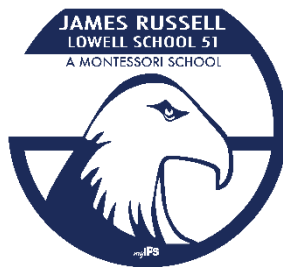




FAMILY & COMMUNITY HANDBOOK 2026-2027



3426 Roosevelt Avenue • Indianapolis, IN 46218
317.226.4251 • jamesrusselllowell.myips.org
Christine L. Rembert, Principal • Tiesha Hooper, Assistant Principal

Welcome to the Lowell Montessori Family!

Dear New Lowell Family,

We are so excited that you have chosen to become part of our community. Whether your child is beginning school for the very first time or joining us from another school, please know that you are now an important and valued part of the Lowell family. We are honored to partner with you during this important chapter in your child's life.

Here at Lowell, Montessori is more than a program; it is the way we understand children. Dr. Maria Montessori believed that every child is naturally curious, capable, and eager to learn. Our role as educators is to prepare an environment that encourages children to explore, ask questions, solve problems, and grow into independent, compassionate members of their community.

Everything we do is guided by three essential parts of Montessori, and when these three parts work together, children flourish.



The Prepared Child

Every child arrives with unique strengths, interests, and incredible potential.



The Prepared Adult

Our teachers carefully observe, guide, encourage, and support each child's individual development.

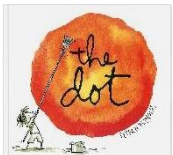


The Prepared Environment

Our classrooms are intentionally designed to foster independence, concentration, responsibility, and joyful learning.

You may notice that our classrooms look different from traditional classrooms. Children move with purpose, choose meaningful work within carefully prepared limits, collaborate with classmates of different ages, and develop independence one step at a time. We encourage questions, celebrate curiosity, and believe mistakes are an important part of learning.

This year our school theme is **Read to Grow**. Throughout the year we will celebrate the joy of reading and the many ways literacy helps children discover themselves and the world around them. We will also explore the inspiring work of author and illustrator **Peter H. Reynolds**, whose stories encourage children to **Create Bravely**—to have the courage to try, imagine, create, and keep growing.



Every classroom is partnered with a **Big Ten University**, connecting students with literacy activities, special events, and college role models who encourage our children to dream big.

BIG

Students also enjoy regular visits to our beautiful school library, renovated through our partnership with the Big Ten Conference, and have access to thousands of additional books through the Indianapolis–Marion County Public Library Shared System. They also participate in Physical Education, Music, Art, Project Lead The Way, and Library experiences because we believe children learn with their minds, hands, hearts, and bodies.



You may also hear about a special member of our community: our therapy dog* Michael Jane, aka MJ! She continues her therapy dog training with us and spends time supporting students and staff throughout the school. Many children enjoy reading to MJ, greeting her in the hallway, or simply seeing her around the building. She has become a beloved part of our prepared environment.

Most importantly, we want you to know that your voice matters. We believe the strongest schools are built through authentic partnerships between families and educators. We encourage you to ask questions, attend school events, volunteer when you can, read with your child every day, and stay connected with your child's teacher. Together, we can create an extraordinary learning experience.

Thank you for trusting us with your greatest treasure. We cannot wait to watch your child learn, grow, read, create bravely, and discover all that is possible.

Welcome to Lowell!

Warmly,

Christine L. Rembert

Principal & Lead Learner

James Russell Lowell 51, A Montessori School

**We recognize that every family has different comfort levels and needs regarding animals. If you prefer that your child have no contact with MJ, we completely respect that choice. A form is included in your enrollment materials that allows you to indicate this preference, and we will ensure that your wishes are honored.*



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26-27 DISTRICT CALENDAR

SY2026-27 Student & Staff School Calendar



JULY							AUGUST							SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4							1			1	2	3	4	5
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30			
							30	31												

OCTOBER							NOVEMBER							DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
							1	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31		

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1		1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28							28	29	30	31			
31																				

APRIL							MAY							JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1							1			1	2	3	4	5
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30			
							30	31												

Summary of Days			
Students		Staff	
Semester 1		Semester	
1 Asynchronous Days	84	94	
Semester 2		Semester	
2 Asynchronous Days	96	98	
Total	180	Total	192

Districtwide PL Days	School-Based PL Days
- Tuesday, July 28 - Monday, August 3 - Tuesday, August 4 - Tuesday, November 3 - Tuesday, February 16	- Monday, July 27 - Thursday, August 6 - Friday, August 7 - Tuesday, September 8

July 3	Observance of Independence Day
July 4	Independence Day
July 21 - 23	New IPS Teacher Induction
July 24	Teacher Work Day
July 27	Staff Professional Development
July 28	Staff Professional Development
Aug 3 - 4	Staff Professional Development
Aug 5	Teacher Work Day
Aug 6 - 7	Staff Professional Development
Aug 10 - Oct 17	Quarter 1
Aug 10	First Day for Students
Sept 7	Labor Day - No School
Sept 8	Staff Professional Development - No School
Oct 12 - 16	Fall Break
Oct 20 - Dec 18	Quarter 2
Oct 23	Student Progress Conferences - Student Asynchronous Learning
Nov 3	Staff Professional Development - No School
Nov 25 - 27	Thanksgiving Break
Dec 17	Last Student Day of 1st Semester
Dec 18	Records Day/Semester Close - No School
Dec 21 - Jan 1	Winter Break
Jan 4 - Mar 12	Quarter 3
Jan 4	First Student Day of Second Semester
Jan 18	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday - No School
Feb 15	President's Day - No School
Feb 16	Staff Professional Development - Student Asynchronous Learning
Mar 15 - 19	Spring Break
Mar 22 - May 27	Quarter 4
Mar 25	Student Progress Conferences - Student Asynchronous Learning
May 27	Last Day for Students
May 28	Records Day/Yearly Close - Staff Only
May 31	Memorial Day
June 18	Observance of Juneteenth
June 19	Juneteenth

STAFF LIST

Title	Room	Phone	First Name	Last Name
LS Teacher	126	251126	DANIEL	ABBOTT
FACE	129	251129	NASHIA	ABDUL-ALEEM
AU Assistant 124	124	251124	ABAYOMI	ADEOYE
EC Teacher	154	251154	MELISA	ALKIRE
LS Assistant 126	126	251126	TERESA	ALLEN
LS Teacher	121	251121	KARIN	AMOS
LE Teacher	206	251206	ANDREA	BLESCH
Cafeteria Support	Cafeteria		REGINA	BROWN
Nurse	Nurse's Office	251001	DORIS	BRUMMER
Music Teacher	130	251130	NEALITA	CALLAHAN
Custodian	Custodial Office		JAMOLE	CALLAHAN
Admin Associate	Main Office	251000	RONNY	CHOW
Custodian	Custodial Office		DEBORAH	CLARK
Speech Therapist	216	251216	HANNAH	COUCH
Library Assistant	Library Office		AJ	CROTHERS
AU Assistant 124	124	251124	FRANKLIN	CRUZ
AU Assistant 125	125	251125	RHONDA	DAVIS
LS Assistant 126	126	251126	HASSIE	ESPARZA
LE Teacher	203	251203	JENNIFER	FEELEY
Interventionist	214	251214	DANIEL	FINDLEY
UE Montessori Assistant 102	102	251102	KENDALL	FULLER
Art Teacher	144	251144	JENNIFER	GASKILL
EC Montessori Assistant 152	152	251152	CHEYENNE	GREER
LE Teacher	204	251204	MEGAN	GRYCZKOWSKI
EC Teacher	152	251152	MARY	HASTE
LS Assistant 121	121	251121	ANGELA	HEDRICK
Assistant Principal	117	251117	TIESHA	HOOPER
Social Worker			JONIKA	HUDSON
AU Teacher	124	251124	JORDAN	JACKSON
RBT	125	251125	BREYA	JOHNSON
Assistant Head Custodian	Custodial Office		VICTORIA	JONES
SPED Lead	215	251215	LAUREN	KILGORE

SPED Resource	107	251107	KIMBERLY	LAUSE
Head Custodian	Custodial Office		DANNY	MCCLURE
Math Coach	207	251207	ANDREW	MITCHELL
UE Teacher	103	251103	TERESA	MURPHY
SPED	217	251217	NIKKI	NAYLOR
Literacy Coach	215	251215	CHERYL	NORMAN
LE Montessori Assistant 206	208	251208	JILL	O'BANYEL
AU Assistant 125	125	251125	ODESSA	OLADOKUN
ENL Teacher	107	251107	BENJAMIN	PERRIN
LS Assistant 121	121	251121	PAMELA	PERRY
LE Montessori Assistant 204	204	251204	GLORIA	PETTIE
Edna Martin Support	Main Office		ALICIA	PLA
Cafeteria Manager	Cafeteria		TALISHA	POINTER
UE Teacher	105	251105	STACY	PRICE
UE Teacher	104	251104	CAREY	RAHMAN
PE Teacher	Gym		DIRK	RATCLIFF
Principal	Main Office		CHRISTINE	REMBERT
LE Teacher	205	251205	ALEXANDR A	REYNOLDS
AU Floater 124	124	251124	ANDREA	RUBIO
PLTW	146	251146	ANGELA	RUIZ
UE Montessori Assistant 105	105	251105	LAVERNE	RUSH
PK Teacher	150	251150	ABIE	SAUTER
UE Montessori Assistant 104	104	251104	WILLIAM	SCHWAB
RBT	124	251124	MONCHE	SCOTT
LE Teacher	202	251202	KAYLA	SMILEY
LE Teacher	208	251208	KAYLA	SPRADLEY
LE Montessori Assistant 202	202	251202	TONI	STERLING
LE Montessori Assistant 203	203	251203	DAJAH	STEWARD
EC Montessori Assistant 154	154	251154	ASHLEY	SULLIVAN
Bilingual Assistant	219	251219	NELIDA	TORRES
LE Montessori Assistant 208	208	251208	TANTILEA	TURMAN
EC Instructional Assistant	150	251150	ARACELI	VILLA
UE Teacher	102	251102	CHARLA	WALKER

AU Teacher	125	251125	ELIZABETH	WALLACE
UE Montessori Assistant 103	103	251103	DAWN	WILLIAMS
RBT	217	251217	MAKEDA	WILLIAMS
RBT	125	251125	SHANICE	WOODSON
LE Montessori Assistant 205	205	251205	LIA	YILDIZ
ENL Lead	219	251219	JESSICA	ZAKLIKOWSKI

WHO WAS JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL?

James Russell Lowell was a relatively famous 19th century poet. His work "The Biglow Papers" ranks among the finest political satires in American literature and was a source of inspiration to Mark Twain. He was a very popular figure in American literature during his day, and his poem *The Present Crisis* was frequently quoted by Martin Luther King Jr in his speeches and sermons. He was published widely in many anti-slavery newspapers and was a member of the famous Fireside Poets.



*When a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad earth's aching
breast Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from east to west,
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels the soul within him climb
To the awful verge of manhood, as the energy sublime
Of a century bursts full-blossomed on the thorny stem of Time.*

from *The Present Crisis* by James Russell Lowell

MISSION, VISION, AND MONTESSORI FOUNDATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Our Core Mission and Vision

Mission

Using Montessori pedagogy and evidence-based best practices, we provide high-quality academic and social-emotional education. We empower our students to become productive global citizens who value diversity, respect the world in which they live, and positively impact their families and communities.

Vision

We are a public Montessori community that prepares all students to be lifelong learners and leaders. We are deeply intentional about thwarting the predictive powers of race and class, ensuring that all students and families are empowered to succeed for generations to come.

School Identity, Motto, & Historical Heritage

School Motto:

We are responsible, respectful, and safe.

School Pledge

At Lowell Montessori 51, we keep our hands, feet, objects, and our mouths to ourselves at all times. We choose to interact with care, consideration, and grace because we deeply value our community.

Historical Context

School 51 has served as a foundational pillar of the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood since 1900. Reopened in August 2006 in our modern, light-filled facility, our school honors the enduring legacy of James Russell Lowell, a 19th-century poet, essayist, and dedicated abolitionist. His works championed basic human freedom and directly inspired civil rights leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who frequently quoted Lowell's stanzas in his major speeches.

School 51 has been part of the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood since the year 1900. An addition was opened in 1913 and it remained open until 1981. The building was closed at that time as part of the desegregation of IPS. In 2004 the building was demolished, the present one was built, and it opened again in August of 2006.

MONTESSORI EDUCATIONAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The staff of Lowell Montessori 51 believe that we have the responsibility to develop the whole child according to the principles of the Montessori Philosophy: physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually, within a safe and positive learning environment.

We believe that expectations should be high for all students and staff, and that a variety of strategies, experiences, technologies, and assessments are needed to encourage children to develop skills necessary for life-long learning.

We believe that it is important to have the involvement and cooperation of parents and community members to help develop attitudes leading to caring and productive citizens in an ever-changing society.

MONTESSORI EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Montessori Education is guided by the work and writings of Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952). Dr. Montessori believed that a truly educated individual continues learning long after the hours and years she/he spends in the classroom. She/he is motivated from within by a natural curiosity and love of knowledge. She believed that early education should not fill the child with facts from a pre-selected course of studies but rather to cultivate the child's own desire to learn.

At its core, the philosophy is simple, to follow the child, which assumes that every child is a unique individual who is naturally driven to grow, develop and learn. The educational goals include instilling in children a love of learning, the ability to make appropriate learning choices, and respect for oneself, other people, and their physical surroundings.

The Montessori Method of instruction aims for the fullest possible development of the whole child. Montessori challenges not only the intellectual and academic development of the child, but the emotional, moral, spiritual and physical characteristics as well. According to Montessori, "A child's work is to create the person she/he will become." A Montessori classroom provides this freedom within limits in an environment which develops a sense of order and self-discipline that allows the student to cultivate her/his own natural desire to learn.

Everything in a Montessori classroom has a specific use or purpose. There is nothing in the classroom that the child cannot see or touch. A Montessori classroom has a busy, productive atmosphere where joy and respect abound. Within such an enriched environment, freedom, responsibility, and social and intellectual development spontaneously flourish. Montessori materials are arranged in different areas of the classroom including sensorial and practical life activities, math, language, and cultural subjects. However, these subjects are presented in an integrated fashion so that the child may see the natural relationships between them.

Montessori classrooms are "prepared environments." Teachers select and display materials that produce a classroom environment that meets the needs of each individual child in order to promote exploration and discovery. Through presentations and demonstrations of carefully selected materials, the teacher and assistant direct

children to specific activities which lead to self-discovery. They let the child feel the excitement of understanding a problem and conquering it. They allow the children to build their own self-image, confidence and independence.



Continual observation by the adults is the key to being able to understand each individual child and as a result, prepare the environment based on the needs observed. The teacher gets to know each child very well and clearly understands her/his needs and development. The Montessori teacher's purpose is to stimulate the child's enthusiasm for learning and to guide it, without interfering with the child's natural desire to teach herself/himself and become independent. Each child works through her/his individual cycle of activities, and learns to truly understand according to her/his own unique needs and capabilities.



Children are placed in multi-age classes. These mixed age groups provide for peer teaching, role models and leadership experience, and an enhanced sense of community within the classroom. By interacting with children of varying ages, a child learns to understand and respect her/his place in a community that extends beyond the students in her/his same "grade". As a younger member of the classroom community, the child learns from observing and interacting with older

classmates. By the time the child becomes an upperclassman, learning is reinforced by providing an example to younger children. Multi-age classrooms permit a child to build a special, longer-term relationship with teachers, which cultivates a sense of belonging to a learning community. The classroom is a community where children learn skills of cooperation and negotiation as they work together. They learn to work independently and structure their time by developing daily/weekly/monthly learning goals.

Children at this age develop and seek to understand their social selves, relationships with others and the environment. They are better able to reason, to ask and search for answers to questions. The Montessori curriculum and classroom materials give children the tools and methods to explore and discover the world. The environment is designed to maximize independent learning and exploration.

Cooperation, not Competition

Each Montessori classroom fosters cooperation instead of competition. Academic progress and grade comparisons of children are discouraged. Examples of competition are eliminated from Montessori classrooms: bulletin boards showing only "best" work, reward charts, grades (PreK-6). Children may compete in activities. A child is not pushed into a competitive area until he or she is ready. Outside the Montessori environment, the students are allowed to explore the idea of competition. Elementary children are given the chances to participate in science fairs and spelling bees and are handled in the following non-competitive way:

- All children may choose to participate.
- Children who meet the standards for advanced competition may be approached privately and given the opportunity to participate in further competition.
- School activities in which all Montessori students focus on cooperation and non-competitive activities.
- Honor's Day and Kindergarten Graduation or 5th Grade Graduation programs are not offered by the school.
- Sports encourage students to compete with themselves and improve their personal scores.
- Soccer, Volleyball, Tennis, Track and Basketball are offered. These teams play against other elementary programs within Indianapolis Public Schools.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Because it takes time to develop a classroom in which children are absorbed in their work, formal observation of the classrooms will begin after the first conference on PIT day (10/24/2025). If you would like to visit your scholar's class, please let your scholar's teacher or the school secretary know. We have specials, special programs and experiences for the students, and we want to be sure that the class will be in the room at the time you would like to observe.

If you would like to "pop in" to check on your child, you may do this. Come to school, sign in and school personnel will escort you to class. "Pop in" visitors don't go into the classroom, but observe through the window in the door.



The Montessori Methodology: Cooperation Over Competition
 Education is not what the teacher gives: education is a natural process spontaneously carried out by the individual, and is acquired not by listening to words, but by experiences upon the environment. The task of the teacher becomes that of preparing a series of cultural activities, spread over a specifically prepared environment, and then refraining from obtrusive interference. Doing so he/she will witness the unfolding of a new adult who will not be the victim of events, but will have a clarity of vision to direct and shape the future of human

OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

To keep disruption of the classroom activities to a minimum, observation appointments are for adults only.

We believe that respecting a child's needs to work undisturbed will give observers a more accurate picture of the nature of a Montessori classroom.

Since the classes also go to other rooms for art, music, physical education, library and we have Town Hall (all school assemblies), appointments are necessary to ensure the best use of your time. Appointments may be made with the school secretary.

A visitor's chair is provided for your convenience. If children speak to you, a brief answer will suffice. You may wish to suggest that the child goes on with their work, so you can continue your work of observing.

School staff will be happy to answer your questions after your observation time. The teacher and assistant(s) are busy facilitating learning and are not available for questions during your visit. We do not want to take staff away from instruction time. Please direct questions or concerns to the teacher at an agreed upon time after your observation.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A MONTESSORI ENVIRONMENT



The Environment

- Arrangement of the Classroom
- Accessibility of materials
- Attractiveness which invites children into the classroom
- Way materials are displayed

Interactions

- Between the children
- Between the children and the teachers
- Between the teachers
- The general support and attitude toward one another in the classroom

Atmosphere & Social Climate

- General work habits of the children
- Independence vs dependence on the part of the children
- Freedom balance with structure: To what extent do the children choose their own work?

Additional Things to Watch For During Your Observation

- One child for a certain period of time in order to have a sense of how a child organizes his work time

- The child/teacher relationship as it is demonstrated throughout the work period.
- The general mood within the classroom and their change throughout the work period.
- The levels of concentration between the children and their work.
- The amount of teacher instruction and the manner in which a teacher presents materials to a child or group of children.
- The level of respect shown between members of the classroom for each other and for their work and materials.



TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

IPS provides transportation to all Lowell Montessori students who live within the boundaries and are beyond the walking area of the school. Transportation is not determined by the school, but by the Transportation Department. We cannot contact a bus directly from the school. Only the transportation dispatchers can do that. They can be reached at 317-226-4500.

Ms. Kilgore is the bus coordinator and is outside daily supervising the unloading and loading of the buses. Student discipline issues are referred to drivers and investigated with a possible referral to administration for further consequences. We typically have 7 buses that totally fill inside our East parking lot. We have another area set up for regular drop off and pick up, should you choose to use this process. Safety of all our students is a top priority. Please assist us in following the drop off and pick up procedures.

BUS PROCEDURE

Students are expected to conduct themselves properly at all times while riding the school bus. If necessary, the bus driver will assign students to seats where they will be expected to sit daily. Any activity that will detract from the safe handling of the bus is to be avoided. Suspension of bus privileges could result from improper behavior relative to bus transportation. All students assigned to a bus are expected to ride the bus home after school, unless a parent/guardian picks them up.

Any time your child's transportation to or from school will be changed for the day, please send a Kinvo to the teacher informing her/him of the change as well as contacting the office at 317-226-4251, before 2 PM. The admin associate coordinates this information. Please do not call after 2 PM with changes, as we may not be able to accommodate the change if we do not have time to inform the appropriate staff of the change. If we are not informed of transportation changes, your child will automatically go home in the usual way.

BUS SAFETY/BUS CONDUCT

Many of our children will be riding a bus to and from school for the first time. Teachers review appropriate bus behavior with students. Please discuss the following information with your child(ren): Safety is your job. Indiana State Law says, "...[T]he bus driver is in charge and the children are required to follow the driver's directions. Enforcing the authority of the driver is required of the principal. Infractions of any bus rules can result in punishment and/or suspension from riding the bus. If a child is suspended, the parent is required to provide transportation."

BUS MISBEHAVIOR

We are interested in transporting children safely and efficiently. When a child violates a safety rule or misbehaves on the bus, he/she may receive a school bus conduct report. In this instance, a parent will be contacted by the bus driver through a written notice. If the child continues to violate safety procedures parents will be contacted via telephone, letter, or personal conference to discuss the problem, depending on the severity of the problem. A consequence may be given based on the offense and could be removal from the bus for a period of time for severe behavior. The parent would be expected to transport the child for that timeframe. Parents, teachers, drivers, children, and the principals must cooperate to achieve the objective of safe transportation of our children. Please consult IPS policy regarding student behavior on the bus.

BUS DELAYS

The school is generally unable to answer questions about late buses. We must use the same number to reach Transportation that parents have. If there is concern over a bus delay, calling 317-226-4500 will get information more quickly than calling the school. After 4:30 PM there is no one in the office to answer questions about late buses. At that time call Transportation at 317-226-4500 or School Police at 317-226-4633.

PICK UP/DROP OFF AREAS

We have a large number of students who are picked-up and dropped off by car or daycare van at school. It takes time to do this correctly, so that all students are released from cars safely and staff members are safe as they perform their duty. If speed is your number one priority, the car pick-up/drop-off line will not meet your needs. If you fail to comply with the rules for pick up and /drop off, you will need to park and bring your students into school. Please remember that these procedures are set up to keep all our students safe.

MORNING DROP OFF All Students: DOOR 1

Enter the parking lot off Roosevelt Ave. The drop off line wraps around the staff parking lot to the left. Follow the cones. Once your vehicle reaches a staff member you may release your student. Do not release your student in the parking lot to run to the door, this presents a major safety concern. We want students to be safe.

AFTERNOON PICK-UP Grades K-5: DOOR 10

You must display the number provided to you in the front windshield of your car during pick-up. You will receive a designated tag that corresponds to your family. If you don't have your tag, you MUST come into the Main Office to pick-up your child. Staff cannot check identifications or give children to unauthorized pick-up cars. Staff will not load other people's children in your car; you must go through the office and sign the other child out, unless it is a DAILY routine, and both numbers are displayed.



EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR PICK-UP / DROP OFF

- Cell phones should not be used when the vehicle is in the loading area as we need your full attention to make sure everyone's safety is ensured.
- All entering and exiting of vehicles is to occur on the curb side ONLY, with the vehicle at the curb.
- Please follow the directions of the staff, as this duty requires a lot of multi-tasking.
- Student and staff safety is our top priority. By not following the guidelines we could have an accident that could cause injury. School Police may ticket cars coming from the north.
- Once the student has exited the car they must go directly to the building's main entrance, Door 1. A staff member will be there to assist them.
- Please understand that for this to work safely, we have to require that everyone follows the guidelines. If you do not, you will have to park daily and walk your child into the school. We do drop off/pick up as a convenience for parents but we must have everyone's cooperation to make it work. The staff on duty is spending time outside doing this no matter what the weather is so please appreciate their efforts to serve the students as efficiently as possible.
- Students should be able to exit the car on their own.

- Drivers and passengers are expected to follow all directions of the Lowell Montessori Staff members directing the line. The safety of our students and staff is our number one priority! With your help we can make our car rider line safe and efficient.
- Please call 317-226-4251 if you need more direction on this or need a designated ID number.

PLEASE NOTE:

- THERE IS NO SUPERVISION FOR STUDENTS UNTIL 8:55AM.
- STUDENTS ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENT UNTIL THAT TIME.
- STUDENTS MUST REMAIN IN THE PRESENCE OF THEIR PARENT UNTIL 8:55AM EACH DAY.
- STUDENTS MUST BE PICKED UP BY 4:10PM EACH DAY; THAT IS WHEN THE STAFF DAY ENDS.
- STUDENTS WHO NEED TO STAY AFTER 4:10PM MUST ENROLL IN THE AFTERCARE PROGRAM.
- OFFICE STAFF CANNOT COMPLETE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN THERE ARE STUDENTS WHO HAVE NOT BEEN PICKED UP BY 4:10PM.
- IF YOU ARE CHRONICALLY TARDY, YOU MAY BE ASKED TO USE THE EDNA MARTIN AFTER-SCHOOL SERVICES.

GENERAL SCHOOL OPERATIONS AND ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Daily Instructional Schedule

- **8:55 AM – Building Doors Open:** Scholars are warmly welcomed into the building to unpack independently, settle into their prepared environment, and enjoy breakfast in a calm, structured setting.
- **9:20 AM – Tardy Threshold & Instruction Begins:** Our morning work cycles begin promptly at 9:20 AM. To protect the integrity of this instructional block, any student arriving after this threshold must be signed in at the main vestibule by an adult family member to secure a tardy entry pass.
- **11:20 AM – 2:05 PM – Lunch & Outdoor Recess Blocks:** Staggered daily by multi-age development bands to ensure active safety and appropriate playground spaces.
- **3:55 PM – Afternoon Closing Circles & Universal Dismissal:** Classroom communities gather for daily reflection, after which orderly dismissal protocols commence.
- **4:05 PM – Transportation Departure:** Buses exit the property safely.

Arrival and Dismissal Safety Protocols

To ensure absolute safety during peak traffic windows, all automotive vehicles must enter the parking lot exclusively via Roosevelt Ave and adhere strictly to the marked single-file cone line that wraps around the staff parking lot. For maximum security, scholars must remain safely inside their vehicles until a staff member greets them at the curb at 8:55 AM. All passenger loading and unloading must occur exclusively curbside. Drivers are requested to remain inside their vehicles to preserve traffic flow.

During afternoon pick-up, families must display their school-issued family identification number placard prominently in the front windshield. If an identification placard is not visible, the driver will be directed to park and present a valid government-issued photo ID at the main office to verify authorization against the student's emergency registry before a secure release is granted.

ATTENDANCE/LATE ARRIVALS/CHRONIC TRUANCY POLICIES

The Educational Imperative of Consistent Attendance

Regular, uninterrupted attendance is essential for your child's academic development and continuity of learning. Because the Montessori curriculum relies heavily on sequentially introduced presentations and collaborative peer interaction, frequent absences create structural gaps in a child's learning journey. Chronic Absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of enrolled school days—excused or unexcused—at any point during the school year, significantly jeopardizes academic success.

Absence Reporting and Mandatory Intervention

If a student must be absent, a parent or guardian must contact the main office before 10:00 AM by emailing Lowell51@myips.org or calling 317-226-4251. Upon the child's return to school, a written parental note or official medical verification detailing the specific reason for the absence must be submitted directly to the main office.

Absences without timely communication or valid institutional verification are classified as unexcused. Prearranged family travel or leisure trips taken during scheduled instructional periods are recorded as unexcused absences.

In strict compliance with new Indiana attendance law (SEA 482), students who accumulate **five (5) absences within any rolling 10-week period—regardless of whether they are excused or unexcused**—will trigger mandatory attendance interventions. Schools are required to hold a supportive attendance conference within 10 instructional days to establish or revise an **Attendance Success Plan**.

When a student in grades K-6 has accumulated **ten (10) verified days of unexcused absence** in a school year, the school is mandated to initiate a formal legal referral to the Marion County Prosecutor's Office for educational neglect.

Early Dismissal Guidelines

Early departures before 3:55 PM disrupt instruction, closing meetings, community clean-up, and daily reflections of the classroom. For a secure early release, an authorized adult must present a valid government-issued photo ID in the main vestibule and sign the secure exit log. Scholars will remain engaged in their classrooms and will be called down to the front desk only after their identity is verified. Families are urged to schedule routine medical or personal appointments during school breaks whenever possible.

UNIFIED CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS POLICY

Holistic & Equitable Birthday Celebrations

At Lowell Montessori 51, individual student birthday celebrations do not occur during instructional time, and outside food, treats, candy, or cupcakes are not permitted

inside the learning environments. We celebrate each child's life and milestones using intentional Montessori traditions that honor the individual child without disrupting the educational environment.

Our uniform classroom celebration guidelines are firmly rooted in five core pedagogical commitments to our children and families:

1. **Protection of Uninterrupted Work Cycles:** Authentic Montessori education relies on deep, sustained cognitive concentration. Spontaneous, food-based parties fragment student attention and interrupt the critical 3-hour morning work blocks necessary for deep concept mastery.
2. **Commitment to Equity and Inclusion:** Bringing outside food, treats, or commercial themed items can create unintended socio-economic comparisons and highlights financial disparities between families. A standardized, school-guided tradition ensures every child is celebrated with equal dignity and joy.
3. **Health, Safety, and Allergy Management:** To guarantee the physical safety of all scholars, including those managing severe, life-threatening food allergies, we maintain strict control over food entering our learning spaces.
4. **Preservation of Instructional Minutes:** Every minute of our school day is dedicated to student growth. Minimizing non-educational interruptions preserves our instructional focus and supports our school-wide literacy goals.
5. **Respect for the Prepared Environment:** In a Montessori setting, we celebrate birthdays through a beautiful cultural presentation known as the "**Celebration of Life**" (or the **Birthday Walk Around the Sun**). The child holds a globe and walks around a symbolic sun representing each year of their life, while sharing family photographs and historic timeline milestones. This connects history and science to their personal identity and growth.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Active Parents as Partners

We believe that deep family-school collaboration is essential to a child's success. Parents and caretakers are formally invited to join our active Eagle Fan Club (PTA) and participate in our quarterly parent workshops, educational roundtables, school community events, and food pantry distributions.

Standardized Communication Protocols

To support strong communication, our school utilizes clear communication tracks: school-wide information is distributed via official social media platforms and direct automated notifications through the Kinvo/IPS Messenger applications. Classroom-specific communication also occurs through the Kinvo/IPS Messenger applications, student progress folders, and individualized work plans. Faculty and staff review communication channels daily and respond to family phone calls and emails within 24 hours during regular corporate business days.

Mandatory Annual Volunteer Screening

To protect our learning community, all family members wishing to volunteer inside the classrooms, assist in our community Learning Garden, or act as field learning

chaperones must complete the volunteer application using the IPS Nimble application protocol. All volunteers must complete the online application and clear a formal criminal background check. This screening must be updated annually, and applications should be submitted at the start of August, as background checks require several weeks for processing. Families should be aware that receiving messages from Nimble after the initial application submission can sometimes be confusing. Please note that while the application is annual, the formal background check approval itself lasts for two years.

Visits

The doors of the school are kept locked for your child's safety. Please ring the school doorbell at the front Door One for entry, sign the Visitors' sheet, and the office staff will come to the secure vestibule to greet you.

Compliance with this rule will help us protect your child and his/her education from disruption from unauthorized visitors. Please remember that instruction is going on in classes and that teachers cannot interrupt their instruction to talk to you at that moment. You **MUST** call the office to make an appointment during teacher planning time, before school or after school if you need to meet with the teacher so that instruction is not disrupted. Visitors will be escorted to the classroom by school personnel.

Lowell Montessori school staff will treat parents and guests with respect, and it is expected that parents and guests behave in an appropriate and respectful manner when they are in the school. IPS has a policy that allows the school to bar disruptive adults from coming to the school. The school is a safe haven for children and disruptive behavior will not be allowed. If someone is barred from the building, that person cannot enter the school without an appointment and only with a School Police escort. It is never in the best interest of the child for the parent to have restricted access to the school. Thank you for modeling excellent behavior while you are at school.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS & POSITIVE STUDENT SUPPORT

The Grace and Courtesy Curriculum & Restorative Practices

Beginning in Pre-Kindergarten, all scholars are explicitly taught community skills through our specialized Grace and Courtesy curriculum. Students practice structural social skills, such as waiting patiently for a material, using peaceful indoor voices, respecting another's physical boundaries, and moving carefully through common spaces to keep everyone safe.

When behavioral challenges arise, our school utilizes Restorative Practices rather than punitive measures. Scholars participate in guided reflection to understand the impact of their choices, repair relational harm, and restore community balance. Our school-wide discipline structure utilizes a predictable Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework, beginning with positive teacher redirects, moving to reflective individual conferences, and involving specialized administration or social work teams as an advanced tier of support.

Sensory Regulation & Emergency Intervention Safeguards

To support emotional self-regulation, our school utilizes two dedicated spaces:

1. **Individual Classroom Peace Centers:** Equipped with calming sensory tools, these centers offer scholars a safe place within the classroom to process emotions and regain focus.
2. **The Eagles Nest Reset Room:** This is a dedicated, supervised, therapeutic space used as an intervention when classroom-level supports (such as the buddy room) have failed, or when a student is exhibiting direct physical or verbal aggression, preventing a functional day of instruction. It serves as a bridge for students to complete a regulation period and restore their readiness to return to learning, thereby protecting the instructional integrity of the other learning environments.
- 3.

In rare instances where a student experiences an acute behavioral crisis and poses an immediate threat of physical harm to themselves or others, trained Crisis Prevention Team personnel may implement a temporary physical hold strictly for safety stabilization. In accordance with school safety protocols, parents are notified immediately by telephone whenever an exceptional physical intervention occurs, and the event is formally documented.

Comprehensive Anti-Bullying Policy

James Russell Lowell School 51 is a certified No-Bullying Zone. Bullying behavior is strictly prohibited on all school grounds, district transportation, school-sponsored excursions, and electronic communication platforms. Bullying is defined as overt, unwanted, and repeated aggressive acts, gestures, or words intended to cause systematic harassment, ridicule, or intimidation.

Official IPS Bullying Report Forms are readily accessible in the main lobby, within every classroom, and from the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) liaison office. All submitted reports undergo a mandatory, rigorous five-day administrative investigation, followed by timely family notification and targeted restorative interventions.

STUDENT HEALTH, DRESS CODE, AND TECHNOLOGY USE

Universal Student Attire Guidelines

Student dress code policies protect safety, hygiene, and a focus on learning without infringing upon individual scholar identity. Students must wear a top with sleeves that covers the midriff, a secure bottom free of structural holes or tears (fingertip length), and fully closed-toe footwear suitable for physical education and outdoor play. Clothing, jewelry, or accessories featuring profane language, drug/alcohol promotion, weapons, or hate speech are strictly prohibited. Head coverings worn for verified religious observations are fully permitted; standard fashion hats, bonnets, and durags must be stored during the school day.

Health Services & Medication Administration

All student medications must be stored and administered exclusively inside the school health clinic under the direct supervision of the school nurse or authorized healthcare

personnel. Prescription medication must arrive in its original pharmacy container with a valid medical script. Non-prescription or over-the-counter medication requires a completed written permission form from the parent accompanied by precise dispensing instructions. Students are strictly prohibited from carrying any medication in their pockets, backpacks, or cubbies. In accordance with public health statutes, students undergo routine vision screenings in Kindergarten and hearing screenings in Grades 1 and 4.

Cell Phones (Personal Technology Devices)

PERSONAL ELECTRONICS POLICY

In accordance with Indiana Senate Bill 185, which addresses the use of personal electronic devices by students during instructional hours, James Russell Lowell 51, A Montessori School implements the following policy below regarding student personal electronic devices on campus.

Electronic Device Policy

The administration recognizes the need for students to have electronic devices for before and after school activities. Students are allowed to bring personal devices (cellphones, smart watches, etc.) to the building. If students bring devices to the building, they must adhere to the following expectations:

Students Arriving to the Building by 8:20AM:

When students enter the classroom, they power down (turn off) all electronic devices. Once the device is turned off, they give it to their homeroom teacher. Teachers secure the devices in their closet.

From 8:20 PM - 3:45 PM, students are not allowed to possess their devices. The phone must remain off during the entire instructional day.

At 3:45 PM, students are given their devices back and continue with dismissal procedures.

Students Arriving to the Building after 8:20AM:

Students who arrive after the tardy bell must power down their device when they enter the front office and give it to the school Administrative Assistant. Students retrieve their device as they exit the building during dismissal.

Violation of the Electronic Device Policy by Students:

If a student violates the Electronic Device Policy, the following progressive discipline measures will be implemented:

1st Offense: Confiscation of the electronic device by the staff member will occur. The device will be turned into the front office. At the end of the day, the student will be allowed to retrieve the device in the Administrative Associate. This will be documented in Power School and parent/legal guardian will be notified by Kinvo.

2nd Offense: Confiscation of the electronic device by the staff member will occur. The device will be turned in to the Assistant Principal. A parent/legal guardian will be allowed to retrieve the device.

3rd Offense: Confiscation of the electronic device by the staff member will occur. The device will be turned into the Assistant Principal. The device will be returned to the parent/legal guardian after a meeting is held by a school administrator with the parent/legal guardian and the student.

4th Offense: To be determined by the school administrator in accordance with the IPS Code of Conduct.

Students are always responsible for following the rules outlined in the Student Technology Responsible Use Agreement.

INTEGRATED FIELD LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Curricular Access and Chaperone Mandates

Field learning experiences are vital chapters in our academic playbook, designed to build background knowledge and deepen reading comprehension. Because these excursions are fully integrated with our curriculum, we do not exclude students as a punitive disciplinary measure. Equal opportunity to participate is guaranteed to every student regardless of financial capacity.

A separate, formal physical permission slip is required for every field trip. In compliance with safety regulations, verbal or telephonic permission cannot be accepted. Permission slips are distributed at least 10 school days prior to the excursion. Parents who wish to chaperone must possess an active, approved criminal history background check on file with the FACE office.



Family Handbook Sign-Off 2026-2027

Please read and discuss this handbook with your child. Afterwards, please sign and return this form to your child's classroom teacher.

Student Name: _____ Room #: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____