The Walden School
Montessori-based, Preschool–Grade 5

Montessori Primary Procedures FAQs

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1. What are the procedures for Arrival & Dismissal?

Arrival:

Arrival: Class begins for all Primary students at 8:45 AM. Parents should park their car in a parking space, enter the Sandy Bank Road door, walk their children to their classroom, and say goodbye at the door. Dr. Maria Montessori wanted children to feel ownership of the "Children's House" — a place where they do their work. If your children are in the 3-day program, they will attend school on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Children typically do best when they cross the threshold into the classroom independently, and parents say a quick goodbye at the classroom door. Whenever babysitters or relatives pick up or drop off your child, please inform them of this important part of the classroom routine. If your child is crying at drop-off, please trust the teachers to assist them with separation. You are welcome to call the school office to learn if your child has calmed down.

Arrival After 9:00 AM: Children should enter at the Sandy Bank Road door. In order to minimize classroom disruption, parents should say goodbye to their children at the front desk.

Dismissal:

Half-Day Dismissal at 11:30:

Students will be picked up from their designated doors.

Half Day/Lunch Dismissal at 12:30:

Outdoor Dismissal: Lunch is eaten in the classrooms from 11:30 AM to 12:00 PM. After lunch, the children go out to the playground until 12:30 PM (weather permitting), or they have indoor recess in their classrooms. Half Day/Lunch children are dismissed at 12:30. They can be picked up at the front playground gate at 12:30 and dismissed by playground staff. Please wait outside the gate.

Indoor Dismissal: During inclement weather, please pick your children up inside using the Sandy Bank Rd. door.

Full Day Dismissal at 3:00:

Outdoor dismissal: Dismissal is at 3:00 for full-day children. Children are dismissed from the picnic tables on the side patio (in the gated playground area). Please walk to the gate to receive your children. If you anticipate late pick-ups, please fill out the Extended Day paperwork so that your child can join the extended day program if you are running late.

Indoor Dismissal: During inclement weather, please pick your children up at their classroom door.

Teacher Wave or Handshake Goodbye: To ensure the safety of the children, children should wave or shake hands and make eye contact with a teacher before they leave and walk safely to a parent/caregiver. If you are able to contact the school when you are unexpectedly delayed, that information may be helpful to avoid potentially upset children.

Changes: Should you have any changes in your children's arrival and dismissal, changes should be sent in writing to the classroom teachers. Please inform all adults responsible for your children about arrival and dismissal routines. If you need to pick your children up early, they will be dismissed at the Sandy Bank Road door.

Kindergarten Bus Transportation: Kindergarten children who live in districts that provide busing are registered by The Walden School in June for bus transportation to and/or from school. Parents should confirm with their districts during the summer to find out when and where their children will be picked up.

2. What does a typical day in the classroom look like?

When children arrive in the morning, they will be encouraged to be responsible for their belongings and to hang up their backpacks and coats on their own. These are the beginning lessons for fostering independence, and your support is helpful. Group time is held in the morning and afternoon, where lessons are given, new materials are presented, songs are sung, reading aloud takes place, and discussions are held. The classroom environment is prepared to promote independence. The inherent values in the Montessori method are freedom of choice, self-discipline, respect for the environment, trust, and peace. The focus is on the process, not the product. There are no time limits on work, and the rewards are internal. It's the innate wonder and curiosity rewarded with pure joy. Individual work is not shared with others. Each child is responsible for the work he or she chooses. Children learn to wait for a favorite work and to make sure that it is taken care of and is ready for the next person to use. Collaboration and cooperation occur naturally within the classroom community.

Lunch is a wonderful opportunity for children to socialize and practice good manners. After recess, full-day students will have a story time that allows them the time they need to refocus for the afternoon.

Afternoons offer additional work time and group lessons with the teacher. Additional subjects in the afternoon are: Kindergarten Physical Education and Kindergarten Art (Preschool children have art lessons incorporated in the classroom) and Kindegarten Music.

3. What are the lunch procedures?

Lunch is an opportunity to come together as a community. Children learn the grace and courtesy lessons necessary to enjoy a meal with friends. It is a time for practicing manners and engaging in polite conversation. When children are prepared, it is easier for them to relax and enjoy their food. Preparing lunches with children and discussing healthy, balanced meals can be helpful. Home and school can work together to teach children about health and nutrition. The challenge is to help them discover and enjoy wholesome, healthy foods.

Children wash their hands and set the table with their placemat and lunch, prepare their drink, and help with cleaning up. A lunchbox and containers that your children can open independently, as well as things that are easily manageable and not too messy, are in keeping with the Montessori cornerstones of independence and care of self.

A Packed Lunch



When children unpack their lunch at school and set the items on their placements, it is helpful when all the items in their lunch are foods that can be eaten at the same time. To provide a clean surface for the child's lunch and isolate their space, include a foldable cloth placemat placed at the top of the lunchbox. A small washcloth or cloth napkin works well. Successful lunches are those where no items are considered treats or rewards for eating other food items. With younger children, prepare healthy food choices in small, easy-to-handle servings, such as cutting sandwiches into quarters, slicing up fresh fruit, and preparing bite-sized slices of cheese.



Lunch Is Ready!

Lunch is eaten in the classroom for a 30-minute period. Children have an additional 30 minutes for outdoor recess, weather permitting. Small portions in containers/wrappings that children can open are suggested. A “cool pack” will keep perishables and drinks fresh. The school is unable to heat any food. Because of food allergies and parents’ desire to maintain healthy eating habits, food sharing does not take place. When children have packed lunches, they will take home any uneaten food home so that you can see what your children are not eating. Walden strives to be environmentally responsible, and families are encouraged to send food in reusable containers.

Walden Lunch Program

Walden partners with Pinnochio's Pizza to offer lunch five days a week. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, we'll offer a rotating menu featuring a balanced, boxed-style lunch. Tuesdays and Thursdays will be pizza days. Our lunch program is offered every school day with the exception of half days. Lunch ordering takes place through Walden’s Parent Portal, found on our website. Lunch Ordering FAQs can be found under Resource Documents in the Parent Portal. On days your children have ordered lunch, they will still need a lunch box, placemat, napkin, and drink, and any additional food that your children may need for their meal.

4. What supplies does my child need?

All clothing, lunch boxes, and backpacks should be labeled and easy for your children to use. Jackets, sweatshirts, and Walden wear should be labeled, as children may be unfamiliar with new clothing. Please choose clothes for your children that encourage independence (i.e., elastic waist, fasteners that are easy, zipper sweatshirts vs. pull-on). Being able to dress themselves promotes independence and helps children feel capable.

- **Backpack:** Simple backpacks that children can independently zip and unzip work well. Please provide your children with a full-size backpack (no wheels, please) to bring home books, a communication envelope, and work. Backpacks should be large enough to hold their lunch box and water bottle.
- **Lunchbox** and **Water Bottle** for Half Day/Lunch and Full Day students.
- **Indoor shoes:** Children should have a pair of indoor shoes or slippers (that remain at school) to change into when inside. Non-slip soles and slip-on croc-type shoes work best. Please avoid oversized or embellished slippers for the classroom.

- **Outdoor clothing:** Children need to be prepared to go outside and to the playground every day, weather permitting.

- **Change of clothes:** A seasonally appropriate change of clothing (including socks) will be kept in a plastic box (that is provided by the school).

- **Medications:** Whenever possible, please administer medications at home. If it is necessary to administer medicine during the school day, parents must complete and sign the appropriate form (short and long-term prescription consent forms can be found on the FACTS Parent Portal). Prescription medication cannot and should not be sent with the student to school. An adult must bring the medication to the front office and give it directly to an Administrator or the Executive Assistant to the Head of School. Do not give any medications to your child's teacher. All medications should remain in their original packaging.

5. How can I help to prepare my child for preschool?

Young children look forward to being with other children and engaging in the fun and interesting activities they have seen on their visits to the school, but many also feel some uneasiness at saying goodbye to their parents. To make your children's transition from home to school comfortable, the following suggestions might be helpful. Our goal is for children to love learning and enjoy coming to school.

- Breathe and relax! Be mindful that both you and the school feel your children are ready to be part of a program outside of the home that is a natural part of their day.
- Talk to your children in the same way about school as you would about an enjoyable place to go or a person to visit. The choice about going to school is your decision. Negotiations can lead to an overall attitude about school that is undesirable.
- Please walk your children to their designated entrance, where a teacher will be meeting them. Say goodbye so your children can focus on the start of the school day without the uncertainty of not knowing when you will be leaving.

6. What if my child is not fully potty-trained before starting school?

Children are expected to be reasonably independent when using the bathroom. If your children are in the process of toilet training and you have concerns, you can contact the school in August and ask to speak to your children's teacher.

At times, young children have bathroom accidents at school. Teachers can only assist children when they are wet, parents will be called to come to school to assist with all other bathroom issues. In the event of a wet accident, children should be able to independently change their

clothes. If they are not able to do so, teachers will guide them through the process. Children have a shoe box in school with a change of clothes, and bags are supplied for soiled clothing.

NOTE: Parents or caregivers will be called to pick up children in the event of a bowel movement accident. Children are welcome to return after they are changed.

In preparation for preschool, please know that when your children are self-sufficient in the bathroom, they will have a much more successful classroom experience. At school, we have prepared environments that support young children's acquisition of independent life skills. Please allow your children to be as independent as possible with self-care routines at home. Children who have been given many opportunities to be independent at home, especially with self-care, make an easier transition to school.

What a child looks like when independent in the classroom bathroom:

- Recognizes the feeling that they need to go.
- Signals or tells the teacher that they need to go to the bathroom.
- Walks independently into the bathroom and looks for an empty stall (they may need to wait until a stall is available).
- Enters the bathroom stall and manages their clothing on their own, pulling down their own pants, underwear, or lifting skirts.
- Can sit appropriately on the toilet by themselves.
- Can manage getting toilet paper off the roll, all by themselves, and wipe appropriately to clean themselves.
- Can pull up their own underwear and outer clothing on their own.
- Can flush the toilet on their own.
- And finally, can wash their hands and dry them before returning to the classroom.

In support of newly learned bathroom habits, teachers will remind children to use the bathroom at lunchtime, before recess, and after recess. (If a parent asks for more frequent reminders, the teacher will do so when possible.) Please remember that buttons, snaps, and belts are most difficult for young children to do on their own and often are the cause of bathroom accidents. Elastic waists help most young ones to be successfully independent in the bathroom. Pull-ups or other disposable-type underwear are not appropriate for children in the full-day program.

With parents and teachers working together to bring our expectations of children into harmony, children are best served in their growth and development. As parents foster their children’s independence, they are empowering their children to better manage frustrations or setbacks.