

North Mullins Primary

“Collaborative Learning, Collective Success”

2026-2027 Montessori Handbook



Ms. Rebecca Pierce, Principal
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North Mullins Primary
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Marion County School District

Direction

Preparing all students to live and work effectively, responsibly, and productively within our society.

Purpose

Marion County School District educates, prepares, and inspires students to be productive citizens in a changing global society.

Beliefs

We believe that:

- All students can become productive members of society.
- Education is a partnership among students, families, schools, and community.
- Our children are at the center of all decision making.
- Education should prepare students to succeed academically and socially so they can compete for quality jobs and become productive members of society.
- Each person has intrinsic value and worth and is a unique individual with different needs and abilities.

District Office Personnel

Dr. Shirley Gamble, Superintendent
Dr. Shawn Haggerty, Chief Operations Officer
Mrs. Stacy Wilbanks, Director of Human Resources
Mr. Jason Jordan, Director of Operations
Mr. Kevin Owens, Director of Informational Technology
Ms. Angela Cooper, Director of Finance
Mrs. Brenda Cross, Food Nutrition Supervisor
Mrs. Susanne Elvington, Public Relations & Special Projects Specialist
Mrs. Char-Len Gorski, Coordinator of Special Services
Mrs. Cynthia Williams Blaine, Coordinator of Federal Programs/Special Services
Ms. Melonie Gordon, Instructional Technology and Accountability Officer/CTE
Ms. JaMese Black, Executive Director of Instruction
Mrs. Sharon Crouner, Parenting and Community Engagement Specialist

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North Mullins Primary School

Purpose

North Primary School educates, prepares, and inspires students to be productive citizens in a changing global society.

Vision & Mission

Vision

Collaborative Learning, Collective Success.

Mission

Creating a vibrant community where every child feels valued, respected, and inspired to achieve academic and personal success.

School History

North Mullins Primary School in Mullins, South Carolina, has been a cornerstone of educational excellence and community pride since its establishment. Founded to meet the educational needs of the local community, the school has grown over the years, expanding its facilities and enriching its curriculum to provide a nurturing environment for students. With a strong emphasis on academic achievement and community involvement, North Mullins Primary School continues to play a vital role in shaping the future of its students and fostering a sense of belonging in the Mullins community.

Mission Statement

Montessori is a prepared learning environment in which a mixed age group of children are able to learn and explore at their own pace. It is based on the education philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori which emphasizes the development of a personal sense of order, coordination, concentration and independence as the foundation of all learning.

Educational Goals

- To provide a learning environment prepared for hand-on learning with Montessori inspired materials.
- To provide a social environment that is inclusive of all children whose parents choose a Montessori education for their child.
- To guide children toward excellence for themselves as Montessori envisioned.
- To allow children to learn at their own pace with encouragement.
- To provide a safe, judgement free learning environment.
- To value the work of all children while encouraging them to concentrate and achieve independence

Our Core Values

- Children are individuals who develop and learn in a supportive, prepared learning environment
- Each child is valuable to society and the future
- Children learn according to the time table of development set by nature which we will honor
- All children can achieve independent learning and are capable of more than expected
- Children learn best in an environment with a caring adult that encourages freedom within limits to choose and learn as guided by their amazing minds

History & Philosophy

The Montessori Program at North Mullins Primary School was begun in 2015. It was a partnering school with the Montessori explosion that took place in South Carolina during the advent of school choice. Marion County Schools believes that parents should be offered choices of high-quality educational programs that suit their needs and the needs of individual children. Montessori is one of those choices. Today, there are more Montessori Public School programs in South Carolina than any other state in the US. North Mullins Primary is proud to be a part of this revolution in school choice.

Campus & Classroom Space

There are currently 4 Early Childhood Classes and 2 Elementary Classes in the school. The program has grown steadily since its inception. Currently about 143 students from throughout Marion County in grades 1st through 5th grade attend the program.

Each classroom is equipped with high-quality Montessori materials to teach language, math, history, geography, biology and science.

Curriculum & Teachers

All of the teachers at North Mullins Montessori Program are either certified by or are enrolled in a Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) Montessori Teacher training program. MACTE is the international standard for Montessori teacher training.

Each early childhood classroom (for 4K and 5K) teach the following subjects:

Practical life: Dr. Montessori structured exercises for the classroom to help children satisfy the need for meaningful activity. We refer to these as “exercises of practical life.” They include those daily activities which adults perform to maintain the environment and promote cohesive human relations. The Montessori practical life area is designed to allow the child to practice skills that will lead to greater independence and self-control. This area provides the child with the opportunity to engage in tasks associated with the real world of home, garden, and self-care. This work allows the child to develop concentration and attention to detail. Fine motor skills are honed, as the child gains a sense of satisfaction that comes from completing a task. They develop a deep joy for caring for themselves, others, and their environment. There are four distinct groups of practical life exercises: Care of person, care of environment, Grace and Courtesy and Concentration and Coordination.

Sensorial Exercises: Maria Montessori believed that nothing exists in the intellect that was not first experienced in the senses. The materials in the sensorial area are designed to help children sharpen their senses by isolating particular qualities such as size, shape, composition, color, flavor, smell, pitch, texture and weight. Each of the materials in this area is autodidactic and allows the child to work at their own pace with minimal interruption from the teacher. Children enjoy working with these materials repeatedly and often develop their own variations on the standard lesson.

Language: Language is an integral part of the entire Montessori preschool curriculum. Stories, songs, poems along with conversations with adults and peers help children increase their vocabulary and develop oral language skills. Written language is taught through a specific progression of lessons that engage the senses—children learn letters and sounds through seeing, hearing, and touching them—and through immersion in a linguistically rich classroom environment. Children first learn the phonetic sound of each letter. Using inviting, hands-on materials the children progress by classifying objects based on their sounds and then begin putting these sounds together to create words. Once they have learned to create their own words, reading follows quickly. The children work with increasingly more challenging materials. As they progress with their reading, the focus turns to comprehension and grammar. With the development of language, children develop a greater ability to organize their thoughts and express themselves.

Mathematics: The materials in the math area are designed for the development of a concrete understanding of abstract mathematical concepts. The hands-on materials in the math area help the child sequentially progress from basic comparisons of different quantities and their numeric symbols, through addition and subtraction and on to the combination of numbers, multiplication, division and fractions.

Science: The objective of science in the Montessori classroom is to develop each child’s natural sense of wonder and invite them to find answers to some of their “Why’s”. Each classroom contains many materials with which to explore various aspects of science.

Geography and Cultural Studies: Maria Montessori believed it was important to study what humans have in common to instill in the child a greater sense of belonging to the universe. By examining the similarities and differences of humans around the globe, we build a sense of connection to all human beings. Children in the Montessori classroom begin by looking at the world as a whole. Children are first introduced to the ideas of air, land, water, and continents. They then begin the study of local regions, cultures, and geography of the United States and all the continents. Colorful puzzles provide extensive hands-on exploration of world geography. Boxes containing a variety of items from each continent give the children a concrete link to peoples in other lands.

Each elementary classroom (for grades 1 – 3 and 4 – 6) teach the following subjects:

In the Elementary program, students begin to move away from concrete materials and develop an ability to think abstractly as developmentally dictated. Learning tools in the Elementary classroom take on multiple and more sophisticated uses. The integrated curriculum includes: reading, language arts, geography, music, art, mathematics, spelling, history, botany, zoology, physical science, physical education, social studies and field trips.

The Elementary program is guided by individualized yet collaborative learning. Each child is a unique person with particular aptitudes and interests. The role of the Montessori teacher is to provoke questions and teach the children the skills to answer those questions. The teacher serves as a guide to each child in his or her own learning, exploring a diverse curriculum, and creating rich learning experiences as the child moves from concrete to abstract thinking. Our teachers match their instruction with each child’s learning style and natural talents, ensuring every child is engaged and invested in learning, and capable of achieving success.

The children in our Elementary classrooms learn to research information, write reports, and make presentations to the group. The range of topics is limitless and the curriculum is vast. Montessori has a proud history of offering excellent hands-on, concrete materials to teach abstract concepts in both science and math. Through both in-class and out-of-class activities, students develop strong skills in the STEM area. The children explore art, music, biology, chemistry, poetry, engineering, and more.

Together, children and guides create an inclusive environment that supports social and emotional development. Children help one another and come to feel that helping is part of living. The feeling in the room is more like that of an extended family, and the focus on respectful social interaction and problem solving cultivates a social maturity atypical of children of this age. The strength of these relationships allows the children to take risks, voice opinions, and creatively express themselves.

Children in an elementary classroom begin to keep a record of their work. This can take the form of a journal, a work plan, or chart. Children develop work plans where they agree to do certain work during a day week or month. The child still has the freedom to choose their own work, as well as choosing to work with another child or in a group. Keeping track of their work helps them make good work choices, and lets the teacher see which presentations have been done and which are still needed.

A Typical Daily Schedule

7:30 AM – Arrival, Breakfast, Settling in

7:45 AM – Worktime begins

10:45 AM – Group meeting

11:00 AM – Outdoor

11:30 AM – Lunch

12:00 – Afternoon worktime

2:00 PM – Group meeting and preparation for dismissal

2:30 PM – Dismissal

The “Work” Cycle

In a Montessori school all of the students’ activities are called work. By using the word this way, it does not denote something unpleasant and opposite from fun. To children, their “work” is its own satisfaction. There is neither praise nor punishment. The urge to give too much praise is difficult even for an experienced teacher to suppress. But we try to remember this: whether you criticize or praise a child's work, you are evaluating the product without knowing how much effort was expended or even whether the child has developed his/her own opinion about it. The inequality between the child and adult is reflected in your response.

A more helpful approach is to comment on an actual attribute of the work. For instance, “I like the way you used this design to border your booklet.” Or, “I've noticed your addition work is becoming very accurate!” These kinds of statements encourage students to consider their own progress and begin to evaluate their own work with a critical eye. This allows them to move away from dependence on adult approval.

In our learning environment, regular discussions about correct behavior, courtesy and respect for others take place in the classroom as a part of instruction, not just as a response to a given negative behavior. Our approach does not eliminate all negative behavior, but it does give the teacher the opportunity to refer to the lesson. “Remember when we talked about walking carefully around someone's work?” Or, “I’ll bet you remember the lesson about pushing in your chair without a sound.”

In our modern hyper-stimulated society, the Montessori teacher's job is challenging. The children must come to love their own efforts without immediate rewards and praise. The materials beckon to the children, but their satisfaction must come from within. This intrinsic reward is the most meaningful and long-lasting.

This atmosphere of calm and joyful order is usually the first impression a visitor experiences in a Montessori school.

In a Montessori classroom you will experience a clear sense of freedom, but you will also realize that freedom is attainable for the children only because the environment is carefully prepared and controlled in a different way. There are a few rules, but they are consistent and equitable. These students learn not to disturb each other or to misuse the materials. They are shown how to select an exercise carefully, complete the procedure, repeat it as many times as desired, and replace it on the shelf as they found it. They learn that preparation and clean-up are part of the activity, not an adjunct. Within these limitations they have the opportunity to choose from every activity the teacher has presented to them.

Montessori students have the security of knowing that they each have exclusive use of the materials they have chosen for as long as they need them. The child is satisfied because the work has value, challenge and purpose.

Most adults have an external aim for which they are actively working. For children, the aim is internal. They work to grow. The work of the child, Dr. Montessori has said, is to create the adult he/she will become. When children reach the state of repeating an exercise, we know that they are on their way. The process has been set in motion. Externally, we observe self-disciplined children. They are working to perfect themselves through the use of the environment, which is a reminder that the environment should be painstakingly prepared to support the children, to sustain their need for activity, and to protect their right to develop at their own pace.

Guidance & Discipline

The Montessori School grounds its entire program in the significant relationship between adult and child. A positive, supportive and loving bond promotes the child's self-esteem and sense of security. The role model provided by the adult teaches children positive problem-solving techniques and courtesy. Children are continuously taught how to solve problems, deal with frustration, and express feelings in a manner that is growth-producing and positive. Some examples of positive methods of discipline include:

- redirecting or distracting a child from the unacceptable activity to a constructive one
- planning ahead to prevent problems
- encouraging, teaching, and modeling appropriate behavior
- setting consistent clear rules
- talking to the child about the feelings he /she is having offering alternative solutions to the problem
- involving children in solving the problem
- ensuring a relationship between the behavior and the discipline method tailoring the method of discipline to the individual child
- removing the child from the source of conflict

Expectations/Criteria

The Montessori Program is committed to providing an authentic Montessori education. Students must continue to meet expectations of the program or can be subject to removal from the program.

The following behaviors may be a reason for removal from the program:

- Any behavior which requires constant attention from the staff
- Any behavior which inflicts physical or emotional harm on themselves, other children, or any staff member
- Behaviors that consistently conflict with the rules of the classroom and/or playground
- If the child consistently isn't able to work independent
- If the child isn't progressing in the Montessori classroom

Our lead teachers are responsible for working out the situation with the child's parent. However, the teacher involved will also include the Program Director in any meeting involving potential discharge from the program.

Parents have the right to appeal to the director regarding any decision made by the child's teacher. However, please keep in mind teachers will typically be acting under the Director's guidance. Parents may make a final appeal to the school principal.

Family Commitment

Parents are a fundamental part of the well-being of our school and of a successful educational experience for their child. As such, we have the expectation that all members of the school community participate and support the school whenever possible. It is the hope and expectation of school that parents make every effort to understand and embrace the mission of the school. To that end, we aim to help parents learn about the Montessori approach by providing information and opportunities for parent education.

Additionally, we expect parents to familiarize themselves with the philosophy and weekly communications.

Parent education nights are provided to allow you to see the school activities which your child is taking part.

Admissions Guidelines

To be considered for admission a child must be 4 or 5 years of age. The parents of the child will apply to the school during the admissions period which will be publicly announced. Children living within the Marion School District are eligible to apply. Parents should be committed to the Montessori philosophy of education and the curriculum described in this handbook. Current students and their siblings are given enrollment priority before the admissions period begins.

The number of students eligible to attend the program will be determined during the admissions period. If more children apply to the program than existing eligible slots, a lottery will be held. The lottery will be public and announced before the admissions process is open.

For more information please contact Ms. Rebecca Pierce principal.

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