



AGBMS-AEHI

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Parent Handbook

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(847) 850-5490 (AGBMS)

(847) 850-5493 (Fax)

www.agbms.org



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This little child is the bright new hope for mankind. - Maria Montessori



VISION & MISSION

Alexander Graham Bell Montessori School is a classic Montessori school that follows both the method and the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori. In the spirit of Montessori education, all children are treated with dignity and respect. Care for ourselves, care for others and compassionate activism are the touchstones of belief at Alexander Graham Bell Montessori School.

In light of these held beliefs, our school strives to be the most sought after Montessori school that delivers exemplary education for children ages 6 weeks through 15 years, including those who are deaf and hard of hearing and those who have speech and language delays. We will do this by enabling children with a wide range of unique gifts and needs to reach their highest potential academically, socially, and emotionally, while also cultivating in them an appreciation for diversity and respect for the world in which they live; and by pioneering a nationally recognized program for successfully educating children who are deaf or hard of hearing and children with other special needs.

HISTORY & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Alexander Graham Bell Montessori School is a not-for-profit corporation, incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois on April 18, 2005. Prior to that time, AGBMS had been operated as a demonstration program of Alternatives in Education for the Hearing Impaired (AEHI), a separate Illinois not-for-profit corporation.

AEHI, and its cornerstone program, the Alexander Graham Bell Montessori School, were founded in 1986 by a group of dedicated educators and parents whose goal was to build a school where deaf and hearing children together could experience the very best Montessori education. This school is a model Montessori program, serving as an official observation site for Montessori training programs. Alexander Graham Bell Montessori School (AGBMS) has been an official observation site as well as research partner for major educational institutions such as Northwestern University, National Louis University, Northern Illinois University and Loyola University. Over the next 5 years we will provide observation, field experience, and student teaching opportunities to students in a wide range of colleges and universities as well as Montessori Training Schools.

AGBMS was “spun off” from AEHI in 2005 in order to allow it to be governed by its own Board of Directors, who would be committed to sustaining and growing the school, independent of the other goals and programs of AEHI. The CEO, Executive Director of the school oversees the teaching staff, enrollment, parent relations, and maintains the implementation of Montessori methodology and curriculum. A Parent Association supports the school through providing an avenue for building a sense of community amongst all stakeholders of the school.

The student population of the school is comprised of up to twenty-five percent deaf or hard of hearing children and seventy-five percent hearing students. The children who are deaf or hard of hearing are included in the general education program and curriculum. The staff includes teachers of the deaf and speech pathologists, who work with children who are deaf or hard of hearing in cooperation with the Montessori staff.



Aside from the Cued Speech program in the Montessori school, other AEHI programs include Cued Speech workshops for parents and teachers; training and supervision of Cued Speech transliterators who act as interpreters for Cued Speech users in mainstream situations; educational programs for audiologists, speech pathologists and pediatricians; and presentations at professional conventions.

CUED SPEECH

Cued Speech is a sound-based visual communication tool used to clarify lip reading and facilitate literacy for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. It consists of eight hand shapes in four locations (cues) near the mouth. When combined with the natural oral movements of speech, the person who is deaf or hard of hearing can see the same language sounds that hearing people hear. Cued Speech allows a child who cannot hear to learn English as their primary language, which, in turn, provides the necessary basis for learning to read and write with fluency. Cued Speech provides complete visual access to the spoken word and is therefore an appropriate tool whether a child's hearing loss is mild to moderate or profound. It can either complement what an aided child can hear, or completely replace the sound of the spoken word while retaining the precise structure, vocabulary, idiom and grammar. The teacher speaking to the child who is deaf or hard of hearing primarily uses Cued Speech. The children's expressive form of communication is intelligible speech, which they will need in order to be successfully mainstreamed in a hearing world. Because it is a visual complement to normal speech, rather than a separate and different mode of communication, it has also been found to be a useful supplement in developing phonemic awareness for children who have normal hearing but who may be visual rather than auditory learners.

DESCRIPTIONS OF AGBMS PROGRAMS

Bambini, Our Nest, The Garden

Ages 6 weeks - 3 years

Sign up for a full or half-day. These young children love the nurturing extension of home while attending "Bambini," "Our Nest", or "The Garden" program. Independence, self-confidence, building self-esteem, encouraging creativity and language are fostered through a dynamic Montessori Curriculum.

Children's House

Ages 3-6 years

Sign up for a full or half-day. Children love the manipulative materials and explore many varied activities. These range from table scrubbing to phonetic spelling and learning the decimal system.

Lower & Upper Elementary

Ages 6-12 years

Children collaborate and enjoy working in groups of mixed ages. They're given the freedom to discover new horizons. Traditional subjects are linked together and introduced with hands-on materials. Lower elementary students are more involved with concrete materials. Upper elementary students strengthen their understanding of abstract concepts.



THE BARE NECESSITIES

Bambini, Our Nest and The Garden: All children in these classrooms will need several items of clothing on a daily basis. Learning to dress and undress is a very big step in independence and it is something your child will be working on every day in this classroom. Toilet learning is another big part of our curriculum. After the first few weeks, all children will wear underpants when they are at school. We will go outside in all types of weather except when it is below 20 degrees (we may even go for a walk in the rain). We have lots of activities involving water and paint so your child may get wet or dirty during the course of the day.

- Clothing should be practical – your child should be able to put it on and take it off.
- Indoor Shoes – your child will need to keep a pair of indoor shoes at school that should say they are **non-marking (usually you will find this printed on the bottom of the shoe)**. Shoes should slip on or fasten with Velcro and permit graceful walking. Simple slippers are acceptable indoor shoes (**no large character or flip flop styles**).
- Outdoor Shoes – the child should wear shoes appropriate for the weather. These shoes should be good for walking, running and climbing and should say they are **non-marking (usually you will find this printed on the bottom of the shoe)**.
- Extra Clothing – each child should keep 3-5 extra outfits (bottoms, tops and socks appropriate for current weather conditions) at school at all times. Pants should have an elastic waist, no zippers or snaps and shirts should easily go over your child’s head and should not need to be fastened in the back.
- Underpants – multiple pairs of thick training underpants. If toilet learning is something new, send 10 pairs, they will be worn for a short amount of time which will be increased each day. During the first few days, children who have not used the toilet before may bring diapers while they are getting acquainted with the classroom and the teachers. If necessary, please send a package of diapers which we will store and notify you if we need more.
- **ALL CLOTHING must be CLEARLY LABELED with your CHILD’S NAME.**
- Rainy Day Attire – you may want to keep a pair of rain boots at school for adventures outside when the ground is wet and for working in the garden. When there is rain in the forecast, send your child to school with a slicker.
- Winter Attire – we will go outside unless it is below 20 degrees. Children will need hats, mittens, snow pants and **non-marking** snow boots (**usually you will find this printed on the bottom of the boot**).
- Full day children are provided with a blanket and low cot for nap time. We wash the blankets on a regular basis.
- Clothing will be sent home for washing. Please allow your child to carry his/her own bag.
- Each child will have a designated spot in our classroom to store extra clothing and indoor shoes.

Birthdays – When your child has a birthday we will celebrate as a class. We would encourage you to bring a special snack but **please not a sugary snack or one that contains peanuts or tree nuts**. Examples: fruit and dip, veggies and dip, crackers and cheese, fresh bread or muffins.



Sharing Basket – This is a great way for you and your child to help provide the classrooms with healthy snacks and replenish some of the consumable items needed for our classroom. It is an opportunity for you to interact with your child and gives your child the opportunity to contribute to his/her classroom community. We ask that you and your child shop together. Families will take turns; a reminder will be sent home when it is your turn, along with the list of things needed for that week.

Children's House: All children need to bring to school these very important basics:

- A complete change of clothes, including socks, **clearly labeled with your child's name**. Some of the materials we have involve water or the child may get wet outside. These clothes need to change with the season or as they grow. Their spare clothes will be kept in their bins.
- Sunscreen and bug spray for the warmer months.
- Coats, snow pants, scarves, boots that say they are **non-marking (usually you will find this printed on the bottom of the boot)**, and gloves **clearly labeled with your child's name** for the winter months. We go outside every day, unless it is raining or below 20 degrees.
- Nappers (3 and 4 year olds) need a fitted crib sheet, blanket, and a small pillow. A comfort object may be brought for naptime only. Sheets will be sent home weekly for washing.
- In winter, slippers (**no large character or flip flop styles**) that stay at school **clearly labeled with your child's name** and say they are **non-marking (usually you will find this printed on the bottom of the slipper)**.
- Proper shoes for playing out of doors that say they are **non-marking (usually you will find this printed on the bottom of the shoe)**.
- Proper clothes for the wear and tear of the school day.
- **No toys or expensive clothing.**
- Birthday celebrations are encouraged. Please choose a treat that **is not too sugary or one that contains peanuts or tree nuts**, e.g. muffins, fruits, vegetables (carrots with ranch dressing or celery). Also for birthday celebrations, please send in a picture of your child from every year of his life. (Example: newborn, 1-year-old, 2 years old, etc.)
- Please send containers for your child's lunch, which they can open. This promotes independence. We have a microwave and toaster oven to warm up lunch items. Please no cooking of an item – only warming.

Birthdays – When your child has a birthday we will celebrate as a class. We would encourage you to bring a special snack but **please not a sugary snack or one that contains peanuts or tree nuts**. Examples: fruit and dip, veggies and dip, crackers and cheese, fresh bread or muffins.

Sharing Basket – This is a great way for you and your child to help provide Children's House with healthy snacks and replenish some of the consumable items needed for our classroom. It is an opportunity for you to interact with your child and gives your child the opportunity to contribute to his/her classroom community. We ask that you and your child shop together. Families will take turns; a reminder will be sent home when it is your turn, along with the list of things needed for that week.



Elementary:

- Proper shoes for playing out of doors daily and gym class weekly.
- In winter, slippers (**no flip flop styles**) that stay at school **clearly labeled with your child's name**.
- Coats, snow pants, scarves, gloves, boots **clearly labeled with your child's name** for the winter months.
- Each child may bring a water bottle for his/her use **clearly labeled with your child's name**.
- Each child that brings his/her own lunch will have it stored in a large refrigerator. ***Each child may heat their lunch in the microwave for no more than one minute. Please no cooking of food.***
- Sunscreen and bug spray for the warmer months.
- **Please: No toys or video games.**
- Birthday celebrations are encouraged. (Please see the parent intro letter received at the beginning of the year.)
- Snack: your child may bring a fruit or vegetable for snack.

Birthdays – When your child has a birthday we will celebrate as a class. We would encourage you to bring a special snack but **please not a sugary snack or one that contains peanuts or tree nuts**. Examples: fruit and dip, veggies and dip, crackers and cheese, fresh bread or muffins.

Snacks - Elementary children should bring their own healthy snack. Elementary children who stay for after school care are provided with a healthy afternoon snack.

PARKING LOT INSTRUCTIONS

We all know that pick-up and drop-off is a very busy time. We are asking all of our families to abide by the following guidelines to make it easier on everyone!

- Please form a pick up line directly in front of the building. Stay to the right of the island even if you plan on parking. Leave the left lane open.
- **Cell phones are not allowed to be used in the school parking lot. Your full attention should be on driving safely in the parking lot. Keep in mind that recent laws have been passed that make it illegal to be on a cell phone or texting in school areas.**
- **Please stay in your car.** Wait for your turn at the front door and your child will be brought to the car by the teachers. Teachers can help a child fasten their seat belt if needed.
- When leaving, make the turn around and head out of the parking lot.
- If you feel it is necessary to escort your children into or out of school, please **park in a parking spot**, not the through lane. Do not leave cars parked or idling in the drop off lane. Guide your child by the hand to the doors. Do not let them run or stray from you in the parking lot.
- The teachers are **not** available to talk during pick up and drop off times. If you need to speak with your child's teacher, please make an appointment via email or leave a message in the office.

If you are not the person picking up your child, please pass this information along to them.



DROP OFF & PICK UP POLICY

Morning Drop Off:

Elementary and Children’s House drop off at the front door is from **8:30 to 8:45 a.m.** Children who are not part of the before school Care program are **not** to be brought to school before **8:30 a.m.**

Bambini, Our Nest and The Garden students should arrive between 8:35 and 8:45 a.m. Parents need to **park in a parking space** and bring their children to the classroom where they will sign them in.

Half Day Pick Up:

Our Nest half day students can be picked up from **11:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** Parents must come to the classroom where they will sign them out.

Children’s House students who attend half days will be picked up at **12:00 p.m.** at the front door.

Afternoon Pickup:

Children who are not enrolled in the after school Care program will be picked up from **3:15 to 3:30 p.m.** **Bambini, Our Nest and The Garden parents** must **park in a parking space** and come to the classroom where they will sign them out.

After School Care Pick Up:

Only those children enrolled in the Care program may stay for the after school Care program. If Care is needed on a specific day, please call the school office to make arrangements. Parents who are picking their children up from Care are to **park in a parking space, ring the doorbell** and a staff member will answer the door. Please remember to sign out your child(ren). Children should be picked up by 6:00 p.m. a fee will be charged \$1.00 per minute after 6:00 pm. This charge will be seen on your next statement. **All children must be picked up by 6:00 p.m. Late fees will apply.**

HEALTH & SAFETY

Immunizations & Health Records: All children must have updated medical records on file upon enrollment. Per the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the state of Illinois requires vaccination to protect children from a variety of diseases before they can enter school. Students must show proof of immunization against up to 12 vaccine-preventable diseases (the number and schedule of these vaccinations depend on a student's grade and age). Illinois' immunization requirements are aligned with recommendations by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices on adolescent vaccinations. For more information specific to each disease, including vaccination schedules, visit www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/immunization. Per the US Department of Education's **State Regulation of Private Schools**, in Illinois, students must present proof of immunizations against preventable communicable diseases as required by the Department of Public Health.



Illness: If a child becomes ill at school, displaying a fever or severe discomfort, the parents will be called to take the child home. Parents, or one of their designated emergency contacts, need to be at the school to pick up their child within one hour of the initial phone call. Parents also need to make sure that all phone numbers are current on the registration card so that someone can be reached quickly if their child becomes ill.

Fever, vomiting, or diarrhea: When a child is home with a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea, the child may not return to school for 24 hours **after the symptoms** subside. Examples: if a child has a fever, they need to be fever free **without medication** for 24 hours. If antibiotics have been prescribed, a child needs to be on them for 24 hours before returning to school. When a child is diagnosed with a contagious illness, the child may not return until the time so written by a doctor's note. The school must be notified of all contagious illness so that proper notification of the illness can be posted.

Illinois state law mandates that children can only be given prescription medication at school. When arriving at school with prescription medicine, the parent needs to fill out a Medical Consent Form. This form is given to their child's teacher or the office. The medication needs to be in the original container from the druggist, clearly marked with the child's name. The school may only give one dose per day at lunch time. **At no time, should medicine be placed in a child's lunch box.**

If a child is not well enough to go outside to play, that child should not be at school. All children will go outside if the class is going outside. Weather permitting; all children go outside to play every day.

Accidents/Incidents: While AGBMS' first commitment is to the safety and well-being of the children, accidents do happen. When your child is hurt a determination is made regarding the seriousness of the accident. If the accident is deemed serious, parents will be called immediately. All injuries to the head, regardless of severity, will warrant a phone call to parents.

If the incident is deemed to be of a non-serious nature, first aid will be administered. Attending staff will fill out an incident report. This report tells parents how the incident happened and what help was given to the child. The parent reads this report, signs it, and returns it to the staff member.

Emergency Treatment: Every child enrolled at Alexander Graham Bell Montessori School shall have an emergency card on file. This card is signed by the parent and gives staff authorization to seek medical care for a child if necessary.

If a child receives an injury that requires immediate medical treatment, one staff member will remain with the child while another staff member will call 9-1-1 immediately. This staff member will also obtain the child's Emergency Card and hand it to the staff that is treating the injured child. One staff member and the Emergency Contact Card will remain with the injured child at all times. After reaching 9-1-1, staff will then call the parents or the emergency contacts until one of them is reached to let them know what happened.

Once the EMT's arrive at the school and a determination is made that the child needs to go to the hospital, one staff member will accompany the child to the hospital. This staff member will take along the Emergency Card, which allows the staff person to sign on behalf of the parents all forms which are required to obtain treatment. The staff at the hospital may make a photocopy of this card for their



files. The card gives the hospital the following information: Doctor, Hospital, Insurance information, and parent's names and emergency numbers. At the same time, staff at the school will again call the parents to let them know to which hospital their child is being taken.

Once the parents arrive at the hospital and are given an update on their child, the staff person will be allowed to return to school.

FIELD TRIPS

Notification of all field trips will be given to parents in a timely manner. Parents will sign the permission slip and return it to the school. Transportation by a bus with seat belts is arranged for all field trips. A ratio of five children to one adult is used for field trips for students in Children's House. A ratio of ten children to one adult is used for field trips for students in the Elementary. Some of the adults may be parent volunteers acting as chaperones. In this case, clear instructions on safety for the children and a clear description of the field trip will be given to the chaperones. Field trips are planned with the comfort and safety of the children being the first and most important factors of the trip.

FIRE DRILLS, BAD STORMS & SECURITY

This school is equipped with clearly marked exits, emergency lighting, fire doors, and a sprinkler system. Regular fire drills are held so that the children and staff know what to do in the case of fire. The school is checked yearly by both the state and village fire marshals.

Since Illinois is in the Tornado Belt, tornado drills are practiced each fall and spring. If weather becomes inclement, the office listens to the radio for alerts. If there is a tornado warning or the tornado sirens have been heard, the children are asked to move into the safe rooms in the building.

The building is kept locked except during children's arrival and dismissal times. Children are allowed to leave only with the people designated in writing by their parents, either on the registration card, or in a letter to the teacher. People unknown to the staff will be asked to show proper identification. Visitors will be asked to register in the office before entering the building.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

During periods of bad weather, on occasion the school has had to close. We will close for bad weather or a power outage for a long period of time at the school. If the weather is bad overnight, please listen to WGN, or WBBM radio, or watch channel 2, 5, 7, 9, FOX, look for an email from the executive director or check the EEC website at www.emergencyclosings.com to see if the school will be closed. The decision to close is usually made **before 6:00 a.m.**

If the weather becomes bad or the school has lost power after school has started, each parent will be called to let them know we will be closing early. If it is difficult for you to arrive back at the school within an hour, we ask that you contact one of your emergency contacts to pick up your child.



PRIVACY & DIGNITY POLICY

All children at Alexander Graham Bell Montessori School (AGBMS) are treated with dignity and respect, whether on the playground or in the classroom. A Montessori tenant is the realization that the child is a person with all the rights of a person. Adults in a Montessori environment show the child courtesy and self-respect and allow him to move freely through the classroom developing his own personality.

Diapering/Toileting Learning Policy: Toilet learning is a big step in independence and is part of the curriculum in Our Nest and The Garden. Children gain voluntary control of their bladder and bowels about the time of their first birthday, at which point they need to learn how to use them. To help children develop a sense of awareness of these functions, they will wear thick cotton underpants at school (even if they arrive in diapers). The staff will assist with diaper and clothes changes as needed always working towards independence. Teachers will model how to put on and take off diapers, underpants and pants, guiding the children through the process with verbal commands and physically helping only with the parts the child cannot do himself. The teachers will also remind children to utilize the toilet at different intervals in the day, based on each child's patterns.

The bathroom in Our Nest and The Garden is equipped with wipes, disposable gloves for the adult, bags to place soiled clothing in, and a diaper pail. With the child standing, the soiled diaper/underpants will be removed by the teacher with the aid of the child (working towards independence so that the child removes it himself as he is ready). The child will be asked to clean himself with the wipes and the teacher will assist as needed. Through modeling and verbalization, the teacher will help the child put on clean underpants. Early on in toilet learning, the children wear their underpants without pants during the work period thereby heightening their awareness and easing the process.

When children wet or soil themselves during the day, teachers show them how to clean up after themselves, using cloth diapers to clean up any urine on the floor. (The adult sanitizes the area afterwards.) These cloths are placed in a designated laundry basket in the bathroom. Children then change into their clean clothes. The adult provides the child with a clean plastic bag for dirty clothing. If a child cannot clean his body sufficiently, an adult, wearing rubber gloves, assists in the bathroom. The door of the bathroom remains open at all times. The bag is placed in the child's cubby and is sent home that day.

All families are encouraged to keep at least one change of clothing at the school at all times. (Bambini, Our Nest and The Garden families need multiple changes of clothing.) If a child has wet or soiled clothing and no extra change of clothes is available, clean clothing is borrowed from the classroom supply of extra clothing or from another child of comparable size. The bag with soiled clothing is sent home and a new change of clothes should be brought in the next day.

DISCIPLINE & INDEPENDENCE

Discipline must come through liberty...We do not consider an individual disciplined only when he has been rendered as artificially silent as a mute and as immovable as a paralytic. He is an individual annihilated, not disciplined. – Maria Montessori



In the Montessori school, discipline and independence go hand in hand. Classrooms are designed to encourage movement and activity. It is the goal of the Montessori educator to guide the children to find their own inner discipline, their own independence. The role of the directress is that of role model, mentor and observer. All discipline is based in positive direction so children are shown how to do things rather than told not to. The goal of the directress is to allow the children more and more independence as they demonstrate more and more discipline. To achieve this end, we have one golden rule in our school and that is respect. Children must show respect to all the people and items when they are under our care.

Discipline in Our Nest and Children’s House: Children are aided in their development of self-discipline and independence. When one is disrespectful to someone or something, the directress first explains the respectful way to approach the given situation. Next, the child is redirected. This simply means that the child is introduced to a new activity. Much of our “discipline” ends here. If redirection does not work, then the child is kept within an arm’s reach of the directress. This keeps the child in the area of influence of the directress. On the rare occasion that the child is still not settled, he/she is removed from the group for a few minutes and given the opportunity to calm down, to settle himself. This removal time usually lasts for only a few minutes. When the child says that he is ready to return to the group, or to his work, he is allowed to return. Positive reinforcement is used in all three steps of discipline. There is never blame or punishment. Children are encouraged to grow in their ability to achieve inner discipline and independence of spirit while learning to care for others.

Discipline in Elementary: While the golden rule remains the same for the Elementary class, the students develop their own set of Ground Rules each year. They may elaborate on this to include: walk with slow feet, clean up after yourself at lunch time or be kind to the animals by touching them carefully, feeding them daily and cleaning their cages. At the beginning of the year, the ground rules are discussed, written out, signed by each student and teacher, and posted in the classroom.

The steps used in maintaining these ground rules are different than in the Children’s House since the Elementary children are on a different plane of development. In the Elementary class, the children are empowered to work out their differences through discussion, negotiation, and through peer mentoring. While an adult may ask to be present, or may be asked by the children to be present while difficulties are being worked out, it is the children who are given the responsibility to resolve differences.

The three steps for resolving conflicts are as follows:

- Ask the person to stop the behavior that is bothering you.
- If the person stops, simply say, “Thank you.”
- If the bothersome behavior has not stopped, ask an adult to assist you.** At this point, an adult will simply listen to the students’ discussion until the problem is worked out. Usually having an adult know that a ground rule has been broken will be enough impetus to correct the behavior.

*** If one student is too angry to discuss the problem right away, time is given to the child to cool down and collect themselves. Once they are ready to discuss the matter, then the above steps are tried again. If the problem persists, the adult will give ideas to help guide the students to a solution that is acceptable to both of them.*



If a child is being disruptive during class time, and does not respond to positive direction, then the directress may choose to give the student time away from the group – usually in the office or other quiet area. This isolation lasts until the student is ready to return to the group. Again, blame and punishment are not part of the steps to inner discipline and independence in the Elementary program.

Courteous, kind behavior is the foundation of the elementary relationships. If a child continues to be discourteous, uses inappropriate language, or hurts another child, then a note will go home to the parent to let them know of the circumstances. The elementary directresses take a team approach to correcting behaviors for the students in their charge and appreciate parents helping in these instances.

The Montessori environment focuses on natural consequences and redirection when inappropriate behavior occurs. However, in the event that a child's behavior should become physical against another child, the following policy will be enacted:

First offense: The child who has misbehaved will write a letter of apology to the other child and both sets of parents. The child will discuss with their classroom directress about the events leading up to the offense, why the action was inappropriate, and how to avoid it in the future.

Second offense: Parents of the offending child will be called into school for a conference with the child's directress, the child, and the executive director. Possible reasons for the child's behavior will be discussed and preventive measures will be agreed upon and put in place at school. The child will provide an act of service to the school as a consequence. This act of service will be agreed upon between the teacher, parents, and principal and will take place during recess for three days following the incident.

Third offense: Parents will be called to pick up the child immediately, with a three-day suspension from school to follow. Tuition will not be credited for missed days. Depending on the severity of the offense and the likelihood that effective measures can be put into place to avoid any future such incidents, the child may or may not be allowed to return to school.

Due to the age of the students in Children's House and the fact that they are still learning right from wrong, any inappropriate behavior at that level will be addressed on an individual basis at the discretion of the teachers.

EXIT POLICY

A **child** may be dismissed from the school for the following reasons:

- The child displays a pattern of unprovoked violence toward him/herself or others in the school, or threatens such behavior, in written or spoken form.
- The child displays a pattern of disruptive and/or disrespectful behavior towards others in the school.
- The child does not demonstrate growth in any academic area over the course of the academic year.



The **parents or guardians** of the child may cause the child to be dismissed for these reasons:

- Displaying a pattern of disruptive and/or disrespectful behavior toward others in the school.
- Nonpayment of tuition after the 10th of the month, or as worked out with the school administrator when necessary.
- Chronic late pick-up of children
- Noncompliance with the health and safety rules of the school.
- Chronic noncompliance with the request to attend parent conferences, observations of their child in the classroom, or parent education meetings.

RELEASE OF CHILD INFORMATION

Alexander Graham Bell Montessori School believes in the privacy of each child and their family. With that in mind, AGBMS will not release any information regarding the child's health or immunization records, cumulative academic record, or any other testing information that may be on record unless we have a signed release by the parent or guardian.

A copy of the release will be kept on file at AGBMS which states the Agency name and address of where the records are to be sent, along with the date they were sent. The records will be sent by Certified Mail to the agency listed and documentation will be retained showing that the file (s) has been sent.

AGBMS reserves the right to keep a copy of each child's test scores which shall be used for acquiring information for Case Studies on our program or keeping statistics to validate the success of our program. The school also will keep on file any private information that was gathered solely for teachers at AGBMS.

PRIVACY OF CHILD INFORMATION POLICY

The teachers at Alexander Graham Bell Montessori School are not at liberty to discuss a child's background and record with anyone besides that child's parents. We realize that parents ask questions with the best intentions or out of curiosity. However, in consideration of the children and their families, parents must respect the privacy and confidentiality of all students.

In the event that a concern arises about a particular student, a parent's first course of action is to discuss this with the child's teacher. Keep in mind that the staff works very diligently behind the scenes to rectify problems. The teacher may refer the parent to the administrator if necessary.

PARENT COMMUNICATIONS

Parents will be kept informed of programs and events happening at the school primarily through the school newsletter and emails. Additional notices will be sent out as needed. At the beginning of the school year each family will be provided the link to our website to access the parent handbook; parents may receive an updated copy of the parent handbook if requested. This handbook will contain school policies and procedures such as drop-off and pick-up, sick children, discipline, fundraising, etc.



Throughout the year teachers will prepare at least two parent nights to educate the parents about Montessori methods and philosophy as well as child growth and development. In addition, parent teacher conferences will be held in November and May. At this point teachers will share written progress reports about each child with the parents.

Each family will provide the school with contact phone numbers, including additional family members or friends who can be called in the event of an emergency. Families will also provide an active email address to teachers as an additional means of communication. Families will be provided with the email addresses of all staff members as well. Parents will be contacted immediately in the event their child becomes sick or suffers any type of injury to the head, even a minor one. In the event a parent cannot be reached, attempts will be made to contact those on the emergency contact list. Incident reports will be filled out by the teacher in the event of any accident and signed by the parent upon pick-up of the child.

PARENT REFERRAL PROGRAM

The AGBMS Parent Referral Program provides additional incentives for our currently enrolled families to participate in the growth of our school by referring new families to our school. New families will be asked to fill out a New Student Referral Form naming the current family that recommended AGBMS. The referring family will receive a tuition credit equal to one month's tuition. Half of this credit will be applied the month the new family starts, the other half will be applied at the end of the school year as long as both families are still attending. The new family must pay the \$100 non-refundable application fee and the \$500 non-refundable tuition deposit in order for the credit to be applied to the referring family.

AGBMS PARENT ASSOCIATION

The mission of the Parent Association is: To build and encourage a united, supportive parent community that reflects the diversity of our student community and to provide a network of communication support between AGBMS-AEHI parents, guardians, school faculty and administration. Together, we are committed to supporting AGBMS-AEHI philosophy of educating students with historical, scientific, artistic, and global perspective, enabling our children to think and act with integrity.

Parent Association Goals are to:

- provide opportunities to socially enrich the lives of the children;
- listen and provide open communication avenues between families and AGBMS-AEHI;
- provide networking and community building opportunities for parents through various Parent Association forums, groups, and activities; and,
- offer volunteer opportunities that acknowledge parents' talents, energy and time.

LIFETIME MEMBERS

It is the policy of Alexander Graham Bell Montessori School to recognize those families who have made a commitment to our program by enrolling their child in both Children's House and Elementary



through age 12 years. Those families will be called Lifetime Members and will receive the standard sibling discount for any subsequent children who attend AGBMS even though the older child has graduated from the program. This benefit will apply even if only one child is here at the school.

FUNDRAISING EXPECTATIONS

It is expected that each family at Alexander Graham Bell Montessori School participates in raising funds for our school. It is expected that each family donate or fundraise \$500 **ANNUALLY** to further help cover the cost of their child(ren)'s education. Opportunities to raise funds can come from the annual Gala and the associated ad opportunities. Contributions can also be made in the form of donated time and skills. AGBMS is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and any contribution is fully tax-deductible.

SMOKE & GUNS FREE ENVIRONMENT

Alexander Graham Bell Montessori School is a smoke-free environment. Smoking and the use of tobacco are prohibited in the building and on the property. This includes chewing, smoking, or holding smoking material, lit or unlit. Look-alike tobacco products, including herbal cigarettes are prohibited.

Illinois passed a concealed carry law, approved in 2013 in response to a federal court order. House Bill 0183 mandated that **guns are not allowed in schools**, churches, government agencies, and liquor stores—and that those places must post 4-by-6-inch stickers of the “no guns allowed” symbol to remind conceal carry permit-holders of that fact.



BAMBINI, OUR NEST & THE GARDEN: DAILY SCHEDULE & ROUTINE PLANNING

Bambini, Our Nest and The Garden are full day classrooms operating between 8:45 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. and the option of half day is 8:45 - 12:00, for children 6 weeks to 36 months with the option for before school CARE from 7:30 - 8:45 and/or after school CARE from 3:15 - 6:00 p.m.

8:30-8:45: Arrival Time- The children arrive, morning readiness encouraging independent practical skills (change shoes, coats off and put away, toileting) saying goodbye to parents, enter the classroom and greet their teacher and friends. Also, children help prepare snack for the classroom and they serve and eat together as a community. Cereal, fruit or yogurt are common snacks available to the children brought by the families in a weekly “sharing basket.”

8:45-10:30: Work Period- Child-directed work cycle designed to help the child become familiar with surroundings and a deeper awareness of self. Children are free to choose activities from the prepared environment. During this period the child is introduced to everyday activities that promote self-esteem, independence while helping to establish community. Lessons are presented to individuals or small groups. The work period includes social skills, toileting, language development, snack prep, care of self, care for the environment and clean up.

10:30-10:45: Line Time- Morning songs, a few finger plays, reviews of the calendar and news time, and the special helper is chosen for the day. The special helper will help to set up the table for lunch. If any group presentations are required that day, they are presented at this line time, such as when there are new Practical Life or art activities on the shelves.

10:45-11:20: Outside time/Gross Motor Activities (If weather permits and the temperature is 20+ degrees including wind chill) children have the opportunity to stretch, flex, and exercise on the various types of age-appropriate play equipment that we have to offer as well as take nature walks and care for the outside environment. During inclement weather, gross motor activities will be available in the gym or in the classroom such as dancing to music, use of the collapsible tunnel, balance beam, balls, tricycles and riding toys.

11:15-11:30: Transition for Lunch Children come in from outside, remove shoes, coats, hats, etc. and wash hands to prepare for lunch.

11:30-12:00: Lunch Time – Children to a healthy lunch catered by Organiclife and a serving of whole organic milk. The children sit in a chair, drink from a glass and use a spoon, fork and knife. Eventually these children learn to serve and pass food around the table and to use “please and thank you.” Eating lunch is the perfect opportunity to reinforce the importance of grace, courtesy and good manners in the Montessori preschool classroom.....it is such a special time of day!

12:00- Dismissal - Half Day Children go home

11:50-12:30: Transition to Nap- The children put away their dishes, wipe their faces and hands and use the bathroom and lay down on their cots.

12:30-2:30 Nap/Quiet Time- Children sleep or rest on their cots.

2:30-3:10 Transition from Sleep to Wakefulness- As children wake they go to the bathroom, have a snack, and get ready to go home or after school care.



THE CHILDREN’S HOUSE DAILY SCHEDULE

8:30 - 8:45 Arrival time- Line Time The whole class comes together for songs and games. Children build language skills and self-esteem by sharing “news” with the group. Social skills are enhanced through this communal experience. New Montessori work is introduced during this time. (This line can be optional depending on the teacher). Birthdays are also celebrated during this time.

8:45 – 11:00 The Work Period Children are free to choose their own activities in any area of the classroom (Practical Life, Language, Math, Science, Geography, Art, Library, Snack) and to work individually or in small groups. The teachers present Montessori Materials based on each child’s individual readiness and interests. Work time is the core of the academic program.

11:00 – 11:30 Clean-Up and Line Time The children are proud to be able to help care for and maintain the classroom environment. This second Line Time is shorter and used primarily as a transition.

11:30 – 12:00 Outdoor Free Play Allows the children the space and freedom to explore the outdoor environment in safe ways. It gives them an opportunity to develop gross motor abilities, to problem solve, and allows them to interact with others in an unstructured situation.

Half-Day Children Go Home

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch and Clean up Table setting and hand washing. A pleasant part of the day in which the children can unwind and socialize. Grace and courtesy are encouraged. After lunch children clean up their own spots and wash their plates.

1:00 – 1:30 Extended Day - Quiet Reading and Story After the children have had the opportunity to look at books of their choice on their mat the adult will read a story to the entire group. **1:30 – 3:00** The extended day allows for increased breadth and depth in the children’s exploration of the curriculum. The more advanced Montessori Materials are presented throughout the year, and the extended day children are encouraged to work with these after being shown how. More emphasis is placed on the recording of learned information, so children spend lots of time writing and lengthy works. (On Friday’s extended day children will have gym from 2-3)

1:00 – 3:00 Nap Time for the 3 and young 4 year olds.

3:00-3:15 Clean-Up and School Dismissal



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ELEMENTARY

Elementary begins at 8:45 a.m. If children are late for school, they miss out on greeting their classmates and any daily announcements. This experience is very important for the children, as it is the time they have to share their news with the group, as well as hear any important news of the upcoming school day. School starts at promptly at 8:45. When the students arrive, they take down chairs, take out their recording notebooks, and begin working. Each student has a specific job that must be done each day. It is the student's responsibility to remember to complete their job. The job schedule will rotate on a weekly basis. We work in the morning from 8:45 until 11:45. Because the children are working hard during the day, homework is not assigned. The Montessori philosophy is based on the idea of mastery. Once a student has demonstrated mastery of a concept, the next, more advanced concept is introduced. This eliminates the need for busy work. Also, because children move ahead as quickly or as slowly as they need to, a student can stay with a concept as long or as short a time as necessary. This individual work time may mean that the children are working on their own, or being presented work by the directress, or working in a small group. The ability to make choices and achieve the set goals within the time limit is a learned skill. This ability to make choices and follow through helps children reach the self-discipline and independence necessary for future accomplishments.

After individual work time, the Elementary class comes together to prepare for lunch by cleaning and setting the tables. This also is a time for compliments, sharing achievements from their work of the morning session or discussing the afternoon activities. We then go out for break from 12-12:30. We eat lunch from 12:30 to 1:00. Hand washing, good table manners, and proper conversation are part of the lunchtime experience. After lunch they silent read for twenty minutes before group presentations in science, geography, or history, or the children may carry on with work begun in the morning class. We devote at least twenty minutes at the end of each day to a group read aloud. Twice a week is devoted to a hour gym class.

The Elementary class ends at 3:15 p.m. The children are responsible for checking their mailboxes before they leave for the day. A more detailed description of the workings of the elementary classroom is given out during the first week of school.



SPECIAL CLASSES AT AGBMS

Music: The class for 3 – 5 year olds builds a foundation of experiences that facilitates self-expression and creativity for preschool children through rhythms, songs, and movements. It also draws on creative repetition and progressive, skill-developing activities to facilitate cognitive learning and children’s ability to anticipate and master classroom activities.

The elementary class harnesses the power of music to advance literacy for students. The children learn the rhythm of words through music and build vocabulary through creative repetition. This class employs multiple senses in reading activities, making the curriculum effective for all children regardless of their learning style – visual, auditory, or kinesthetic. Children learn the mechanics of music through playing instruments, reading notes, or creating their own music. Emphasis is placed on music appreciation as well as skill acquisition.

Art: The Teacher’s introduce art activities in the Children’s House on a regular basis and incorporate these activities into the morning work time.

The elementary students have art integrated into their curriculum. They introduced to a variety of art concepts – using the correct vocabulary that goes with each activity. During each art class, the children are presented with a project and concept. The children work on this project throughout the week. She also works on and has the children help her create the sets for our plays.

Spanish: During our foreign language instruction we focus on using the immersion methodology. Our native Spanish-speaking Director encourages the children to speak Spanish through participation. We believe that this develops a solid foundation for learning the language. The curricula will include songs, stories, and cooking typical Hispanic food, and we will use Montessori Materials as well.



NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENTS

Child Care Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with state family child care licensing regulations, child care services are available without discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, disability, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry.

Disability Non-Discrimination Statement

Reasonable accommodation will be provided for qualified children with disabilities upon request, as specified under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Americans with Disabilities Act discrimination issues should be referred to: OFFICE ON THE ADA CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION, US DEPT OF JUSTICE, PO BOX 66738, WASHINGTON DC 20035- 9998, (202) 514-0301.

Food Program Non-Discrimination Statement

The U.S Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).