



# PARENT HANDBOOK

## 2018-19

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# General Information

## *Message from the Head of School*

Welcome to Aidan Montessori School. The Parent Handbook will provide you with information about our school so that you and your child can have a successful year. Please read, and keep handy, the Parent Handbook.

We look forward to a year filled with exciting educational opportunities and growth for your child. A Montessori education fosters curiosity and leads to a lifetime of learning and is the foundation for all of one's future works. We are pleased you have joined our Aidan family and hope you are excited to be a Montessori parent!

—Kevin Clark

## *Mission Statement*

The mission of Aidan Montessori School is to create and sustain an optimum Montessori educational environment to enable each child to realize his or her richest potential for learning and to become an independent, self-motivated, and contributing member of the world community.

This mission is best accomplished by:

- Providing a curriculum adhering to rigorous Montessori standards, informed by current thinking and research on child development and learning;
- Fostering a love of learning;
- Embracing a diverse student body in which students experience and learn to respect ethnic, cultural, economic and other differences and to seek and identify common ground;
- Recognizing that personal growth involves responsibility toward others and toward the earth; and
- Facilitating the involvement of parents, teachers, students and the larger community.

## *Statement of Philosophy & Objectives*

Aidan begins with a deep respect for children as unique individuals. We are concerned about the development of the whole child—social and emotional, intellectual, physical, and

spiritual. An underlying purpose of an Aidan Montessori School education is to aid the child in independence and self-formation by creating an environment that can unlock the inherent potentials and intelligences within each child. We:

- Embrace the Montessori pedagogy, which is based on universal principles of child development, as sound theory and practice for teaching and learning;
- Look to accepted current research to inform our evolving understanding of human development. Recognize the many differences in learning rates and styles;
- Believe in individualizing each child's school experience for the fullest development of his or her potential. Embrace the concept of a multi-age, three-year age span classroom community as optimum for academic, social, and emotional learning;
- Believe that the dynamic classroom requires a sufficient gathering of children (24-29 students) to operate effectively; and
- Value cooperation over competition and believe that each child's work and behavior should be evaluated on his or her inherent capacity rather than by comparison.

## *Diversity Statement*

“The needs of mankind are universal. Our means of meeting them create the richness and diversity of the planet. The Montessori child should come to relish the texture of that diversity.” — Maria Montessori

At Aidan Montessori School, we embrace and celebrate the diversity of our world. Our differences — including those of culture, race, ethnicity, religion, age, family structure, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomics, learning style, and world view, among others — form and inform a rich environment that is a crucial part of educating our children on their path to maturity and global citizenship. Our interactions across our entire community are characterized by guiding principles of respect, equity, justice, humanity, peace, and personal responsibility.

We oppose discrimination and consciously recognize the value of diversity throughout our hiring practices, admission and financial aid processes, classroom composition, professional development, community and classroom activities.

## *Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy as to Students*

Aidan admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Aidan does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin,

gender identity, or sexual orientation in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, financial aid programs, athletic programs, and other school-administered programs.

## Faculty & Staff

Aidan is proud of its AMI-trained classroom faculty and accomplished specialty faculty and administrators. For a full and up-to-date list of all Aidan employees, please see our website. There, you will find names, faces, titles, and contact information, as well as a profile for each employee detailing their qualifications for their post.

## Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for setting the mission, establishing overall policy and ensuring the financial stability of Aidan Montessori School. Through the selection of a Head of School, the Board assures implementation of the policies it has adopted.

A full and up-to-date list of Aidan's current Board members can be found on the school's website.

Board members serve staggered three-year terms. In addition, the Head of School serves as an ex-officio non-voting Board member. The Committee on Trustees is responsible for developing and considering individuals for Board membership. The full Board votes annually to fill any vacancies and to elect officers for the following year.

Aidan's current Board of Trustees consists primarily of parents and friends of the school. More significantly, Board members are administrators, educators, fundraisers, lawyers, engineers, financial planners, business owners, planners, consultants and problem solvers. While the Board strives for diversity in the backgrounds and skills of trustees, all members share a common commitment to maintain the character, philosophy, and fiscal health of Aidan Montessori School.

The Board works through standing committees: Building and Grounds, Development, and Finance. The Board authorizes other committees and special task forces to study specific issues that arise. Parents who are not Board members have served on Board committees. The Board holds regular meetings during the school year and a meeting during the summer months to approve the revised budget as needed. Actions of the Board are reported to the parent body at large through letters from the President of the Board of Trustees and committee chairpersons of the Parent Association.

# Parent Association

## *Who are we?*

When you enroll your child at Aidan Montessori School, you automatically become a member of the Parent Association (PA).

You can find an up-to-date account of the Parent Association's leadership on the school website.

## *What do we do?*

The Parent Association mobilizes and coordinates parent volunteers and resources for the support of the school. Money raised by the PA goes primarily toward community-building events.

The PA holds regular meetings open to all parents, at which upcoming school activities are discussed and planned. The PA works closely with school administrators, faculty, and staff and serves as a liaison between the parent body and the school staff.

The PA will have a presence at many events throughout the school year. Every parent is needed to help Aidan thrive. Please participate!

Aidan's Director of Communications and Advancement serves as liaison between the PA and the administrative staff. Aidan's Director of Communications and Advancement also provides support for the PA Officers, assisting them with logistics and publicity.

## *How can you participate?*

Attend a PA meeting and/or respond to a call for volunteers sent out in School Communications. Be sure to fill out a Parent Volunteer Interest Form online and please contact one of the PA Officers if you have an idea or a suggestion.

## *Volunteer Opportunities*

- We want to include as many parents as possible in volunteer activities. For this reason, we try to avoid having a volunteer serve in the same position for more than two consecutive years (for Room Parents, that means serving no more than two consecutive years in the same classroom). For Committee Chairs, the ideal arrangement is for one Co-Chair to be a veteran of the prior year, while the other Co-Chair is new. This allows the transfer of institutional knowledge while opening

up opportunities for leadership. Room Parent and Committee Chair assignments are subject to approval by the Head of School.

- All parents, especially when volunteering, are expected to abide by the Aidan Code of Conduct. The Aidan community depends heavily on parent participation, and the atmosphere of trust and respect here at Aidan is maintained by the professional and courteous behavior of our volunteers.

Please see the Aidan website ([www.aidanschool.org](http://www.aidanschool.org)) for more information about the Parent Association—and thank you for participating!

### *Parent Association Activities*

- Auction to Fund Students
- Book Fair
- Community Service
- Evening of the Arts
- Fall Festival
- Grocery and Retail Programs that Give Back
- Room Parents
- Swirl
- Spring Fling
- Summer Playdates
- Support Admissions Open Houses



# Upcoming Year at-a-Glance

Aidan is always bustling with activity! The brief summary below will give you some information about important yearly events as well as what is generally expected from parents. Please see the school website and the print calendar you received before the start of the school year for exact dates.

## *August/September*

### NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

All students who are new to a Toddler, Primary or Elementary class, even if they are coming from another Aidan class, will have the opportunity to visit with their new teacher prior to the start of school. The teachers will contact parents to schedule the appointments.

### BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT

This evening is for parents to learn about the classroom schedule, curriculum, and procedures from their child's teacher. Attendance is strongly encouraged!

## *October*

### ADMISSIONS OPEN HOUSES

Aidan holds four Open Houses in the fall and winter for prospective parents to visit the school. Open Houses are great opportunities to share your favorite things about Aidan with other parents.

### CLASS SOCIALS

Throughout October, one Aidan family in each class hosts a social event for the other parents in the class.

### SCHOOL PHOTOS

Twice a year, school pictures are taken in the Primary and Elementary classes. In the fall, individual portraits are taken, and in the spring, class pictures are taken. These are entirely voluntary although we hope you will allow your child to be in the class photograph even if you do not order a copy.

## LOOKING AHEAD...

Designed for parents whose children will be moving up to Lower or Upper Elementary in a year or so, the program describes the transition and continuation of the curriculum.

## BOOK FAIR

The Book Fair is held at Politics and Prose Bookstore. During this one-day event, the school receives a portion of the sales when Aidan is mentioned at the register. Funds are dedicated to the Library. In addition to purchasing books for gifts and home, parents may also buy books to donate to the Library and to families in need. Parent volunteers are needed to explain the wish lists, answer questions, and receive books purchased for the Library.

## JOURNEY & DISCOVERY

This workshop, designed for parents, grandparents or other adults in your child's life, is a unique opportunity for a "hands on" experience with the Montessori materials. Adults attend one evening for a journey through Toddler, Primary and Elementary classrooms to begin to get a sense of the differences between Montessori and traditional education models. Attendees return the next morning, where, under the guidance of the teachers, they work directly with preselected materials to discover Montessori from the perspective of the child. Each session ends with a lively discussion. It is required that parents attend once in the first two years of their child's time at Aidan. Childcare is provided for the Saturday portion of this adults-only event.

## UPPER ELEMENTARY FALL TRIP

The entire class goes to the Echo Hill Outdoor School on the Chesapeake Bay for two nights and three days of special classes and activities.

## *November*

## PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE DAYS

Held twice a year for two days in the fall and spring, Parent-Teacher Conferences are important opportunities to hear about your child's life at school and to share information from home. Our teachers are well prepared to discuss each child on these days. We fully expect every parent to make an appointment during Parent-Teacher Conferences and use this dedicated, pre-planned time to meet with the teacher. Except for Toddlers who are in session on the Thursday of conferences, school is closed for those days, as is the After School Program. Child care is provided during Parent-Teacher Conferences.

## “SWIRL” SOCIAL

This not-to-be-missed social event for parents is a kick-off event for the Annual Auction to Fund Students and a great time for everyone who attends.

## *December*

### SIBLING PREFERENCE

In order to qualify for sibling preference, applications must be received by the deadline indicated in the calendar. (Siblings of students applying out are not accorded preference.)

## *January*

### REENROLLMENT

Re-enrollment contracts are due back to the Office at the end of the month, along with the enrollment fee, in order to hold your child’s place for the next year. Please note: your child’s place will not be held without the enrollment fee.

## *March*

### AUCTION

The annual Auction to Fund Students is held each year in March. There is a variety of components to the Auction each year – all of which culminate in the Live Auction event, a festive and fun Saturday evening for the entire Aidan adult community. During bidding at the Live Auction, we also hold our traditional Fund-A-Student paddle raise in a direct appeal for 100% tax-deductible donations to financial aid. Volunteers help solicit items, promote items for bidding, organize the evening event, and much more to help raise funds for Aidan’s Financial Aid program.

### ELEMENTARY MUSICAL

After weeks of preparation, the entire Elementary student body performs a musical/dramatic production for family, friends, and the community.

## *April*

### ELEMENTARY FAIR

Elementary students present learning projects to fellow students, faculty, staff and parents. Lower Elementary students work on displays with explanations, and Upper Elementary students perform and present projects.

## *May*

### GRANDPARENTS' RECEPTION

Grandparents will have the opportunity to meet our administrative leadership team and enjoy light fare and beverages with other Aidan Grandparents. Following the reception, the group will walk over to Aidan to enjoy the Evening of the Arts.

### EVENING OF THE ARTS

The annual Evening of the Arts is held in conjunction with Special Persons' Day. Throughout the school year, selected works of each student are saved and later mounted in the halls of the school for display. Volunteers are needed for matting, hanging artwork, decorating, and staffing as directed by the Art Teacher.

### SPECIAL PERSONS' DAY

This is one of Aidan's most popular events. We invite the students' grandparents and other special people to visit our classrooms. Volunteers help to act as greeters and guides.

### UPPER ELEMENTARY CAMPING TRIP

This student-planned spring trip lasts for four days and three nights at a location the students choose through their planning.

## *June*

### CLASS PHOTO BOOKS

At the end of the year, photo books for each class are available for sale.

## SPRING FLING

This end-of-year event is created by our families, for our families. Volunteers are needed! Be on the lookout for more information on the school website, in the school's smart phone app, and in School Notes.

## END OF THE YEAR CLASS GATHERINGS

Each class holds a different year-end celebration, which is planned by the students, teachers, and Room Parents. These are festive occasions for students and parents to celebrate the year and to thank the teachers and assistants.

## COMMENCEMENT

This evening graduation ceremony for our 6th year students is always special. The entire Aidan community is invited, and the Upper and Lower Elementary students act as marshals, ushers, and chorus. We hope all Elementary families will attend and that all non-graduating Elementary students will participate in the ceremony. A reception immediately follows Commencement.

## *Ongoing Activities*

### AIDAN STORE

School apparel is sometimes available online. Please check the website to see what is currently for sale.

### AMAZON SMILE

Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchase when you shop at AmazonSmile ([smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)) and select Aidan Montessori School as your receiving charity.

### ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN (THE AIDAN FUND)

Our campaign officially begins on July 1. The Aidan Fund is our second largest source of income, bridging the gap between tuition and the actual cost of an Aidan education. The Aidan Fund supports everything we do at Aidan, from our Montessori classrooms to financial aid. The Aidan Fund runs from July 1 to June 30 of each year. The School's goal is to have 100% participation from our current families, faculty & staff, and the Board of Trustees.

## GROCERY PROGRAMS

Local Harris Teeter and Giant supermarkets give schools cash in exchange for Club Card usage. Parents simply register their Club Cards through Aidan and use them when buying groceries. Grocery programs start in early fall and continue throughout the school year.

# Educational Programs

## *Class Structure*

In keeping with AMI accreditation guidelines, each Toddler community has a capacity of 12 children with an AMI-trained Montessori guide and two assistants. Our Primary and Elementary classrooms have approximately 24-29 students in each class, with a balance of ages and gender to ensure social and emotional development. Each Primary and Lower Elementary class is guided by an AMI-trained Montessori “guide” (teacher) with an assistant. The Upper Elementary class is guided by an AMI-trained Montessori guide and an assistant. Primary children have support from the foreign language teachers, the librarian and the physical education teacher. In addition to those, the Elementary classes receive support from the art, music and drama teachers and have access to the resources provided by our in-house educational specialist and the school counselor.

Each class is a social and emotional community with the responsibilities, limits, and freedoms inherent in such a group. The pedagogy includes a continuum of individual and group lessons for a multi-year period for Primary and Elementary students. Children benefit significantly from the completion of each multi-year cycle. Parents make a commitment to complete the Primary and/or Elementary cycle. During the last year of each class, the child integrates and solidifies the work of the previous years. A balance of all three age groups is important for the classroom and the larger school community to function at its best. Parents are strongly urged to plan for a complete multi-year cycle for the sake of their child and the other students in the class.

The Montessori curriculum is tied to the stages of child development. Dr. Montessori called them the “Planes of Development.” The school divisions mirror this continuum from Toddler to Primary to Elementary. Each child grows at their own pace, reaching milestones approximate to chronological age. Montessori teachers are keenly aware of these stages of development and watch carefully for evidence that would indicate that a child is ready to transition to a new level of work or a new division in the school. Such evidence is cognitive, physical, social, and emotional.

Our Montessori classes are ungraded and are divided along developmental stages:

### FIRST PLANE 0 – 6 YEARS

**Toddler** 18 months to 36 months

**Primary** 2 1/2 years to 6 years

## SECOND PLANE 6 – 12 YEARS

**Lower Elementary** 6 years to 9 years (first year through third year)

**Upper Elementary** 9 years to 12 years (fourth year through sixth year)

### *Student Placement and Transitions*

Placement or transition to a new division of the school requires that a child indicate readiness for a new placement in the school, as well as meet an age requirement as follows:

#### TODDLER TO PRIMARY

May move to Primary if in a range of 6 months before or 3 months after the child's third birthday.

#### HALF-DAY PRIMARY TO FULL-DAY

May move from Half-day to Full-day at approximately four and a half (4.6) years old.

#### FULL-DAY PRIMARY TO LOWER ELEMENTARY

May move from Full-day Primary to Lower Elementary if the child is six years old by September 1 or turning six within the next 3 months.

#### LOWER ELEMENTARY TO UPPER ELEMENTARY

The child must be nine years old by September 1 or turning nine within the next 3 months to move to Upper Elementary.

When a child demonstrates readiness, and has met the chronological criteria, their teacher and parents discuss ways that the family can support a transition to the next level. For Toddlers this change happens upon return from Winter Break. Primary children change from Half Day to Full Day at the teacher's recommendation and this can happen any time throughout the school year. You will be contacted by the Business Office to make arrangements for your tuition adjustment; bills will be prorated.

Parents should be aware that placement and transition to a new division of the school at Aidan might not precisely replicate a graded program in conventional education. Placement in most public schools and the great majority of private and independent schools is determined by a September 1 birth date cutoff. For example, a first-grade student must be six years old by September 1 or they must attend kindergarten.



While our students often accelerate academically through our curriculum, the school will point out to parents how placement at Aidan compares to placement at neighboring schools.

This is important to understand either upon graduation or if parents apply out to a non-Montessori school for their child. The Head of School welcomes discussion with parents regarding placement within the school, placement to another school, and standardized testing.

## *Student Assessment*

Aidan Montessori School's curriculum fosters the development of integrative thinkers who see and make connections within and among the disciplines instead of viewing them as "subjects" in isolation. Here, powerful learning experiences are relevant, rigorous, and coherent. Aidan's program transforms learning by supporting and encouraging self-directed reflection, inquiry, and self-assessment. Teachers evaluate progress on a daily basis, keeping careful record of lessons presented and skills and concepts mastered. Aidan also employs traditional assessments.

### ASSESSMENT TOOLS & REPORTING

#### *Montessori Assessments*

- Detailed Progress Reports;
- Student Portfolio, toddler through 6th year;
- Science, Math, History presentations demonstrating content comprehension;
- Research projects and papers (as part of Montessori work);

#### *Homework*

The Montessori environment is rich with daily experiences in self-motivation and self-organization. Because students manage their own work every day, there is no need to "practice" such skills at home. For Montessori students, homework comes in the form of the student's desire to continue working on areas of interest that began in class. Research, reading, and special projects can be done at home as a continuation of work started in class. Students also bring home practice work on math facts and spelling, and should practice reading every night. Also, Montessori students are expected to be contributing members of their families, which means taking on responsibility for some household chores, which families may use to supplement learning such as having children help with baking (measuring with fractions) or finding the square footage of the home. Thus, "homework" becomes replaced by "the work of the home."

## *Requesting Teachers*

Aidan is fortunate to have an entire faculty of outstanding and highly accomplished educators. Your child's teacher understands the learning style and personality of each student. When it comes time for a student to join another classroom, teacher assignments are thought out very carefully. As part of the process, teachers observe each other's classrooms. Over a series of meetings, the teachers and the administrative team thoughtfully determine placements.

It is important that parents trust the judgment inherent in this process. **Therefore, please do not request specific teachers.** Placements will be made at the sole discretion of Aidan Montessori School. Enrollment Contracts entered into with the school are not contingent upon classroom placement or personnel. The school cannot honor enrollment contingent upon a requested teacher.

## *Classroom Observations*

Parents are invited to visit the classroom in order to see first-hand what their child does during the day. This experience is designed to deepen your understanding of your child's development as well as to affirm the educational choice you have made for him/her. All parents - Toddler, Primary and Elementary - will receive an invitation to come to school and observe and/or interact with their child(ren) as is age appropriate. Observations last approximately 30 minutes and take place in the weeks prior to or immediately following Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences.

## *Parent Conferences*

Parent Conferences are held twice yearly on a Thursday and Friday in the fall and spring. Regular classes for Primary and Elementary students are not held on these days in order that the faculty may be available to meet with parents. Toddler students will have class on the Thursday only. Conferences are scheduled at thirty-minute intervals. These meetings are an opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss and share information about the child's program, progress, and experience at school and home. Child care is provided during Parent-Teacher conferences.

## *Support Services*

### COUNSELING

Aidan's School Counselor supports the work of Primary and Elementary teachers in providing the optimum learning environment for each child. At times, a teacher and administrator may request that the Counselor work with an individual child and their parent(s).

### LEARNING SUPPORT

If the school recommends or requires tutoring, parents may choose to hire a private tutor or work with Aidan's Support Services team. It is sometimes possible to have your child work with a private tutor or therapist at school, provided you make arrangements with the school.

If you choose to work with a private tutor, Aidan requires that you submit a monthly report to the school. Aidan's Tutor will work closely with your child's teacher and the administration to monitor progress.

If you choose to work with Aidan's Support Services Team, they will create a Plan for Instruction outlining specific goals and strategies that will be addressed in the tutoring sessions. These goals and your child's progress will be evaluated regularly. All tutoring accommodations are handled through the Chief Operations Officer, in collaboration with the teachers and parents of the student involved.

### DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATION

In order to provide appropriate classroom support, the school may request that parents seek diagnostic evaluation(s) of their child through outside professional services. This includes psycho-education evaluation, motor-sensory evaluation, language assessment, hearing or vision testing. The school expects parents to honor this request and fully disclose the results in a timely manner. Failure to do so may prevent the school from offering reenrollment to that child for the following year.

## *Library*

The Aidan Library is for the children, faculty, staff, and parents. Books and multimedia resources support the curriculum of the Montessori classroom. The Librarian sets the policies and procedures regarding the check-out and return of books. The Aidan Library gives students a first experience in research; it is meant to supplement, not replace, family use of the public library. Parents also may use the library, especially the Parent Section. Please contact our Librarian if you would like to volunteer in the Library.

## *Aidan Program for Families (APF)*

The Aidan Program for Families (APF) creates a forum to establish relationships that support and empower parents as they embrace the changes that come with a dynamic family life. As such, Aidan offers assistance to our families in establishing and sustaining an optimum loving and supportive home environment. All adults in the lives of the children - parents, grandparents, caregivers - are invited to participate in the exchange of information and ideas interweaving the principles of Montessori pedagogy with current research on child development.

These programs foster a harmonious and interdependent relationship between home and school, expanding our educational reach beyond the classroom and directly into your hands. The discussions and presentations place the responsibility to learn and become informed about Montessori theory and practice in your hands since you are your child's first and most influential educator. Topics are chosen so as to be relevant to today's families as they relate to the intricacies of raising children in the 21st century. Check School Notes, This Week at Aidan and the APF page on the Aidan website for details and schedules about APF events!

### OPPORTUNITIES THIS YEAR

- EPIC - Elementary Parent Information Classes
- Caregivers' Basics
- elementaryworks
- Journey & Discovery
- Toddler & Primary Montessori Parent Nights
- Observations
- Workshops on Nurturing Your Child's Emotional Health, Siblings in Harmony, and How to Enjoy Living with a Preadolescent

## *Community Service*

Service to others is an important part of the Montessori philosophy. As a school, we aim to serve those in our immediate neighborhood of the District of Columbia as well as members of our global community. Each of the individual classroom communities nurtures an ethic of caring. Some classes, inspired by their students, undertake projects that evolve from particular natural disasters and/or special interests. The Community Service Committee of the PA organizes charitable efforts throughout the year. For example, Aidan has an on-going

relationship with the Bright Beginnings Family Development Center serving homeless families in DC and with So Others Might Eat (S.O.M.E.), which provides food and other services for the extremely poor citizens of our city. Our Children Changing Communities effort has put us in partnership with the Office of the Clean City's Adopt-a-Block initiative, cleaning up 27th Street four times a year. Parents are encouraged to involve their children in these drives and events. We also encourage families to model generosity and to talk with and to read to their children about giving to others. Information can be found on the Community Service page of the Aidan website.

# School Operations

## *Getting to School*

Smooth arrival and dismissal is crucial to the well-being of the Aidan community and to our relationship with the neighborhood. We need your cooperation and understanding! Please explain the Arrival/Dismissal policies and procedures to all caregivers who drop off or pick up your child. **Your signature on the enrollment contract indicates your willingness to follow all of Aidan's policies and procedures. Refusal to comply is considered a violation of the Aidan Code of Conduct.**

## *School Hours*

**School Office:** 8:00 AM-3:45 PM

**Before-School Program (BSP):** 8:00-8:25 AM

**Toddler:** 8:15-11:15 AM

Half-day Primary: 8:45 AM-12:00 PM

Full-day Primary: 8:30 AM-2:45 PM

Lower Elementary: 8:00 AM-3:45 PM

Upper Elementary: 8:00 AM-3:45 PM

After School Program (ASP): 12:00-3:00 PM & 3:00-6:00 PM

## *General Arrival & Dismissal Schedule*

### ARRIVAL

7:45-8:00 AM: Upper & Lower Elementary Arrival

8:00 AM: Upper & Lower Elementary Classes Start

8:00 AM: Primary Before School Program Arrival

8:00-8:15 AM: Toddler Arrival

8:15 AM: Toddler Classes Start

8:15-8:30 AM: Primary Arrival

8:30 AM: Primary Classes Start

When siblings have different arrival times, we provide “Gap Care” which allows you to drop all siblings off at the earliest arrival time at no extra charge. When the child with the earlier arrival is absent, Gap Care is not an option for the other child(ren).

For arrival after 8:30 AM, please stop by the Reception Desk so that a staff member may accompany your child to class thereby minimizing any interruptions to classes already in progress.

## DISMISSAL

11:15-11:30 AM: Toddler Dismissal

12:00-12:15 PM: Primary Dismissal

2:45-3:00 PM: Full-day Primary Dismissal

3:00-3:15 PM: ASP Dismissal

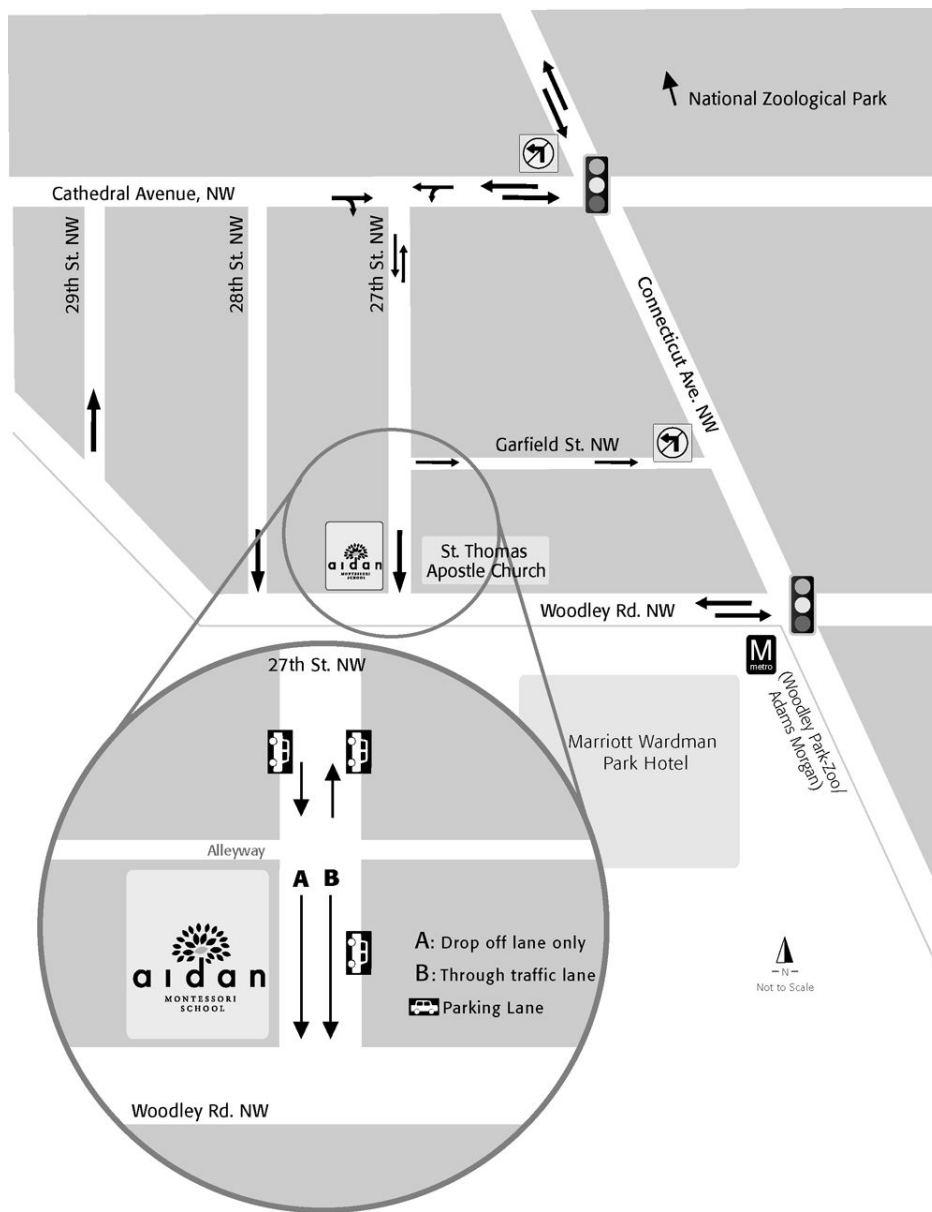
3:45-3:55 PM: Lower Elementary Dismissal

3:45-3:55 PM: Upper Elementary Dismissal

When siblings have different Dismissal times, we provide “Gap Care” allowing you to pick up all siblings at the later dismissal time. When one sibling is absent, you must pick up the other child at the regular time - the Gap Care arrangement does not apply. When utilizing this service, be considerate of your younger child by picking up at the front end of the dismissal window so as to minimize their wait.

Gap Care is provided for Toddlers who have Half Day Primary siblings being dismissed at 12:00 PM. Full Day Primary students with an Elementary sibling, are welcomed to Gap Care from 2:45-3:45 PM. There is no Gap Care for Half-Day Primary students with Elementary siblings: they should enroll in ASP.

## Campus Map



## Locations

Please note that while all faculty and most staff at Aidan work on-campus at our main address, several of our administrators work at our Annex, located at 2627 Connecticut Avenue, NW.



## *Driving to School*

- Heading south on Connecticut (toward Dupont Circle), turn right on Cathedral (not Garfield) and left on 27th Street.
- Heading north on Connecticut (from Dupont Circle towards the Zoo), turn left on Woodley Road at the arrow, pass Aidan, turn right on 29th, then right on Cathedral, then right again on 27th Street. You cannot turn left onto Cathedral from Connecticut heading north.
- You cannot make a turn onto 27th Street from Woodley Road, as 27th Street is one-way heading south (only one direction in the block in front of the school campus). You may not use the alley behind the school or next to the school for arrival and/or dismissal.
- After dropping your child off, you may turn left (towards Connecticut) or right (towards Garfield) onto Woodley Road from 27th Street.

## *Arrival & Dismissal Procedures*

Arrival and Dismissal require that safety and courtesy be in the forefront of everyone's minds. You may drop off and pick up children by car or on foot.

### ON FOOT

You are welcome to walk your child to school from home or the Metro. If you plan to drive to Woodley Park and then park before walking your child in, park your car legally: not in front of hydrants, in crosswalks, in no parking zones, nor in back of the school.

### BY CAR

Join the car line on 27th Street at your specified time. See the procedure outlined below.

Please follow the traffic flow diagrammed on the Campus Map above, obey the rules outlined below and comply with all requests made by Aidan staff or traffic officers:

- The Car Line forms at the curb lane in front of Aidan's entrance and continues down 27th Street. You may not join the line from the alley or Garfield Street.
- Pull over as far to the right as possible while waiting so cars coming down the street can pass.
- Do not get out of your car to chat with other drivers or Aidan staff.

- Do not help your child into or out of the car. Aidan staff will assist your child.
- If the line gets too long, additional cars in line may be asked to circle the block. Please comply.
- Cars will be called into the curb lane by an Aidan staff member or a traffic officer. If you pull up in line before your scheduled Arrival/Dismissal time you may be asked to drive around the block. Please be understanding. Kindly share these procedures with your designated pickup person(s).
- An Aidan staff member will assist your child into and out of cars and car seats. At Arrival, please have lunch boxes, backpacks, and coats ready, not in the trunk. Note: Car seats or booster seats are required by District law for all children under 8 years old. At Dismissal, Aidan staff cannot place your child in a car without proper seating, including a seat belt for older children. In such cases, parents will be instructed to legally park their car and retrieve their child on foot.
- After dropping off or picking up, cars must exit onto Woodley Road.

#### EARLY ARRIVAL FOR PRIMARY & TODDLER

If you arrive by car before 8:00 AM you may wait in the curb lane until a staff member arrives at 8:00 AM to take your child. If arriving on foot, you must wait with your child outside the school until 8:00 AM. If your child is not joining the Before School Program (BSP), you may sit with them in the lobby, not the classroom or hallway, until his or her Arrival window. If you have not contracted for BSP, and you drop off your child after 8:00 AM but before your scheduled window of Arrival, they will be sent to BSP, and you will be invoiced \$10 for the extra care.

#### LATE ARRIVAL

At 8:30 AM, Aidan staff will leave the sidewalk and lock the front door for security purposes. If you arrive after 8:30 AM, please park your car legally in the neighborhood, not in the curb lane in front of the school, then walk your child into school. If your child arrives after 8:30 AM, please sign in with the Receptionist Desk so we can take your child off the “absent” list and so that a staff member can walk your child to class thereby minimizing disruptions to the class that is already in progress. If your child is chronically late to school, your teacher will contact you. Please be on time!

#### LATE PICK-UP

Families whose children have not been picked up by the end of the program dismissal time will be charged a late fee. This is \$10 for the first ten minutes, changing to \$35 for pick-ups

that are more than 10 minutes late. You will be billed for late fees, so please be sure to pick up your child on time and let your caregivers know that they must do the same.

Children, except for Toddlers, who have not been picked up by the end of their Dismissal window (oldest sibling) will join the After School Program (ASP). Please call the school and leave a message if you are going to be late so we can reassure your child.

## RELEASE PERMISSION

Aidan Montessori School is authorized to release a child only to his or her parents or guardian, unless we receive in writing the names of other people permitted to pick up your child. If your child is going home with someone not on our list, such as a friend after school, the School Office must have permission in writing (or fax 202-387-1777) from the parent. Last minute phone calls from a parent for emergency situations are acceptable.

Please do not make playdates at the curb or in the Car Line. If you have not made arrangements in advance, step away from the front of school or pull both vehicles into a legal parking space away from the curb lane and make your arrangements privately so as not to cause any inconvenience to the other drivers or our neighbors.

If you are part of a carpool, be sure to notify the driver who is scheduled to pick up your child in the event your child is ill, that he or she is going home with someone else, or that he or she is bringing home a guest.

Along with Health and Emergency Forms, you are required to sign permissions that allow your child to participate in field trips, neighborhood excursions off campus for classroom and ASP walks, going beyond the school grounds for recess, Physical Education and Discovery Programs, and Elementary “Going Out” programs where appropriate. The permission waiver information contains details for supervision and notification. (These waivers can be found on Aidan’s parent portal at <https://www.aidanschool.org/families>). Your child will leave campus and go beyond the school grounds only if these permissions are signed. Going off campus is applicable depending on the age of your child and is at your sole discretion to permit. Recess and physical education is primarily conducted at the St. Thomas Apostle Church Hall and Marriott lawn along with other trips to local field locations. Various other Discovery programs include travelling to a sport field, the Zoo or library and other nearby locations, always accompanied by several adults.

## CAR SEAT & STROLLER STORAGE

Cars seats and strollers left at Aidan for pick-up must be folded and stored at the bottom of the front stairs. Please label them.

## *Before & After School Programs (BSP/ASP)*

The Before and After School Programs at Aidan (BSP and ASP) are designed to provide a safe, comfortable, and engaging environment for Primary (BSP & ASP) and Elementary (ASP only) students before and/or after their Montessori work period.

In the morning, Primary children enrolled in BSP go straight away to their own rooms and are greeted by their classroom Assistant. They take down chairs, fold laundry, wet sponges, organize the food for snack and otherwise prepare their community for their soon-to-arrive classmates. They can read, socialize, and begin their work for the day.

In the afternoon, our Director of Auxiliary Programs prepares an after-school environment in the Toddler classrooms so that children can be independent and enjoy choosing age-appropriate materials, games, art media, etc. Students can take a nap, eat a snack, and enjoy each other's company in play. Parents supply snack on a rotating basis similar to the classroom. When the playground is available, children go to the outdoor environment for supervised outdoor play. Children may also go for a walk to the Zoo, the library, and parks in our area. ASP personnel are sensitive to the needs of children at all ages and stages of development in creating activities. They guide and encourage independence, positive choices, and collaborative play that fosters positive social relationships.

### DISCOVERY PROGRAM

Aidan's after-school Discovery Program is a chance for students to explore interests beyond Aidan's regular curriculum. For a fee, parents can enroll students from Primary to 6th year in foreign languages, art workshops, music workshops, informal sport and athletic programs, and various crafts. Discovery should not be considered "additional lessons" but rather an optional, relaxed opportunity to socialize and try something new. Space is limited, so parents are encouraged to enroll as soon as they receive the Discovery offerings in the fall, winter, and spring from the Director of Auxiliary Programs.

### ASP/BSP CONTRACT

Parents of Primary to Elementary children who need regular before or after school care are advised to sign a BSP and/or ASP contract for the year. A contract can be obtained from the School Office. An annual contract is a considerable savings from the drop-in rate. Partial week plans (a minimum of three days required) are available and are charged on a prorated basis.

## ASP DROP-IN

Aidan offers the use of the Before School and After School Programs on an as-needed basis for currently enrolled Primary (BSP & ASP) and Elementary (ASP only) students only. Staffing requirements and regulatory restrictions limit the number of children in ASP, so reservations must be completed online via [www.aidanschool.org/parents/parent-forms-and-information](http://www.aidanschool.org/parents/parent-forms-and-information)

Payment is due at the time of reservation.

There are two ASP sessions: 12:00-3:00 PM and 3:00-6:00 PM. The fee for use of part or all of each ASP session is \$35 per child. BSP opens at 8:00 PM; the fee for the use of BSP service is \$10.

## LATE ASP PICK-UP

If a Primary child is picked up from ASP after 3:00pm the family will be billed \$10 for the first ten minutes and \$35 should the family be more than ten minutes late. For each child picked up from ASP after 6:00 PM, there is an immediate charge of \$35. In addition to the \$35 charge, for each child picked up after 6:00 PM, parents will incur charges of \$1/minute. Therefore, the charge for one child will be \$36 at 6:01 PM, \$37 at 6:02 PM, etc. Please call 202-816-0976 if you know you will be late so we can reassure your child. A phone call does not absolve you from the fee.

## *Attendance, Tardiness, & Vacations Absenteeism*

Regular attendance is an important part of the Montessori experience and promotes better school performance. Attendance records are kept as part of each child's file. Excessive absenteeism will be discussed with parents and is required to be reported to the DC Child Licensing authorities for children subject to compulsory education. Every effort should be made to avoid scheduling vacations when classes are in session.

## TARDINESS

Chronic tardiness has an enormous impact on children. At the Elementary level, a lesson might be given to the whole class at the beginning of the day, and any child who arrives late may miss part of or the entire lesson. In the Toddler and Primary classes, the teacher takes time with each arriving child to welcome, connect, and assist the child in becoming engaged. A child arriving late finds the teacher already giving individual lessons and unable to free herself to make that vital connection. It is important to note that children themselves are uncomfortable when they arrive after the start of the school day. Elementary students who are consistently tardy are reported to the Head of School as required by law.

## FAMILY VACATIONS

It is difficult for a child to miss school for an extended time for any reason. Obviously, a child must stay home when sick. However, a family vacation while school is in session should be avoided. In the third year of Primary and at the Elementary level, many Montessori lessons are given in small groups, even if a child is absent. Lessons can be long and complex, and it is not possible to present the new concept or skill with the same level of detail to a child who has missed the initial presentation. And, since Aidan does not rely on workbooks, it is difficult to send students off with a week of work. Please plan vacations to coordinate with the school calendar (located in the back of this Handbook).

## *Snow Days & Inclement Weather*

When faced with the complexities produced by inclement weather, please note that we make our own decisions about whether to close or delay school and do NOT follow the District of Columbia public school system. Any decision to amend a school day is not taken lightly and is always made with consideration for the safety of all members of the Aidan community.

Please opt into emergency text messages from the school (see the Communication section of this document for instructions), go to Aidan's website ([www.aidanschool.org](http://www.aidanschool.org)), or call the school to listen to the outgoing message on our machine. **In the event that Aidan opens on a delayed schedule, Toddler classes will not be held.**

## *Health & Safety*

### RECORDS

All records listed below must be submitted to Aidan in order for your child to begin school. If we do not have this information, we will not allow your child to attend class.

1. **Emergency Contact Information:** This should include emergency phone numbers and emails for parents, who is allowed to pick up your child, and any allergy or other important medical conditions. A request for this information will be emailed to you in the summer.
2. **Current DC Medical Forms for Child:** This includes immunization records and must have your doctor's original signature, not a stamped signature. DC also requires Aidan to have the following three forms on file for each student: DC Emergency Medical Authorization Form, Registration for Child Receiving Care Away from Home Form, and Travel and Activity Authorization Form. These forms

can be found in the Parent section of our website. Please contact the office with questions.

Link to forms: <https://www.aidanschool.org/families/parent-resources>

3. **Current DC Dental Assessment Form:** This is required for all children 3 years and older. This form is available in the Parent Section of the website.

Link to forms: <https://www.aidanschool.org/families/parent-resources>

#### 4. **Aidan's Consent and Waiver Forms.**

5. **Guardianship, as appropriate.** If necessary for your family situation, please make sure the school knows who has guardianship for your child.

### ABSENCES & ILLNESS

Parents should notify the School when their child is absent by completing the absence form found on the Parent Portal. [www.aidanschool.org/parents/parents-forms-and-information](http://www.aidanschool.org/parents/parents-forms-and-information)

Please indicate if your child has a communicable disease.

In case of an absence due to a communicable disease or an illness of more than five days' duration, a note from your child's physician is required before the child can be readmitted to the classroom. **A child must be free of fever (over 100 degrees Fahrenheit), vomiting, and/or diarrhea for 24 hours before they can return to school.**

Please be considerate of others in your child's class. Do not send your child to school they have a fever or are "coming down with something." Toddler and Primary children with a colored discharge from the nose should stay home until the discharge is clear in color. If your child becomes ill at school, we will call you to come and take your child home as soon as possible.

If your child goes home because of illness, they may not return to school that same day for afternoon or evening activities such as the Discovery Program or ASP.

### LICE

If head lice are discovered on a student, we will send that student home and notify all parents in the class that a child with lice has been in the class. We will carefully check all students in the class where lice were found, as well as the classes of that student's siblings. Upon the student's return to school, they will be carefully checked to be certain there are no live or

hatching eggs remaining. Aidan has a “no nits policy;” a child who has nits may not return to the classroom.

## MEDICATION POLICY

Sometimes it is necessary for a child to take medication during the school day.

**Prescription medication must be brought to the school office by an adult in the original container** (medications may not be sent in a lunch box). A pharmacist will fill the prescription in two containers if requested. The prescription medication must be accompanied by a Medication Authorization Form stating the current date, dosage, and time the medication should be given, dates of administering the medication, and whether the medication should be returned at the end of each day. The Medication Authorization Form must be signed by the physician and parent. Medication Authorization Forms are available online. [www.aidanschool.org/parents/parents-forms-and-information](http://www.aidanschool.org/parents/parents-forms-and-information)

Non-prescription, “over-the-counter” medications of any kind (which includes but is not limited to fever reducers, pain medications, cough syrup or drops) cannot be taken at school unless accompanied by a Medication Authorization Form signed by the child’s physician. The medication (in the original container), and the Medication Authorization Form, as described above, should be given to the School Office by an adult.

If your child has a medical condition or allergies and requires routine medications, please contact the Office Manager to arrange a specific medical treatment plan for your child.

For a student who is severely allergic and requires an Epi-pen, please provide two Epi-pens and a Medication Authorization Form to Aidan. One Epi-pen will be stored in the child’s classroom, and the second Epi-pen will be stored in Aidan’s Front Office. If the Epi-pen is administered, the parent will be notified, and we will call 911.

When parents disclose an allergy or food sensitivity to the school, we inform the teacher and indicate the allergy on the snack guidelines. We also include this information on the Snack Reminder notices for parents.

Aidan School requires that families not send in food/snacks containing peanuts or peanut by-products for the safety of children who are severely allergic. These children may experience life-threatening anaphylactic reactions to peanuts or peanut by-products. While focusing on making the School as safe as possible for children, the School cannot guarantee the total absence of peanuts or peanut products in foods that are brought to campus by every child. We strongly encourage the family of any child with known peanut allergies to contact us regarding health care plans and practices to promote food safety.

Taking any food allergies into account when providing snacks or celebration foods is extremely important. Some allergies, particularly to nuts, are life threatening. Sending items



in their original packaging (containing ingredient lists) or a handwritten ingredient list for homemade items is very useful. If an item containing an allergen is sent in, the allergen needs to be indicated to the teacher so a substitute snack can be provided to an allergic child. So as not to exclude any students, food that all children can enjoy should be the first choice. When in doubt, please contact your child's teacher

## FOOD ALLERGIES

Aidan requires that families not send in food/snacks containing peanuts or peanut by-products for the safety of children who are severely allergic. These children may experience life-threatening anaphylactic reactions to peanuts or peanut by-products. Please be sure to check labels and ingredients.

While focusing on making the School as safe as possible for children, the School cannot guarantee the total absence of peanuts or peanut products in foods that are brought to campus by every child. We strongly encourage the family of any child with known peanut allergies to contact us regarding allergy action plans and practices to promote food safety. Lists of allergies and food sensitivities will be distributed by class, and severe allergy lists will be distributed to the community for the safety of the children. Please respect these sensitivities when supplying snacks.

### *Severe Allergy List*

At the beginning of the year, the School will send out a list of severe food allergies prevalent in each specific classroom. We want all parents to be aware of all severe food allergies at the school. Awareness is a HUGE part of our efforts to keep children safe.

Students in classrooms where there are no allergies are still required to not bring in foods with peanuts as an ingredient due to the potential of cross-contamination.

### *Full Class Snacks*

All ingredients or class snacks brought in by parents must be approved by the teachers before they can be brought on campus and given to the children. This requires parents to give their child's teacher a list of all ingredients of whatever foods they are bringing to Aidan at least 48 hours in advance for approval.

## *Security*

The front door is locked all day and monitored (via camera) by the Office Manager. In order to enter the school, parents, volunteers and visitors must ring the doorbell and be buzzed in after being viewed on a television monitor. Visitors must check in with the Receptionist. If your child arrives after 8:30 AM, you must sign in with the Front Office so we can take your

child off the “absent” list and so that a staff member can walk your child to class to minimize interruptions to classes already in progress. The playground gates are kept closed except during Arrival and Dismissal, when teachers and staff are accepting or releasing students.

As stated in the Arrival/Dismissal Section, Aidan Montessori School is authorized to release a child only to his or her parents, unless we receive in writing the names of those people permitted to pick up your child. If your child is going home with a friend after school, the School Office must have permission from the parent—last minute phone calls from a parent for emergency situations are acceptable.

## *Emergency Preparedness*

### GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY OR CRISIS

1. **FIRST RESPONSE** – A notice and procedures will be posted on the school’s website ([www.aidanschool.org](http://www.aidanschool.org)) and emailed if possible. Follow instructions carefully.
2. In some emergencies (a fire, for example) the children may be walked to a safe location where you can pick them up. Information will be posted on the website and disseminated by way of our text notification system.
3. We have several safe locations. The St. Thomas Apostle Church basement is our primary location. The basement was built in the 1950’s as a bomb shelter. We have complete provisions stored there for three days. The Marriott and the Visitors Center at the National Zoo are our secondary locations.
4. If we are required to “shelter in place” at Aidan, we have provisions and are completely prepared to do so.
5. In some cases, FEMA may tell you not to leave your building or location, or we may be told to allow no one to enter our building. Please know that your child’s well-being and safety are our only priority.
6. Your child will never be left without an adult. If you are unable to pick up your child during a crisis or emergency, they will be safely cared for until you can be reunited.
7. **You keeping all records up to date in our office is critical**—including cell phone numbers, email, and those individuals you allow to pick up your child. Consider carefully your list of those to whom we can release your child in a crisis/emergency.

8. Respond immediately to any requests for items or information related to our emergency plan.
9. Keep the school's telephone number and website handy at home, at work, and in your car.
10. The school has a supply of emergency clothing, food, and water for all the children in the school attic and at the church. If your child has dietary restrictions or medication requirements, you should supply the school with two bags containing a 3-day supply of special foods or medications.

If you have further questions or concerns, please contact the Chief Operations Officer to discuss them.

## *Classroom Procedures*

### FOOD: LUNCHES, SNACKS AND FOOD ALLERGIES

#### *Lunches*

Lunch is a relaxing and informal time, a chance to practice grace and courtesy, and to socialize with classmates. Finding appropriate lunch foods for children who do not enjoy sandwiches can be challenging. Cheese and crackers, cold cuts, even cold pizza are good options. Fresh vegetables and fresh fruits are great "side dishes." A small dessert (no candy, please) may be included; however, we will ask the children not to eat dessert first. We will also return the uneaten portion of lunch to you so that you know what an appropriate size lunch is for your child. (Sometimes eating a sandwich cut into quarters instead of halves is easier for your child, or perhaps half a sandwich is enough.) When including a drink, please choose 100% juice, milk, or water.

Lunches should not include items that need to be microwaved or refrigerated. Please include a cloth napkin and the utensils your child will need in order to eat their lunch. In an effort to be a responsible community we ask that parents try to employ reusable containers, washable utensils, and cloth napkins rather than disposables. We recommend that you allow your child to be a part of the lunch-packing process as a complement to their Montessori school experience, which encourages independence and responsibility.

#### *Snack: Toddler, Primary & ASP Students*

Each Toddler and Primary family is asked to contribute food for their child's class; usually you will be asked once in the fall and once in the spring. Toddler families are usually asked to

provide food three times a year. If your child is enrolled in ASP, you will be asked to provide snack foods for the group, usually once a year.

You can leave your box/bag of snacks with a staff member at drop-off or bring it in to the classroom. Please label the box/bag with your teacher's name. If you are unable to participate or have any last-minute difficulties, please contact your designated person - teacher or Room Parent.

Please use the following guidelines in conjunction with the Snack Schedule provided for your child's class. This information can be found on your child's online class portal. You may also receive separate guidelines directly from the teacher when it is your turn.

### *Quantity*

Enough food should be provided to feed all the children in your child's class for the week. Please ask your child's teacher for approximate amounts. Fresh fruit and vegetables (apples, melon, carrot sticks, etc.), cheese, crackers, muffins, bagels, breads, cream cheese, or other spreads are some suggestions. Please do not send cookies, cupcakes, individual snack cups, juice boxes, nuts, grapes, hot dogs, popcorn, soda, or candy of any kind. Each class has a small refrigerator with only enough storage for 2-3 days' worth at a time.

### *Elementary Students*

Elementary families are to pack an extra food item in their child's lunch to be used as a snack each day. We ask that families be mindful of not packing snacks with sugar as a main ingredient. The best foods for snack often contain high levels of protein - which will sustain your child's energy throughout the day. Fresh fruit, meat, cheeses, yogurts, and vegetables with dips like hummus are some of the best snack options for your child. Drinks are not necessary, as we encourage students to drink lots of water throughout the day.

## FOOD ALLERGIES

Aidan School requires that families not send in food/snacks containing peanuts or peanut by-products for the safety of children who are severely allergic. These children may experience life-threatening anaphylactic reactions to peanuts or peanut by-products. Please be sure to check labels and ingredients.

Please note that we have updated our school policies around food allergies, we encourage all families to review our "Food Allergies" policy on page 40 of this Handbook.

## CELEBRATION FOOD GUIDELINES

### *Birthdays*

At Aidan Montessori School we acknowledge the gift of the life of each person in our community. Along with classmates and parents, we celebrate the child's journey around the sun (i.e., years old) in a special ceremony. Beginning in Fall of 2018, food or treats will no longer be part of the festivities. Please check with you child's teacher and/or on your online class portal for further information.

### *Cultural Holidays*

Aidan is a non-sectarian and non-denominational school and with all due respect recognizes that, though many holidays cross cultural boundaries, some of our families either do not observe or do not observe in the same way. We acknowledge that understanding these differences and appreciating the richness within our community is paramount to our children's education. We realize that food is integral to the heart of so many celebrations and welcome the chance to have you share your heritage. Please refer to the above guidelines when preparing a menu; check with your child's teacher well in advance. See guidelines for Full Class Snacks under Food Allergies on page 40.

## PARTY INVITATIONS

Please do not send invitations to school to be distributed. In a small school, being inclusive is so important. Being left out can be devastating to a child. Here are some suggested guidelines:

While you may be inclined to invite the whole class, doing so may be impractical, and most children do better with a smaller group. A good rule of thumb is to invite the number of children which corresponds to the age of your child - 3 guests for a three year old; 8, for an eight year old, in addition to family, of course. Allowing the child to choose his or her guests, while Montessori in principle, requires parental guidance and has the potential of hurting a child who is not invited.

It is best if children do not discuss a party that is coming up or a party that they have been to because other children may feel excluded. Please, ask your child to refrain from discussing social events during the school day.

In order to keep the guest list manageable while ensuring that no one child feels left out, consider inviting all of one (or two) ages. If you are unsure of the ages, please ask your teacher.

Be sure to check the class lists and confirm with the teacher to prevent omissions such as a child who has joined the class mid-year.

*Note:* Toddlers are different. For them a small party with one or two children is preferable, and they do not share information with each other in the same way as the older children.

## CELEBRATING HOLIDAYS

Aidan is non-sectarian and non-denominational, including the observance of holidays. Though most holidays are part of the culture and heritage of the majority of our students, we recognize that all do not observe each holiday or do not observe them in the same way. We recognize, however, that understanding a variety of holidays enriches the classroom and cultural awareness of the students so please contact your child's teacher if you would like to share elements of your culture with the class.

## CLOTHING & SHOES

**Please label** all outer garments your child wears to school. This includes coats, sweaters, hats, gloves, boots, etc. Should an item be misplaced, please check the Lost & Found basket in the first floor stairwell. All Toddler and Primary students need a change of labeled clothing to be kept in their classroom. If your Primary student is enrolled in the After School Program (ASP), please provide an additional change of labeled clothes to be kept in ASP.

The school has a limited supply of "extra clothes." If your child comes home wearing unfamiliar clothes, please wash these clothes and return them to school promptly.

**Children should wear clothes they can manage themselves when going to the bathroom.** Suspenders, sweaters outside of overalls, tights or small buttons are difficult for children to manage themselves. Pants with elastic at the waist are often easier than pants with snaps or belts. We are willing to assist your child, but he or she is very pleased when he or she can say, "I did it myself!"

All clothing should be weather appropriate for being active outside comfortably.

Aidan strongly recommends sending children to school in athletic shoes (sneakers). Full-day and Elementary children can participate in Outdoor/Physical Education only if they are wearing athletic shoes with laces or Velcro fasteners.

## TOYS

Toys are a distraction from classroom work and should not be brought to school. Also, please check pockets for unfamiliar items. These may be important parts of Montessori materials and need to be returned to school.

## *Field Trip Policies*

Field trips are planned for Elementary students and a limited number are planned for Full-Day Primary students. Room Parents help in the planning and coordination of trips in conjunction with the teachers to support and complement the curriculum. Aidan's Consent and Waiver forms for leaving campus are completed by the parents as part of the emergency contact information request during the summer. Permission from the parents is required for participation in the trips. Families will be notified in advance of each trip. Field Trip Coordinators should send the schedule of field trips for his or her class to the Director of Communication.

Transportation is by foot, Metro, or parent drivers. Rules for car seat and seatbelt safety are followed. Children must be properly seated in a child safety seat until they turn 8. Parents sending in car seats in order to enable their child to participate in a field trip is imperative. Children eight and over must wear seat belts at all times. No child will be allowed to sit in the front seat.

Aidan will provide Room Parents with guidelines regarding the number of chaperones required for each field trip. The school may cancel a trip if there are not enough adult chaperones.

Parents who drive on field trips are required to have a copy of their driver's license on file with the Front Office.

Parent chaperones must keep their cell phones on and within reach during field trips. In the event of an emergency, chaperones must call the School and follow instructions from Aidan staff.

### CHAPERONE GUIDELINES

Educational opportunities outside of School enrich our children's learning and reinforce lessons taught in the classroom. These outings enlighten the children about the world around them. They would not be able to participate without the help and guidance of our volunteers.

Chaperones should keep in mind that field trips and Elementary Going Outs are extensions of the Montessori classroom experience and, therefore, please make certain that you help ensure that all the children get the maximum opportunity for self-directed activity and independence.

Field trips and Going Outs should NOT be viewed as a chance to chat with other parents. You are there to closely supervise the children assigned to you AT ALL TIMES from the moment of departure from the School until they are returned to their classrooms. Especially if they are

off having free play, you must be nearby and vigilant. You would expect nothing less of another parent who was responsible for your child.

Chaperones may NOT use or check cell phones while supervising the children. If you have an emergency, please notify the teacher so you can step away to manage the call. Please do not take pictures of the children unless directed to do so by the teacher.

Chaperones will be assigned a group of student at the discretion of the teacher and should stay close to the teacher/staff member unless they are told otherwise. If children are demonstrating behavioral issues, please notify the teacher immediately.

Be in charge - you are not along to be the children's buddy. You are the adult in charge. Enforce the rules consistently. Be a role model: model good behavior by listening to and following the teacher's directions.

You have been invited to a part of a School experience and therefore must abide by all of the Code of Conduct as written in this Parent Handbook on page 49.

### ***Going Outside in Weather Extremes***

All children enrolled at Aidan Montessori School shall go outdoors for recess, walks, PE class, and ASP unless the air temperature and/or the wind-chill factor is below 25° as reported by the National Weather Service for Washington, DC, at the time of said outdoor activity. Plans will be made for age-appropriate indoor movement and play.

Decisions around exposing children to extreme heat and diminished air quality may be made at the discretion of School leadership in conjunction with recommendations from the local and federal governments.

### ***Teacher & Staff Gifts***

Teachers and staff at Aidan are not permitted to accept cash "tips" or gifts, except for small, personal tokens of appreciation. Even these tokens are unnecessary. If you feel the desire to give a small gift, something made by your child is a particularly charming way to say thank you.



# Code of Conduct

*(Code of Conduct, Grievance and Disciplinary Protocols for Parents and Students)*

## ***I. Parent Conduct:***

Families with a child enrolled at Aidan become part of our Aidan Community. This community thrives because we all agree to treat each other with grace, courtesy, and respect. Your signature on the Aidan Contract indicates your willingness to abide by the following guidelines:

### **A. PRIVACY**

Please help us maintain the mutual trust and respect we all need to keep our community healthy by safeguarding the privacy of children, parents and staff. Passing on confidential, damaging or hurtful information is not acceptable.

### **B. CONFLICTS**

Conflicts between parents or parents and staff should be addressed in a calm and private manner, preferably in person or with a respectful note. Phone calls and emails should not be used to express anger, frustration or criticism. Meetings are to be held by appointment or at a mutually convenient time.

### **C. ETIQUETTE**

Aidan teachers, staff and parents are all expected to strive for high standards of etiquette and behavior. Commitments should be honored, criticism should be constructive and genial, and “thank you” should be frequent. Parking and traffic laws must be followed, and Aidan’s neighbors should be treated with the utmost respect. Using proper etiquette is good for our community and for our children – we should model the very best behavior for them.

### **D. COMMUNICATION**

When a parent has a question, concern or grievance, he or she should make every effort to bring their issue to the appropriate person, as outlined below:

*Who to Contact:*

#### **For Program, Student and Classroom issues:**

*First:* Child’s teacher

*Second:* Chief of Operations for Elementary concerns, or Director of Education for Toddler and Primary questions.

*Third: Head of School*

**For General School Operations and Policy issues:**

Chief of Operations

The use of broadcast emails to contact fellow parents about sensitive issues involving Aidan policy, teachers, staff or students is inappropriate and may be grounds for probation.

*Note: Aidan's Board of Trustees is NOT charged with the oversight of day-to-day school management. When faced with questions about such issues, Board members will simply pass those concerns on to the Head of School, as is "best practice" for Trustees in independent schools.*

## ***II. Zero Tolerance***

Some behavior is grounds for immediate withdrawal from the Aidan community, including:

### **SEXUAL ABUSE/ASSAULT**

Sexual abuse/assault is illegal and will not be tolerated. Allegations of abuse or assault will be thoroughly investigated and offenders will be dealt with appropriately. This applies to all employees, parents, students, volunteers, and subcontractors.

### **DISCRIMINATION**

Discrimination or harassment of any person in the Aidan community on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, disability, source of income, and place of residence or business is counter to our values and will not be tolerated. Allegations of discrimination will be thoroughly investigated and violators of Aidan's Non-Discrimination Policy, found in the Parent Handbook, will be dealt with appropriately. This applies to all employees, parents, volunteers, and subcontractors.

### **CONSEQUENCES**

Parents who stray from the above guidelines are subject to possible probation after a review by the Chief of Operations and the Head of School. Parents on probation will be barred from participating in school volunteer activities for a specified period of time. Parents who are put on probation more than three times during a school year will be asked to withdraw their child from Aidan beginning the following year. However, the School is not required to allow for three probationary periods before terminating an enrollment contract. Parental behavior determined by the School to be particularly egregious may result in immediate termination of

the enrollment contract(s), or non-renewal of enrollment(s) at the sole discretion of the School.

### *III. For Students:*

Our community expects students to:

- Respect themselves.
- Respect others.
- Respect the environment, the property of the school, and the property of others.

At Aidan we teach grace and courtesy beginning at the earliest ages. This is a continuing process, and children demonstrate respect in different ways depending on their age and social development.

Occasional aggression is normal throughout early and middle childhood (the span of ages of Aidan's student population). Some children have a more difficult time self-regulating. In these situations, the School and parents should avoid labeling children. It is the job of the teacher and the Aidan community to support the child as he or she learns self-control.

The Zero Tolerance Policy stated in the Code of Conduct for Parents also applies to students as developmentally appropriate.<sup>1</sup>

There are times when a student may exhibit repeated behavior that is troubling or harmful to him- or herself, other students, the school's physical environment, or other members of the Aidan community. Although the school must retain the right to address issues in accordance with professional discretion and on the particular facts of a matter, below is the general course of action the school will follow in working with a child and his/her parents:

- Immediate verbal correction and/or redirection of behavior in a developmentally appropriate manner
- Call to parents
- Student visit to administrator with teacher
- Conferences with parents between teacher(s), parents and administrator
- Individual Behavior Plan developed with the School

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<sup>1</sup> "Developmentally appropriate" is a term referring to action taken appropriate to the age and stage of the child.

- May include requirement of seeking counseling, specific diagnostic testing, or full evaluation at the parents' expense.
- Timeline for assessing the success of the Individual Behavior Plan
- Student Contract (Elementary age only)
- Probation (Elementary age only) - A student's continued enrollment will be contingent upon his or her adherence to the Individual Behavior Plan and the Aidan Code of Conduct for Students
- Suspension (Elementary age only) - A student will be temporarily removed from the classroom either within the school building or at home
- Expulsion (Elementary age only) - A student will leave the Aidan community permanently

Allowing the process to take place in private without interference by other parties is vital. Parents who are concerned about the impact of another student's behavior on their child should follow the procedure outlined under "Communication" above, and speak first to the teacher. The School (teachers, administrators, staff) will address the concerns brought forward, but in most cases will not share the personal situation of the child with other parties including the parent expressing the concern.

## *Volunteering at Aidan*

Aidan volunteers are vital to the success of our programs and to the children. Each year, Aidan is fortunate to receive many gifts of time, talent, and treasure, which are essential to our success. Volunteers help to make special activities happen - field trips need chaperones and the Auction needs a chair. When you agree to perform a service for the school, the entire community is counting on you to fulfill your promise. If you cannot, please contact a member of the PA Leadership or the event coordinator and arrange for a replacement right away.

Being present at the school and on field trips requires confidentiality regarding what is observed or heard. Any concerns you may have should be made known to the teacher who will indicate if you need to speak to an administrator.

## RESPECT FOR THE CHILD

A positive, optimistic attitude about children, a cooperative spirit, a nurturing of independence, a recognition of unique individuality, trust in the child's work, providing the right activity, and listening to and observing in order to follow the child. One should avoid pride and anger, touching the child unless invited, speaking ill of the child, sarcasm, teasing, overreacting to misbehavior, and implied reward and punishment. Phrasing of instructions

should be direct and to the point. When communicating with the child, speak to the child at his/her eye level.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

Includes personal information about children and families, organizational problems, and individual staff matters. All records, files, conversations, and conferences are held for the benefit of the child and are strictly confidential. Being present in the classroom requires confidentiality regarding what is observed or heard. Problems or concerns should be addressed to the teacher present.

#### GOOD STAFF RELATIONS

Includes working cooperatively and non-judgmentally with our staff in a trusting manner. Direct communication with teachers and staff is important. Negative comments, gossip, and other harmful behaviors are violations of the School's Code.

#### PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Includes keeping private matters outside of the school, maintaining agreements at all levels regarding performance of duties, and meeting the needs of individual children and staff.

### *Guidelines from The Association of Independent Maryland Schools (AIMS)*

#### PARENTS & INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

To be successful, every independent school needs and expects the cooperation of parents, who must understand and embrace the school's mission, share the school's core values, and fully support the school's curriculum, faculty, and staff. When joined by a common set of beliefs and purposes, the independent school and its parents form a powerful team with far-reaching positive effects on children and the entire community.

Working together, parents and school professionals exert a strong influence on children to become better educated; they also help them to mature by modeling adult working relationships based upon civility, honesty, and respect.

In practice, the greater impediment to effective teamwork between independent schools and parents grows out of misunderstandings about school decision-making processes: Who makes decisions in independent schools? How are those decisions made? Independent

schools must communicate their procedures to parents, who, in turn, share the important responsibility to become informed members of the school community.

## PARENTS & THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

In most independent schools, decision-making authority at the highest level resides in a volunteer Board of Trustees whose membership often includes current parents. The Board of Trustees does not intervene in the daily affairs of the school, such as curriculum development and hiring, evaluating or firing of faculty and staff. Instead, the Board focuses on three areas critical to the success of any independent school: it selects, evaluates, and supports the Head of School, to whom the Board delegates authority to manage the school; the Board develops broad institutional policies that guide the Head in running the school; and it is accountable for the financial well-being of the school. In the conduct of official business, the Board acts only as a whole; individual Trustees, including the Board Chair, have no authority to act unless specifically authorized to do so by the Board acting as a whole:

- AIMS encourages parents who are interested in high-level decision making to stay informed about the work of the Board of Trustees by reading school publications, talking to the Head of School, and attending appropriate meetings.
- Parents with concerns about the school or with decisions made by the administration or faculty are encouraged to inquire about and follow the school's review process, but they should not expect the Board of Trustees to act as an appeals board. In a day school, trustees often interact with others within the school community and hear concerns about the daily operation of the school. As a matter of good practice, the trustee reports those concerns to the Head of School.

## PARENTS & THE FACULTY & ADMINISTRATION

Parents play an essential and positive role in the life of an independent school. Not only are parents advocates for their children, they also support the faculty and administration through extensive volunteer activities and events.

The relationship between parents and the faculty and administration is formally governed by the school's written enrollment contract and handbook, in which the school's procedures are spelled out. When parents choose to enroll their child in an independent school, they agree to subscribe to the school's mission, follow the school's rules, and abide by the school's decisions. However, most teachers and administrators would agree that trust and mutual respect are the most essential underpinnings of effective working relationships with parents.

- AIMS encourages parents to work productively with teachers and administrators by staying informed about their child and important events in the life of the school. Thoughtful questions and suggestions should be welcomed by the school.

Incumbent upon the school, is providing parents with timely and pertinent information.

- Parents best support a school climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to the teacher or administrator closest to the problem. Efforts by parents to lobby other parents will be viewed by the school as counterproductive.
- While parents may not agree with every decision by the school, in most cases the parent and school will find enough common ground to continue a mutually respectful relationship. In the extreme case, however, an impasse may be so severe that the parent cannot remain a constructive member of the community. In such cases, both the parent and the school should consider whether another school would be a better match for the family.

## THE PARENT ASSOCIATION & THE SCHOOL

The Parent Association in an independent school provides a vital and much-appreciated service to school leadership and the entire school community. Because the Parent Association is so important, and its volunteer activities are potentially so wide-ranging, AIMS recommends the following steps to structure and clarify the Association's role:

- The Board of Trustees, in consultation with the administration, should develop a set of written by-laws for the Association that make clear its procedures and role as a service organization.
- The by-laws should clearly state the Association's mission to support the decisions and policies of the Board and administration. The Parent Association neither participates in policy-making by the school, nor functions as a lobbying group.
- The finances of the Parent Association should be supervised and regularly monitored by the school and should be part of the school's annual audit process.
- The Head of School should be closely involved in the Association nominating process. Cooperation and teamwork between the Head of School and the officers of the Parent Association are crucial to the health of the school community.
- Advertising activities and events is an appropriate function of the Parent Association. The PA, however, is not a public relations arm of the school and should play no role in the school's efforts to communicate about itself.

# Communication

## *Emails*

### REGULAR COMMUNICATIONS

Our policy is to communicate with families via email whenever possible, but as sparingly as possible. The following is a list of emails that families can expect from Aidan:

- **This Week at Aidan:** Sent every Sunday evening with a schedule for the upcoming week
- **School Notes:** Our monthly newsletter that is sent on the first Wednesday of every month. **Please make certain that you read this email carefully**, particularly through the section with the yellow background, as it is used to communicate important information without overwhelming you with separate emails for each item of note at school. This newsletter will include such content as notes on events, photos from around Aidan, and articles on events and parent support from our faculty.

You can expect to receive personalized emails about your child's progress both during the first and second semesters. In addition to communication about events affecting your child, you can expect to receive periodic classroom updates with photos throughout the year.

Parent-Conferences in November and March, and Progress reports in January and June for all levels, are also useful tools for discussion between you and your child's teacher about your child's progress.

We will also send home important medical/health notices and emails about certain events. Having correct email addresses for each family is very important. Please make every effort to read all Aidan emails for important information. Items that cannot go home via email are mailed or occasionally placed in children's backpacks.

### EMAIL DEADLINES

In order to be sure that we do not send out conflicting information, and that our activities reflect Aidan cohesively and correctly, submissions for the School Notes newsletter must be approved (and edited, if necessary) by the Director of Communications, the Head of School, and other stakeholders within the school as appropriate. As such, please consult with the Director of Communications about any content you would like to submit to School Notes at least one week before it is scheduled to go out - typically the last Wednesday of the month during the school year.



## AIDAN MOBILE APP

We strongly encourage all members of the Aidan community to use our mobile app, which will help you access everything from emergency notifications to school news more easily. Notably, it will persistently log you in to Aidan's website portals, so that you can access the safeguarded information stored there behind a password without re-entering your credentials every time. Search either the App Store or Google Play for "Aidan Montessori School" to find and download the app.

## *Emergency Text Messaging System*

Aidan Montessori School has developed a comprehensive Crisis Plan to safeguard Aidan students and employees in the event of a range of crisis contingencies. If circumstances permit, parents will be notified in the event of an emergency or unanticipated event via text messaging from SMS provider Remind.com. **Parents should opt-in to receive text messages sent from Aidan if they do not receive a test text early in the year.**

To do so, please to <https://www.remind.com/join/fa940> and follow the prompts, or to subscribe manually, **text @fa940 to the number 81010**. You will be asked to enter your first and last name to complete your subscription. Standard text messaging rates apply.

## *Aidan Website*

Parents are encouraged to visit Aidan's website, [www.aidanschool.org](http://www.aidanschool.org), for general information, calendar details, emergency updates, and more. The school also hosts more sensitive information for families in Aidan's Parent Portal. Families should receive login information for the portal by email shortly after enrolling at the school. For any problems accessing the portal, please email [aidan@aidanschool.org](mailto:aidan@aidanschool.org) for assistance.

## *Consistency and Honoring Privacy Preferences*

Aidan is fortunate to have a community that is rich in events and talented volunteers, and it benefits tremendously from having such energy and creativity in our corner. All communications created on the behalf of the school by any member of the community must be checked by the Director of Communications before being distributed to the Aidan community. This helps us to ensure that family privacy preferences are being respected and that the school is being represented consistently and accurately.

## *General Communication*

### COMMUNICATION WITH SECOND FAMILIES

The school will make every effort to send school communications to second families as requested when supplied with names, emails, and addresses.

### COMMUNICATION WITH FACULTY/STAFF

Teachers and staff will be in touch with you via phone or email when needed. In addition to the twice-yearly Parent-Teacher Conferences, feel free to discuss your child's school progress, behavior or overall well-being with the child's teacher when you feel it is necessary or appropriate. Please call (202-387-2700) or email them on their Aidan school email address (first initial.last name@aidanschool.org). Your child's teacher will return your call or email within 48 hours. Please do not use Arrival or Dismissal for these conversations, as the teacher has other responsibilities at this time that will prevent him or her from giving you his or her full attention.

Please be respectful of faculty and staff during nights, weekends, and holidays - allow them the appropriate amount of time upon returning to work to respond to emails and phone calls.

Please contact members of the administrative staff using their school phone number, email address, or by leaving them a note in the front office. (See the section on Code of Conduct for communication of concerns or grievances.)

### COMMUNICATION WITH FELLOW PARENTS

Room parents set up group email lists at the beginning of the year and communicate with parents in their class regarding school and class activities. Room Parents should let the Director of Communications and Advancement know prior to asking parents for monetary donations of any kind. Primary and Elementary Field Trip Coordinators should send the field trip schedule for the class to the Director of Communications and Marketing.

### COMMUNICATION WITH THE BOARD

Aidan's Board of Trustees works on strategic, long-term issues facing the school. The Board welcomes comments and insight regarding site acquisition, current facilities, neighbor relations, institutional finances, trustee development, school diversity and financial aid. The Board does not work on day-to-day matters such as hiring/firing of employees (other than the Head of School) or the educational programs. Parents may contact individual members of the Board using the school directory or by sending a letter to the President addressing the entire Board. Concerns or questions raised by parents to the Board related to school operations or

school programs will be passed on to the Head of School as it is a best practice for independent school trustees.

## ***Social & Digital Media***

Aidan Montessori School is officially represented on various social networks. These sites are managed by the Director of Communications. Links are available on the homepage of the Aidan website.

## ***Class Portal Groups***

Each teacher, in conjunction with the Director of Communications, maintains a class group on the Aidan Portal. Each page has complete information for contacting your child's teacher, including the best method and times to reach them. Snack schedules, class event and trip information, and class updates are also posted here. Photos can be viewed on this page.

To view your child's Class Page on the website, please visit the parent portal and login with your email address and password.

Please also check for monthly additions of blog entries and photos from each classroom.

# Admission & Transition

## *Sibling Policy*

Siblings of re-enrolled students who have not applied out are given priority in the admissions process if the application is submitted on or before the December deadline. If a student has applied out, their sibling is not accorded preference. If the original re-enrolled sibling does not ultimately reenter in September, then the sibling for whom preferential admission was granted may not be offered re-enrollment the following year.

## *Applying Out*

As a member of the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington, we maintain common deadlines with other area independent schools. Contact your schools of interest for specific application information. For assistance from Aidan for applying out, please email [registrar@aidanschool.org](mailto:registrar@aidanschool.org).

## *Application Timeline for Admission into the Following Year*

### FALL

- Open Houses/School Tours
- Parents must schedule a placement counseling meeting with the Head of Upper School or Head of Lower School depending on the child's respective level.

### DECEMBER

- Deadline to submit teacher recommendation forms to Aidan.

### MARCH

- Notifications sent.
- **It is important that Aidan receive all recommendation forms prior to Winter Break** to allow faculty the opportunity to use the break to complete the forms thoroughly.
- Aidan cannot guarantee that schools will receive our recommendations in a timely fashion if we do not receive the forms by the deadline before Winter Break.

## *Special Procedures for Graduating Students*

- Aidan recommends applying to no fewer than six schools.
- Aidan requests that parents work through the application process closely with the administration, allowing Aidan to advocate on behalf of the student to first choice schools.
- Parents of graduating students should meet with the Head of School at the beginning of September to discuss the process ahead.

## *Transitioning from Primary to Elementary*

During the third year of Primary, parents should do the following:

### OCTOBER

- Attend “Journey and Discovery.”

### OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

- Schedule a meeting to discuss Aidan’s Elementary program with the Head of Upper School.

### JANUARY

- Re-enroll for Elementary.

# Business & Finances

The Business Office is responsible for preparing and sending out invoices as well as posting payments to parents' accounts. Here are some guidelines for interacting with the Business Office:

- Please refer all questions regarding billing for enrollment contracts, tuition and BSP/ASP to our Senior Accountant.
- In order to post payments correctly, all checks that are made payable to the school need to include a description in the Memo portion of the check (example: Tuition – Plan A – Nicholas – Full-Day Primary).

## *Tuition Payment Plans*

Tuition for any given school year is due in the June preceding the school year.

In order to accommodate the myriad needs of families, Aidan has established alternative payment plans that spread the payments out over the school year. The payment plan options are listed below:

- **Plan A** – This is a one-time payment and is due in June.
- **Plan B** – 60% of the payment is due on June 1st, with the balance due on the first day back after Winter Break. There is a 2.0% fee added to the tuition for this Plan.
- **Plan C** – These are 10 monthly payments, with the first payment due in June and the 10th payment due in March. The interim payments are due on the first of the month. There is a 2.5% fee added to the tuition for this Plan.

Each family must select a payment plan on the enrollment contract. If no preference is noted, then the family will be billed under Plan A. If a family would like to change payment plans, the request must be submitted in writing to the Business Office and, if at all possible, such requests should be made before the first tuition payment has been made.

## SMART TUITION

All families, regardless of payment plan selected and payment history, must enroll in the Smart Tuition system. Re-enrollment materials include Smart Tuition forms and details about the system.

## PAYMENT METHODS

Aidan does not accept cash or credit card payments. Plan A families may pay by check, cashier's check, money order, or certified check. Plan A families may arrange for an automatic withdrawal from their bank account. Plan B and Plan C families must pay via automatic withdrawal from their bank account.

## *Enrollment Contracts*

The enrollment contract that the parent signs is a legal agreement between parents/guardians and Aidan Montessori School. The school requires predictable tuition revenue in order to effectively provide the services contracted. Re-enrollment contracts for current parents are distributed in early January, are due with the re-enrollment fee in January, and become binding in June. Contracts offered to new families also become binding in June. Some important points:

- **Tuition is nonrefundable. After the June binding date parents/guardians are responsible in full for this obligation.** To defray this cost, Aidan uses Dewar's Tuition Refund Plan. This plan is automatically included for students selecting plans B or C. For Plan A families desiring the coverage, the cost is 1.7% of tuition and must be paid in full by June 1st (or within 10 days of signing an enrollment agreement for post June enrollees). The school offers this for the Montessori program only, not ASP, BSP, or Discovery. More detailed information about this plan is provided with re-enrollment materials.
- **Grace period.** The school provides a grace period of four calendar days after the stated due date. Checks are logged in and dated as soon as they are received (whether by hand or mail).
- **Late fee.** A late fee of 1.0% per month will be applied on all balances due over 30 days. In addition, you may incur a \$35 late fee and bank fees from Smart Tuition.
- **NSF checks.** A \$50 charge will be assessed for a non-sufficient funds check. If a family presents a 2nd NSF check in the school year, then all future payments plus fees must be paid by money order, certified check, or cashier's check.
- **Good financial standing.** All tuition and fees must be paid in full by the June binding date prior to the start of the school year to be considered in good financial standing. Good financial standing is required for a child to start a new school year or for school records to be released to other schools.

- **Re-enrollment.** The re-enrollment fee must accompany the re-enrollment contract. A contract will not be accepted until payment is made.

## *Receipts/Statements*

Many families participate in tuition reimbursement plans and therefore request receipts. Please submit your request in writing—specifying exactly what information should be included. The Business Office will prepare these statements once a month so please consider this when timing your request.

## *Financial Aid*

Aidan Montessori School recognizes the importance of a strong financial aid program. Each year, the Board of Trustees designates a portion of the school's budget to assist families whose resources would not otherwise allow them to enroll their children in the School. The Board has authorized the proceeds from our annual Auction to be used for this purpose.

The goals of the program are twofold: (1) to attract a diverse socioeconomic student body, and (2) to provide tuition payment assistance to families within the school who require financial assistance and meet the established criteria. Priority in financial assistance goes to families already within the School.

Children are accepted to the School without regard to financial need. The School makes an effort to offer tuition payment assistance in all cases of demonstrated need as determined by the Financial Aid Committee.

Currently, Aidan uses the School and Student Services (SSS) in Princeton, New Jersey. SSS analyzes financial data provided by the applicant family and provides a need-based financial aid report to the School. Final review of tuition assistance requests is made by the Financial Aid Committee, and funds are awarded through the Head of School. Aidan holds all financial information regarding Aidan families, including financial aid awards strictly in confidence; Aidan appreciates families treating financial aid awards in confidence also.

The deadline for Financial Aid forms to be submitted to SSS is December 15 for current families and early February for first-time applying families. Applications for Financial Aid are processed in early January for current families and mid-February for applying families for the following academic year; decisions are announced by the end of March. Applications must be submitted to SSS each year Financial Aid is requested.

## *Employing Aidan Staff Outside of School*

Any financial arrangement between an Aidan employee and an Aidan family must be requested by the employee to the Head of School, who will approve such arrangements on a



case-by-case basis. If the arrangement is approved, the employee must have the family sign a waiver and return it to the School. This employment is between the individual faculty/staff and the family. Any and all such services shall be provided outside the school premises. Aidan Montessori School is not a party to such arrangements and, therefore, is not responsible for the actions of any of the parties. Aidan Montessori School will not be liable or responsible for any damages, injury or loss, consequential or otherwise, resulting from such employment. The faculty/staff and the employer shall hold Aidan Montessori School harmless with regard to any and all damages, injuries and liability arising therefrom or related thereto. Financial arrangements between school employees and school families that are not initially approved by the Head of School are considered serious breaches of employment.

### ***Tuition & Fee Schedule and Financial Disclosure***

You can always find a link to our complete Tuition & Fee Schedule and Financial Disclosure, as well as an overview of the current year's tuition, at this web address:

**<http://www.aidanschool.org/admissions/tuition-and-fees>**

Please take time to review this information, which is important to all Aidan families.

# Giving at Aidan

Giving at Aidan falls into three categories:

- The Aidan Fund (Annual Giving)
- The Auction to Fund Students
- Capital Campaigns

For more than 50 years, philanthropy has played a significant role in Aidan's success. In the next 50 years, your support will shape the school as a place where students can achieve the highest standard for education.

Throughout the year, you will be asked to participate in various school fundraising efforts listed in this section. Please know that each and every gift received positively impacts the quality of Aidan Montessori School. Only you can determine how much to give, but we ask each family to be as generous as possible and to participate in as many ways as they can.

## *The Aidan Fund*

After tuition, the Aidan Fund is Aidan's largest source of income. It helps to fill the gap between tuition income and the actual cost of an Aidan education. We ask that you make the Aidan Fund one of your family's philanthropic priorities. Generous contributions help us to provide our students with the best educational experience possible by supporting classrooms, faculty and staff salaries and benefits, professional development, and maintenance of building and grounds.

Independent schools, like Aidan, rely on voluntary support of current parents, alumni, faculty, staff, the Board of Trustees, alumni families, grandparents, and friends of the school to support The Aidan Fund. Our goal is always to reach 100% participation from our current families as well as our faculty and staff and for significant participation from our other constituent groups.

All members of the Aidan community are contacted in the fall with information about the year's Annual Giving effort. Then, volunteers follow up to answer any questions you may have or to help you make your gift. Contributions to The Aidan Fund must be received by June 30 to include your participation in that year's efforts.

## *Auction to Fund Students*

Aidan's Auction is held annually in March with all proceeds benefiting our Financial Aid Program. At Aidan, between 15% and 20% of our families receive some form of tuition assistance. We hope that your family will choose to participate in this effort – whether you

donate an item, help as a volunteer, bid during the auction, attend the live auction, raise your paddle during our Fund-A-Student appeal, or all of the above. The Auction provides a fun, social atmosphere for the Aidan community to provide philanthropic support for the school.

## *Capital Campaigns*

From time to time, independent schools like Aidan also engage in capital campaigns to raise funds for improvements to our building and programs, and to plan for our future. During these periodic campaigns, we will ask you to support these long-term efforts in addition to Annual Giving.

Additional information about how to make a gift to Aidan Montessori School can be found on our website ([www.aidanschool.org](http://www.aidanschool.org)) under “Support.”

# Background Information

## *A History of Aidan Montessori School*

Aidan began life as St. Aidan School on the campus of Dunbarton School for Girls, a Catholic college for women on what is now the Howard University Law School campus on Upton Street NW.

The school was founded in 1961 by Catholic parents who wanted a Montessori school for their children. They incorporated as the first Montessori school in Washington as a 501-c(3) not-for-profit corporation and formed the first Board of Trustees. Soon after, St. Aidan moved to Military Road where it leased space for 33 years from Temple Sinai. St. Aidan School changed names in 1985 to Aidan Montessori School to reflect the school's secular nature.

Aidan purchased the St. Thomas Apostle Church School in 1995 and moved to the school's present location in historic Woodley Park.

Over the years, Aidan joined with other independent schools in the greater Washington area and embraced the practices which guide independent schools nationwide.

## *Corporation, Accreditation, & Associations*

Aidan Montessori School is a non-profit entity incorporated in the District of Columbia and governed by a Board of Trustees. Admissions and staffing at Aidan Montessori School is open to all regardless of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, religion, or national origin. The rules of governance are set forth in the organization's by-laws. Copies are available from the School Office upon request. Aidan Montessori School is licensed in the District of Columbia by the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs.

Aidan is recognized by the prestigious Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) as an accredited Montessori school. Aidan is also accredited by the Association of Independent Maryland Schools (AIMS). Aidan Montessori School and its teachers are members of the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). In addition, Aidan holds a membership in the North American Montessori Teacher's Association (NAMTA).

Aidan is a member of the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington (AISGW) and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

## *A Brief Guide to Aidan's Accrediting & Collegial Organizations*

### AMI

Association Montessori Internationale is at the heart of Aidan in that Aidan has always been guided by AMI pedagogy. All of our lead classroom teachers are AMI-trained, providing our educational program with great consistency and congruence. Dr. Maria Montessori founded AMI in 1929 in order to maintain the integrity of her life's work. AMI sets standards on a straightforward interpretation of Dr. Montessori's writings, teachings, and universal principles. AMI's standards include:

- 3-hour morning work period
- Classes representing three-year age ranges: 3-6, 6-9, 9-12
- 1 teaching professional (AMI) per classroom only
- 1 non-teaching assistant per classroom
- Only two adults in the classroom at one time
- 28-35 students per class
- No specialists in the morning: PE, Music, Art, Foreign Language, etc.
- Only AMI-approved materials in the classroom
- 2 to 3 hours of uninterrupted Montessori work in the afternoon for full-day Primary students, and for Elementary students 4 days per week.

### AIMS

Association of Independent Maryland Schools. Many of our Greater Washington area independent schools are accredited by AIMS (Washington, DC does not have a DC-specific accrediting body). Aidan is a member of AIMS and received full accreditation in 2004. AIMS accreditation allows Aidan to be a serious colleague when seeking placement for our graduates in our fellow independent schools. Independent school evaluation systems are an assessment of whether a school is, in fact, doing what it says it is doing. AIMS evaluates the educational program, general operations, finance, governance, health and safety, admissions, library, parent relations, and more.

## AISGW

Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington. Aidan is a longstanding member. AISGW is a collegial organization, not an accrediting body, and AISGW serves as a cooperative hub of communication, professional development, and statistics gathering. AISGW schools agree to comply with a professional code of ethics with respect to admissions and other policies.

## NAMTA

North American Montessori Teachers Association. All Aidan faculty are members. NAMTA is inclusive of all Montessori accrediting bodies and organizations and provides professional and parent educational materials and programs.

## NAIS

National Association of Independent Schools. Aidan is a member of this national umbrella organization for independent schools throughout the country. NAIS provides many services to member schools and is a voice representing our schools in national policy initiatives.

# On the Handbook

## *Revision Policy*

Aidan Montessori School reserves the right at its sole discretion to amend its policies, programs and/or guidelines, including the contents of this Handbook, at any time with or without prior notice.

## *Revision Date*

This document was last revised on September 14, 2018.