



Family Handbook  
**2010-2011**

# Island Montessori Academy Family Handbook

## **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Island Montessori Academy admits students and parents of any race, color, religious affiliation, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or marital status to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at our school. We do not discriminate in the administration of our school policies or programs.

### **IMA MISSION STATEMENT**

The Island Montessori Academy strives to create an educational community of families that inspire children to develop inner discipline, self-assurance, and a love of learning.

Our program provides a nurturing, balanced learning environment that fosters responsibility and cooperation through academic and social development. We understand the uniqueness of every child and strive towards helping each child to develop skills at periods of their greatest readiness and sensitivity, in order to reach their full potential in all aspects of their development.

Our students learn to view themselves as contributing members of a diverse global community. We endeavor to being open to all members of the community, and seeking to understand and value them for whom they are. The guiding principle for the IMA community is to treat one another with honesty and mutual respect.

### **EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

Education at IMA is based on the theories and work of Maria Montessori. This child-centered approach views the primary task of education as allowing children to discover knowledge—and ultimately themselves—by engaging in meaningful, self-directed activity in a stimulating and nurturing atmosphere. The aim is to help children grow socially, emotionally, cognitively, aesthetically, and physically while also developing self-awareness and an understanding of themselves as members of the world community. The key elements of our philosophy are described below.

**The Child**—We view children as active participants in a cooperative learning community. Children discover for themselves how to use their intellects and temperaments, how to see and understand and remember. By working to master the carefully prepared classroom environment—both individually and in concert with other students—the children develop the concentration, self-confidence, and self-discipline that will enable them to become life-long learners and problem solvers.

**The Prepared Environment**—IMA classrooms have a full complement of developmentally appropriate Montessori materials designed and constructed to respond to the children's interests. This rich array of multi-sensory material invites children to work both independently and with other children while engaging in purposeful activity. A defining feature of our classrooms is their clarity and order, while providing the consistency and dependability needed to enable children to develop in a safe learning environment that encourages children to experiment and take risks as they explore the world. Our curriculum is integrated across subjects and is presented in contexts that are meaningful and stimulating to children over a large range of ages. Our teachers continually refine the prepared classroom environments to respond to changing needs and interests of the children, making education at IMA a dynamic and creative process that encourages and supports varied approaches to learning.

**The Teacher**—IMA teachers are trained observers, facilitators, and role models for learning. Our teachers present lessons and information, and then give the children the time and autonomy to absorb them in their own way. The teachers carefully observe each child over time, then use these observations to modify the classroom environment while the children are exploring. This approach allows each child to learn independently, seeking the help of the teachers or other students when the student herself feels it is needed. Although most of the learning takes place within the classroom environments, the children also experience a rich set of offerings outside of the school through field trips and other specialist teachers.

**The Multi-Age Classroom**—A key aspect of education at IMA and all Montessori schools is the belief that, to realize their human potential, children must learn to understand and care for themselves, other individuals and the environment. Thus, the experience of being a contributing member of a real community is an essential part of an IMA education. Our multi-age environment provides children with the opportunity to learn at their own pace and to be a part of a small community engaged in cooperative learning. This approach aids social development by giving the children the experience of being the youngest, middle, and oldest in a group; by encouraging peer teaching; by offering older children the opportunity to model behavior for younger children, and by providing opportunities among all children for mutual help. The heterogeneous mix of talents and perspectives in each classroom leads to respect for the individuality of each person in the group, and recognition that each child has unique strengths and contributions to offer.

**The School Community**—Although the prepared classroom environment of materials, peers, and teachers is the backbone of an IMA education, the school community and the community at large are essential influences. Children at IMA have opportunities to pursue work with children in other classrooms, to participate in school-wide activities, and to take field trips to explore the broader community. Parents assist teachers volunteering for classroom projects, chaperoning field trips, or demonstrating their own talents and skills to the children. Parents are also active partners in their child's education: they join the school in setting goals for their child and support the school's efforts both in the school setting and by reinforcing educational objectives at home. At the elementary level, IMA students will actively engage in community service projects and learn to view themselves as responsible members of the global community.

**Our Larger World**—Our students will be living their most productive years in a world which is multicultural, multilingual, and heterogeneous in every aspect we can imagine. Interwoven through each aspect of our educational philosophy, therefore, is the responsibility we feel to prepare children to live in and contribute to a global community. Furthermore, we believe a significant element in a child's education is the development of critical thinking skills. The ability to apply multiple lines of inquiry to address and analyze a problem, question interpretations, and listen to the ideas of others relies on presence in a variety of thoughts, opinions and perspectives. A student body comprised of children with different experiences and viewpoints, with all voices able to contribute, is an enriching experience for all involved. A heterogeneous environment is an imperative part of fostering cognitive growth and an essential element in a good education. To this end, we strive to assemble a diverse school community, to build curriculum that reflects the realities of all our children, to create a cooperative community among them, and to nurture their sense of wonder about the interconnectedness of life. In appreciating and understanding their differences, we believe children of all backgrounds will find their common bonds and the human values that unite us all.

## **II. DAILY ROUTINE**

Regular School Hours	All Programs
Doors Open	7:45 AM
School Begins	8:00 AM
School Ends for Half Day Programs and Wednesdays	12:00 PM
School Ends Full Day Programs	3:00 PM

### **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

Except in the case of illness, students are expected to attend school regularly and to observe the stated school hours. We expect families to schedule vacations that are consistent with the school calendar. If, however, your child does miss school due to a vacation, please note that the teachers are not responsible for providing work for the student during their absence. Please call in all absences to 642-2020 by 8:15 on the day of the absence. So that we may be in compliance with Board of Health regulations, a form or note must accompany your child on the day she returns to school from a contagious illness. If your child has a fever of 100° or higher, please refrain from bringing her into school until the fever has subsided for more than 24 hours.

### **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

Arriving on time to drop off and pick up your child is essential to each child's school experience and to the efficient running of the school's programs. Children may be dropped off at school any time after the doors open for their program.

- Children should arrive no later than 7:55AM so that school can begin promptly at 8:00 AM.
- Excessive tardiness and absences may affect your child's re-enrollment status.
- We will dismiss children from 3:00 until no later than 3:15. If you are late picking up your child more than three times in a semester, you may be assessed a late pick up charge. Please respect our teachers, and pick your child up promptly. There is a \$1.00 per minute charge for late pick-ups.
- Please remember to hold your child's hand at all times in the parking lot.
- In order to encourage confidence and independence, your child should walk and not be carried into school.

**Please note:** We will not release your child to anyone other than you, or those specifically designated by you on your Emergency Contact Form. Any other arrangements must be communicated in writing to your child's teacher.

### **SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

School Telephone: 239-642-2020

School Fax Number: 239-394-6570

School Email Address: [info@islandmontessoriacademy.org](mailto:info@islandmontessoriacademy.org) School Website: [www.islandmontessoriacademy.org](http://www.islandmontessoriacademy.org)

The school office is open from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM when school is in session. If you need to visit the office, please be respectful of the staff and the students. Whenever possible, please schedule your visits ahead of time. You are welcome to observe the classrooms through the observation windows, however be mindful of the teachers and students.

### **SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS/HURRICANE DAYS**

Whenever school is closed because of inclement weather, the closing applies to all school programs for that day. Parents are responsible for listening to the "No School" announcements on the radio or television stations. In general, if Tommie Barfield Elementary School is closed, then IMA will be as well.

Parents can also call the school where an updated message will indicate a school closing. Should it become necessary to close school unexpectedly after it has opened for the day, parents or their emergency contacts will be notified by phone. In such cases for their and your own safety, please be sure to pick up your children promptly.

## **LUNCH AT SCHOOL**

At IMA, the preparation and eating of food are an integral part of our school day. Lunch and snack times are a social experience and also a time for children to become more conscious of healthy eating. We use these times to build community and respect for others, and as opportunities to teach about nutrition, food preparation, and practical life skills such as table setting, clean up, composting and recycling, and dishwashing. Microwaves are available in each classroom, which students may use with teacher supervision. Please include a note with heating instructions in your child's lunch if you would like their food heated. Please do not send frozen entrees (unless defrosted) because they take so long to heat.

IMA does not offer a daily lunch program. Therefore, please be aware that each family is responsible for sending a lunch to school with your child everyday. Packing lunches is an opportunity to help, especially elementary-aged children, plan ahead and be involved in the process of packing their own nutritiously balanced lunches. Offering a variety of acceptable choices can provide an opportunity to help children take responsibility for their own nutrition. Please follow some guidelines listed below.

- Place your child's name clearly on all lunch items to reduce confusion during lunch clean up and set up.
- Pack a reusable lunch box and an easy-opening thermos or juice box with a spout in the cap.
- Whenever possible, pack using reusable containers (instead of baggies and drink boxes, etc.) to help us reduce trash that cannot be recycled.
- A well-balanced, nutritious meal excludes candy, soda and other highly sugared foods with excessive quantities of additives and preservatives. If your child brings such items to school, s/he will be asked to bring them back home.
- We strongly urge you not to pack "Lunchables" and "Chef Boyardee" on a regular basis, as these highly processed foods include nitrates that are closely linked, specifically in children, to severe medical conditions.

If your child has any food sensitivities or allergies, please be sure to inform your child's teacher as soon as possible. Please respect any limitations placed on what your child can bring to school for lunch because of food allergies that other children in the class might have. If you have concerns about this, please talk to your child's teacher.

**Please note: Wednesdays are an early release day for all children, therefore they will not eat lunch at school.**

On Fridays, Gino's Olde Marco Trattoria offers pizza delivery to the school for students who pre-order. The cost per slice will be predetermined and any proceeds will go toward school enrichment and activities, such as field trips. Before the beginning of each quarter, you will receive an order form.

## **SNACKS**

Every day the children will help prepare and be offered a snack of fresh fruit or vegetables.

**Please note: Due to the high risk of life-threatening allergies, we have elected to be a peanut-free school.**

**NO peanuts or peanut products should be brought to school.**

In an effort to reduce waste, we ask that you send in a labeled, reusable cup or water bottle for your child to use for drinking water at school. Children in the primary class are mastering the skill of drinking from an uncovered, regular cup; therefore "sippy" cups are discouraged in that program.

### **III. LIFE AT SCHOOL**

#### **DRESS CODE**

Because we stretch, run, play, climb, work and sit on the floor, appropriate dress at IMA is casual. In class, children are encouraged to have a comfortable set of simple slippers, flip flops, or indoor shoes to change into when they come into the classroom. This not only keeps our learning environment clean, it creates a home-like environment where children feel comfortable physically, as well as mentally. Please follow some simple guidelines when dressing your child for school.

- Any extra clothing or shoes/slippers brought into school should be labeled with your child's name.
- All children should wear sneakers or comfortable shoes (or leave a spare pair in their cubbies at all times).
- For children who are unable to tie shoelaces, please have them wear Velcro or slip-on shoes to help expedite transitions.
- Shorts and skirts should be at knee-length or longer.
- T-shirts must be free of rips or holes and inappropriate messages or pictures.
- Shirts must extend below the waistline, and have at least two-inch wide straps.  
(No belly-shirts, spaghetti straps, halter tops, etc.)
- Hats are permitted for outdoor use only. Baseball caps are not to be worn in class.

We also advise families to leave a set of dry clothes (including underpants, socks and shoes, pants/shorts, and a shirt) in their child's cubby at all times in the case of soiled clothing due to rainy/muddy weather, painting, spilling, and other classroom mishaps.

#### **BEHAVIOR**

The purpose of ground rules is to aid our children in the development of self-respect and respect for others. Our rules are as follows:

- Treat others with compassion and respect for differences.
- Respect the right of each child to work in the environment undisturbed.
- Refrain from activities that are dangerous or hurtful.
- Assume responsibility for your own actions.
- Walk and use an inside voice when inside the buildings.
- Return work to its proper place after use.

If a child does not meet these expectations, and the teachers consider his/her behavior detrimental to the classroom or school, then the Head Teacher and Head of School will discuss with the parents ways to proceed.

First Incident. Child will be removed from group. Parent(s) informed.

Second Incident. Parents contacted and removed from school for the rest of that day.

Third Incident. Dismissal from school for the remainder of that week and/or following week.

We believe that the growth and development of the child must be the focus in disciplinary interventions. However, we also recognize that sometimes even the best efforts may be unsuccessful and that in order to preserve the climate of respect for others and the learning environment, the removal of the child from the classroom on a temporary or permanent basis may be necessary.

Teachers will report major conduct problems to the Head in a timely manner. Using an incident report, the parents will be notified and the problem will be addressed in a parent/teacher conference. If necessary, IMA may call a parent to take the child home immediately.

## **NAPPING AND QUIET TIME**

Children in a full day, Primary or Toddler program will have an hour to an hour and a half of quiet time each day in the afternoon. During this time, your child is expected to make every attempt to sleep, and if not, rest quietly without disturbing others. It is vital to your child's success in the program to be well rested for each day, and throughout the day. Research has shown that brain development during these early years is dependent on proper nutrition, rest and environment.

Please provide your child with a clean, crib-sized sheet each week labeled with his/her name. You may also wish to bring a pillow with a pillowcase as well. It is also acceptable for children to leave a small comfort item in their backpacks, including a small plush toy or blanket. This may ease the transition, especially at the beginning of the year, to sleeping in an unfamiliar setting.

## **SHARING AND TOYS**

Sharing is both a social and an educational experience. While children are encouraged to share experiences, books, natural specimens such as shells or horseshoe crabs and other educational items, we ask that they not bring toys or trading items (Yu-Gi-Oh, Pokemon, Webkinz, etc.) to school. If you are in doubt about any item, please see your classroom teacher.

## **COMFORT ITEMS**

Children need to suck and to soothe gums, but getting constant oral stimulation has many negative physical and psychological consequences. Creating a habit of oral stimulation is not good for the teeth or the development of language. Limited use of a pacifier will help the child stay in touch with his needs, while allowing him to graduate to proper drinking from a glass. Therefore, please do not send pacifiers or sippy cups to school. Cups with attached straws or water bottle spouts are more appropriate.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

### **Toddler Program:**

The child's message at any age is "Help me to do it myself." Supporting this need shows respect for and faith in the child. In our Toddler classroom, we observe the child and guide him to support his independence. At the right times, he will imitate others who are using the regular toilet. Learning to use a toilet naturally, when interested, helps children become better aware of their bodies' signals, and boosts their confidence to master the skill. There is no need for bribery or rewards, and doing so at home would confuse the child during this sensitive period.

Send your child in what she is most comfortable in be it diapers, pull ups or underwear. Please provide us with diapers or pull ups and wipes if needed and a set of dry clothes (including underpants, socks and shoes, pants/shorts, and a shirt), which will remain in your child's cubby at all times. In the case of an accident, soiled clothing will be sent home with the child and your child's teacher will inform you in the case that items in her cubby needs to be replenished. If there is not a set of dry clothing for your child to change in to, you will be expected to bring one for your child when called upon by the classroom teacher.

### **Primary Program:**

All children in the Primary program must be fully toilet-trained. (This means no pull-ups, please!) The 3-6 teachers' time is focused on creating a learning environment for a multiage class, which is challenging and safe for all the children. For all the children to participate fully in this rich experience, toilet training should be complete before entering the program.

Although an occasional accident will occur, if your child experiences more than three accidents in a semester's time, he will be asked to stay home until he has proven that he is fully trained. Primary program families are responsible for leaving a set of dry clothes (including underpants, socks and shoes, pants/shorts, and a shirt) in their child's cubby at all times (this is also recommended for elementary program families). In the case of an accident, soiled clothing will be sent home with the child. If there is not a set of dry clothing for your child to change in to, you will be expected to bring one for your child when called upon by the classroom teacher.

## **HOMEWORK**

**Primary Program:** At IMA, formal homework is not usually given in the 3-6 program, and we usually discourage parents from working on specific skill-building for its own sake at this level. Often they are learning skills with specific materials and vocabulary so that more traditional methods may be confusing to them and impede their learning. We encourage them to “follow” their children’s leads and interests, to read with children who are reading and to children who are not, and to create opportunities to explore and expand their world.

**Elementary Program:**In the elementary program (6-9), we will assign homework that is developmentally appropriate for each child. We believe homework should connect with the classroom curriculum and should be appropriate for the individual needs of the child. At this level, the important skills to be learned through homework are receiving assignments with due dates, completing those assignments, and taking the responsibility to hand them in at the appropriate time. This homework practice should prepare children to understand and carry out this basic homework routine independently.

A note about homework: When parents think about homework, it often helpful to think about it as “taking the learning process home” and discovering that it is not an exclusively school-related activity. Practicing baseball or the piano for ten minutes a night, setting or clearing the table every night for dinner, writing in a journal, or reading with a parent or sibling on a regular basis can all be considered HOMEWORK. These types of activities teach responsibility and routine, but more importantly they help children experience the process of learning and repetition or learning in their daily lives. It gives them value and pride in small accomplishments.

## **LIBRARY**

Any child enrolled at IMA may borrow books from the school library for a period of one week. You may help your child choose, sign out and return books if s/he is too young to do it independently. Children may not check out a library book if overdue books have not been returned.

**Please remember that we do not have a librarian, therefore your help in maintaining a well-organized and functional library is greatly appreciated.**

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Leaving the school to visit interesting places is a valuable experience for our students. Vans with seatbelts or school buses are used for all-class trips; small group excursions are possible only with the help of parents. We expect that parents who drive are properly licensed and insured, and are not under the influence of any alcoholic beverages, controlled substance, or any medication that might impair their ability to operate a motor vehicle. We also ask they refrain from using mobile phones while children are in their moving vehicle, unless absolutely necessary. Every parent who drives is asked to sign a Parent Liability Form.

Most trips are arranged well in advance so that schedules can be set, parents notified, and chaperones invited. All students participating in off-campus trips must have the signed general permission slip on file in the office. PLEASE NOTE that we also take impromptu neighborhood field trips for which advance notice may not be possible; such trips are always well supervised.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

**Back to School Night**—Meet the school family; get an overview of your child’s classroom; bring your questions; and schedule fall conferences

**Harvest Fest**—Come enjoy entertainment performed and arranged by your child’s class; stay and build community over refreshments with the other performers’ families.

**Luncheons and Potlucks**—Room parents organize potluck luncheons and dinners at school to help build the school community.

**Parent Night**—One parent accompanies each child to the classroom for an introduction to the work and classroom experience, held in the fall and spring.

**IMA Fundraiser**—Parents are encouraged to participate in a fundraiser that will help raise capital for school growth and development.

## **CELEBRATIONS**

Due to our commitment to teaching diversity, we expose children to all different cultural celebrations throughout the year. It is our belief that celebrating some holidays causes a distraction and creates feelings of exclusion in school. We support all families in their traditions and ways of celebration outside of school.

**Vacations**—Vacation times and school observed holidays are listed on the school calendar. We celebrate the usual legal holidays, and make an effort to coordinate with the Collier County Public School calendar when possible.

**Halloween**—Because many small children are still wary of costumed figures, we ask that families who celebrate this holiday do so at home. Children may participate in *Mystery History Day*, in which they wear a costume to represent a character, a plant or animal they have researched from the history of any country or culture. Families are also encouraged to participate in the Trunk or Treat Celebration at the St. Mark’s Church/IMA parking lot.

**Winter Holidays**—Following our mission of diversity, we encourage all families to share with us their winter traditions and celebrations. In school, we will celebrate diversity of holidays, traditions and celebrations around the world. Please remind your young children that every family has different beliefs and that it is important to respect one another during this time as with any other.

**Valentine’s Day**—Children are encouraged to exchange valentines at school as long as each child in the class is remembered. Classroom teachers may plan other activities, but please remember not to bring in toys, candy or sweets.

**Birthdays at School**—Each child’s birthday, is celebrated with a special ceremony in the classroom. Each classroom has different traditions to mark this event; please check with your child’s teacher for more information.

**Parties Outside of School**—If classmates are invited to a party or get-together outside of school, we request that you invite either a small number or all of a grouping (for example, all first years in a class) to avoid creating a situation which will make any child feel excluded. Play dates should be arranged via telephone or otherwise outside of school.

#### **IV. THE PARENT AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP**

We encourage all IMA parents to be actively involved in the life of the school. The learning and development of children happen most successfully within the context of a cooperative relationship between home and school. Essential to this relationship is the trust that we all share the best interests of the child, and the realization that we have much to learn from one another.

#### **PARENT AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

As educators of your children, we are well aware that parents are our most important resource in understanding a child, and we count on you to alert us to any concerns, changes at home, or significant health issues. Such information is handled discreetly and shared on a need-to-know basis with other staff.

To facilitate this partnership, we offer the following guidelines:

- Questions about your child's **academic progress or social development** should be directed to your child's Head Teacher. Your wish to consult with the teacher should be left on the teacher's voice mail or email and should include times when you can best be reached, so that the teacher can return the call at a time that is mutually convenient. Teachers are not in a position to have such conversations at drop-off, pick-up, in class or in the hallways, when their responsibilities to the children are paramount. IMA teachers are eager to consult with parents and will return phone calls and notify you of any concerns they have about your child.
- All other concerns can be addressed to the Head of School after school hours. Please note that some concerns may need consultation with the Board of Directors.

**E-Mail**—All IMA teachers and staff have e-mail addresses. Each teacher will inform parents as to her e-mail preferences.

**Use of Observation Windows**—IMA has an open-door classroom environment and we invite parents who want to observe their children in action to use the observation windows into each classroom. This window not only provides an observer the opportunity to see a child in his/her class environment, but it also allows the children to work uninterrupted by visitors. Therefore, please do not knock on the glass or otherwise attempt to get a child's attention while class is in session. The purpose of the windows is to ensure that the children are not distracted from their work. Please use the windows respectfully and follow some observation window tips:

- Observe silently. Voices can be easily heard and distracts the children from their work.
- Watch your child for signs of independence, collaboration between children, and for social and academic interaction.
- Watch another child as a way to learn about child development.
- Be considerate of others and limit the window to two people at one time.
- Limit your observations to ten (10) minutes so that children are not conscious of your presence. The window is to provide you with a snapshot of your child's day.
- If you observe something that leaves you with a question, please contact your child's teacher by leaving a voice mail or e-mail message. Do not walk into the classroom and disrupt the children's learning environment.

**Take Home Folders**—In the past, a Wednesday envelope was sent home with student work, notices and other information. In order to reduce waste, IMA will now be sending monthly newsletters out via email. Please read through materials, returning anything as needed. Be aware materials may include time-sensitive material, although we will make every effort to communicate this in advance. \* If you prefer hard copies please contact the office at 239-642-2020 or [info@islandmontessoriacademy.org](mailto:info@islandmontessoriacademy.org).

IMA families can now view current school notices, forms, fliers and family information at:

<http://www.islandmontessoriacademy.org/parents.htm>

## **DECISION MAKING AT IMA**

Our four central decision-making bodies include:

### **Board of Directors**

The Board is responsible for those major policy decisions that impact the mission, philosophy, values, long-term financial health and stability of the school. Examples of decisions made at the Board level include:

- Approval of the School Mission Statement and Philosophy
- Setting tuition
- Approving the Operating Budget and Capital Budgets of the school
- Setting the annual increase for the salary budget
- Approving personnel policies
- Determining the size and structure of the school

Board Members are appointed to a one-year term by the Head of School. The Board strives to ensure that Board Members bring diversity of opinion, background, experience, and needed talents to the Board. Most Board meetings are open, and parents are welcome to attend these meetings.

The IMA Board of Directors consists of eight members appointed by the Founder of the School. The 2009-2010 Board members include:

Jason Bailey, President  
Peter Nguyen, Vice President and Treasurer  
Janice Cox  
Brandi Lostracco  
Michele Micheline  
Nadine Ouillette

### **Head of School**

The Head of School works with the Board, in:

- Administering the school in keeping with the Board-approved budget
- Preparing and presenting regular reports to the Board, attending meetings, and participating actively in Board committees
- Communicating regularly with IMA constituencies
- Working with the Board to ensure all legal requirements are met
- Assisting the Board in formulating plans for the future development of the school, and assisting with solicitation of funds when needed

The Head of School reports to the Board, which outlines the Head's contractual duties as:

- Implementing the policies of the Board
- Supervising the day-to-day running of the school including, but not limited to admissions, academic program, administration, development and evaluation of staff, professional and student affairs, business affairs and maintenance of the School's physical facilities
- Hiring, retaining, and professionally developing faculty and staff
- Assuming a public role as the principal representative of the School in professional education and ensuring proper accreditation

All decisions made by the Head are based on the best interests of the children and the school, consistent with the Board direction.

## **The Faculty**

The faculty reports to the Head and works closely with her on areas involving curriculum, the development of individual children, general school program and schedule, and behavioral expectations. Teachers work with the Head to develop a baseline all-school Montessori curriculum, but are individually responsible for the implementation and elaboration of that curriculum within their own classrooms. Teachers are regularly consulted by the Head and are involved in many decisions regarding the day-to-day operation of the school.

## **THE PARENTS AND THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION (PA)**

Parents make the decision whether or not to enroll or re-enroll their children in the school. We respect the individuality of each family, and will work with each family to create a program that meets the needs of a diverse group of families.

The future success of IMA will be closely linked to the support of its parent community. All current parents are members of the IMA PA. The PA mission is to promote family participation in the fabric of the School in order to enrich each child's education and each family's experience at IMA. The PA will organize, sponsor and host activities that provide opportunities for parents to participate in the life of the school and that benefit the school socially, culturally, and financially.

If you are interested in becoming a PA Chair or other active member, please contact the Head of School.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

### **Conferences, Reports, and Parent-Teacher Communication**

The IMA Calendar includes scheduled days set aside for parent-teacher conferencing. We also encourage parents and teachers to contact one another whenever either has questions to ask, concerns to express, or triumphs to share. Working out a means of communication with your child's teacher that works for both of you should be your first priority.

Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled after school during a three-day period. We urge all parents to plan vacations around the school calendar; conferences will not be rescheduled for families who arrange long weekends away during conference periods. Parents are responsible for choosing two or three convenient times during those days to meet, and teachers will post a final schedule of conference dates and times for families at least one week prior.

**Fall conferences** focus on establishing the parent-teacher working relationship, sharing perceptions of the child, and developing shared goals. Teachers cannot generally report on children's progress at these meetings, as it is too early in the year. These short conferences are scheduled for after school on an early release Wednesday in the fall.

**Winter conferences** are an opportunity to check in on progress as viewed by both teacher and parent, and to set goals for the remainder of the year.

**Spring conferences** are not required for all families, but may be requested by either teacher or parents. These conferences offer an opportunity to discuss and facilitate transition to the next program for children in their transition year.

**Written progress reports** are sent to parents prior to the winter and spring conference days. They are intended to give parents a thorough understanding of a child's work style, interests, strengths and weaknesses, as well as a clearer sense of the classroom curriculum and activities. Sometimes a child's performance or behavior changes dramatically in the middle of a term. In such a case, teachers will complete an Interim Report so that communication of the change is timely.

### **School Records**

The school maintains a record for each enrolled child. Unless the custodial parent provides written consent for access to the record by others, it is not made available except to those staff members involved in your child's program. At your written request, we will send your child's record to you or to a school and/or professional of your designation. Any such requests will be sent directly from IMA to the school or program you have designated.

## **V. POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

Your child's health and safety is our primary concern. Sometimes when children begin school or change schools, they may be prone to infection and illness. We hope that these guidelines will contribute to a healthier school year for all.

### **IMMUNIZATION RECORDS**

- Any child entering a preschool, school (K-12), licensed childcare facility or family daycare must have a completed Florida Certification of Immunization form (DH 680) with either proof of immunization or exemption for the form to be valid. *Rule 64D-3.046, Florida Administrative Code*
- DH 680 (the Blue form) and the School Entry Health Exam (the Yellow form) are required annually until your child reaches Kindergarten. The next required update will be when your child enters seventh grade.

### **HEALTH**

- You may not send your child to school with a contagious infection. This includes a running nose from early stages of a cold, within 24 hours of a fever; within less than 24 hours since beginning antibiotic medication; with nits from pediculosis (head lice); with active chicken pox; fifth's disease (or other spreading rash) or with any other contagious infection.
- If your child shows any symptoms of contagious infections, you will be contacted to pick up your child immediately to seek medical attention. Your child will not be permitted back to school without a doctor's note.

Our program is stimulating and demanding. Your child must be well rested to participate fully. Please let your child's teacher know of any significant change in your child's family circumstance (such as illness or separation), or in his/her individual behavior.

### **MEDICATION**

The School can accept responsibility for administering medication only with the order of a physician and with your written consent and instructions. Please complete the School Medication Form signed by both physician and parent. You are responsible for bringing in and taking home the medication itself, which must be in a properly labeled medication container.

The School will not accept responsibility for the administering of prescription medication without a School Medication Form. **Medications may not be left with, nor distributed by classroom teachers, nor may medication other than EpiPens and inhalers be kept in the classroom.**

**Antibiotics**—Our policy is not to administer antibiotic medication at school. Since antibiotics are generally taken three times daily, children can be medicated outside of school hours.

**Non-prescription medications**—The school does not dispense non-prescription medications unless a child has a condition, which requires a standing prescription (example, Tylenol for migraines or a broken arm). The School Medication Form is required for non-prescription medication standing doses, and the child's physician must sign it.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION POLICY**

It is the policy of IMA that, upon enrollment, the parent signs an Emergency Medical Authorization Form stating where parents can be reached if not at home, and whom should be contacted in the event they cannot be reached.

The following statement appears in your child's Emergency Medical Form:

I understand IMA teachers are trained in First Aid and CPR, and I authorize them to give my child treatment whenever they deem it appropriate. I understand that every effort will be made to contact me in the event of an emergency, which requires medical attention.

I hereby authorize Island Montessori Academy to proceed as follows in the case of illness or emergency:

1) **NON-LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY\***

My child will be given First Aid treatment and kept at school until I or another adult contact on the Emergency Release Form can be reached to pick up my child.

2) **LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY**

My child will be transported by ambulance (at my expense), accompanied by a staff member, to the nearest hospital, where I give Permission for any and all x-rays, tests, treatment, and/or hospitalization to be administered and/or arranged by those medical personnel in attendance at said hospital, as they may deem necessary.

\* As determined by a staff member trained in First Aid

**PLEASE NOTE:**

At the Academy's discretion, students with facial or head injuries or other injuries of a potentially serious nature may be transported by ambulance as described above (2), even if those injuries are not deemed life threatening.

The school health form lists your child's physician's name, address and phone number, and the date of the last Diphtheria/Tetanus Booster, as well as your child's other pertinent medical information.

The physician named is authorized to undertake such care and treatment of a child, as she considers necessary. In the event that your child's physician is not available at the time, authorization for such treatment and care is given to any licensed physician or surgeon.

We will always attempt to contact you, your child's physician, and/or your emergency contacts whenever illness or medical emergency occurs.

**LIFE THREATENING ALLERGIES**

If your child has a life threatening allergy, the parents, the primary care provider, and the student's teacher will prepare an Individual Health Plan (IHP) to aid in keeping your child safe while at school and during school hours.

**FINANCIAL POLICIES**

Annual tuition may be paid in full at the time of enrollment. IMA does, however, offer two payment plans outlined below. No other methods of payment will be provided.

**Standard Payment Plan**

Tuition will be paid in two installments—less the \$1,000 tuition deposit—due by August 18, 2010; the remaining 50% is due by January 3, 2011. A late fee of 1.5% per month will be assessed on unpaid balances after the stated due dates.

**Monthly Payment Plan**

The tuition, less the \$1,000 deposit, will be paid in ten equal installments beginning August 18, 2010 and ending May 14, 2010. Payments will be made by authorized automatic debit. There will be a 0.5% additional fee for those paying monthly by check. There is a \$25 late fee if payments are not made by the 15th of each month.

Please note: If more than two monthly payments are missed, the contract will be considered breached by the family, and the child will not be permitted to attend classes; in this event, the school shall have the sole discretion whether to re-admit the child at such time as the account is brought current. Should the school elect not to re-admit the child, nothing contained herein shall relieve the family from the obligation of paying the full tuition amount. If more than three late payments are made, along with the late fees, the family will no longer be permitted to utilize the Monthly Payment Plan; in this event, the family shall pay the remaining tuition in full upon receipt of written notice from the school. Following such action, the family will follow the Standard Payment Plan or pay the tuition in full at the time of enrollment.

### **Unconditional Obligation**

Your obligation to pay the tuition for the full academic year is unconditional after acceptance of this contract by IMA.

### **Financial Information**

IMA assumes that all natural parents and legal guardians, their individual relationships and custodial arrangements notwithstanding, have legitimate interest and responsibilities toward the student. Therefore, IMA reserves the right to include and involve all natural parents and legal guardians in all student-related financial matters including applications for financial assistance (when available) and the receipt of student bills. At the same time, IMA will make every reasonable effort to work with parents, legal guardians and trust administrators toward the resolution of sensitive issues related to student fiscal matters.

### **Account Status**

A student whose account is overdue as of one week before the first day of school will not be permitted to start school until the past due amount is paid in full, or satisfactory payment arrangements have been made with the school. IMA reserves the right not to renew this enrollment contract for the 2011-2012 academic year, if tuition payments are not current as of January 15, 2011.

### **Rules and Regulations**

By signing the *Reservation Agreement and Enrollment Contract* the parent accepts the rules and regulations adopted by IMA. The parent agrees that the student may participate in all school activities and any other school-sponsored trips away from the campus unless IMA receives a written notice to the contrary. The student's disregard of the rules and regulations of IMA may be deemed sufficient cause for dismissal. Furthermore, the parent understands that IMA is committed to building positive and mutually respectful relationships through which parents and the school work towards the child's best interests. If this is not possible, IMA may require a family to withdraw. The decision of the school and the IMA Board in this regard will be final.

### **Discounts**

There is a 15% discount for families enrolling more than one student.

### **2011-2012 Enrollment**

The re-enrollment date for students currently in the School and intending to return in the fall is March 16, 2011. The enrollment date for newly accepted students is May 31, 2011. A completed Reservation Agreement and Enrollment Contract, plus a tuition deposit of \$1,000, must be received by the above dates to ensure a place for the student during the forthcoming year.

*Your family may be eligible for more than one discount. Please see the Head of School for more details.*

### **FORMS**

Before starting school each year, every child must have original copies of the Department of Health Forms 3040 (Student Health, yellow) and 680 (Immunizations, blue) on file in the school's office. These forms are provided and completed by your family physician and are required by the State of Florida.

The following IMA forms are included and must be completed and returned to the school office by **August 24<sup>th</sup>**.

- Family Handbook Acknowledgement
- Emergency Medical Form
- General Permission Slip

These forms are also included, but may not be applicable to your family.

- Authorization for Medication Form
- Parent Liability Form

**ISLAND MONTESSORI ACADEMY  
FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Please initial each statement below:

\_\_\_\_\_ I have received my copy of the 2010-2011 Island Montessori Academy Family Handbook and acknowledge my obligation to read its contents and follow the guidelines within.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that the handbook is intended to provide an overview of the Academy's policies and procedures and does not necessarily represent all such policies in force. The Academy may at any time vary from, add, change, or rescind any policy or practice at its sole discretion, without notice.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that the IMA Family Handbook is not a contract of my child's acceptance in the program and should not be deemed as such, and we are enrolled at will. There is no guarantee of enrollment made to any enrollee, either expressly or implied, in this handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have received a copy of the FL Department of Children and Families brochure entitled, "Know your Child Care Facility."

\_\_\_\_\_ I give the Parents Association permission to publish my contact information in an IMA family directory.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Full Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date