

Elizabeth Seton Montessori School
of
Westmoreland County

Parent Handbook
Revised July 2005

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Elizabeth Seton Montessori School, a private, non sectarian educational program was founded in 1970 under the auspices of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill. Its mission is to provide:

early childhood educational services to children ages 3 through 6, based upon the Montessori philosophy of Education.

An age appropriate curriculum that respects the independence and the individuality of each student while it promotes the development of social skills based on Christian values.

And environment that fosters a heightened awareness of the physical care of each person and the environment: the sensorial; the academic; the cultural and artistic dimensions of each child.

An active and direct involvement with each child so as to foster inner motivation and self discipline.

An alternative philosophy of education to families or guardians with young children residing in this particular geographic area.

The school's administrator and staff perceive their role as awakeners: as directors who allow children to discover and explore their creative potential. Because they value the holistic approach to development, the staff empowers each child with the responsibility of actively embracing the process of learning in all spheres - physical, emotional, intellectual, interpersonal, and spiritual. They are committed to regarding each child as a purposeful, spiritual being in a meaningful and interconnected world.

HISTORY

THE ELIZABETH SETON MONTESSORI SCHOOL was founded in 1970 under the auspices of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill, Greensburg, Pennsylvania to provide an alternative philosophy of education to families with young children residing in the area.

For the first twelve years of its existence, the school was located on Mt. Thor Road, Greensburg, Pennsylvania in a facility owned and operated by the Congregation. In August, 1982, when these facilities were no longer available to the school due to a reorganization of building space, **The Elizabeth Seton Montessori School** relocated to the East High Acre section of Greensburg.

The school's legal status changed in September, 1986 when it incorporated as a Not-for-Profit corporation and became known as **The Elizabeth Seton Montessori School of Westmoreland County, Inc.** Its mission: to engage in providing preschool educational services to children, ages 3 through 6, based upon the Montessori Philosophy of Education. When the corporation purchased a track of land and renovated an existing building on Old Route 30 in Greensburg in July, 1987, the school once again relocated to its new facilities.

The Elizabeth Seton Montessori School of Westmoreland County, Inc. is an affiliate of the AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY and operates in accordance with the Society's "Code of Ethics."

The Elizabeth Seton Montessori School of Westmoreland County, Inc. is non-discriminatory on the basis of race, religion, sex or national origin. It is an equal opportunity employer.

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

SISTER ANITA SCHULTE:

Administrator

CREDENTIALS

B.A. Seton Hill College
M.A. Xavier University
A.M.S. Montessori Certification
Xavier University

MRS. LINDA FIDAZZO

Head Teacher - Morning Class & Afternoon Class/
Extended Day Teacher

CREDENTIALS

B.A. Seton Hill College
A.M.S. Montessori Certification
Carlow College

MRS. RYAN MARTIN

Teacher – Morning Class & Afternoon Class

CREDENTIALS

B.A. California University of Pennsylvania
A.M.S. Montessori Certification
MECA Seton of Chicago

Each staff member is required to maintain her professional development by attending seminars and workshops and by keeping professionally updated with pertinent and informative readings.

The school serves as a training site for Montessori Interns from A.M.S. Teacher Preparation Programs who are fulfilling course requirements for Montessori Certification.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

The Parents of the Elizabeth Seton Montessori School work together and function as a group to raise money through various activities and events. All monies that are generated through fund-raisers are added to the annual operating budget of the school.

A **PARENT PARTICIPATION FORM** is distributed in the beginning of the school year. It contains information on the various events and fundraisers that the Elizabeth Seton Montessori School will sponsor throughout the school year, 2005 - 2006.

Each family is expected to carefully consider which function(s) they are able to participate in and volunteer their services. Once the form is completed and returned to the school, a list will be compiled and various responsibilities will be delegated to each family.

POSSIBLE FUNDRAISERS AND EVENTS FOR 2005-2006

Fresh Christmas Greens Sale
Halloween Party
Book Fair at Barnes and Noble
Thanksgiving Celebration
Monthly Pizza/Sub Sales
Gingerbread House Decorating
Christmas Gift Shop
Holiday Party
Winter Show
Valentine's Day
Ongoing Cookbook Sales
Walk-a-thon
Art Show

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

ADMISSIONS:

Parents who wish to enroll their child will make an appointment to come to observe for an entire class session. At this time, they will be able to meet with the School's Administrator and discuss the following topics: school's philosophy, freedom, independence, and discipline.

Parents are given an Application for Admission along with the Tuition and Fee Information. When an application is submitted, it must be accompanied with the appropriately designated application fee.

Upon the return of the Application for Admission, with its application fee, an appointment is made with the parents to bring their child to school. During this visit, the child is evaluated and the parents are interviewed.

As the results of the child's evaluation are reviewed with the parents, a decision is made regarding the child's readiness for admission. If the child is to be accepted, the parents receive the necessary medical forms to have completed before their child's first day of school.

ENROLLMENT

Children are enrolled according to the following priority

- Children entering their second or third year
- Siblings of children already enrolled
- New Children

The Application for admissions and Fee and Tuition Information are sent during the second week of February to each family whose child is already enrolled. They are asked to complete the form and return it with the appropriately designated application fee by

the second week of March. The application fee is refundable ONLY if the school cannot accept the enrollment of the child. When the re-enrollment deadline has been reached, new applications are considered for any remaining positions.

The School's Administrator reserves the right to select new applicants for the sake of maintaining an equal balance of boys and girls as well as a balance of three, four and five year old children.

TUITION PAYMENTS:

THE ELIZABETH SETON MONTESSORI SCHOOL is a non-profit organization and all operating expenses are paid with tuition monies. Payments are expected to be prompt. Additional billing is not sent out. Any tuition payment made more than five days after the due date is considered overdue and is to be accompanied by a \$10.00 late fee. Checks are directed to the Administrator and made payable to the Elizabeth Seton Montessori School. All money / checks coming to the school are to be enclosed in a sealed envelope with clear identification of the purpose of the enclosure marked on the outside.

Non Sufficient Fund Checks (NSF checks) will be charged a \$35.00 fee.

All financial accounts need to be up to date before a parent-teacher conference can be scheduled.

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS:

The school requires a medical examination for each new student. This is not required for the students who are returning.

The school's medical form must be completed by the family physician and returned to the school at the beginning of the school year.

ILLNESSES:

Parents will be notified promptly of any case of a contagious disease in the school. Please contact us if a contagious disease has been diagnosed in your child. Parents are asked to keep children at home when they are running a fever, experiencing a runny nose, or have a bad cough.

EMERGENCIES:

Minor accidents occurring during school hours receive prompt and careful attention from the staff members. In case of an emergency, parents will be notified and the child will be taken to the emergency room at Westmoreland Regional or Latrobe Hospital. Parents are required to furnish the school with an EMERGENCY FORM, which is kept in their child's records.

ARRIVALS:

As parents bring their child to school, they enter the school's West parking entrance and exit on the East side. Parents are encouraged to allow their child to separate from them at this point as soon as the child is able to do so. **PLEASE REFER TO THE CLASS SCHEDULE FOR ARRIVAL TIMES.** Tardiness creates a disruption to the work cycle of the children.

DISMISSALS:

At dismissal time, parents will enter the parking area and wait for their child to be dismissed by a staff member. **PARENTS ARE ASKED TO REMAIN IN THEIR CARS AT DISMISSAL. Please do not stand in the vestibule or near the closet area.**

Under no circumstances may a parent leave a car unattended while he or she is waiting for their child to be dismissed. If the children are playing on the playground at dismissal, each child will be dismissed from the playground as soon as the parent or guardian arrives. This will help to eliminate any congestion of traffic in the parking lot. The school operates on a fifteen minute staggered system for all arrivals and dismissals.

**ALWAYS ENTER THE PARKING LOT WITH CAUTION.
CHILDREN MAY BE PLAYING OUTSIDE !!**

Each driver must be prompt in picking up children at the end of the session. It is particularly important to the staff that children be picked up at the specified time in order to facilitate daily scheduled activities.

If a child is to be picked up by a person other than a parent, **PERMISSION IN WRITING MUST PRECEDE THE TIME OF DISMISSAL.**

BIRTHDAYS:

The school welcomes the opportunity to celebrate a child's birthday in school. If the child wishes to bring a special birthday treat, it will be served at snack time and should be brought to school at the beginning of the session.

NOTE * OUR POLICY IS TO SERVE A NO SUGAR SNACK--- even for birthdays!!!**

A calendar is provided for parents to reserve a day for their child's birthday celebration. Parents wishing to join their child at the end of the session for the celebration, are welcomed.

If school friends are being invited to a special party, it should be done outside of school so that the feelings of other children, who are not invited, may be considered. Please do not send invitations or gifts to children via the school.

CARPOOLS:

The school does not provide a bus service. Many families form carpools to facilitate the transportation of their children. A roster of all families in the school is distributed early in the summer to assist parents in forming carpools. The school staff is not responsible for organizing, setting up or maintaining carpools.

NEWSLETTERS:

A school newsletter, containing relevant information pertaining to school functions, is sent home with the children every other month. Parents are encouraged to submit articles (especially about activities for children in the community) to be printed and shared in the newsletter.

CLOTHING:

Clothing that is suitable for outdoor play, working on the floor, or painting with washable paints, is the recommended school attire.

COWBOY BOOTS, SNOWBOOTS, and SANDALS SHOULD NOT BE WORN IN SCHOOL. Children who are wearing these kinds of items on their feet, will be encouraged to remove them and wear slippers or socks. Slippers can be kept in school and worn during the work period.

Because we foster independence, parents are asked to purchase the type of clothing that children can manage themselves. They need to check for difficult buttons and zippers before buying the clothing. Winter boots should be large enough to enable the children to put them on by themselves with relative ease.

Clothing that the children remove, such as coats or sweaters, should be marked with their names. Sewn labels or names written with permanent marker are recommended.

PARENTS ARE ASKED TO PROVIDE THE STAFF WITH AN EXTRA CHANGE OF CLOTHING. Please put extra clothes in a box with the child's name on the outside of the box. Parents are asked to launder clothes that have been soiled and to return a clean set to school as soon as possible.

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS:

Parents are appointed to call the homes of children in the event that school would be closed due to snow conditions or other emergencies.

The school maintains the policy not to conduct classes on the days when the area public schools or parochial schools have closed due to bad weather.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

EXTENDED DAY:

8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday

8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Friday

MORNING CLASS:

8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday

AFTERNOON CLASS:

12:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. Monday through Friday

EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM:

This program is for children who need additional care before or after the designated school schedule. The charge for this program is **\$4.00 per hour**, with one hour being a minimal charge.

SNACKS:

A light, wholesome, NO SUGAR snack is provided on a daily basis. Parents will receive a snack note approximately five times during the year, requesting an item to be sent into school for daily snacks.

All snacks are placed in the environment and are available to the children to serve themselves whenever they feel the need for nourishment.

THE MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

The basic idea in the Montessori Philosophy of education is that every child carries unseen within her / him the person she / he will become. In order to develop these physical, intellectual and spiritual powers to the fullest, she / he must have freedom, a freedom to be achieved through order and self discipline. The world of the child is full of sights and sounds that appear chaotic at first. From this chaos, the child must gradually create order and learn to distinguish among the impressions that assail her / his senses, slowly but surely gaining mastery of herself / himself and the environment.

Dr. Maria Montessori developed what she called the “prepared environment” which already possesses a certain order and disposes the child to develop at his / her own speed, according to her / his own capacities in a non-competitive atmosphere during the first years of school. The years between three and six are the years that a child most easily learns the ground rules of human behavior. These can be constructively devoted to “civilizing” the child - freeing her / him through the acquisition of good manners and habits to take her / his place in her / his own culture.

The child who has had the benefit of a Montessori environment is freer at a later age to devote herself / himself more exclusively to the development of her / his intellectual faculties. The method by which children are taught in the Montessori school might well be called “Programmed Learning.” The structure of Montessori learning involves the use of many materials with which the child may work independently. At every step of her / his learning, the teaching material is designed to test his / her understanding and to correct errors.

Dr. Montessori recognized that the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child. Children move themselves toward learning. The teacher prepares the environment, programs the activity, stimulates interest, functions as an exemplar and reference person, but it is the child who, motivated by the work itself, learns through making individual choices and pursuing these interests with persistent effort. If the Montessori child is free to learn, it is because he or she has acquired an “inner-discipline” from her / his exposure to both physical and mental order. This is the core of Dr. Montessori’s educational philosophy. Patterns of concentration, stick-to-itiveness and thoroughness established in early childhood, produce a confident and competent learner in later years. Schools have existed historically to teach children to observe, to think, and to judge. Montessori introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social-discipline go hand in hand.

Maria Montessori, physician and educator was the first woman to receive a medical degree in Italy. Born in 1870, she devoted her life to the education of children while her special method of realizing their full potential brought her world-wide honor and respect long before her death in 1952. Perhaps the greatest tribute to Dr. Montessori is the currently growing public acceptance of her educational theories. For, as we have learned, freedom without responsibility only delays maturity and prolongs a state of dependence.

FIRST SEMESTER SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

September 6 – December 21 2005

JUNE

- 1 First Tuition Payment is Due
Applicable to **All** Tuition Payment Schedules

AUGUST

- 31 Opening School Picnic –MT. ODIN PARK
See details in letter

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Trimester Tuition Payment is Due
6 Meeting for First Year Parents (10:00-11:30)
7 Orientation Classes Begin for First Year Students
14 General Schedule for ALL Students
NOTE** ½ day schedule for Extended Day
19 Extended Day Schedule is in Effect.

OCTOBER

- 22 Barnes and Noble Fundraiser
28 STAFF DAY: NO CLASSES
31 Halloween Celebration NO COSTUMES

NOVEMBER

- 1 Christmas Greens orders due
18 Conferences for SECOND YEAR STUDENTS
NO CLASSES
23 Thanksgiving Celebration- NO EXTENDED DAY
CLASS in the Afternoon
28 NO CLASSES – Hunting Season
29 Classes Resume from Thanksgiving Vacation

DECEMBER

- 1 Trimester Tuition Payment Due
9 Gingerbread House Decorating
15 Children's Christmas Gift Shop
21 Christmas Party -ALL CLASSES 9:30-11:00 a.m.
Vacation commences at 12:00 p.m.

SECOND SEMESTER SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

January 3 - May 27, 2005

JANUARY

- 3 Classes Resume from Christmas Vacation
- 13 First Year Conferences- NO CLASSES
- 16 Martin Luther King Day – NO CLASSES
- 27 STAFF DAY – NO CLASSES

FEBRUARY

- 3 Winter Show Rehearsal
- 4 Winter Show
- 14 Valentine's Day Celebration – Regular Schedule
- 20 President's Day – NO CLASSES

MARCH

- 30-31 NO CLASSES – Montessori Conference – Texas

APRIL

- 12 Easter Vacation Begins – 3:15
- 24 Classes Resume from Easter Vacation
- Extended Day Conferences (Afternoon)
- Extended Day Conferences (Afternoon)

MAY

- 6 Art Show 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
- 12 Walk-a-thon: Lynch Field (Family Event)
- 22 Graduation Ceremony for Extended Day Students
- 23 Last Day of Classes - NO EXTENDED DAY
CLASS IN THE AFTERNOON
- 24-26 Staff Days – NO CLASSES
- 25 FAMILY PICNIC - Details to Follow

TUITION AND FEE INFORMATION

A Registration Fee of \$150.00 is required of all FIRST YEAR STUDENTS.

A Registration Fee of \$75.00 is required of all SECOND YEAR STUDENTS.

A Registration Fee of \$125.00 is required of all EXTENDED DAY STUDENTS. First Year EXTENDED DAY STUDENT registration fee: \$150.00

The fee, which accompanies the APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION is not refundable and is not part of the tuition rates for the Academic Year, September, 2005 to May, 2006.

Payments for Half Day and Extended Day Sessions

A. FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

- 1. Registration Fee.....\$ 150.00
- 2. Tuition..... \$2,985.00

B. SECOND AND THIRD YEAR STUDENTS

- 1. Registration Fee\$ 75.00
- 2. Tuition.....\$2,985.00

C. EXTENDED DAY STUDENTS

- 1. Registration Fee.....\$ 125.00
- 2. Tuition: First Year.....\$4,600.00
Second Year.....\$4,260.00
Third Year.....\$3,940.00

PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE ELIZABETH SETON MONTESSORI SCHOOL.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The following payment schedule has been adopted for the Academic Year 2005– 2006.

REGISTRATION FEES

First Year.	\$150.00
Second and Third Year.	\$ 75.00
Extended Day.	\$125.00

TRIMESTER PAYMENTS

<u>TUITION PAYMENT #1</u>	<u>Half Day</u>	<u>Extended Day</u>
Sept. 1 – Nov. 30, 2005		
PAYABLE JUNE 1, 2005	\$ 1045.00	\$1,380.00 – 3 rd yr.
\$1,491.00 – 2 nd yr.		\$1,608.00 – 1 st yr.

TUITION PAYMENT #2

Dec. 1, 2005 – Feb. 28, 2006		
PAYABLE SEPT. 1, 2005	\$ 1045.00	SAME AS PAYMENT #1

TUITION PAYMENT #3

March 1 – May 25, 2006		
PAYABLE DEC. 1, 2005	\$1045.00	SAME AS PAYMENT #1

MONTHLY PAYMENTS

Payable by the first of every		
Month- JUNE – FEBRUARY	\$ 350.00	\$ 460.00 – 3 rd yr. \$ 497.00 – 2 nd yr.
\$ 536.00 – 1 st yr.		