



FAMILY HANDBOOK

2009 - 2010

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SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION

The mission of Ruffing Montessori School is to employ the philosophy and methods of Dr. Maria Montessori to educate young people to their fullest potential, instilling a deep sense of personal independence and social responsibility. With the knowledge that they are citizens of the world, they will contribute to that world by making decisions based on the highest order of ethics and conscience.

Ruffing Montessori School prohibits discrimination in employment, educational programs and activities on the basis of race, national origin, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or associated preference.

In 2005, Ruffing earned accreditation from ISACS (Independent School Association of the Central States), a voluntary membership association of 230 independent schools from 13 states in the Midwest region. Ruffing is also an active member of CCIS (Cleveland Council of Independent Schools) and OAIS (Ohio Association of Independent Schools), organizations that support and advance independent education locally and state wide by providing professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, and services to families enrolled in or considering independent schools for their children.

WELCOME

Ruffing Montessori School of Cleveland Heights is an independent school with the distinction of being the second Montessori school established in the United States. Founded in 1959 with rented facilities in a church basement, Ruffing has grown to be one of the largest Montessori schools in the greater Cleveland area with more than 300 students from age 18 months through 14 years. Ruffing operates as a non-profit school with a board of trustees consisting of parents and non-parent community members.

In 1907, Dr. Maria Montessori initiated the first expression of her unique method of education, the *Casa dei Bambini* or Children's House, designed for children ages 3 to 6. Since then, her educational philosophy and method have been extended in both directions, to both younger and older children, each with its own specifically designed environment (including mixed age groupings) and curriculum.

The Montessori philosophy is based on the belief that children are inherently good and have an innate desire to learn. By providing an environment that meets the needs of the whole child, students joyfully and naturally involve themselves in their own education.

Education is not something a teacher does, but is a natural process, which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words, but by virtue of experiences in which the child acts on his environment... We must offer the child the help he needs and be at his service so that he does not have to walk alone.

Maria Montessori

Ruffing offers a carefully prepared environment, rich in learning materials and experiences. Students are grouped in mixed-age classes that allow them to interact with each other on a variety of levels. The teacher acts as a facilitator in the learning process. Through careful observation and guidance, children are directed toward meaningful activity. They learn to work independently, building concentration and self-discipline while developing their own interests and abilities.

Ruffing's Toddler Community serves children age 18 months to 3 years. Toddlers attend either 4 or 5 half-days or full days. The Children's House requires that children reach age 3 by September 30 and toilet trained. Children who are 3 or 4 attend school daily from 8:30 am until 11:45 am, whereas the 5 year olds, or Extended Day children, stay from 8:30 am to 3:15 pm, with extended hours available from 7:45 to 8:30 am and 3:15 to 6 pm. The elementary program, which builds upon the foundations of the Children's House experience, consists of the Lower Elementary - grades 1st, 2nd and 3rd (ages 6 to 9), Upper Elementary - grades 4th, 5th and 6th (ages 9 to 12) and Middle School - grades 7th and 8th (ages 12 to 14).

Ruffing's students come from nearly 20 northeast Ohio communities, including Beachwood, Bedford, Broadview Heights, Chagrin Falls, Cleveland, Cleveland Heights, East Cleveland, Euclid, Mayfield Heights, Novelty, Orange, Richmond Heights, Shaker Heights, Solon, South Euclid, Willoughby Hills and Willowick.

SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

Ruffing Montessori School
3380 Fairmount Blvd.
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118
216-321-7571 PH
216-321-7568 FX
www.ruffingmontessori.net

Administrative Staff

**office hours: 8 am – 4 pm

Head of School	Gordon Maas	ext. 304	gordonm@ruffingmontessori.net
Director of Admissions	Julie Haffke	ext. 305	julieh@ruffingmontessori.net
Office Administrator	Karen Hahn	ext. 300	karenh@ruffingmontessori.net
Director of Finance & Operations	Debra Mitchell	ext. 303	debram@ruffingmontessori.net
Business Administrator	Sue Pacini	ext. 301	suep@ruffingmontessori.net
Director of Development	Carol Provan	ext. 330	carolp@ruffingmontessori.net
Director of AHA! and Summer Ruffing	Julia Sheehan	ext. 310	julias@ruffingmontessori.net

Whom do I call if I have a question about . . .

- Article Submissions for *Ruffing Today* & *Little Ruffing Today* Karen Hahn
- Academic Calendar Karen Hahn
- Academic Programs Gordon Maas
- Academic Transcripts Julie Haffke
- After School Programs (AHA!) Julia Sheehan
- Alumni Affairs Carol Provan
- Annual Giving Carol Provan
- Building and Grounds Debra Mitchell
- Change in your child's routine Karen Hahn
- Curriculum Gordon Maas
- Donations Carol Provan
- Enrollment applications Julie Haffke
- Financial Aid Debra Mitchell
- Operations/Safety/Security Debra Mitchell
- Publicity & Marketing Carol Provan
- Re-enrollment Julie Haffke
- Reporting an absence or illness Karen Hahn
- Scheduling a classroom observation Julie Haffke
- School forms Karen Hahn
- School policies and procedures Gordon Maas
- Summer Ruffing It Julia Sheehan
- Tuition Payment and billing Sue Pacini
- Using the facility for a class event Debra Mitchell
- Volunteering Parent Association or your child's class parent
- Website Carol Provan

Technology Coordinator:

Lauren Pacini ext. 341 lauren@ruffingmontessori.net

FACULTY & STAFF ROSTER 2009-2010

Administration:

Head of School	Gordon Maas	gordonm@ruffingmontessori.net
Director of Admissions	Julie Haffke	julieh@ruffingmontessori.net
Office Administrator	Karen Hahn	karenh@ruffingmontessori.net
Director of Finance & Operations	Deb Mitchell	debram@ruffingmontessori.net
Business Administrator	Sue Pacini	suep@ruffingmontessori.net
Director of Development	Carol Provan	carolp@ruffingmontessori.net
Development Assistant	Susan Olsen	susano@ruffingmontessori.net

Toddler Community

Directress	Stacey Wilker	staceyw@ruffingmontessori.net
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Children's House

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Directress	Bridget Rotman	bridgetr@ruffingmontessori.net
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All Day Children's House

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Lower Elementary

Directress	Susan Gray	susang@ruffingmontessori.net
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Director
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Co-Directors

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Middle School

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Spanish (1 – 6)

Spanish (Children's House)

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Latin

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Technology

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AHA!

After Hours Activities

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Siesta Program

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Stephanie Long
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After School Care

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Summer Ruffing It!

Julia Sheehan

julias@ruffingmontessori.net

Custodian

George Porter

COMMUNICATIONS

The Ruffing communications network (fliers, newsletters, posters, family directory, email, Website, telephone, etc.) is used to communicate school-related business only and may not be used to solicit, sell or otherwise promote non-Ruffing matters, causes or organizations to Ruffing families.

Newsletter

Ruffing Today, distributed by email on the third Thursday of the month, includes a two-week calendar of events, timely announcements, and news about the school. As part of our “green” policy, we make a conscious effort to reduce paper distribution whenever possible, and email this to all of our families who have provided us with an email address. Families without email addresses, or those who are unable to access the internet, are to call the office to arrange for a delivered copy. *Little Ruffing Today* is published on the first Thursday of the month, and includes Parent Directory updates and time-sensitive notices. This publication is delivered via “kiddie express” to the youngest or only child in the school.

Telephone

The classroom telephones are reserved for emergencies, not for social arrangements (e.g. permission to bring a friend home). All after-school arrangements should be completed **prior** to children’s arrival at school, and shall include written permission from the parent to the teacher. If an urgent need arises, children must obtain permission to use the phone. When necessary, messages to children may be transmitted through the office.

School Closing

Each family will be informed via InfoXChange, an automated voice broadcast service when the school closes for weather reasons or last minute emergency or facility problems. The school’s outgoing phone message will also have closing information. Ruffing closes automatically when Cleveland Heights or Shaker Heights closes because of the number of Ruffing children who rely on buses from these districts, but may also close when those schools are open if circumstances warrant it.

Conference Days

Communication is essential so that parents and teachers may work together for each child’s progress. Formal conference days are scheduled twice each year, in the fall and spring, for Children’s House and elementary students (see school calendar and note that school is closed on these days). Both parents, without children, are expected to attend these conferences. Middle School conferences are scheduled three times per year. **MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED AT TWO; THE THIRD CONFERENCE IS SCHEDULED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE FAMILY OR TEACHERS.** At all levels the conference will include both a verbal and a written account of the child’s academic and social progress.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Attendance

Students are expected to attend school and arrive on time daily. Excused absences include illness, emergency medical or dental appointments and religious holidays. Ruffing Montessori School considers class attendance of critical importance and does not accept the responsibility for offering special help for unexcused absences. If a child will not be in school, or will arrive late because of an appointment, please call the office before 8:30 am (216-321-7571). Middle School parents, please call 216-321-1654.

If a student must leave school early, please send a note to the teacher. The teacher will inform the office, and at the appointed time, the parent is to come to the office to “sign out” the child. The office will inform the classroom teacher that the parent has arrived, and the parent may proceed to the classroom to pick up the child. Children returning to school mid-day must likewise be “signed in.”

Keeping appointments and being punctual are traits to reinforce. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that students arrive at school between 8:15 and 8:30 am. Late arrivals will be marked tardy. If a student arrives at school after the doors have been locked, he or she is considered tardy, and must “sign in” in the school office before proceeding to the classroom.

Excused or unexcused absences in excess of 15 days will result in a mandatory meeting with the teacher and Head of School. It is of concern that the student may not be able to maintain the academic requirements necessary for moving from grade to grade and level to level, e.g., Upper Elementary to Middle School.

Cell Phone Use

Students may bring cell phones to school, but must turn them off and keep them in their lockers. Students are not permitted to use them to phone or text during the day, and if found doing so, the phone will be taken and secured in the school office. Any subsequent violations of this policy will result in prohibiting having a cell phone on campus.

Computer/Internet Use

Computers are used in many exciting ways to enrich the curriculum in the Upper Elementary and Middle School, and in some After Hours Activities. In addition to applications such as keyboarding, word processing, database, spreadsheet, and the use of electronic encyclopedias, and other academic software, students may be exploring global learning opportunities available on the worldwide web. These opportunities might include the use of e-mail.

Teachers closely monitor student computer use in class, and Internet use will be clearly focused on classroom work. Even so, students and parents need to understand the level of responsibility that computer and Internet use in an educational setting requires. This tremendous communication resource offers us connections all over the world. Accordingly, each student is expected to use this technology wisely. In order to clearly define our expectations and to present clear consequences in the event of a problem, both students and parents are asked to:

- Read the *Technology Acceptable Use Agreement* (sent with the August mailing);
- Discuss the stated expectations;
- Indicate your understanding and acceptance through your signature; and
- **Sign and return the agreement to the appropriate classroom teacher as soon as possible after school begins.**

Only upon receipt of the properly signed *Computer Use Agreement* will the use of computers, email and other tools by your student be allowed for this academic year.

Gym Participation

All children participate in physical education classes. If a child has a specific limiting restriction, please inform the physical education teacher in writing, so that the program can be modified for the child. Be as specific as possible about the limitation, and the time frame for restrictions from activities.

Arrival and Dismissal

Entrance procedures:

Only the Upper School (Upper El and Middle School) and Lower School (Toddler, Children's House, Lower El) entrances are to be used when children arrive each morning. These doors will be unlocked and monitored between 8 and 8:30 am. At 8:30 am, the doors will be relocked, securing the building for the school day. If your child arrives after 8:30 am, you will need to report to the office through the administrative entrance to sign in and then your child may proceed to his/her classroom. Students may not enter the building before 7:45 am.

Families enrolled in Before School Care or After School Care or the All Day Children's House program will be given a code to enter the building on school days when the doors are locked.

Students from throughout the greater Cleveland area attend Ruffing. Children 18 months old through age 4 arrive by car, and car-pooling is encouraged. For children ages 5 and over, bus transportation may be provided by local boards of education according to their regulations. Please complete and return the "Daily Dismissal Arrangements and Permissions" form contained in the August family mailing prior to the first day of school. Submitting this form will ensure that your child will be released only to the adults you designate.

Bus

Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights, Beachwood, Chagrin Falls, and Orange are districts that traditionally provide bus service to and from Ruffing. Other local school boards have opted to make financial compensation in lieu of such service. Ruffing provides the above-mentioned systems with a list of students from that district who are eligible for school transportation. The school system contacts the parents directly, sets schedules and establishes all guidelines for the use of the bus. Those students who use school transportation are subject to all the rules and regulations of the particular school system providing the transportation. Route information or problems with the service should be handled directly with the transportation department of your local district.

If you live in districts other than the aforementioned ones, you should contact your local board of education to inform transportation officials that your child attends Ruffing in order to determine what, if any, forms you will need to sign for transportation or determine if you are eligible for reimbursement.

Car

Traffic in the drop-off and pick-up line can be a bit slow the first few weeks of school and patience is appreciated. As the faculty begins to match the students with their respective cars, the system will run smoothly. Please share this information with all who are responsible for transporting your child. Drop off is from 8:15 to 8:30 am. Pick up is at a designated time, depending on the level or program your child is enrolled.

PLEASE NOTE:

**During drop-off and pick-up,
drivers must remain in their vehicles at all times.**

For arrival:

Enter the driveway from the west only. If there is a line of cars waiting to enter, please wait on the street, and DO NOT stop on the apron. Next, pull into the circular driveway in front of the school and wait for the “greeter” to assist your child in getting out of the car and proceeding to class. Greeters will be on duty from 8:15 until 8:30 am. Exit using the lane near the wall. **A left turn onto Fairmount is not permitted.** Please do not get out of your car if you arrive in the circular driveway during arrival. Parking in the driveway lane in front of the stone wall is prohibited from 8 to 9 am, 11 am to 1 pm, and 2 to 3:30 pm. Drivers ignoring this directive will be issued a friendly reminder. If a child needs to be accompanied into the building, please park in the school’s visitors’ lot, across the street on Ashton, or on Shelburne.

For dismissal:

At the end of the day, all children will be waiting in front of the school with their teachers. Cars are not permitted to “stand” on Fairmount, so please observe our two-lane dismissal procedure. Teacher volunteers will be directing the cars to enter. Do not wait on the apron, or take “cuts” around the standing vehicles. Please wait in the car line and do not pull around and park in the back and claim your child. Pull up next to the sidewalk or the wall as directed by the teacher volunteer and the children will be brought to the cars. Then proceed to the center lane to exit. Please exercise caution when exiting by car. There are bicyclists and walkers who frequent the sidewalk. Parents walking children home from school should meet them outside the building.

If your child will not be riding in his or her usual car pool, please send a note or call the office authorizing the new arrangement and the name of the individual picking up your child.

No child will be dismissed to anyone other than a prearranged person or car pool without advance written/phone notice. Your permission is contained in your signed “Daily Dismissal Arrangements and Permissions” form on file in the school office and with your child’s teacher.

Children who are not picked up by 3:30 pm are taken to After School Care and parents are charged accordingly. (See the After School Care rates described in the Fee Schedule.) Children attending After School Care must be picked up by 6 pm. Parents who are late will be charged \$1 for each minute past 6 pm. If late pick up from After School Care becomes habitual, a family will be asked to withdraw their child(ren) from the program.

Dismissal Safety – Children’s House & Toddler Community

The mid-day dismissal involves placing approximately 60 very young children (ages 18 months to four years of age) into cars. Your cooperation is important in maintaining a safe and efficient procedure during this process. Please place the color-coded name card in the passenger side of the front window of your vehicle or that of the person who is picking up your child. This should always be displayed at pick-up times. To foster independence, the children should be encouraged to buckle themselves in the car seats. The parent or caregiver has the ultimate responsibility to oversee that the child is buckled. If time permits, the classroom teacher will be happy to assist. This information should be communicated to all adults involved in picking up your children. For safety, no cell phone use is permitted while navigating the arrival/dismissal car line.

Building Security

Safety and security are important at Ruffing. Like most schools, our building's security system is armed whenever the school is closed – weeknights after 6 pm, weekends, and holidays. The building is disarmed at 7:30 am on school days. Please do not drop off children at school before 7:45 am, or enter the school when it is closed unless prior arrangements are made. No child should ever enter the building when there are no adults present. We pride ourselves in maintaining a safe school and appreciate your cooperation.

Student Behavior Expectation and Rules

Ruffing Montessori School expects all students to conduct themselves with respect for the physical well being and rights of other students and adults. Ruffing expects all students to show proper respect for property. Respect, trust and responsibility go hand in hand with the freedom offered in the Montessori learning environment. In developing self-discipline, a child must be free to take responsibility for his or her own actions, and to understand that there will be appropriate consequences when the actions are out of bounds.

Ruffing Montessori School believes in a non-punitive approach to discipline, accompanied by creative and context-specific approaches to resolving conflict. Children and teachers cooperate in creating an environment conducive to work and growth. Within each class there is frequent discussion of appropriate behavior. Serious problems or recurring difficulties may require parent consultation and the intervention of the Head of School. Ruffing Montessori School reserves the right to dismiss, at any time, a student who, at the discretion of the Head of School and the teacher, is determined to be detrimental to himself/herself, fellow students, or the reputation and integrity of the school.

Code of Conduct

Ruffing Montessori School has established a Code of Conduct for each grade level. These policies will be described and explained during each level's New Parent Meeting in September. The written codes are available in the office.

State requirement for Licensure.

Behavior Management Discipline / Ohio Statute: 3301-37-10

- There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking or biting.
- No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box or a similar cubicle.
- No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family or other verbal abuse.
- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.

- Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame or frighten a child.
- Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest or toilet use.
- Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted and well-ventilated space.
- The school shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

Copies of the current state licensing inspection and state contacts for questions or issues are posted on the bulletin board in the Toddler/Children's House hall.

School Crisis Management

The staff at Ruffing has been trained in crisis management (e.g., fire, tornado, safety plan, etc.) and have participated in drills and protective actions. Ruffing Montessori has formulated responses in the event of a crisis, and the guidelines are available in the office for parental examination.

HEALTH POLICIES

Health Form & Immunizations

A physical examination is required for all students new to the school. In addition, it is required every year for all Children's House and Toddler Community students. Please ask your child's physician to complete the School Entrance Physical Examination form, which includes the immunization information. The Health History form is to be completed by the parents. These completed forms, or a completed Immunization Exemption form, must be completed and returned to school by **Monday, August 24**.

A physical exam is also required of all sixth seventh and eighth grade students participating in after-school sports. These forms are available from the school office.

Emergencies

By state mandate, an Emergency Medical form for each child must be completed by a parent or guardian and **on file in the office by the first day of school** in order for your child to attend class. This form provides specific instructions regarding the school's response to a child's serious medical emergency. In the event of illness or accident, the family of the child is notified, or in the event of an extreme emergency, the school will call 911. Minor accidents occurring during school hours receive prompt and careful attention from the school staff and the parent will receive an injury report. Please notify the office if any of the information on the emergency form changes during the year, i.e., new work number, etc.

Medications

Employees of Ruffing Montessori School are not permitted to dispense medication (prescription or non-prescription) to any child, unless your child requires the use of an inhaler or EpiPen and the appropriate permission forms are on file in the office. Medications must be administered by the parent or guardian before school, or during school after prior arrangements have been made. The only exceptions are when children are on school-sponsored overnight field trips. We then require written permission from the parent, as well as a copy of the prescription and the name of the prescribing physician. **Please contact your child's teacher if**

your child requires the use of an inhaler or an EpiPen. A signed permission form must be on file in the school office.

Communicable Illnesses

Please do not send a child to school on days when any of these symptoms are present: a rash, a fever, discharge from eyes and/or ears, runny nose, serious cough, vomiting or diarrhea. Please keep your child at home for 24 hours following a return to normal temperature. Children who arrive at school with symptoms of an illness will be sent home. If a parent is unavailable during the day, please make arrangements with another adult, presumably one listed on the Emergency Medical form, so that a child can be picked up from school if necessary.

Parents must notify the school if their child has been exposed to a communicable illness. A child who contracts an illness must stay home for the period of time prescribed by the child's physician or by the local health department.

Head Lice Policy

If a child is found to have head lice, he/she will be sent home and is to be treated in the following manner: 1. Recommended over-the-counter shampoo. 2. The application of Vaseline or olive oil overnight, 3. Followed by fastidious cleaning with a fine-toothed comb. The child may return to school the following day. 4. Every three days following treatment, your child's hair should be "bug busted": Prepare a solution of warm water and 1-2 tablespoons of vinegar; using a cloth, apply the solution to a section of your child's head and comb through. Continue applying the vinegar solution and combing for about 15-20 minutes. "Bug busting" needs to continue 2-3 weeks after shampooing.

DRESS CODE

Children's House and Toddler Community Clothing

To foster independence and self-esteem, clothing that can be managed by the child is necessary, e.g., large buttons, front zippers and elastic waists. Students should wear washable and non-restrictive clothing as the children engage in many messy endeavors such as painting, baking, water play and outdoor play. Students must have at school an extra change of clothing, including socks, pants and underwear. Please place extra clothing in a plastic bag with the child's name on the bag. For our Toddlers: NO pull-ups, only diapers or cloth training pants. Once Toddlers are learning toileting, onesies and overalls may not be used.

Children need slippers or slip-on shoes without laces to wear inside the classroom. This makes a distinction between outside/inside shoes and keeps the rooms cleaner. Slippers or inside slip-on shoes should be as plain as possible and **marked clearly** with the child's name, as are all clothing and possessions. A loop on coats and snowsuits is helpful for hanging garments on the hooks.

Lower Elementary Students

Dress should be simple, comfortable, and appropriate for the child's age and activities at school. Clothing that features such themes as super heroes, e.g., with inappropriate language or images, or clothing otherwise designed to draw attention (too revealing clothing that features spaghetti straps, bare midriffs, tight short shorts, etc.), is not appropriate school attire. We encourage you to help your child select appropriate school clothing when shopping and when choosing what to wear each day. All clothing and possessions should be **clearly marked**.

All elementary students must have a pair of **outdoor shoes** to be kept at school. Our playground can be muddy and children need snowpants or a change of pants and boots for much of the school year. **ALL CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN OUTDOOR RECESS.**

Upper Elementary and Middle School Dress Code:

If it is too tight, too low cut, too sheer, too revealing, or it shows undergarments, it is inappropriate for our learning environment.

Shorts, skirts, and dresses: Their length should be no shorter than the tips of fingertips while standing.

Shirts: Sleeveless shirts, specifically including but not limited to tank tops, spaghetti straps, and camisoles, are prohibited. Shirts with bare midriffs, bare backs, and off the shoulder are prohibited.

Jeans and pants: Pants with tears and rips are prohibited. Pants that are too low are prohibited.

Hair: For personal safety in various environments including the science lab, campouts, and physical education classes, hair should be kept off the face with a headband, barrette or other hair accessory.

Hats: Hats worn indoors are prohibited.

Clothing and accessories: Themes featuring inappropriate language or images of violence, drugs, and/or alcohol are prohibited.

We expect parents to take part in the enforcement of the dress code.

Remedial Action: Should the student fail to comply with the Middle School Dress Code, the teaching staff will (1) provide acceptable attire, or (2) call home and ask the parent(s) to provide other clothing, or (3) escort the student to the office.

Gym Clothing

Gym uniforms (shirt and shorts) are required for all students in **grades 1 through 6**. (The student's first name is to be printed in large letters on the front and back of the shirt. You may use either iron-on letters or permanent fabric marker.) A numbered gym shirt is required for **grades 7 and 8**. Please provide white socks and sneakers to be used for gym class only. (Sneakers, without black soles, should tie or fasten securely.)

Ruffing provides the required gym uniform for new students and for all students moving up to the Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, and Middle School levels. **Only 1 uniform per level is provided by Ruffing** as we strongly encourage reusing gym uniforms from year to year. Additional or replacement gym shirts and/or shorts may be purchased for \$10 per item.

LOST AND FOUND

Check the classroom for lost and found items, as well as the bin located under the front gym landing to pick up any items left behind. All unclaimed clothing without identification will be donated to a social service agency during major vacations. Anything of obvious value, e.g., glasses, watches, rings, etc. will be brought to the office.

SNACKS

In our Toddler Community and Children's House programs, snacks are an important part of your child's day. Each family is assigned one week during the year to bring in snack foods. A schedule will be distributed at the fall parent orientation evening. In addition, specific snack suggestions will be provided to the "snack parent" prior to the assigned week. The school provides milk for snack at these levels.

If a child has dietary restrictions, please notify the school, even if the child is capable of monitoring himself/herself.

NO WASTE LUNCHES

The staff has given careful consideration to making lunch time a meaningful part of the Montessori curriculum. It is an opportunity to continue the Grace and Courtesy lessons the children have learned. They are also learning about the planet they stand to inherit and how to make it a better place for all through recycling and composting. To that end, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Provide a reusable lunch container (lunch box) with the child's name marked clearly on the outside. The container should be as plain as possible.
- Within the lunch box, lunch items should be placed in reusable containers to promote environmental consciousness as well as enabling child-sized portions.
- If you are sending an item that needs to be served warm, please use a thermos. Meals cannot be microwaved for all the children.
- No juice boxes or juice packs, please. If your child is not purchasing milk in school, send his or her beverage in a thermos.
- Please provide a cloth napkin and placemat on a daily basis. The Toddler Community, Siesta Care, All Day Children's House and Extended Day Children's House provide napkins and placemats.
- Good nutritional habits are always encouraged. "Lunchables," "Go-Gurts," and other prepackaged foods contain many additives and preservatives. An ideal lunch would contain a healthy, balanced mix of the different food groups to provide the nourishment so vital for a long, active day.
- Please, no candy or junk food in the lunches. If cookies, sweets, potato chips, etc., are included in a lunch, many children will eat them first, thus ruining their appetite for the nutritious food. Fruits make nice desserts for children and also help clean the teeth.
- In the Montessori spirit, children should be encouraged to make or at least help make their daily lunches. Tip: Make lunch the night before.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE AND TUITION DUE DATES

Ruffing Montessori School is an independent school supported by tuition and fees, which provides the necessary operating capital to run the school. All tuition and fees are due and payable to Tuition Management Systems in accordance with one of the following payment options:

- * One payment plan: due *August 1*
- * Two payment plan: *60% due August 1, 40% due January 1*
- * Ten Payment Plan: Due on the 1st and 15th of each month from July through April, depending on the option selected.

Please contact the business office if you have any questions. It is the family's responsibility to remit payments on a timely basis. The school reserves the right to deny the student(s) the right to participate in supplementary activities (including but not limited to after school enrichment programs, After School Care, class trips or summer camp) if the account is not current and acceptable payment arrangements have not been made through the business office. A past due account of 45 days may be turned over for collection, and at 60 days the student(s) may be excluded from school. Parents will be notified in advance in writing should that situation occur. Student records will not be released if an account is not in good standing with the business office.

Students are enrolled for the entire year, and the full year's tuition must be paid, notwithstanding the fact that the student may be withdrawn during any part of the school year. Participation in the Tuition Refund Insurance Plan is required and incorporated into your tuitions and fees. The Plan insures tuition fees should your child withdraw from the school prior to the end of the school year, if the terms of the policy are met as spelled out in the Plan brochure. The parent authorizes the school to collect any claim of payment and to credit such payments to the parent's account. The parent further agrees to pay the school any remaining balance within 30 days following receipt of a final itemized bill.

RE-ENROLLMENT

In January, all current families will receive a re-enrollment packet and notification of changes in tuition and fees for the following school year. February 19 is the deadline for returning the re-enrollment contract along with a \$500 tuition advance, which will secure class placement for the next academic year. The \$500 advance is credited to tuition for the following academic year and is non-refundable in the event of withdrawal. If your contract is returned by February 19, 2010, the school's \$50 administrative fee will be waived. Failure to return a re-enrollment contract by the deadline may result in the loss of a position in the class. ***Please note that only those families who are current with their financial obligations will be offered re-enrollment contracts.*** The re-enrollment deadline for families applying for Financial Aid is March 10.

FINANCIAL AID

2010-2011

Ruffing Montessori School has established a financial aid program to assist families that are not able to manage the full cost of tuition using one of the payment plan options offered by the School. Ruffing's financial aid program is compatible with the mission, values and goals approved by its Board of Trustees. The School's policy is also consistent with the National Association of Independent Schools' Principles of Good Practice of Financial Aid Administration.

PURPOSE OF FINANCIAL AID

The primary purpose of financial aid is to provide financial assistance to families of students who have been accepted to the school and who demonstrate financial need. Additional purposes of financial aid are to support and implement the school's commitment to socio-economic diversity, and to enhance the school's long-range viability by maximizing enrollment at various levels.

CRITERIA FOR FINANCIAL AID

All financial aid awards are based on demonstrated financial need. (No performance-based financial aid or scholarships for specific abilities or talents is available.) Only families whose accounts are in good standing with the School's business office will be considered for financial aid. The school does not charge a fee to apply for financial aid.

APPLICATION AND AWARD PROCEDURE

Applications for financial aid may be requested from the business office. The deadline to apply for Financial Aid is February 5, 2010. Other information, including tax returns, may be required and requested by the school's financial aid committee to assist in the decision-making process.

The financial aid committee will consider all pertinent information made available to it to determine an award that is within the financial aid budget and that follows, as far as possible, the SSS recommendations. The information submitted to the committee shall be kept confidential and consist only of the information pertinent to the award decision.

All awards are for one year and must be reapplied for each year, following the procedure above. In the case of a current financial aid student's reapplication for assistance, the financial aid committee will consider, in addition to need, the applicant's overall progress and contribution to the school.

AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL AID

Recognizing that each family has an obligation to finance their child's education to the maximum extent that they are able, only partial financial aid grants are awarded by Ruffing. All Ruffing families pay a portion of their child's education costs and financial aid shall typically not exceed 50% of tuition. Financial assistance may only be applied toward tuition. It may not be applied toward fees, class trips, or extra-curricular activities.

Financial need shall be demonstrated by the report produced as a result of the parents' application, by the 1040 tax forms if requested by Ruffing, and any other financial documents as requested. The applications, reports and any other supplemental information shall be used confidentially as guidelines in determining the amount of aid awarded.

DIVORCED & SEPARATED FAMILIES

In cases of divorce or separation, both natural parents are required to file an application for aid. Other financial documentation may be required to make a financial aid decision. The School will not be bound by any divorce agreement specifying a parent's responsibility for educational expenses since it was not a party to the agreement nor represented at the hearing. In cases where one parent has had no contact with the student for more than five years, the requirement that both parents file may be waived.

VOLUNTARY REDUCTION OF INCOME

The lifestyle and economic changes brought about by a family's voluntary reduction of income will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

APPEAL PROCESS

Families who wish to formally appeal a financial aid decision should do so in writing to the financial aid committee.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Class placement of the child is a decision reserved for the school. It would be impossible to honor every parent's and child's request for class placement; therefore we do not entertain them. The administration and teachers thoughtfully and carefully place children in a manner that provides the best chance of their success and with regard for well-balanced classes. The age and gender of the students, their strengths and weaknesses, social relationships, and other information supplied by current teachers are among the factors that determine placement at the next level. Class placement decisions are final after the publication of the class lists in August.

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts of students who have not attended Ruffing for more than one calendar year will be copied and mailed for a \$15 fee.

All financial obligations to the school must be satisfied before any records for a student may be released.

STUDENT RECOMMENDATION POLICY

Ruffing's faculty and staff are happy to assist students with their applications and recommendations. Please submit all recommendations and transcript requests to Ruffing's admissions office. The admissions office will distribute the recommendation forms to the requested faculty member. Once the recommendation forms are complete, Ruffing will send the recommendations, along with the students' transcripts, to the requested school. Ruffing will inform you when this information has been sent. Please be cognizant of deadlines and give the faculty a minimum of one week to complete the recommendation forms.

Please note that Ruffing respects the confidential nature of faculty recommendations, and shares the recommendations **ONLY** with the schools to which the student is applying. This means that Ruffing does not keep copies of the recommendations and families are not privy to the information set forth therein. Families submitting recommendation requests must sign the Consent and Waiver form, which acknowledges that you have read and understand Ruffing's Student Recommendation Policy and that you will adhere to the Policy.

All requests for teacher recommendation or the transfer of records must be submitted to the Director of Admissions.

ORIENTATION AND OPEN HOUSES

There are many ways to learn about your child's classroom and work. At the beginning of the school year, each classroom conducts an orientation meeting for parents to inform them of classroom requirements and curricula. Please note that parental attendance **is required**. Your child's teacher will provide important information about the classroom, etc. In the spring, each classroom hosts an open house for families where students present and share their work.

Classroom observations for current families are scheduled through the Director of Admissions from October through April. They are held on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 8:45 to 9:30 for the Children's House; from 9 to 10 for the elementary, and from 9 to 11 for the Middle School. Guidelines and feedback opportunities are provided before and after the observation.

Friends and relatives who may wish to observe a child in a classroom outside of regular observation times must make arrangements with the Director of Admissions. No one will be accommodated to see a child without the authorization of the legal parent or guardian. **ONLY** persons named on the "Daily Dismissal Arrangement and Permission" form will have access to the child.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Onsite learning coaches specializing in reading and math are available to work with children on an individual or small group basis. Ruffing also employs the services of an outside clinical psychologist. If a professional observation is suggested by a teacher, Ruffing will absorb this initial expense as well as the follow-up meeting with parents and teacher. Any additional services recommended by the psychologist are the responsibility of the child's parents.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The partnership between the school and home creates an optimal learning environment and assures the school's successful operations. **Ten hours of volunteer time are required** of each family, and Ruffing offers many opportunities for all schedules - whether driving on special outings, helping teachers make materials, sharing a special interest, coordinating classroom events, or working on social and fund-raising events.

Parent Education/Special Events

Educational opportunities and discussions involving staff, parents, and guest speakers take place throughout the school year in an effort to offer information about the Montessori method, Ruffing's curriculum, and parenting issues, and to provide a forum for an exchange of ideas and information. Throughout the year, there are numerous opportunities for families and extended families to visit the school.

We make every effort to accommodate the special needs of our guests. Should you or your guests require handicapped parking or use of the elevator to the second floor, please give the school advance notification. Chairs for major events (choral concerts, Moving Up Ceremony, Graduation, Grandparents' and Special Persons' Day) are rented and may be insufficient for people with special needs. Please try to anticipate your guests' requirements and call ahead so we can appropriately make them feel welcome and comfortable.

Any parent-oriented weekend or after hours event, indoors or out (i. e., Girl Scout meetings, classroom playground play date, holiday party in the gym, etc.), must be scheduled through the Director of Finance and Operations. The parent coordinating the event will be apprised of the responsibilities and requirements.

Parent Association

The Parent Association (PA) exists to provide an active means for parents to participate in the life of the school, and all parents are members. It provides a structure through which parents can support and serve the Ruffing community and one another. The specific activities will be inspired by, and change with, the needs of our school community. The PA coordinates events such as the Pumpkin Party, Grandparents' and Special Persons' Day, and Great Kids' Race. Parents who are involved in their children's education will determine the efforts of the association. Please visit the PA page on the school's website to learn more about the organization and volunteer opportunities.

SPECIAL CONCERNS

All concerns regarding your child's classroom day should be taken directly to the child's teacher. In most circumstances, concerns are resolved between the parties involved. If parents and faculty make genuine efforts at resolution and are not successful, the parent shall consult with the Head of School.

A child's behavior at school can be affected in many ways by changes at home. Please let the teacher know if anything of a stressful nature is occurring in your family life. To make contact with a teacher, send a note with the student, or leave a message on the teacher's voice mail, or email the teacher. All Ruffing personnel have email addresses that begin with their first name and first initial of their last name, followed by ruffingmontessori.net (i.e., gordonm@ruffingmontessori.net). The teacher will contact you and arrange a mutually convenient time to meet or talk.

FAIRMOUNT MONTESSORI ASSOCIATION

Ruffing Montessori School is owned and operated by the members of the Fairmount Montessori Association. All parents of children currently enrolled in Ruffing Montessori School are automatically members of the Fairmount Montessori Association, as are all staff members and outside Board members. By-laws of the Association are available in the office.

The Board of Trustees establishes overall policy for the school and assures its financial stability. In short, the Board is concerned with the strategic health of the school and is not involved in the daily decisions. Rather, it hires the Head of School, who then hires all other personnel and is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school. The Board maintains the following standing committees: executive committee, committee on trustees, development committee, leadership committee and building and facilities committee.

THE RUFFING MONTESSORI ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The Ruffing Montessori Alumni Association was established in 1999 and the first alumni reunion was held in the spring of that year. A current database of over 1,000 names has been created. Ongoing and future alumni events are publicized by mail, email and on the Ruffing website and newsletter. Ruffing Alumni are encouraged to contact Ruffing with address or email changes. Call 216-321-7571, or complete and submit the form available on the school website: www.ruffingmontessori.net.

SUMMER RUFFING IT

Entering its fourth decade, our Summer Ruffing It program for children ages 3-14 is open to all families from Cleveland and around the globe. The area's Montessori training programs provide an opportunity for trainees to bring their children to our local summer camp where cultural exchanges are welcomed and green environmental practices are embraced.

Our staff of professional teachers of art, athletics, computer, media, dance, drama, music, lab science, skills and writing are joined by a support staff of high school and college students who enthusiastically return year after year to create continuity of friendship and learning. We offer three programs each 6 weeks long.

- A Summer to Grow On – ages 3-6 offers a variety of arts, crafts, music, movement, storytelling, nature walks, water and sand play, and outdoor gardening options.
- Creative Arts and Sciences -grades 1-6-allows for personal choice of balanced activities from firing clay tiles to filmmaking; building solar cars and windmills; from launching rockets to digging in gardens; writing plays to creating and playing in jug bands. Children create our own green newsletter, an electronic news show that is shared weekly with families.
- Extreme SRI- grades 7-8 provides on and off site learning through visits to our illustrious University Circle area museums, and to our Cleveland Metroparks green belt for explorations and adventures both on and near Lake Erie and the Cuyahoga River Valley.

We provide morning and late afternoon care for an additional fee to the summer program tuitions.

Please contact Julia Sheehan, Director,
216-932-7866
216-321-7571 ext 310
julias@ruffingmontessori.net

SUGGESTED READINGS

Lillard, Paula P. (1966). *Montessori Today and Montessori: A Montessori Approach*. New York: Random House.

Describes Montessori theory and contemporary American Montessori schools serving ages ranging from birth to adulthood.

Lillard, Angeline Stoll. (2005). *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lillard has masterfully explored the basic tenets of Montessori education and how they are validated with today's scientific findings.

Montessori, Maria (1948). *To Educate the Human Potential*. Madras, India: Kalakshetra Publications.

Describes the needs of the elementary-aged child in the process of acquiring culture.

Montessori, Maria. (1956). *The Child in the Family*. Chicago: Henry Regnery.

A series of short essays about the child, the family, and the school, with a philosophical emphasis.

Montessori, Maria (1948). *From Childhood to Adolescence*. Oxford, England: Clio Press Ltd.

Dr. Montessori examines the educational concerns of the elementary child, the adolescent, and even the university student.

Montessori, Maria (1949). *Education and Peace*. Oxford, England: Clio Press Ltd.

Dr. Montessori was nominated in 1949 and 1950 for the Nobel Peace Prize for her work with children and the internal process of building peace.

The Clio Press Editions of Montessori's work can be ordered at www.abc-clio.com.