



Welcome to J.J. Hill Montessori Magnet School

998 Selby Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104 - (651) 293-8720 (Main Office)
elizabeth.diemer@spps.org (Principal) - gail.ross@spps.org (School Secretary)

Welcome from Principal Diemer

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year! We hope you have been enjoying your summer. We have been busy preparing for the upcoming school year and are excited to see all our students and their families come together as part of the J.J. Hill Montessori community!



Personally, I had a delightful summer full of fun outings, reading good books, watching the Olympics, and I took a couple short trips with friends and family. I feel rested and excited to start my third year at J.J. Hill Montessori!



As we prepare for the 2024-25 school year, I am planning for a year of celebration, closure, and transition. As many of you know, it is planned that this will be our last year at the J.J. Hill school site as we prepare to move to the newly renovated Obama school site for the 2025-26 school year. This transition is sure to provide opportunities throughout the year for us to celebrate J.J. Hill Montessori in special ways as we build excitement for new opportunities at the Obama school site.

Another integral part of the school year for the J.J. Hill educators will be participating in the [CAREIALL](#) (Advancing Language and Literacy) training as part of Minnesota READ Act. You can read more about the Minnesota READ Act [here](#). I am excited to share more about our school-wide improvement goals after the start of the school year.

There will be various events throughout the year for you to connect with the J.J. Hill Montessori community. We hope you will join us for as many of these as you can! All current events scheduled for this year are noted in the attached [J.J. Hill Montessori Family Calendar](#). Also, all of our events will be kept updated on our school's Google calendar which can be viewed at jjhill.spps.org/calendar. If you have a personal Gmail account, you can add our J.J. Hill calendar to your personal devices by clicking this [link](#).

Strong partnerships with families and community members make us better. You are all an integral participant in your child's educational experience. A great way to connect with our community is by being active in the J.J. Hill Montessori Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Information about our PTO can be found at the end of this document.

I know as we get closer and closer to the school year starting, anticipation builds and it can be an exciting yet overwhelming time. Please take some time to read through the following information to help you and your family prepare for the school. If you have any questions, please call our office at (651) 293-8720 or email either Gail or myself.

Sincerely,

Lizzy Diemer
Principal, J.J. Hill Montessori School



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First Day of School



Students in **E1 and E2** (Grades 1-5) will begin **Tuesday, September 3rd**. Students in **Children's House** (Grades PK-K) will begin on **Thursday, September 5th**.

Open House Welcome Night

We would like to invite you and your family to come and meet your child's teacher on **Thursday, August 29th between 4:30-6:00 p.m.** Teachers will be in their classrooms and would love for you and your child to stop by and say hello before the year begins.

Children's House Welcome Meetings

Children's House (Pre-K and Kindergarten) Welcome Meetings will take place either on **Tuesday, September 3rd or Wednesday, September 4th**. Your child's teacher will be emailing you a conference letter with date and time for an individual welcome conference on September 3rd or 4th. Please call the office as soon as possible if your scheduled time doesn't work.

Complete Back-to-School Forms (iUpdate)

Completing the Back-to-School forms (formerly iUpdate) will ensure that you receive proper services, eligible transportation and important communications by U.S. mail, phone, email or text. One parent or guardian from each primary household is expected to complete the Back-to-School forms. To guarantee transportation on the first day of school, complete this form no later than **August 16th**.

Parents or guardians can log into [Campus Portal](#) to complete Back-to-School Forms by using their One Stop username (the letter 'g' followed by six numbers, gXXXXXX) and password. Families can retrieve their usernames and reset their passwords at spps.org/onestop. An email address or mobile phone number must be listed in the child's school record.

If you are new to SPPS, you can find your username and password by:

- Contacting your school's main office.
- Call (651) 603-4348 or email familysupport@spps.org

School Supplies

This year, our PTO has graciously donated money for needed school supplies. Families do not need to purchase school supplies. Your child should plan to bring a backpack and tennis shoes for gym class. Please label your these items with your child's first initial and last name. This helps us return any lost items.

Class Placement

Over the summer, you should have received class placement information and welcome letters from your child's teacher(s). If changes are made prior to the school year, you will receive communication from Lizzy regarding these changes. As noted in the placement letters, some changes may need to be made to balance classrooms after shifts over the summer.

School Hours

7:30 a.m.- 2:00 p.m., Monday - Friday



J.J. Hill Montessori students will be allowed into the school at 7:15 a.m. each day.

Please do not drop your child at school prior to 7:15 a.m., as there is no adult supervision. We want your children to be safe.

Classes start promptly at 7:30 a.m. and dismissal begins at 1:50 p.m.

Attendance

Attendance is an important part of student success. Missing **less than nine** days of school each year helps students to stay engaged, and experience success in their schoolwork. We recognize there are many reasons a student may be absent from school. If your student is ill, check SPPS's illness guidelines at spps.org/studentwellness.

If your child will be **absent** from school, please either **call the main office (651-293-8720) or email your child's classroom teacher and Gail (gail.ross@spps.org)**.

Communication between home and school is vital to a positive school experience. More information about consistent attendance can be found at spps.org/attendance.

Dismissal Plans

If the pickup plan changes for your child, please call the office no later than 1:00 p.m. so that we have enough time to communicate with their classroom teacher. You can also send a note to school with your child. **Students will not be allowed to change their pick up plan without a note or phone call from a parent.**

Childcare After School

SPPS Community Education offers Discovery Club at J.J. Hill again this year! The fee-based after school program does not include transportation. For more information, please visit their [website](#) or call 651-632-3793.



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Visitors

Please access the building via the main entrance only. To enter the building, ring the security buzzer to speak with a receptionist. You will sign in at the office and receive a visitor's badge. The visitor's badge must be worn at all times during your visit at J.J. Hill Montessori to ensure the safety of the children. We encourage all visits to be scheduled.

Busing Information

Busing information will be sent out on a postcard from the district at the end of August. Please watch for it in the mail. We are not able to let students ride a bus other than their assigned bus, even with parent permission. Students should plan to be at their bus stop **five minutes** before the scheduled pick up time. Track the status of your child's bus on our school's website or the [MySPPS Bus app](#).

Please talk with your child before the school year begins if they will be riding the bus. J.J. Hill Montessori students should stay seated in the same seat the entire ride, be kind to others and safely cross the street at the bus stop. J.J. Hill Montessori strictly follows the district guidelines for unacceptable bus behavior. This may include suspension from the bus.

If you believe your student is taking the bus but did not receive a postcard, please call Gail, our school secretary at 651-293-8720 as soon as possible, or email her at gail.ross@spps.org.



Dropping Off at School

Parents dropping off students should do so in the school parking lot. Please pull up *all the way to the front* of the parking lot near the playground to drop off your child. Once they have exited the car, please wait until the car in front of you moves and *do not pass other cars in the line*. We want to make sure all our students make it into the building safely. If you plan on walking your child to the building, please park on the street. All family members entering the building will need to sign-in in the Main Office and wear a guest badge.

A pillar of Montessori is supporting student independence. **After the first week of school, please begin to drop off your child at the school door instead of walking them to their classroom.** Students learn to transition to school more quickly when family members say their goodbyes outside of the building.

Walking to School

Elementary school students who live less than a half-mile from school may walk from home to school. If your student(s) will be walking to school, please communicate this to your student's teacher and Gail. If needed, we will assign a staff member to cross students at busy intersections.

Picking up from School

Each student who is picked up by a family member will receive a number in the first week of school (families who picked up last year will keep their same number). Students will congregate inside of the gym to wait with members of our staff before being called out when their family members arrive.

- If driving, families should place their number in their dashboard and then pull all the way into the parking lot.
- If walking, families will line up near the flagpole along the alley and share their number with a school representative and their child will be called to come outside.

School Meals

All students are eligible to receive free breakfast and lunch under the Minnesota Free School Meal program. As students arrive at school, they can grab their breakfast and eat at school. Hot and cold breakfast options are available.

Single Item Purchases and Second Meals

Second meals, incomplete meals and single items, such as milk only, must be purchased. The 2024-25 meal and milk prices are:

- Student Second Breakfast: \$3
- Student Second Lunch: \$5.25
- Milk Only: \$0.50
- For a complete list of prices, visit spps.org/ns.

Application for Educational Benefits

Even though all students will receive free breakfast and lunch, **all families are still strongly encouraged to complete an Application for Educational Benefits.** These applications determine more than just qualification for free or reduced price meals. They also determine how much educational funding our school receives, eligibility for grants and school discounts, and other benefits for families who qualify for free or reduced meal eligibility. The application, as well as school lunch and breakfast menus can be found online at schoolcafe.com/spps.



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Classroom Visits

Visitors are encouraged to keep classroom visits short in order to not distract students during academic instruction time.

We ask that you do not visit during arrival or dismissal times (7:15-8:00 a.m. and 1:45-2:00 p.m.) as these are times when students and staff are moving around the building.

When visiting a classroom, please consider the following guidance:

- The Montessori classroom is designed to give students the freedom to move about, the freedom to choose materials, and the freedom to use the materials for as long as needed. You may notice some differences in the way in which our classrooms function. Most classrooms have no desks, so the students choose whether to work at a table or on a floor mat.
- During a Montessori work time, students are presented with lessons and work on materials they have had a lesson on already. One of the goals of a Montessori classroom is to help the students build their power of concentration. Thus, visitors are encouraged to sit in an observation chair and to interact as little as possible with the students while visiting.

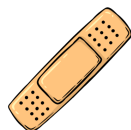
Student Health Concerns

The school nurse or health assistant will reach out to families of students with known health concerns prior to school beginning. If your child is new to J.J. Hill, you can connect with our health office by calling 651-888-7639.

Illness or Injury at School

In case of illness or injury during the school day, the school nurse will care for your child **temporarily**. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, a guardian will be contacted. If no guardians are available, the child will be taken to the emergency room of the nearest hospital, if necessary. **It is extremely important for us to have accurate emergency phone numbers for your child throughout the school year!**

Please pick up children who have been determined ill within a reasonable amount of time or make arrangements with others to help. We cannot accommodate ill students for any length of time.



Immunizations

Please check in with your healthcare provider to ensure your child's immunizations are current before school starts in the fall. Visit spps.org/studentwellness or call our school nurse for more information.

School Safety Measures

J.J. Hill has an Emergency Operations Plan that is created specifically for our school and regularly reviewed.

Families, students and staff can use the MySPPS app to "[Send a Tip](#)" and confidentially report unsafe behaviors to SPPS Security and Emergency Management (SEM). Every tip is taken seriously and acted on right away. Learn more about the SEM Department by visiting their [website](#).

Student Rights & Responsibilities

SPPS strives to create welcoming schools where each and every student is seen, known and valued. There are rights students are guaranteed when they are at school as well as responsibilities that accompany those rights. Families are strongly encouraged to review the [Rights & Responsibilities Handbook](#).

J.J. Hill PTO

J.J. Hill has a strong PTO which supports student learning in a variety of ways including providing funds for school supplies and field trips as well as hosting community events! The PTO is still in need of a couple volunteers to serve on the Steering Committee - a Co-Treasurer and Parent Advocate. If you are interested and able to donate any of your time, please reach out to them at jjhillpto@jjhillpto.org.

Our school is gearing up for a major transition with the move to Obama so now is a great time to get involved! They meet monthly from 5:30-6:30 pm at the school (meeting schedule below). General meetings include dinner for kids, snacks for adults, and childcare. Steering Committee meetings do not include these extras, but all are still welcome. Find out more information and join the PTO Email listserv at www.jjhillpto.org.

Dates for General Meetings:

- 10/10, 12/12, 2/13, 4/17, 6/12

Dates for Steering Committee Meetings:

- 9/12, 11/14, 1/16, 3/13, 5/8