



# Far Horizons Montessori School

## A HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS

Far Horizons Montessori School admits students of any race, color, gender, religion, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Far Horizons Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, and national or ethnic origin in administration of its employment practices, educational policies and admission policies



# Far Horizons Montessori School

## GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Far Horizons Montessori was established in Albany, GA in 1990 as a private, co-educational school. Today we serve children from 2 years of age through the third grade. Our 5,906 square foot school has four classrooms and one large hall/multi-purpose room. Our 26,755 square foot fenced-in playground offers a variety of activities in an attractive outdoor setting. Our children represent many cultural, economic, and educational backgrounds. The common element among parents is their interest in providing their children with an outstanding education based on the principles of the Montessori Method.

### CLASS SCHEDULE

School Term: See current school calendar.

Half Day	2 & 3 years old	8:30 am - 12:00 noon	(Monday - Friday)
School Day	Pre-K-2 to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	8:30 am - 3:00 pm	(Monday - Friday)
Extended Day	Pre-K-2 to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	7:40 am - 5:00 pm	(Monday - Friday)

### ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

ALL STUDENTS MUST HAVE THE FOLLOWING FORMS COMPLETE AND ON FILE AT FAR HORIZONS MONTESSORI BEFORE THEY BEGIN SCHOOL:

- Completed Application /Enrollment Forms including the Student Release Form, Emergency Medical Authorization Form & Parental Agreement (To download these forms, please visit the Parents' Page of our web site: [www.farhorizonsschool.com](http://www.farhorizonsschool.com))
- GA Immunization Certificate (all new students), and a GA Vision, Hearing & Dental Screening Certificate (for students five years old and older)
- Signed Enrollment Agreement & accompanying Tuition and Fee Schedule.

### GENERAL ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

Far Horizons Montessori School accepts children between the ages of 2 and 9. All children must be toilet trained. Children will be considered for our program after a consultation between the director or assistant director and the parents, and an informal interview between a senior staff member and the child.

Because of our individualized program, children may be phased into our classes at any time during the school term, if space is available. There is a one month trial period for each newly enrolled child. This allows us time to evaluate the child's readiness for our program. It is our desire that your child's experience be a positive one. Therefore, we reserve the right to request withdrawal of any child who is found by the staff to not yet be ready for our program.

Additionally, any student who persistently displays discipline issues and uncooperative behavior may be dismissed at the discretion of the Director.

### PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents are responsible for supplying **and maintaining** accurate information on all required forms prior to their child's admission to school. They must keep these forms up to date throughout their child's enrollment at Far Horizons Montessori. These forms include the Application/Enrollment Form, Student Release Form, Emergency Medical Authorization Form, Parental Agreement Form, etc.

The parents are responsible for keeping the school advised as changes occur in the information previously provided in all of these forms, especially information concerning phone numbers, work locations, emergency contacts, family physician, etc.

Parents must also agree that when they (the parents), (or persons authorized by them), pick up or drop off any child at the school, they will not allow the child to enter or leave the school without being escorted. The staff at Far Horizons Montessori will also not permit the child to enter or exit the school without an escort.

For Arrival & Pick-Up Procedures, see below.

### TUITION AND FEES

A non-refundable registration fee is due (each term) upon application to Far Horizons.

All children are automatically covered by accident insurance at the time they are enrolled. The cost of this is included in the registration fee.

Tuition is a term fee. The Academic School Term runs from August through mid-May, and our Summer Term runs from June through July (See current School Calendar).

- All students are enrolled for the entire Academic Year, and no deduction in tuition or fees can be made for withdrawal, absence, or vacation. The payment of tuition for the full year is unconditional.
- Tuition for the Academic Year may be paid in full by June 1<sup>st</sup> (at a discounted rate), or in ten equal monthly installments. (See current Tuition & Fee Schedule.)
- Parents will be billed for the workbooks of Kindergarten to Grade 3 children. Payment for workbooks is due upon receipt of statement.
- Monthly tuition statements will not be sent out.

Tuition payments should be mailed to Far Horizons Montessori School/Business Office/P.O. Box 71273/Albany, GA 31708. A **\$25.00 per month late fee** will be charged to your account for any monthly tuition payments not received or postmarked by the fifth of the month. A \$45.00 returned check fee will be charged to your account by Far Horizons Montessori School for any checks returned for "insufficient funds". Additionally, a collection fee may be charged to you by the bank when they redeposit your check.

There is a fee for late pickup for all class sessions. (See Late Pick Up below.)

## TRANSPORTATION

Far Horizons Montessori does not provide transportation.

### ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

#### DURING 8:30 DROP-OFF

During morning carpool. Please form two parallel carpool lines in our school parking lot, as needed. A teacher will come to your car, hand you a clipboard to sign your child in, and take your child into school. It is the parent's responsibility to see that his/her child / or carpool children are safely fastened in their car seats or seat belts until the car is fully stopped and a teacher arrives at their car. Children should quickly gather their things and be ready to leave. Help your child to remember his, lunch, snacks, books, (homework) and linen. Children must not be allowed to leave the car without holding the teacher's hand.

Students may be dropped off ten minutes before their 8:30 class session, and parents are encouraged to do so.

We also have a Parents' Notes to Teachers clipboard available to parents each morning. If you need to leave your child's teacher a note, please park and ask for this clipboard. Please, feel free to jot your child's teacher a brief note to inform her of anything pertinent to your child's day at school. Maybe Daddy is away, your child's tummy is a little upset, or his first tooth is loose. This is all helpful information in making the most of your child's day. Let us know also, if an alternate driver will be picking up your child today. Your child's teacher will read over your note after her students are settled in and busy. She will also make every effort to get back to you later that same day if you need additional feedback.

All questions concerning school news or finances may be addressed to Ms. Marlowe or Ms. Isabel during afternoon carpool.

Be assured that on any day your child has difficulty coming into class; a teacher will address your child right away and will attend to his/her special needs in a caring and encouraging way. Often a warm smile, words of encouragement, and a gentle hand leading the child into the activity of class are enough to comfort your child. Other times your child's teacher may suggest an activity, or solicit your child as her helper in preparing art projects, replenishing classroom supplies, or listening to a young reader. The idea is to engage the child and to assist him in sharing in the activity of the classroom community.

#### DURING NOON AND 3:00 DISMISSAL

Please form two parallel carpool lines in our school parking lot. A teacher will come to your car, hand you a clipboard to sign your child out, and bring your child to your car. It is the parent's responsibility to see that his/ her child / or carpool children are safely fastened in their car seats or seat belts before driving off.

Preschool students with no older siblings may be ready to be dismissed a few minutes early, if their ride is in line early. PLEASE BE PATIENT WITH THE CARPOOL PROCESS. SAFETY IS OUR PRIMARY CONCERN.

**Please stay in your car.** Do not leave your car to get your child or speak to a teacher while you are parked in the carpool line.

Any parent needing to speak to a teacher should park and wait for the end of dismissal. Teachers generally have an ongoing class, even after 3:00 dismissal. Therefore, they may need to get back to you later.

**NEVER LEAVE ANY CHILD UNATTENDED IN A CAR WHILE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY!!!**

### ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL DURING HEAVY RAINS

During heavy rain, please park and come to the porch to drop off or pick up your child and sign him in or out. Our Sign-In and Out sheets are documents required by the state and should not get wet.

Please do not leave children unattended in the car at any time. If you have additional children in the car during heavy rains, a teacher will assist you by escorting your child to or from your car. She will wait, as needed, until you have signed our Sign-In or Out sheet. Turning on your headlights will let teachers know that you are waiting for their assistance.

No child may ever enter or leave the school unaccompanied.

### EXTENDED DAY DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

FOR EARLY MORNING DROP-OFF (before 8:20), please walk your child to his classroom. Have him put his things away independently, and then walk him over to the teacher in the designated extended day classroom. Never send a child into school alone, or leave a child alone in a classroom without a teacher. Please be sure that the teacher acknowledges that she **has received** your child before you step away from the classroom. Our highest priority is your child's safety.

Be sure to sign your child in each morning. Use the Sign-In clipboard on the yellow chest just inside the front door. Also jot your child's teacher a note, as needed, on the Parents' Notes to Teachers clipboard. This is also located on the yellow chest just inside the front door. (See additional notes about our Parents' Notes to Teachers clipboard above.)

DURING EXTENDED DAY PICK-UP, please sign your child out before coming to the classroom to pick him/her up. Then expect your child to gather his things quietly and independently, and shake the teacher's hand before meeting you at the classroom door.

Please stand patiently in the doorway until your child has been dismissed by the teacher. Once your child has been dismissed, please do not leave the doorway until the teacher sees that you have received your child. Teachers cannot be expected to leave the classroom to look for a parent who stepped away to visit or answer a phone call.

### ALTERNATE DRIVER

If someone other than you will be picking up your child, please jot us a note in the morning or give us a call. Otherwise, your alternate driver will need to wait patiently while we check for authorization to release your child to him/her.

### LATE PICK-UP

Students should be picked up immediately following the end of their class session

Late pick-up fees will be charged for any child picked up 15 minutes or more following the end of their class session. Parents will be charged a dollar a minute, since scheduled pick-up time. (i.e. Parents picking up 15 minutes after scheduled pick-up will be charged \$15.00.)

Children picked up after 3:15 will be sent to an extended day class, and parents will be charged our extended day fee of \$15.00 and a replacement snack, instead of minute-by-minute late fees. Please give us a call if you know you are running late, so that we can accommodate your child.

Late pick-up fees should be paid at time of service. Please come with a check in hand to settle your account at pick up time.

### **All extended day students are considered late after 5:00 pm on Fridays.**

On Friday's, our extended day class session ends promptly at 5:00. Late pick-up fees double on Friday to \$2.00 a minute. (i.e. Parents picking up at 5:10 on Friday will be charged \$20.00.)

### **DISCIPLINE & GUIDANCE TECHNIQUES**

It is our policy to help the children acquire self-discipline. We believe if children are constructively occupied doing interesting and challenging activities, children will generally not have discipline problems in class. We feel that if children understand the rules and know the expected behavior, they will generally choose to behave. Therefore, expected behavior is geared to the child's age, and limits or rules are developmentally appropriate and understandable to the children to whom they apply.

Positive discipline is a process of teaching children how to behave appropriately. Positive discipline respects the rights of the individual child, the group, and the adult. The methods of discipline used in class include distraction, brief verbal command, or sitting by teacher, as needed.

Parents, please teach your child to follow directions. To teach your youngster listening skills, you must be consistent. Every time you tell your child to do something, insist that he/she follows through with what you direct him/her to do. Don't expect perfection. Changing an old habit sometimes may take many tries and some practice. Try "Oops, your toys are not put away!" instead of "Didn't I tell you to put those toys away?" Following directions is one of the most important skills your child can learn. It will be important in school and in everyday life. It is imperative for the safety of your young child to be able to follow your directions. You must be able to believe that your child will stop an activity or come to you without delay or reservation when you call.

### **STUDENT DISMISSAL**

Far Horizons Montessori School reserves the right to dismiss any student at any time at the discretion of the Director when the student's conduct or academic record at the school is not in keeping with the best interest of the school and its students.

### **CHILDRENS' HEALTH AND SAFETY**

For the health of all children and staff, a child shall not be accepted nor allowed to remain at the school if the child has the equivalent of a one hundred one (101) degrees Fahrenheit or higher oral temperature and/or another contagious symptom, such as, but not limited to, **fever, rash (until diagnosed and determined to be non-contagious), cough, discharge of discolored or profuse amounts of mucous from the nose, diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat, eye inflammation (conjunctivitis or "pinkeye").**

When a child shows symptoms of illness during the day, the child will be moved to a quiet area away from other children where the child will be supervised and provided the necessary attention until such time as the child leaves the school or is able to return to his/her group.

When professional medical attention is required, or when a child experiences symptoms of moderate discomfort such as elevated temperature, vomiting or diarrhea, parents will be immediately notified. Parental instructions on the care of their child will be followed until the child can be picked up.

When professional medical attention is not required, or when a child experiences a mild adverse reaction to prescribed medication which does not constitute moderate discomfort, the parents will be notified by the end of the day.

If your child has been exposed to a communicable disease, a notice will be sent home within twenty-four (24) hours, or the next school day, after we become aware of the illness.

### MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In the event of an accident or sudden onset of illness, the school will not hesitate to seek proper care for a child. The child's individual emergency instructions on file at the school are consulted immediately, and his/her parents are called.

When a medical emergency arises involving a child, the school staff will seek prompt emergency medical treatment and provide any certified or licensed emergency medical persons with immediate access to your child. If necessary, the child will be transported by emergency medical persons to Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital's Emergency Center. The Emergency Treatment consent statement that you signed as part of your child's Application/Enrollment packet will accompany your child to the hospital in an emergency situation. This form allows emergency treatment to be given immediately in your absence. It is **IMPERATIVE** that you keep your child's emergency contact information up-to-date.

### MEDICATION

Except for first aid, school personnel shall not dispense prescription or nonprescription medications to a child without specific written authorization from the child's physician or parent. A state form must be filled out for us to administer any medications. Authorizations to dispense medications shall be limited to two (2) weeks, unless prescribed by a physician. The authorization form will provide medication administration instructions. We will watch for, and record, any noticeable adverse reactions to the medications.

School personnel shall only dispense medications that are provided by the parent and meet the following criteria: 1) The medication shall be in the original labeled container. 2) The medication container shall be labeled with the child's full name. All medicines which are no longer being dispensed should be picked up by the parent immediately.

### EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

During a period of emergency, the Director shall have the authority to close school, shorten the school day, and to institute other necessary measures to ensure the safety and welfare of the students and personnel.

**School closures will be the same as announced by the Dougherty County School System for emergency weather conditions.**

### ATTENDANCE

Parents are asked to notify the school when a child will be absent for more than three days.

#### ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THIRD GRADE:

As educators, we recognize the relationship between daily school attendance, and student performance. Each tardy or absence is a lost opportunity to learn.

Students in kindergarten through third grade need to be in school on a regular basis. Students arriving late or leaving early often miss lessons and valuable learning time. Promotion may be jeopardized with excessive absences. It is expected that these children remain in class for the entire school day except as required for illness or medical appointments. Vacations need to be scheduled around the student's school calendar (not vice versa).

Additionally, tardiness and early dismissals are disruptive to the teachers and the class in session. Repeating lessons over and over as late students arrive, is time prohibitive, unproductive, and unfair to classmates. Tardiness and early dismissals must be kept to a minimum. Students arriving after 8:30 or leaving before 3:00 will be marked tardy.

Students missing more than 114 hours (10% of class time) per academic year will be expected to make up class time either by attending summer camp or extended day study sessions. Both involve additional fees.

## CLOTHING

School uniforms are required for all students. Uniform information is available at school, and on our school website [www.FarHorizonsSchool.com](http://www.FarHorizonsSchool.com). All students should wear our school uniform on Monday through Thursday with Friday being a free choice day.

All clothing should also be easy for the child to manage for himself in the restroom. Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are recommended. Crocs, as well as flip-flops or other open-heeled shoes are not permitted because they may pose a tripping hazard. Hazardous items worn around student's necks or attached to their clothing are also not permitted. Shorts should be worn under skirts and dresses.

All children less than seven years old are required to maintain a complete change of clothing at school. Please place these items in a plastic gallon Ziploc bag and label the bag with your child's name.

Please label all clothing, especially shoes and outerwear. Visit [www.mabelslabels.com](http://www.mabelslabels.com) for assistance.

## SNACK AND LUNCH PROGRAM

Children must receive nutritious meals and snacks while at Far Horizons Montessori. These meals and snacks will be provided by parents. Far Horizons will provide all parents written nutritional information concerning the permitted content of snacks and lunches (See below.).

All meals and snacks consumed at school must comply with USDA standards. Snacks and lunches will be evaluated each day; and if the child's snack or lunch does not meet the USDA standards, Far Horizons will provide the child the additional food necessary to meet the requirements. Parents will be charged for the additional food provided.

Snacks and lunches should be labeled with the child's name.

Children will be monitored to assure that there is no swapping of home-prepared meals.

All full-day students are **required** to have milk for lunch in accordance with DHR guidelines. A milk fee of \$45-\$50 per semester will be assessed to parents. The first payment is due by **the first day of school**.

A physician's note is required if your child needs special milk due to allergies. **Only** those children with medical exemptions may bring special milk from home, due to our limited refrigerator space

### **SNACK**

A snack should be placed in a paper bag and contain one nutritious food item, one nutritious drink, and two paper napkins.

For your child's nutritious drink, please send **only 100% fruit or vegetable juice, milk, or a yogurt drink**. **Water is not allowed to be substituted for a nutritious drink. Water is available to your child throughout the day.**

Snack time is a great opportunity to introduce new foods to your child. You can also offer pops of color, texture or taste by sending goldfish, or pretzels dipped in peanut butter, string cheese, cereal with raisins, or slices of bagel spread with cream cheese.

Foods containing a lot of salt, sugar, food coloring, chemicals, preservatives, or trans-fats should be avoided. (Chips and sweets are **NOT** considered nutritious snacks.)

Please do not over pack for snack. The children should be able to finish their snacks in ten minutes and not spoil their appetite for lunch.

Extended day students should bring an additional nutritious late afternoon snack following the guidelines above.

### **LUNCH**

Lunch should be placed in an insulated lunch bag or box along with a cloth napkin, to be used as a place mat. Also include a paper napkin for wiping fingers, and a fork, spoon, straw, or ice pack, as needed.

**State guidelines require that your child's lunch contain each of the following items:** one protein (meat or alternative), two vegetables or fruits, and one bread or equivalent. Additional food is optional (but **no desserts**). We provide at least 4 oz. of milk daily.

Foods to avoid are listed above. For students under five, also avoid food that may pose a **choking hazard** such as celery, carrots, popcorn, and nuts. Hotdogs and grapes should be cut lengthwise into several slices to lessen the choking hazard.

### **GUM**

Please do not allow children to bring chewing gum to school. They will not be permitted to chew it. Also, please do not allow children to chew gum in the parking lot. Discarded gum makes a sticky mess on the pavement.

### **NAPS**

All full-day students under five years of age are required to rest on a cot daily for at least 30 minutes. A fitted crib sheet and a light-weight blanket must be provided. Blankets and sheets go home each Friday for laundering.

Any student that does not return clean linen on Monday will use our school linen and be assessed a linen laundering fee of \$5.00. This fee is due at time of service.

### **CUBBY**

A cubby is assigned to each child. Upon returning to school in August, your child may have a new cubby. Teachers will help your child find his/her cubby, as needed.

## SCHOOL EQUIPMENT

Please return any items found at home that belong to the school. Much of our equipment is very expensive and can take months to replace.

## NEWSLETTERS

Please read all notices that are sent home. A copy of all newsletters is posted by the front door and should be found in your child's lunchbox. If your copy is missing, please ask Ms. Marlowe or one of the staff for a duplicate.

## ART

Art projects are made with adult supervision. Many of our art projects may pose a choking hazard to young children, if handled independently. Please be aware that buttons, stuffing, pom-poms, small pieces of paper, felt, etc., can all pose choking hazards. Projects should, therefore, generally be displayed out of the reach of young children.

## BIRTHDAYS

At Far Horizons we have a special birthday tradition. In celebration of students' birthdays, children are encouraged to present their class with a hardback book for the classroom library. This helps the children to learn the value and pleasure of giving as well as receiving, and the entire class also benefits from an enhanced literature program. Parents wishing to participate in this tradition should consult our Birthday Wish Lists. Books donated for our school library should be inscribed with your child's name and birthday.

Additionally, parents not wishing to receive additional toys for their child's birthday party are encouraged to consider requesting a donation of books to our school library. Guests would purchase a hardback book from our class Birthday Wish List, wrap it, and bring it to the party. Books would then be presented to your child to be donated on his behalf to our school library. Each book could be inscribed with a note such as: Donated to Far Horizons Montessori School on behalf of (your child's sixth birthday).

Children generally enjoy having a special birthday snack or class luncheon at school. Cookies, cupcakes, Popsicles, ice cream, or a catered birthday luncheon may all be brought to class in celebration of your child's birthday. (Home preparation is not authorized by the state).

On your child's birthday (or day you choose to celebrate it), please send in a homemade Birthday Poster for your child. Your child's Birthday Poster should include pictures highlighting his/her life. It may also include written or typed captions for each picture. We would enjoy keeping this poster for several days to share with the class. This allows us to celebrate your child's life on his/her birthday and helps the child to develop a sense of identity and a growing awareness of time.

Parents are encouraged to come to class to help share in the presentation of their child's Birthday Poster and then, possibly, read a book to the class. Please check with your child's teacher at least two weeks early to schedule your child's Birthday Poster presentation and/or his birthday snack or luncheon celebration.

If you are planning a party for your child, please do not hand out invitations at school unless all his/her classmates are invited. Likewise, if your child is attending a party after school, please do not send gifts to school with your child. In the past, we have found that these situations can create hurt feelings and sad children. When only a few classmates are invited, it is more appropriate to mail invitations and plan weekend parties.

Teachers cannot be expected to attend children's birthday parties.

### FIELD TRIPS

During the course of the year, an occasional field trip for kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students may be scheduled in order to enrich our students learning experiences. Working out transportation for field trips is the responsibility of parents. Carpooling is recommended.

All field trips will be announced in advance, and a parent or caregiver must accompany all children.

### PICTURES/ VIDEOS

Pictures and/or videos of our students will occasionally be taken by the staff or parents of Far Horizons Montessori School for our scrapbook, yearbook, web page, blog, promotional ads, and other school related publications. Additionally, some pictures may be available on Shutterfly or a similar site for parents to download. Written notification is necessary if you **do not** wish for your child's picture to be included in any of these mediums. (Names will not be printed in reference to any picture.)

### PARENT PARTICIPATION

We know our parents are a wonderful resource for our school. Perhaps you, a grandparent, a neighbor or a friend would enjoy touching the lives of our students by volunteering in one of the following areas:

- Typing
- Yearbook Committee
- Music
- Story Time
- Spanish
- Sewing, needle point, and cross stitch
- Gardening
- Outdoor play activities including relays, aerobics, jumping rope, soccer practice, kickball, parachute play, etc.
- Yoga or dancing
- Preparing craft projects from a template
- Listening to young readers
- Checking older students on their independent vocabulary study
- Assisting students on computers

Additionally, parents who have a talent, cultural experience, career, or hobby that they would like to share with our students, we encourage you to do so. Please see Ms. Marlowe or Ms. Isabel for details.