Code of Conduct for Students.
- Suspension: A student will be temporarily removed from the classroom either within the school building or at home.
- Expulsion: A student will leave the Aidan community permanently.

Allowing the process to take place in private without interference by other parties is vital. In the case of termination of the enrollment of a student, the financial obligation of the family is not dissolved.

Bullying

We at Aidan believe that all children deserve to have a safe and healthy school environment. We also believe all children are capable of learning how to resolve conflicts in a respectful and appropriate manner. We are committed to supporting children in their conflict resolution, helping them to develop skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

If you suspect your child is being bullied, please notify the School Counselor, Head of School, and your child's teacher by email. You can expect a follow-up by phone as we address your concerns and determine how to move forward. We will work with you to be certain that the issue is resolved.

Volunteering at Aidan

Aidan volunteers are vital to the fulfillment of our Mission. Each year, Aidan is fortunate to receive many gifts of time, talent, and treasure, which are essential to our success. Volunteers help to make special activities happen. When you agree to perform a service for the school, the entire community is counting on you to fulfill your promise. If you cannot, please contact a member of the PA Leadership or the event coordinator and arrange for a replacement.

Being present at the school requires confidentiality regarding what is observed or heard. Any concerns you may have should be made known to the teacher who will indicate if you need to speak to an administrator.

Respect for the Child

Volunteers at Aidan must demonstrate a positive, optimistic attitude about children, a cooperative spirit, a nurturing of independence, a recognition of unique individuality, and also trust in the child's work, providing the right activity, and listening to and observing in order to follow the child. One should avoid pride and anger, touching the child unless invited,

speaking ill of the child, sarcasm, teasing, overreacting to misbehavior, and implied reward and punishment. Phrasing of instructions should be direct and to the point. When communicating with the child, speak to the child at their eye level.

Confidentiality

This includes all personal information about children and families, organizational problems, and individual staff matters. All records, files, conversations, and conferences are held for the benefit of the child and are strictly confidential. Being present in the classroom requires confidentiality regarding what is observed or heard. Problems or concerns should be addressed to the teacher present.

Good Staff Relations

Working cooperatively and non-judgmentally with our staff in a trusting manner is essential. Direct communication with teachers and staff is important. Negative comments, gossip, and other harmful behaviors are violations of the School's Code.

Professional Conduct

This includes keeping private matters outside of the school, maintaining agreements at all levels regarding performance of duties, and meeting the needs of individual children and staff.

Communication

Emails

Regular Communications

Our policy is to communicate with families via email whenever necessary, but as sparingly as possible. The following is a list of emails that families can expect from Aidan:

- *This Week at Aidan*: Sent every Sunday with a schedule for the upcoming week
- *School Notes*: Our monthly newsletter that is sent on the first Wednesday of every month. **Please make certain that you read this email carefully** as it is used to communicate important information without overwhelming you with separate emails for each item of note at school. This newsletter will include such content as notes on events, photos from around Aidan, and articles on events and parent support from our faculty.

- Health updates including notifications about communicable diseases such as Pink Eye, Hand-Foot-and-Mouth, Strep Throat, Flu, and COVID-19.

You can expect to receive personalized emails from the teacher about your child's progress both during the first and second semesters. In addition to communication about events affecting your child, you can expect to receive periodic classroom updates with photos throughout the year. Parent-Teacher Conferences in October and March, and Progress reports in January for Elementary students and June for Primary & Elementary, are also useful tools for discussion between you and your child's teacher about your child's progress.

Having correct email addresses for each family is very important. Please make every effort to read all Aidan emails for important information. Items that cannot go home via email are mailed or occasionally placed in children's backpacks; you will be notified in advance if this is the case.

Email Deadlines

In order to be sure that we do not send out conflicting information, and that our activities reflect Aidan cohesively and correctly, submissions for the *School Notes* newsletter must be approved (and edited, if necessary) by the Director of Communications and other stakeholders within the school as appropriate. As such, please consult with the Director of Communications about any content you would like to submit to *School Notes* at least one week before it is scheduled to go out. It is typically scheduled to go out on the first Wednesday of the month so submissions should come in about a week before that.

Emergency Text Messaging System

Aidan Montessori School has developed a comprehensive Crisis Plan to safeguard Aidan students and employees in the event of a range of crisis contingencies. If circumstances permit, parents will be notified in the event of an emergency or unanticipated event via text messaging from SMS provider Remind.com. **Parents should opt-in to receive text messages sent from Aidan if they do not receive a test text early in the year.**

To do so, please to https://www.remind.com/join/fa940 and follow the prompts, or to subscribe manually, **text @fa940 to the number 81010**. You will be asked to enter your first and last name to complete your subscription. Standard text messaging rates apply.

Aidan Website

Parents are encouraged to visit Aidan's website, www.aidanschool.org, for general information, calendar details, emergency updates, and more. The School also hosts more sensitive information for families in Aidan's Veracross Parent Portal. Access to the Portal is granted to new families in early July, and utilizes the same Veracross login credentials used

throughout the admissions process. Families will receive an email letting them know when they have access to the Parent Portal. Families may also access. For any problems accessing the portal, please email the Director of Communications for assistance.

Consistency and Honoring Privacy Preferences

Aidan is fortunate to have a community that is rich in events and talented volunteers, and it benefits tremendously from having such energy and creativity in our corner. All communications created on behalf of the School by any member of the community must be checked by the Director of Communications before being distributed to the Aidan community. This helps us to ensure that family privacy preferences are being respected and that the School is being represented consistently and accurately.

General Communication

Communication with Faculty/Staff

Teachers and staff will be in touch with you via phone or email when needed. In addition to the twice-yearly Parent-Teacher Conferences, feel free to discuss your child's school progress, behavior or overall well-being with the child's teacher when you feel it is necessary or appropriate. Please call (202-387-2700) or email them on their Aidan school email address (first initial.last name@aidanschool.org). Your child's teacher will return your call or email within 24-48 working hours. Please do not use Arrival or Dismissal for these conversations, as the teacher has other responsibilities at this time that will prevent them from giving you their full attention.

Please be respectful of faculty and staff during nights, weekends, and holidays—allow them the appropriate amount of time upon returning to work to respond to emails and phone calls. Every Lead Teacher has a Communications Plan on their class website page, which explains how to best communicate with them.

We ask that families contact members of the administrative staff using their school phone number or email address. (See the section on Code of Conduct for communication of concerns or grievances.)

Communication with Fellow Parents

Room parents set up group email lists and/or WhatsApp group texts at the beginning of the year and communicate with parents in their class regarding school and class activities. We expect that all communication on these platforms will follow Aidan's Code of Conduct.

Social & Digital Media

Aidan Montessori School is officially represented on various social networks. These sites are managed by the Director of Communications. Links are available on the homepage of the Aidan website.

Pictures and videos of our students may be featured on our website and social media platforms throughout the year. If you do not wish for your child to be featured in photographs or video, please contact the Head of School in writing by August 1 as instructed by Aidan's Enrollment Agreement.

Parent Portal & Class Websites

Each teacher, in conjunction with the Director of Communications and the Assistant Heads of School, maintains a class website through Aidan's Parent Portal on Veracross. Each website has complete information for contacting your child's teacher, including the best method and times to reach them. Snack schedules, class events and trip information, and class updates are also posted here. Photos and videos can be viewed and enjoyed on this page.

To view your child's class website, please visit the Veracross Parent Portal (https://portals.veracross.com/aidan/parent). Once you have logged in using your username (firstname.lastname) and password, under the "My Children" section, select "Classes & Reports" followed by website. We recommend bookmarking this page and Veracross Parent Portal homepage for easy access later.

Under the Veracross Parent Portal, families can access the Magnus Health Portal, which contains all student forms. Additionally, families may register for ASP or Discovery, access re-enrollment information, update household information, search directories and more. If you have difficulty logging into the Parent Portal, please contact aidan@aidanschool.org for additional support.

Admission & Transitions

Sibling Admission Preference Policy

Siblings of re-enrolled students who have not applied out are given priority in the admissions process if the application is submitted on or before the December deadline. If a student has applied out, their sibling is not accorded preference. If the original re-enrolled sibling does

not ultimately re-enter in September, then the sibling for whom preferential admission was granted may not be offered re-enrollment the following year.

Applying Out

As a member of the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington, we maintain common deadlines with other area independent schools. Contact your schools of interest for specific application information. If you are considering applying out, or if your child is graduating, please contact the Head of School and the Director of Admissions to begin that process.

As detailed in the Aidan's enrollment contract if a family is not in good financial standing, the School may "withhold transcripts and other records, withhold references, deny placement the following year, deny Student's participation in graduation ceremonies, and deny permission for the student to participate in other activities unless the Student's account has been paid in full."

Special Procedures for Graduating Students

Graduating students are closely supported by the Head of School and the Director of Admissions & Enrollment Management throughout the out-applying process. Early in the school year, an information session is run for parents of graduates. Aidan requests that parents work through the application process closely with the administration, allowing Aidan to advocate on behalf of the students.

Business & Finances

Parents may contact the Business Office with questions regarding tuition and fees. Here are some guidelines for interacting with the Business Office:

- Please refer all questions regarding billing for enrollment contracts, tuition and Enrichment at Aidan (ASP/Discovery/Summer Camp) to our Business Manager.
- Aidan uses Veracross to manage tuition and billing for families. All tuition payments must be paid directly to Veracross (VC Pay). The binding date for all contracts is June 1.

Tuition Payment Plans

Tuition for any given school year is due in the month of June preceding the school year.

In order to accommodate the myriad needs of families, Aidan has established alternative payment plans that spread the payments out over the school year. The payment plan options are listed below:

- **Plan A** – This is a one-time payment and is due in June. .
- **Plan B** – Tuition paid in two payments: 60% of the payment is due in June, and remaining 40% due in January. There is a 2.25% fee added to the tuition for this Plan.
- **Plan C/D** – Ten monthly payments, with the first payment due in June and the remaining payments due each month thereafter through March. There is a 2.75% fee added to the tuition for this Plan.

Each family must select a payment plan in Veracross. If a family would like to change payment plans, the request must be submitted in writing to the Business Office 10 days before the first tuition payment is due.

Payment Methods

Aidan does not accept cash. Plan A families may pay by check, cashier's check, money order, or certified check directly to the Business Office or use VC Pay through Veracross. Plan B and Plan C/D families must pay via automatic withdrawal from their bank account or credit card (Plan A families can opt in to autopay). Any families that need to make an adjustment to their automatic withdrawal should first contact the business office.

Enrollment Agreements

The enrollment agreement that parents sign is a legal agreement between parents/guardians and Aidan Montessori School. The school requires predictable tuition revenue in order to effectively provide the services contracted. Re-enrollment agreements for current parents are distributed in early January, are due with the tuition deposit at the end of January, and become binding on June 1. Enrollment Agreements offered to new families also become binding on June 1. Some important points:

- **The tuition deposit is nonrefundable.**
- **After the June 1 binding date, parents/guardians are responsible in full for the tuition obligation.** In order to partially safeguard against unforeseen departures, Aidan uses Dewar's Tuition Refund Plan. Families under payment plans B & C are automatically enrolled in this plan and premiums are included in the tuition and fees section of the enrollment agreements. Families under payment plan A may elect coverage for an additional fee of 1.7% of tuition which must be paid in

full by June 30th (or within 10 days of signing an enrollment agreement for post June enrollees). Dewar's tuition insurance covers tuition for the Montessori program only, and does not cover fees paid for Enrichment at Aidan Programs (ASP, Discovery, and Summer Camp). More detailed information about this plan is provided with re-enrollment materials.

- **Grace period**. The school provides a grace period of five calendar days after the stated due date. Checks are logged in and dated as soon as they are received (whether by hand or mail).

- **Late fee**. A late fee of 1.0% per month will be applied to all accounts with past due balances over 30 days.

- **Returned Payment and Non-Sufficient Fund (NSF) check fees**. Aidan will charge a $50 fee for every returned payment (electronic or check payments). A returned payment may result in late fees per the above paragraph. If a family presents a 2nd NSF check or any electronic payment is returned on a second attempt, future payments of tuition and fees may be required to be paid by money order, certified check, or cashier's check. An additional charge of $50.00 from Veracross may also be assessed in the event of a returned payment or NSF withdrawal.

- **Good financial standing**. All tuition and fees from the current or prior school year must be paid in full (in accordance to the payment plan selected) to be considered in good financial standing. Good financial standing is required to enroll your child for the next school year, for a child to start a new school year or for school records to be released to other schools.

- **Re-enrollment**. The tuition deposit must accompany the re-enrollment agreement. An agreement will not be accepted without payment.

Receipts/Statements

Many families participate in employer tuition reimbursement plans and therefore request payment receipts. Please submit your request in writing to the Business Manager specifying exactly what information should be included. The Business Office will prepare these statements once a month, so please consider this when timing your request. Billing statements and invoices are accessible on the Parent Portal under Tuition Management - Student Billing.

Financial Aid

Aidan Montessori School recognizes the importance of a strong financial aid program. Each year, the Board of Trustees designates a portion of the school's budget to assist families whose resources would not otherwise allow them to enroll their children. The Board has authorized the proceeds from our annual Auction to be used for this purpose.

The goals of the program are twofold: (1) to attract a diverse socioeconomic student body, and (2) to provide tuition payment assistance to families within the school who require such assistance and who meet the established criteria. Priority for financial assistance goes to families already within the School.

Children are accepted to the School without regard to financial need. The School makes an effort to offer tuition payment assistance in all cases of demonstrated need as determined by the Financial Aid Committee.

Aidan uses TADS to conduct financial need assessments. TADS analyzes financial data provided by the applicant family and provides a need-based financial aid report to the School. Final review of tuition assistance requests are made by the Financial Aid Committee, and funds are awarded through the Head of School. Aidan holds all financial information regarding Aidan families, including financial aid awards, strictly in confidence; Aidan appreciates families also treating financial aid awards in confidence.

The deadline for Financial Aid forms to be submitted to TADS is mid-December for current families and late January for new incoming families. Financial Aid decisions are communicated to current families at the time re-enrollment contracts are made available in January. Admission decisions and Financial Aid notifications are sent to new families in March. Financial Aid awards do not rollover from school year to school year; applications must be submitted to TADS for each successive school year. A decision to grant or not grant Financial Aid to a family for any year does not guarantee future support or a consistent level of support in subsequent years.

Tuition & Fee Schedule and Financial Disclosure

You can always find a link to our complete Tuition & Fee Schedule and Financial Disclosure, as well as an overview of the current year's tuition under the Admissions page on our website. Please take time to review this information, which is important to all Aidan families.

Employing Aidan Staff Outside of School

Any financial arrangement between an Aidan employee and an Aidan family must be requested by the employee to the Head of School, who will approve such arrangements on a case-by-case basis. If the arrangement is approved, the employee must have the family sign a

waiver and return it to the School. This employment is between the individual faculty/staff and the family. Any and all such services shall be provided outside of the school premises. Aidan Montessori School is not a party to such arrangements and, therefore, is not responsible for the actions of any of the parties.

Aidan Montessori School will not be liable or responsible for any damages, injury or loss, consequential or otherwise, resulting from such employment. The faculty/staff and the employer shall hold Aidan Montessori School harmless with regard to any and all damages, injuries and liability arising therefrom or related thereto. Financial arrangements between school employees and school families that are not initially approved by the Head of School are serious breaches of employment.

Giving at Aidan

Giving at Aidan falls into several categories:

- The Aidan Fund (Annual Giving)
- The Auction to Fund Students
- Capital Campaigns

For over 60 years, philanthropy has played a significant role in Aidan's success. In the coming years, your support will shape the school as a place where students can achieve the highest standard of education.

Throughout the year, you will be asked to participate in various school fundraising efforts listed in this section. Please know that each and every gift received positively impacts the quality of Aidan Montessori School. Only you can determine how much to give, but we ask each family to be as generous as possible and to participate in as many ways as they can.

The Aidan Fund

After tuition, the Aidan Fund is one of Aidan’s largest sources of income. It helps to fill the gap between tuition income and the actual cost of an Aidan education. If possible, we ask that you make the Aidan Fund one of your family’s philanthropic priorities. Generous contributions help us to provide our students with the best educational experience possible by supporting classrooms, faculty and staff salaries and benefits, professional development, and maintenance of the building and grounds.

Independent schools, like Aidan, rely on voluntary support of current parents, alumni, faculty, staff, the Board of Trustees, alumni families, grandparents, and friends of the school

to support their annual fund. Our goal is always to reach 100% participation from our current families as well as our faculty and staff, and Board of Trustees, and for significant participation from our other constituent groups.

All members of the Aidan community are contacted in the fall with information about the year's Annual Giving effort. Our Director of Advancement is available to answer any questions you may have or to help you make your gift. Contributions to the Aidan Fund must be received by June 30 to include your participation in that year's efforts.

Auction to Fund Students

Aidan's Auction is held annually in March with all proceeds benefiting our Financial Aid Program. At Aidan, approximately 25% of our families receive some form of tuition assistance. We hope that your family will choose to participate in this effort–whether you donate an item, help as a volunteer, bid during the Auction, attend the Auction, raise your paddle during our Fund-A-Student appeal, or all of the above. The Auction provides a fun, social atmosphere for the Aidan community to provide philanthropic support for the school.

Capital Campaigns

From time to time, independent schools like Aidan also engage in capital campaigns to raise funds for improvements to our building and programs, and to plan for our future. During these periodic campaigns, we will ask you to support these long-term efforts in addition to Annual Giving.

Additional information about how to make a gift to Aidan Montessori School can be found on our website under "Support."

Records Retention and Management

Policy

The policy of Aidan Montessori School is to retain, for an appropriate time, all records that are needed for the operation of Aidan or required to be retained by law. Records will be retained or routinely disposed of in accordance with the time periods indicated in the Records Retention Schedule.

Records relevant to litigation, or potential litigation, must be preserved until it is determined that those records are no longer needed. The Head of School will issue a Records Disposal

Suspension Notice, and routine disposal of the relevant records will be suspended pending authorization by the Head of School to resume routine record disposal.

Definitions

Record

Information that has been recorded on a storage medium and can be retrieved. A record may be a paper, electronic, email, photograph, blueprint, or audio or video recording.

Confidential Records

Records containing confidential student or employee data that should have limited access and be protected from inadvertent disclosure.

Confidential Data

Information protected by statutes, regulations, Aidan policies, or contractual language; e.g., medical records, student records and other non-public student data, social security numbers, personnel and/or payroll records, bank account numbers and other personal financial data, any data identified by government regulation to be treated as confidential or sealed by a court of competent jurisdiction.

Department

Any organizational subdivision of Aidan.

Records Retention Coordinator

The person in charge of the Aidan Archives and the Records Management program.

Electronic Records

Records created or obtained in electronic format must be treated the same as records in hard copy under this policy. The general rule of thumb in this area is that electronic records should be kept as long as a paper record of the same type. Email presents a unique issue. When emails are “deleted,” they often are stored in a back-up file and not disposed of immediately. Nevertheless, these messages are not retained indefinitely. Thus, employees receiving email messages that are required to be retained in accordance with this policy should retain the message in the form of a paper document or in a separate electronic folder in the employee’s email system.

Inquiries

Any inquiries regarding the Records Retention and Management Policy or Records Retention Schedule should be referred to the appropriate employee in charge of the department or the Records Management Coordinator who will seek advice from the Head of School as needed.

Records Retention Schedule

Department Responsible for Retaining	**Record Type**	**Retention Period**
ADMISSIONS	Accepted Students, Not Enrolled	3 years
	Denied & Waitlisted Students	3 years
	Confidential Documents - teacher recs, etc.	1 year
	Incomplete Applications	1 year
	Marketing Materials	Permanent
ADVANCEMENT	Alumni Records	Permanent
	Aidan Fund Records	7 years
	Bequests	Permanent
	Deferred Gifts	Permanent
	Donor Files	Permanent
	Income In-Kind	Permanent
	Statements - including perpetual trust	3 years, end of fiscal & calendar year
BUSINESS OFFICE	Aidan Business & Finance Policies	Permanent
	Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws	Permanent
	Audit Reports	Permanent
	Board Committee Minutes	Permanent
	Board Minutes and Packets	Permanent
	Building Drawings and Plans	Permanent
	Canceled Checks (including electronic)	5 years

	Construction and Major Equipment Records	Permanent
	Contract Bids	3 years
	Contracts and Agreements	Permanent
	Deposit slips (including electronic)	3 years
	Financial Aid — award letters and invoices	4 years after student leaves
	Income – bequests	Permanent
	Income – broker statements	3 years
	Inventories	3 years
	Invoices	3 years
	Journals	3 years
	Ledgers – trial balances, A/P, and A/R	3 years
	Legal Opinions	Permanent
	Loan Documentation	Permanent
	Long Range Plans – facilities and strategic	Permanent
	Mortgage and Note Agreements	Permanent
	Property/Real Estate/Zoning Documentation	Permanent
	Reports Required by Federal and State	Permanent
	Student Contracts	7 years
	Time Sheets	5 years
	Vouchers AP & CR	3 years
	W-2s	7 years
COMMUNICATIONS	Constituent Communications	Permanent
	Photographs & Videos	Permanent
	Publications	Permanent
HEAD'S OFFICE / HUMAN RESOURCES	All Items in Aidan Personnel File except for:	6 years after separation
	1. Appointment letters – original & renewals 2. New Hire Forms	Permanent

	Board & Committee Agendas and Materials	Permanent
	Computer Hard Drive Backups 1. Assistants & Support Staff 2. Teachers 3. Administrators	 1 Year 1 Year 5 Years
	Documents Related to Overnight Travel	5 years after graduation
	Employee Initial Benefit Enrollment Forms	6 years past separation
	Google User Staff Profiles (Email & Drive Docs) 1. Assistants & Support Staff 2. Teachers 3. Administrators User email accounts suspended upon separation unless noted otherwise.	 1 Year 1 Year Permanent
	New Hire Forms	Permanent
	Payroll Change Form	6 years past separation
	Position Descriptions – employee files both electronic and paper	Permanent
	Separation Form	Permanent
	Student Accident Reports	7 years after graduation
	Student Health Forms – graduated and withdrawn	7 years after graduation
	Student Injury Records	7 years after graduation
	Time Sheets	5 years
RECORDS RETENTION COORDINATOR	All Items in Academic File except for:	5 years after graduation
	1. Transcripts 2. Progress reports 3. Narratives 4. Conference reports 5. Notes in student files	Permanent
	Any testing done in school	Permanent
	Student Learning Diagnostic Files	1 year after graduation

Upcoming Year at-a-Glance

Aidan is always bustling with activity! The brief summary below will give you some information about important yearly events as well as what is generally expected from parents. Please see the school website and the print calendar you received before the start of the school year for exact dates.

August/September

New Family Orientation

Families who are new to Aidan are invited to a three-part series featuring two-virtual sessions and an in-person visit. Sessions include "Montessori 101—Why Are We Here?" "What to Expect—Your Child, Our Teachers & Aidan," and "All Things Practical—A Day in the Life".

New & Transitioning Student Visits

All students who are new to their class, even if they are coming from another Aidan class, will have the opportunity to visit with their new teacher prior to the start of school. Look for your invitation to sign up for your visit in August.

Back-to-School Night

This evening is for parents to learn about the classroom schedule, curriculum, and procedures from their child's teacher. Attendance is strongly encouraged!

Class Socials

Throughout September and October, one Aidan family in each class hosts a social event for the other parents in the class.

Fall Festival

The Fall Festival is an event run by the Parent Association and takes place at Aidan on the playground. All families are warmly invited to attend.

October

Admissions Open Houses

Aidan holds several Open Houses in the fall and winter for prospective parents to visit the school. Open Houses are great opportunities to share your favorite things about Aidan with other parents.

Financial Aid Applications

The application portal for families interested in applying for financial aid for the 2024-25 school year opens in October. Learn more by visiting:
https://www.aidanschool.org/admissions/financial-aid

New Family Breakfast

New families, we look forward to sharing a meal with you. The New Family Breakfast is an opportunity to get to know each other better. Come meet our Admin Team, PA Leadership, Trustees, and other new families!

School Photos

Twice a year, school pictures are taken by a contracted vendor in the Primary and Elementary classes. In the fall, individual portraits are taken, and in the spring, class pictures are taken. These are entirely voluntary although we hope you will allow your child to be in the class photograph even if you do not order a copy.

Looking Ahead to Elementary

Designed for parents whose children will be moving up to Lower or Upper Elementary in a year or so, the program describes the transition and continuation of the curriculum.

Book Fair

The Book Fair is held at the Politics and Prose Bookstore. During this one-day event, the school receives a portion of the sales when Aidan is mentioned at the register. Funds are dedicated to the Library. In addition to purchasing books for gifts and home, parents may also buy books to donate to the Library and to families in need. Parent volunteers are needed to explain the wish lists, answer questions, and receive books purchased for the Library.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Held twice a year for two days in the fall and spring, Parent-Teacher Conferences are important opportunities to hear about your child's life at school and to share information from home. Our teachers are well prepared to discuss each child on these days. We fully expect every parent to make an appointment during Parent-Teacher Conferences and use this dedicated, pre-planned time to meet with the teacher. Except for YCC, who are in session on the Thursday of conferences, school is closed for those days, as is the After School Program. Child care is provided for enrolled students for the duration of the family's Parent-Teacher Conferences.

November

Swirl Social

This not-to-be-missed social event for parents is a kick-off event for the Annual Auction to Fund Students and a great time for everyone who attends.

Guided Tour with Wine & Cheese

During this adults-only event, you can sip on wine, snack on cheese, and enjoy a special guided tour of our Montessori classrooms.

Looking Ahead to Primary

Designed for parents whose children will be moving up to Primary in a year or so, the program describes the transition and continuation of the curriculum.

December

Sibling Preference

In order to qualify for sibling preference, applications must be received by the deadline indicated in the calendar. Siblings of students applying out are not accorded preference.

Financial Aid Applications for Returning Students

Families of returning students who are interested in applying for financial aid must submit their applications and materials by the deadline indicated on the calendar. Award notifications will be sent in early January.

The Montessori Journey

This workshop, designed for parents, grandparents, or other adults in your child's life, is a unique opportunity for a "hands on" experience with the Montessori materials. Adults attend one evening for a journey through YCC, Primary and Elementary classrooms to begin to get a sense of the differences between Montessori and traditional education models. Under the guidance of the teachers, adults have the opportunity to work directly with preselected materials to discover Montessori from the perspective of the child.

January

Mid-Year Mingle

Chat with Aidan parents and administrators, snack on pastries and coffee, and learn about a few upcoming events and important announcements. If you're looking to build community at Aidan and/or understand a bit more about what the Spring has in store, the Mid-Year Mingle is for you.

Re-enrollment

Re-enrollment contracts must be completed online by the end of the month, along with the tuition deposit, in order to hold your child's place for the next year. Please note: your child's place will not be held without the tuition deposit.

February

Elementary Fair

Elementary students present learning projects to fellow students, faculty, staff and parents. Lower Elementary students work on displays with explanations, and Upper Elementary students perform and present projects.

March

Auction

The annual Auction to Fund Students is held each year in March. Members of the Aidan Community will have the opportunity to bid on a number of great items and experiences. We also hold our traditional Fund-A-Student paddle raise in a direct appeal for 100% tax-deductible donations to financial aid. Volunteers help solicit items, promote items for

bidding, organize the Online Auction, and much more to help raise funds for Aidan's Financial Aid program.

April

Elementary Musical

After weeks of preparation, the entire Elementary student body performs a musical/dramatic production for family, friends, and the community.

May

Evening of the Arts

The annual Evening of the Arts is held the night before Special Persons' Day. Throughout the school year, selected works of each student are saved and later mounted in the halls of the school for display. Volunteers are needed for matting, hanging artwork, decorating, and staffing as directed by the Art Teacher.

Special Persons' Day

This is one of Aidan's most popular events. We invite the students' grandparents and other special people for a morning reception and to visit our classrooms. Children are dismissed following their visits or by 11:15 AM on this day.

June

End of the Year Class Gatherings

Each class holds a year-end celebration, which is planned by the students, teachers, and Room Parents. These are festive occasions for students and parents to celebrate the year and to thank the teachers, assistants, and classroom volunteers.

Spring Fling

This end-of-year event is created by our families, for our families. Volunteers are needed! Be on the lookout for more information on our website and in *School Notes*.

Commencement

This graduation ceremony for our 6th-year students is always special. The entire Aidan community is invited, and the Upper and Lower Elementary students act as marshals, ushers, and chorus. We hope all Elementary families will attend and that all non-graduating Elementary students will participate in the ceremony. A reception immediately follows Commencement.

Ongoing Activities

Aidan School Store

A variety of Aidan merchandise is available at any time during the year through the Aidan School Store website and at different events in the school lobby and in front of the school. Look for periodic announcements in *School Notes* or social media.

Community Service

Throughout various points in the school year, Aidan identifies ways to give back and support our local community. Community Service initiatives are overseen by Aidan's Parent Association and are often connected with other school events. Want to get involved? Contact the Community Service Coordinator of the Parent Association to learn more!

Background Information

A History of Aidan Montessori School

Aidan began life as St. Aidan School on the campus of Dunbarton School for Girls, a Catholic college for women on what is now the Howard University Law School campus on Upton Street NW.

The school was founded in 1961 by Catholic parents who wanted a Montessori school for their children. They incorporated as the first Montessori school in Washington as a 501-c(3) not-for-profit corporation and formed the first Board of Trustees. Soon after, St. Aidan moved to Military Road where it leased space for 33 years from Temple Sinai. St. Aidan School changed names in 1985 to Aidan Montessori School to reflect the school's secular nature.

Aidan purchased the St. Thomas Apostle Church School in 1995 and moved to the school's present location in historic Woodley Park.

Over the years, Aidan joined with other independent schools in the greater Washington area and embraced the practices which guide independent schools nationwide.

Corporation, Accreditation, & Associations

Aidan Montessori School is a non-profit entity incorporated in the District of Columbia and governed by a Board of Trustees. Admissions and staffing at Aidan Montessori School is open to all regardless of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, religion, or national origin. The rules of governance are set forth in the organization's by-laws. Copies are available from the School Office upon request. Aidan Montessori School is licensed in the District of Columbia by the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE).

Aidan is recognized by the prestigious Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) as an accredited Montessori school. Aidan is also accredited by the Association of Independent Maryland Schools (AIMS). Aidan Montessori School and its teachers are members of the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).

Aidan is a member of the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington (AISGW) and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

A Brief Guide to Aidan's Accrediting & Collegial Organizations

AMI

Association Montessori Internationale is at the heart of Aidan in that Aidan has always been guided by AMI pedagogy. All of our lead classroom teachers are AMI-trained, providing our educational program with great consistency and congruence. Dr. Maria Montessori founded AMI in 1929 in order to maintain the integrity of her life's work. AMI sets standards on a straightforward interpretation of Dr. Montessori's writings, teachings, and universal principles. AMI's standards include:

- 3-hour morning work period
- Classes representing three-year age ranges: 3-6, 6-9, 9-12
- 1 teaching professional (AMI) per classroom only
- 1 non-teaching assistant per classroom

- Only two adults in the classroom at one time
- 28-35 students per class
- No specialists in the morning: PE, Music, Art, Foreign Language, etc.
- Only AMI-approved materials in the classroom
- 2 to 3 hours of uninterrupted Montessori work in the afternoon for Primary students and Elementary students 4 days per week.
- In addition, consultations and reviews, workshops and refresher courses, and work with training centers to assist in the preparation of future Montessori teachers.

AIMS

Association of Independent Maryland Schools. Many of our Greater Washington area independent schools are accredited by AIMS (Washington DC does not have a DC-specific accrediting body). Aidan is a member of AIMS and received full accreditation for the first time in 2004. AIMS accreditation allows Aidan to be a serious colleague when seeking placement for our graduates in our fellow independent schools. Independent school evaluation systems are an assessment of whether a school is, in fact, doing what it says it is doing. AIMS evaluates the educational program, general operations, finance, governance, health and safety, admissions, library, parent relations, and more.

AISGW

Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington. Aidan is a longstanding member. AISGW is a collegial organization, not an accrediting body, and AISGW serves as a cooperative hub of communication, professional development, and statistics gathering. AISGW schools agree to comply with a professional code of ethics with respect to admissions and other policies.

NAIS

National Association of Independent Schools. Aidan is a member of this national umbrella organization for independent schools throughout the country. NAIS provides many services to member schools and is a voice representing our schools in national policy initiatives.

Guidelines from The Association of Independent Maryland Schools (AIMS)

Parents & Independent Schools

To be successful, every independent school needs and expects the cooperation of parents, who must understand and embrace the school's mission, share the school's core values, and fully support the school's curriculum, faculty, and staff. When joined by a common set of beliefs and purposes, the independent school and its parents form a powerful team with far-reaching positive effects on children and the entire community.

Working together, parents and school professionals exert a strong influence on children to become better educated; they also help them to mature by modeling adult working relationships based upon civility, honesty, and respect.

In practice, the greater impediment to effective teamwork between independent schools and parents grows out of misunderstandings about school decision-making processes: Who makes decisions in independent schools? How are those decisions made? Independent schools must communicate their procedures to parents, who, in turn, share the important responsibility to become informed members of the school community.

Parents & The Board of Trustees

In most independent schools, decision-making authority at the highest level resides in a volunteer Board of Trustees whose membership often includes current parents. The Bdoard of Trustees does not intervene in the daily affairs of the school, such as curriculum development and hiring, evaluating or firing of faculty and staff. Instead, the Board focuses on three areas critical to the success of any independent school:

- It selects, evaluates, and supports the Head of School, to whom the Board delegates authority to manage the school;
- The Board develops broad institutional policies that guide the Head in running the school;
- And, it is accountable for the financial well-being of the school.

In the conduct of official business, the Board acts only as a whole; individual Trustees, including the Board Chair, have no authority to act unless specifically authorized to do so by the Board acting as a whole:

- AIMS encourages parents who are interested in high-level decision making to stay informed about the work of the Board of Trustees by reading school publications, talking to the Head of School, and attending appropriate meetings.

- Parents with concerns about the school or with decisions made by the administration or faculty are encouraged to inquire about and follow the school's review process, but they should not expect the Board of Trustees to act as an appeals board. In a day school, trustees often interact with others within the school community and hear concerns about the daily operation of the school. As a matter of good practice, the trustee reports those concerns to the Head of School.

Parents & The Faculty & Administration

Parents play an essential and positive role in the life of an independent school. Not only are parents advocates for their children, they also support the faculty and administration through extensive volunteer activities and events.

The relationship between parents and the faculty and administration is formally governed by the school's written enrollment contract and handbook, in which the school's procedures are laid out. When parents choose to enroll their child in an independent school, they agree to subscribe to the school's mission, follow the school's rules, and abide by the school's decisions. However, most teachers and administrators would agree that trust and mutual respect are the most essential underpinnings of effective working relationships with parents.

- AIMS encourages parents to work productively with teachers and administrators by staying informed about their child and important events in the life of the school. Thoughtful questions and suggestions should be welcomed by the school. Incumbent upon the school, is providing parents with timely and pertinent information.

- Parents best support a school climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to the teacher or administrator closest to the problem. Efforts by parents to lobby other parents will be viewed by the school as counterproductive.

- While parents may not agree with every decision by the school, in most cases the parent and school will find enough common ground to continue a mutually respectful relationship. In the extreme case, however, an impasse may be so severe that the parent cannot remain a constructive member of the community. In such cases, both the parent and the school should consider whether another school would be a better match for the family.

The Parent Association & The School

The Parent Association in an independent school provides a vital and much-appreciated service to school leadership and the entire school community. Because the Parent Association is so important, and its volunteer activities are potentially so wide-ranging, AIMS recommends the following steps to structure and clarify the Association's role:

- The Board of Trustees, in consultation with the administration, should develop a set of written by-laws for the Association that make clear its procedures and role as a service organization.
- The by-laws should clearly state the Association's mission to support the decisions and policies of the Board and administration. The Parent Association neither participates in policy-making by the school, nor functions as a lobbying group.
- The finances of the Parent Association should be supervised and regularly monitored by the school and should be part of the school's annual audit process.
- The Head of School should be closely involved in the Association nominating process. Cooperation and teamwork between the Head of School and the officers of the Parent Association are crucial to the health of the school community.
- Advertising activities and events are an appropriate function of the Parent Association. The PA, however, is not a public relations arm of the school and should play no role in the school's efforts to communicate about itself.

On the Handbook

Revision Policy

Aidan Montessori School reserves the right at its sole discretion to amend its policies, programs and/or guidelines, including the contents of this Handbook, at any time with or without prior notice.

Revision Date

This document was last revised on March 6, 2024.