Table of Contents
Welcome to St. Catherine’s Montessori ........................................................................................................................................ 1
Non-Discrimination Policy .......................................................................................................................................................... 1
Mission ........................................................................................................................................................................................ 1
Philosophy: Bringing Wisdom to Light ........................................................................................................................................ 2
History ........................................................................................................................................................................................ 2
Accreditations ................................................................................................................................................................................. 3
Board of Directors ....................................................................................................................................................................... 3
Parental Involvement ................................................................................................................................................................. 3
Parent Education ......................................................................................................................................................................... 3
Advancing Our Mission through Philanthropic Support ........................................................................................................ 4
Communication ........................................................................................................................................................................ 5-6
Contacting Guides ................................................................................................................................................................. 5
Parent-Guide Conferences ...................................................................................................................................................... 5
The Globe .................................................................................................................................................................................... 5
Website & Parent Directory ...................................................................................................................................................... 5
Social Media ................................................................................................................................................................................ 6
Emergency Notifications ............................................................................................................................................................ 6
Room Parents ............................................................................................................................................................................. 6
Updating Your Contact Information ........................................................................................................................................ 6
Daily Procedures ........................................................................................................................................................................ 6-11
Daily Schedule ........................................................................................................................................................................ 6-7
Arrival & Dismissal Transitions ................................................................................................................................................ 7
  Arrival Procedures ................................................................................................................................................................. 7-8
  Before-School Care .............................................................................................................................................................. 8
  Car Seats ................................................................................................................................................................................. 8
  Late Arrival ............................................................................................................................................................................ 8
  Dismissal Procedures .......................................................................................................................................................... 8-9
  Late Dismissal ...................................................................................................................................................................... 9
  Friday Dismissal ................................................................................................................................................................. 9
  After-School Program .......................................................................................................................................................... 9
  Careful Driving on Campus .................................................................................................................................................. 9
  Releasing Students to Adults ................................................................................................................................................ 10
Visitors ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 10
Volunteering at School ............................................................................................................................................................ 10
In the Classroom ........................................................................................................................................................................ 10-16
Attendance/Tardy Policy ......................................................................................................................................................... 10-11
Dressing for Independence ....................................................................................................................................................... 11
  Dress Code for Elementary, AC, and High School .................................................................................................................. 11
  Attire for Mass and Special Outings .................................................................................................................................... 12
What to Bring to School ......................................................................................................................................................... 12
  Change of Clothing ............................................................................................................................................................. 12
  Backpacks/Umbrellas ............................................................................................................................................................ 12
  Toys ....................................................................................................................................................................................... 12
  Cell Phones .......................................................................................................................................................................... 12
The Head of School retains the right to amend the contents of this handbook at any time.
Welcome to St. Catherine’s Montessori

We are delighted that your family has chosen St. Catherine’s Montessori and are committed to providing your child with a wonderful Montessori experience.

Our dedicated faculty and staff are committed to helping children reach their unique potential. By nurturing children’s natural curiosity and enthusiasm for the world, our Montessori curriculum helps students of all ages develop their inner wisdom, along with qualities like self-motivation, self-discipline and critical thinking.

An integral part of the Montessori approach is helping children learn to work and thrive in community. We believe you will find that our St. Catherine’s community inspires as many of our adults as our young people. Visitors often comment about being positively impacted by “the spirit of the place,” and our families contribute in countless ways to give St. Catherine’s that intangible character.

This parent handbook is intended to introduce you to our school community, our policies, and procedures. Please read it and use it as a resource throughout the school year. If you have any questions, please let us know.

We are honored to work with you and your child.

Blessings,
Susan Tracy
Head of School

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston admit all students to the rights, privileges, programs and activities made available to the student body. They shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, or national origin in the administration of their admission, loan, athletic or scholarship programs.

Archdiocesan Policy 652.1

Mission

As a Catholic Montessori School, St. Catherine’s is dedicated to an educational experience which awakens in our students the awareness of their gifts and responsibilities as individuals in relationship with Jesus Christ and as stewards of the global community.
Philosophy: Bringing Wisdom to Light

St. Catherine’s Montessori upholds the values of our shared Montessori and Catholic heritages. As an AMI school, we follow the curriculum and traditions established by Dr. Maria Montessori more than 100 years ago. More than simply a method of education, the Montessori approach fosters the development of the whole child—intellectually, physically, socially, morally and spiritually. As a Catholic community, St. Catherine’s additionally nurtures children’s spiritual development so that each student may experience the presence of God both individually and in community.

Montessori Vision

Our complementary missions are perhaps most simply summarized by our guiding motto, “Bringing Wisdom to Light.” Maria Montessori frequently described the inner wisdom inherent in all human beings and envisioned education as a spiritual mission to unleash each child’s inner potential. In The Secret of Childhood, she writes, “Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence.” Montessori believed that properly nurtured, each child’s wisdom radiates outward to create a more peaceful world.

Catholic Roots

Our motto also resonates with our Catholic vocation to nurture and reveal the Spirit of God within each child. Revealing one’s inner light is an aspect of service to God outlined in the Gospel of Matthew. “You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father” (Matthew 5:14-16).

History

Our school’s Dominican foundresses, Sister Edna Ann Hebert and Sister Shirley Owens, envisioned the rich potential of combining Montessori and Catholic principles, and their generous legacy continues to inspire our community. St. Catherine’s Montessori is the third oldest Montessori school in Houston and the first Montessori school in the area to include basic religious doctrine in its curriculum.

Sister Edna Ann opened the school as Dominican Montessori in 1966. Originally in the old St. Agnes Academy building, she and 43 Primary students were joined by Sister Shirley the following year. Both sisters held AMI diplomas and taught for many years, much to the delight of generations of students. Sister Shirley remained on the Board of Directors until her death in June 2012, and Sister Edna Ann currently serves on the Board of Directors in an Emeritus position.

The school has moved and evolved many times in its more than 50-year history. In 1974, the school moved to Holy Rosary Parish, where Primary classes were located, followed by expansion to another building at Bering Memorial Methodist Church, where Elementary classes were held. In July 1982, Dominican Montessori was renamed St. Catherine’s Montessori after Catherine of Siena, a Doctor of the Church, and follower of St. Dominic, acclaimed for her preaching in the fourteenth century. In March 1983, the school moved to the Westridge “castle” campus and finally to the current Timberside campus in July 2006. Expansion of our current campus began in June 2017.

St. Catherine’s Montessori is a vibrant community of more than 300 students from diverse backgrounds. Sustained by the support and work of dedicated guides, staff, parents and friends, our school continues to awaken students to their inner wisdom and to prepare them for service in the world.
Accreditations

St. Catherine’s Montessori is associated with Catholic Schools of The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston located at:
2403 E. Holcombe Blvd.  Houston, TX 77021-2098  |  Phone (713) 741-8704  |  Fax (713) 741-7379

We are accredited K-12 by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED) and the Texas Catholic Conference Accreditation Commission (TCCAC). We carry the highest “Recognized” level by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).

Texas Catholic Conference Education of Bishops Department (TCCBED)
Recognized by the Texas Education Agency (TEA, TCCED is the designated coordinator of all activities related to state accreditation. As such, it shall establish standards which a diocesan system of schools must satisfy to be accredited and shall adopt an accreditation process to be used in Catholic schools.

Texas Catholic Conference Accreditation Commission (TCCAC)
Membership consists of all superintendents of the 14 Texas dioceses, other experts in the field of education and two bishop members who serve as episcopal liaisons. The Commission, through committees, is responsible for setting up the operations, ongoing planning of the accreditation process, review of school compliance and reporting of accreditation status.

Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)
AMI is the international organization founded by Dr. Maria Montessori in 1929 to maintain the integrity of her approach to educating children. The organization continues to be recognized as the foremost authority on authentic Montessori education. St. Catherine’s Montessori maintains certification as AMI Recognized,” which is the highest level of acknowledgment for Montessori schools worldwide. This accreditation requires that our school be in compliance with all AMI standards, the most significant of which is that there is an AMI-trained guide heading the classroom at every age level.

St. Catherine’s Montessori also maintains membership in the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA), North American Montessori Teachers Association (NAMTA), Houston Area of Independent Schools (HAIS), Montessori Administrators Association (MAA) and Elementary Alumni Association (EAA).

Board of Directors

Catholic school boards are advisory and consultative to the Head of School in Archdiocesan regional schools. Boards assist the Head of School in Archdiocesan regional schools by recommending policy and identifying and articulating the educational needs and aspirations of the school and school community. These goals become the basis for program objectives, policies, and action plans for the educational program.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement and support are integral to the spirit of St. Catherine’s Montessori. The education of each child is the collaborative work of students, guides, staff and families. Organizations, events and projects throughout the school year enable parents to be actively involved. Since the beginning years, St. Catherine’s has appreciated and depended on parent support. Parents are what have sustained St. Catherine’s over the years.

Parent Education

The Montessori approach is new to many parents who may have grown up with more traditional schooling. Your child will derive the most benefit from his or her experience at St. Catherine’s if you familiarize yourself with our outlook and methods. To help you better understand the Montessori philosophy and the workings of our classrooms, we offer several Parent Education events throughout the year concerning children of all ages. We encourage you to attend to better understand the changes in your child’s development and the transitions from one classroom level to another. Additionally, you will learn from our guides the many useful and practical applications of Montessori at home.
Advancing Our Mission Through Philanthropic Support

St. Catherine’s Montessori prides itself as a community with a deep commitment to the school’s mission and a strong culture of philanthropy. As an independent non-profit school, we rely on tuition income and charitable contributions to support our operating expenditures and capital projects (campus expansion). We do not receive support from state or local agencies, the Catholic Archdiocese, or a parish. St. Catherine’s has been able to grow and continue as an exceptional institution because of volunteer parent participation and a tradition of generous giving.

Throughout the 2018-2019 school year, the Advancement Office will coordinate the following four fundraising opportunities. We invite you to participate in the philanthropic life of St. Catherine’s in the manner that makes the most sense for your family.

**SCM Fund**
The most important philanthropic contribution a family can make to St. Catherine’s, the SCM Fund allows us to fully fund the actual cost of educating each child beyond tuition income. It also helps us uphold our long-standing commitment to keep tuition affordable and preserve our diverse community. Contributions support daily operations that are fundamental to providing the best curriculum, environment, and facilities for the academic, emotional, and spiritual needs of our students. The motto of the SCM Fund is “Every Family for Every Child,” and we ask that every family make an annual contribution. A pledge card will be mailed to your home in September, and we ask that pledges be fulfilled by May 31.

**SCM 2018 Gala: Night Owl Soirée**
St. Catherine’s hosts a biennial gala to raise funds in support of the school’s greatest current and future needs as we plan for our next phase of growth. This year’s event will be held on Saturday, November 3 on our campus, and will feature dinner, dancing, live and silent auctions, and a biergarten. Past galas have supported such achievements as the construction of elementary classrooms and the restoration of The Sister Edna Ann Hebert Library and Reading Center. We invite all members of the St. Catherine’s community to participate in the fun by joining a gala committee, purchasing a table, underwriting a portion of the event, donating auction items, and attending the gala.

**Sociables**
Sociables are parent-sponsored parties and activities hosted throughout the school year that raise funds for St. Catherine’s needs through ticket sales. They are designed as fun community-building opportunities and, like the SCM Fund, support the school’s operational costs. Families can sponsor kids’ events for Infant Community through the Adolescent Community, activities that are fun for the whole family, as well as parties for adults. Sociables can be hosted at a home, at school (depending on space availability), or at a specific venue.

This year, a few select events will take place in December to delight you for the holiday season. Those tickets will be available online mid-November. The majority of Sociables will take place spring 2019, and tickets will be sold at school on January 11 during Sociables Sign-Up Day.

**Steps 4 Students**
Held every February, Steps 4 Students is a 5K Fun Run/Walk that raises awareness for Catholic education and supports the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. St. Catherine’s organizes a team and raises funds for the school via registration fees and pledges made in support of team members by a wide network of friends and relatives, in Houston and beyond. All proceeds – less a $3 processing fee for every registrant – come back to St. Catherine’s.
Communication

Open communication keeps everyone abreast of your concerns and your child’s needs, and of pertinent information about the school and upcoming events. We welcome your ideas, feedback, and questions. The school’s main number is (713) 665-2195. You may also email the front desk receptionist, Emily Blackman, at eblackman@stcathmont.org.

CONTACTING GUIDES

If you need to get in touch with your child’s guide, you may do so by telephone or email. (Please do not use a cellphone or home number unless specifically asked to do so. All guides check campus voicemail and email at the end of the day so please be mindful that guides may not have a chance to respond during the school day. Please let your guide know if your family experiences any major changes at home so that your child may be better helped through the transition at school.

PARENT-GUIDE CONFERENCES

Conferences offer you and your child’s guide an opportunity to share general and specific information regarding your child’s progress and to discuss areas of improvement. Since the education of the child is a partnership between the guide and family, it is imperative that conferences are set and attended. We encourage parents to schedule a conferences in both Fall and Spring semester. Additional conferences may be scheduled as needed.

Adolescent Community and High School students conduct conferences with their parents and Guides. A narrative is sent home at the end of the year for all elementary, adolescent and high school students. This report is a thorough evaluation of each student’s progress throughout the year.

Observations

If you would like to observe your child in the classroom, please arrange the observation with your child’s guide.

THE GLOBE

Each Wednesday you will receive an email with the school newsletter called the Globe. The newsletter contains a weekly schedule for school activities, any guide notes and other timely information. All parents are asked to read this information as soon as possible and to respond in a timely manner as indicated. If you would like to submit something to be included in the Globe, please send it for approval by noon on Monday to globe@stcathmont.org.

WEBSITE

St. Catherine’s Montessori maintains a school website at www.stcathmont.org. The website is a useful source of information for the school community, prospective families and the general public. It contains our online school calendar (under the Parents tab, which is an active source for the listing of school events, holidays, closings, etc.

PARENT DIRECTORY

To access the directory, please sign in to ParentsWeb > click School Information > Directory. You can search and filter the directory. Contact information in the Parent Directory—including email addresses—may not be used for solicitation purposes.

Please note that your name, address, phone number(s), and email address(es) are automatically available to other parents in the RenWeb school directory unless you opt-out.

How Do I Opt-Out?

1. Click Web Forms > Parent Contact Information Form.
2. Click the button for each custodial parent. You must repeat the following process for each parent.
3. Scroll down to Parent Preferences
SOCIAL MEDIA
Our school has a Facebook (www.facebook.com/stcathmont) page that features updates about happenings on campus. St. Catherine’s Montessori will not post non-public school information, nor will it post the names of students. St. Catherine’s Montessori reserves the right to delete or block any person engaging in behavior deemed inappropriate or behavior that conflicts with the values or mission of our school.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS
It is essential that we have a phone number on file where you can reliably and immediately be contacted regarding unexpected closings, health emergencies, etc. Your emergency contact information must always be current. If you are traveling, please notify the school of your backup in the event of an emergency. All families must have one local emergency contact on file.

Inclement Weather/School Closure
St. Catherine's uses the Parent Alert automated communication system to alert you of inclement weather delays or closings, or any other alerts that affect the timing of the school day. In case of severe weather conditions, you will receive a telephone call, text and email message with school closing or early dismissal information. Notifications will go to the telephone numbers and email addresses on file. We follow the Archdiocesan School Closing Policy and will close when schools within the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston close. Please also check the school website (www.stcathmont.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/stcathmont) for updates.

ROOM PARENTS
The room parent is a volunteer who has been with the school in previous years and helps organize class activities. You will receive emails from your room parent throughout the year to pass on information about school events and to recruit volunteers. Room parents may communicate via phone or email to all classroom parents. Class mailings and solicitations are to be approved in advance by the Head of School. The Head of School is copied on all emails sent to parents. All room parents are required to have current VIRTUS training on file with the school.

UPDATING YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION
Should any changes to your contact information occur during the school year (e.g., a move, separation of parents, change of phone number or email address, please sign on to ParentsWeb and update your family’s file accordingly.

Daily Procedures

DAILY SCHEDULE
Infant Community AM: Monday through Friday
8:15 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Arrival
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Montessori Program
11:30 a.m. Dismissal

Primary AM: Monday through Friday
8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Arrival
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Montessori Program
11:30 a.m. Dismissal

Primary PM: Monday through Friday
8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Arrival
8:30 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. Montessori Program
3:15 p.m. Dismissal (Friday Dismissal 2:15 p.m.)
All Day Primary: Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.  Arrival
7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.  Montessori Program
3:15 p.m.  Dismissal (Friday Dismissal 2:15 p.m.)
3:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.  Primary After-School Program (Friday starts at 2:15 p.m.)

Elementary
7:50 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.  Arrival
8:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.  Montessori Program
3:15 p.m.  Dismissal (Friday Dismissal 2:15 p.m.)
3:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.  Elementary After-School Program (Friday starts at 2:15 p.m.)

Adolescent Community
7:50 a.m.–8:00 a.m.  Arrival
8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  Montessori Program
3:30 p.m.  Dismissal (Friday Dismissal: 2:30 p.m.)
3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.  Adolescent Community After-School Program (Friday starts at 2:30 p.m.)

High School
7:50 a.m.–8:00 a.m.  Arrival
8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  Montessori Program
3:30 p.m.  Dismissal (Friday Dismissal: 2:30 p.m.)
The After-School Program is not available for High School students.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL TRANSITIONS
Drop-off and pick-up are important transitions in your child’s day, and we make every effort to encourage your child’s confidence and independence. The following procedures are designed with your child’s needs in mind, along with the safety and efficiency of the carpool line.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES
Infant Community
Parents of Infant Community students should park in the designated Infant Community parking area at the school and walk their child to the classroom no earlier than 8:15 a.m. Infant Community arrival time is between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m.

Primary
Parents of Primary students should use the drive-through procedure at the curb in front of the school from 8:15–8:30 a.m. All students exit the passenger side. Please arrange car seats accordingly. Assistants and staff will be present at the curb during this time to help students from the car and to ensure that students arrive in their classrooms. Initially staff will walk children to their classrooms, but as children’s familiarity and independence progresses, they will walk to class themselves. If you need to conduct business inside the school, please park in the parking lot after you have allowed your child to be assisted from your car at the curb.

Please make sure that your Primary child has his/her lunchbox and jacket (if needed in hand when you approach the curb for drop-off. Additionally, in consideration of the cars behind you, please do not use drop-off as a time to converse with staff. If you need to communicate with a guide or staff member, you may hand a note to an assistant through the car window, or park and leave a note with the front desk receptionist.
Primary children with siblings in Elementary, Adolescent Community or High School may arrive at 7:50 a.m.
Your older children will have the responsibility of walking the Primary student to his/her classroom at that time. If you have both an Infant Community and Primary child, please drive through the drop-off line to let the Primary child out, and then park in the designated Infant Community parking area to walk your Infant Community child to class.

Please refrain from walking your Primary child into the school building unless you arrive late. Calm, kind and consistent drop-off through the carpool line eases the separation process for you and your child.

Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School
Parents of Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School students use the drive-through procedure at the curb in front of the school. Students may arrive no earlier than 7:30 a.m. The students’ day begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. will be marked tardy.

BEFORE-SCHOOL CARE
Supervised before-school care is available for Elementary students and older in their classrooms each day beginning at 7:30 a.m.

CAR SEATS
If you need to leave a car seat in the Welcome Center, please label it and place it inside the Welcome Center on the floor to the left of the entrance. Elementary students will occasionally need to bring their booster seats, and you will be notified in advance.

LATE ARRIVAL
If you arrive after Primary drop-off ends (8:30 a.m.), please park your car, walk your child to the front door and ring the bell.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES
Infant Community
Infant Community students will be picked up from the Welcome Center by a parent or designated adult. Parents should park in the Infant Community designated parking area and walk to the Welcome Center.

Primary AM
To ensure a safe and efficient dismissal time, students in Primary AM are to be picked up through the carpool line. A sign with your child’s name will be distributed at the beginning of the year. This sign must be displayed on the passenger’s side windshield during carpool.

At 11:30 a.m., the children walk to the front of the school with their guide and are seated quietly on the benches. Once seated, no student is to stand up or walk around the area. As parent cars approach, the student’s guide will direct him/her to a designated color area. Students will gather their belongings and walk carefully to the directed color with a staff member.

All drivers should approach the pick-up line as close to the curb as safely possible in the color area designated by staff. When you have come to a complete stop, a staff member will open the door for your child. For safety, all students must enter and exit the car on the curbside. If young children need assistance with their belongings or getting secure in a car seat, a staff member will help them.

We encourage students to do as much for themselves as possible. Patience is a requirement for this process to succeed, and if a student needs more than a moment to complete this process, you will be asked to pull forward and assist yourself. If you are in the carpool line, do not walk up to get your child. During inclement weather, please plan to pull forward after your child is in the car to assist them yourself.
Primary PM & Elementary
Students in Primary PM and Elementary are to be picked up through the afternoon carpool line.

At 3:15 p.m., the children walk to the front of the school with their guide and are seated quietly on the benches with their class. Once seated, no student is to stand up or walk around the area. As parent cars approach, the student’s guide will direct him/her to a designated color area. Students will gather their belongings and walk carefully to the directed color.

A sign with your child’s name will be distributed at the beginning of the year. This sign must be displayed on the passenger’s side windshield during carpool. All drivers should approach the pick-up line as close to the curb as safely possible in the color area designated by staff. When you have come to a complete stop, an assistant will open the door for your child. For safety, all students must enter and exit the car on the curbside.

If young children need assistance with their belongings or getting secure in a car seat, a staff member will help them. We encourage students to do as much for themselves as possible. Patience is a requirement for this process to succeed, and if a student needs more than a moment to complete this process, you will be asked to pull forward and assist your child yourself. If you are in the carpool line, do not walk up to get your child.

Adolescent Community and High School
Adolescent Community and High School students will dismiss with procedure above at 3:30 p.m.

LATE DISMISSAL
If you will arrive late, please call the school so we can let your child know. All students not picked up by the end of dismissal will be placed in the appropriate After-School Program. Families will be billed the daily rate per day for any portion of the day spent in an After-School Program.

FRIDAY DISMISSAL
Friday is early dismissal day, except for Infant Community and Primary AM., Primary PM and Elementary dismissal time is 2:15 p.m. on Friday, and Adolescent Community and High School dismissal time is 2:30 p.m. on Friday. The After-School Program is available until 6:00 p.m. on Friday. (No After-School Program for Infant Community or High School.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM
Our After-School Program is offered to all Primary PM, Elementary and Adolescent Community students. The After-School Program is not available for High School students. The program is offered from 3:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. (2:15 – 6:00 p.m. on Fridays. Students must be registered to attend. The cost for the After-School Program for all levels is $250 per student, per month. The daily charge for children who attend occasionally is $20 per student. A late fee of $10 for each 10 minutes, or portion thereof, will be billed for pick-up later than 6:00 p.m.

CAREFUL DRIVING ON CAMPUS
Please be prompt, safe and courteous while driving in the carpool line. Your cooperation will keep arrival and dismissal periods as safe and efficient as possible.

Speed Limit
Please observe the 15 mph speed limit on campus at all times. Children, families, staff and visitors regularly cross the carpool lanes and spend time in the Peace Garden. For safety, it is essential that drivers on campus proceed slowly and carefully.

Cell Phones and Hand-held Devices
The use of hand-held wireless devices in a designated school zone is against the law. Do not use your cell phone while driving on campus.
Parking

• Please park in the parking lot while on campus.
• Never leave unattended children in the parking lot or in your car.
• When parking at school, do not leave valuables in your car, even if the car is locked.

RELEASING STUDENTS TO ADULTS
The school must have on file the names of persons, other than parents, who are permitted to pick up each child. Your child will not be released to any person that has not been designated on the Pick-Up Information Form unless we receive a note from a parent in writing, by email or fax. This form can be found on ParentsWeb under Web Forms.

• Additions to the authorized to pick up list must be made on ParentsWeb.
• When the authorized person arrives, his/her driver’s license will be checked before your child is released.
• St. Catherine's Montessori will not release children to individuals whom they suspect are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or who display behavior that has the potential to put a child in danger.
• Unless there is an emergency situation, a courtesy call at least thirty minutes prior to an unscheduled early student pick-up should be made to the front desk.

VISITORS
We are grateful to have parents and volunteers who actively contribute to our school’s mission. For security reasons, school visitors (volunteers, parents, etc.) must sign in at the front desk when they enter the building. All visitors and volunteers are required to wear a designated badge that may be picked up at the front desk. They are also to sign out at the time of departure. Visitors may be asked to show identification in the form of a driver’s license or other government-issued identification. If you are volunteering during the school day, do not drop in to your child’s classroom, as this interrupts the guide and the concentration of the children working in the room.

VOLUNTEERING AT SCHOOL
To ensure the safety and well-being of our students, all parents are required to complete VIRTUS training before volunteering with students at St. Catherine's Montessori. The Archdiocesan-sponsored VIRTUS course, “Protecting God’s Children,” is presented throughout the year at various Catholic parishes. To learn more about the VIRTUS program and to register for training, please visit www.virtus.org. If you completed VIRTUS training more than 5 years ago, the Archdiocese requires a refresher course called “Keeping the Promise Alive.”

Parents volunteering to drive must also provide a photocopy of their current driver’s license and auto insurance to Emily Blackman at the front desk. For further information about volunteer driving, please refer to the Field Trips section of the handbook.

In the Classroom

ATTENDANCE/TARDINESS
Regular attendance is essential for your child to progress satisfactorily in school. Each school day is a building block in his/her work progression. Should your child need to be out of school, please call the front desk receptionist, and she will notify the guide.
Your child will need to arrive at school on time so that all children may observe morning classroom rituals and an uninterrupted three-hour work cycle. A student who is late for class not only falls behind in his/her work, but disrupts the other students as he/she enters. Students who arrive after the stated start time will be marked tardy.

**Arrival times are as follows:**
- Infant **8:30 a.m.**
- Primary **8:30 a.m.**
- Elementary - High School **8:00 a.m.**

We consider more than five tardies for the year to be a problem. Guides will speak directly to parents about late arrivals. If there is no improvement, then guides are expected to inform the administration when tardies are excessive.

At that point, the Program Coordinator will contact the parent and together they will discuss how to manage more timely arrivals. When planning family vacations, please look carefully at the school calendar online at www.stcathmont.org. It is difficult for children to miss large chunks of school. Please try not to arrange trips when school is in session. There are many days when school is closed throughout the school year.

**DRESSING FOR INDEPENDENCE – INFANT COMMUNITY & PRIMARY**
Children should come to school in clothes that can be managed with minimal assistance. This encourages independence and improved coordination, particularly important for our youngest children learning self-care and toileting. Clothes for school should be casual and comfortable, allowing for daily activities including art, cooking and outside work. Please keep these factors in mind when assisting your child with dressing each morning:
- Ease of using the restroom
- The day’s weather forecast
- Whether it’s acceptable for clothes to come home soiled with dirt or paint

The following items are appropriate for the classroom work environment at St. Catherine’s Montessori:
- Flat, rubber-soled shoes that cover the entire foot (Infant Community and Primary children should wear shoes with self-manageable Velcro or laces.)
- Walking-style shorts that are loose-fitting
- Slacks, shirts, skirts, dresses

The following items are not appropriate for school:
- Tank tops, crop tops, halter tops
- No short shorts or tight shorts (unless under a dress)
- No shirts that depict characters or advertisements from movies, TV, comic books, role-playing games, or other pop culture.
- Footwear such as jellies, clogs, flip-flops, light-up shoes, high heels or Crocs (except as needed for gardening)

**DRESS CODE FOR LOWER & UPPER ELEMENTARY, ADOLESCENT, AND HIGH SCHOOL**
- No clothing with holes, tears, frayed edges, broken fastners, or other damage.
- Hair is to be one’s own natural color, kept clean and well-groomed and cut in styles that are in good taste and not distracting.
- No shirts that depict characters or advertisements from movies, TV, comic books, role-playing games, or other pop culture.
- No shirts that have neck openings that allow the shirt to fall off the shoulders.
- Attire must be modest and school appropriate. Shorts and skirts must be 2” past fingertip length. Shoes must be closed-toe, lace-up shoes or sturdy athletic sandals with straps. No flip-flops, or any shoes with a heel higher than 1.5 inches. No backless, open-toed, high-heeled, or light up shoes.
- Skin may not be visible through the fabric of any clothing.
Attire for Mass and Special Outings
Off-campus trips, including community service outings, require Upper Elementary students to wear SCM collared shirts with khaki slacks or skirts. Upper Elementary students also wear this uniform to Mass. AC students are required to wear a navy blue blazer, long-sleeve white dress shirt, and khaki skirts or slacks to Mass. **The SCM collared shirts may be purchased online at Lands’ End. Please use the link located on our website, www.stcathmont.org, in “News & Announcements” on the homepage.**

If a student comes to school dressed inappropriately, a parent will be called to bring an appropriate item of clothing for the student to wear.

WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

*Change of Clothing*
Infant Community and Primary children keep an extra set of clothes at school to support toileting and water activities. Please remember to label all clothing and to switch extra clothes as the seasons change. If your child needs to borrow something from our supply of extra clothes, please wash and return items.

*Backpacks and Umbrellas*
Infant Community and Primary children do not need a backpack or umbrella at school, so please leave those items at home. Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School students may bring a backpack if necessary to accommodate books, homework, and sports gear.

*Toys*
When preparing for the school day, please leave toys at home. They are a distraction in the classroom.

*Cell Phones*
AC Students and younger may not have a cell phone at school or off-campus on school-sponsored trips. If your student has a legitimate reason to need one for after-school, off-campus purposes, you must inform the Head of School in writing. The phone must be completely turned off (not in silent mode), and kept in the student’s backpack at all times. If it comes to the attention of an adult, it will be confiscated and brought to the Head of School. The parent must pick it up from the Head of School at the end of the day.

There are school telephones which students may use with the express permission of a faculty or staff member. This use is limited to emergency purposes, not for telephoning parents to arrange visits with friends or to bring forgotten items to school, etc. Students are not allowed to bring iPods, Nintendo DS, CD or MP3 players, or other game/music items to school. If such an item should come to the attention of an adult, it will be confiscated and brought to the Head of School. The parent may pick it up from the Head of School at the end of the day.

NUTRITION
St. Catherine’s Montessori encourages children to select foods that are minimally processed or unprocessed with high nutritional content. As part of our school-wide focus on sustainability, children of all ages learn to grow their own food, prepare snacks, cook, compost and use reusable materials for dining. By the time students reach the Adolescent Community, they are managing a large community garden with dozens of varieties of fruits and vegetables. We ask that you support the children’s learning by helping them bring healthy foods to school.

*Snack*
All students are provided a nutritious morning snack. This is only a snack and should not serve as a substitute for a good breakfast.

- Infant Community snack is provided by the school. The cost of snack is included in the fees.
- Elementary snack is provided by the school, and students do the shopping and daily preparation. The cost of snack is included in the fees.
- Adolescent Community students take turns planning snacks, preparing grocery lists, and
purchasing with their parents any outside ingredients needed for the week.

- High School students bring their own snack.

**Lunch**

Gathering for a meal instills children with a sense of community, and we use lunch time as an opportunity to emphasize language skills, etiquette and table manners. Children of all ages learn to care for themselves and others by setting the table and cleaning up after a meal.

Students attending a full-day session should bring a well-balanced lunch, including protein. Finger foods and sandwiches cut into smaller pieces make handling easier for young children. Carbonated or sugary drinks, juice boxes, candy, gum, cookies, brownies and other junk food are not appropriate at lunchtime. Please do not send these items to school.

Lunchboxes should be properly identified on the outside, and food containers should be reusable and child-friendly. Please avoid “handy” single packs, as these can be difficult for children to open and create excess waste. Uneaten food will be returned home each day. Cutlery, napkins and filtered drinking water are provided to students in their classrooms.

**Lunch Visitation Policy**

Lunch visitation is at the discretion of each Guide.

**Allergies**

If your child suffers from food allergies, you are required to complete an Allergy Action Plan as well as inform your child’s guide and the school’s Healthcare Coordinator. Food allergies in a classroom that require special accommodations, will be communicated by the Healthcare Coordinator. Please honor any food restrictions in your child’s class.

**NUT ALLERGY POLICY**

St. Catherine's Montessori has the following policy regarding nuts: While every effort will be made to follow these guidelines to keep children safe from allergens, St. Catherine’s cannot guarantee that a child will not be exposed to a potentially hazardous or life threatening allergen.

The following procedures will be enforced regarding nut safety:

1. **Children with known nut allergies will be admitted to St. Catherine’s.** They may attend classes when the following conditions are met:
   - An “Allergy Action Plan” is completed by a Medical Specialist (at least annually) and on file in the clinic
   - An EpiPen (if required) is delivered to the school [along with completed and signed Physician’s Authorization Form].

2. **It is the duty of the parents of a minor child to inform the school of a nut allergy.**

3. **If a parent becomes aware at any time during their enrollment that their child has a nut allergy, it is the duty of the parent to notify the school immediately.** After the school has been notified, the parents have at least 5 days to meet the following conditions:
   - An “Allergy Action Plan” is completed by a Medical Specialist (at least annually) and on file in the clinic
   - An EpiPen (if required) is delivered to the school [along with completed and signed Physician’s Authorization Form].

4. **In all Classrooms:**
   - Snack and cooking class ingredients containing nuts will not be allowed in the classroom.
   - Parents of other children in the class will be notified about specific products that may cause serious to life threatening allergic reactions to a student(s) within the classroom.
   - If a child does come with a lunch item containing nuts, every effort will be made to ensure that contact with the nut-allergic child is not made.
BIRTHDAYS
The Montessori tradition honors birthdays as special celebrations of each child’s journey from birth to the present day. Sharing this important milestone with peers is encouraged, and each class celebrates with their own interpretation of Montessori’s unique rituals. Typically the birthday child shares his/her life story with classmates and takes celebratory walks around the sun to commemorate each year of life.

Your child’s guide will notify you of plans for your child’s celebration ahead of time.

When planning a party of any kind for your child outside of school, please mail the invitations from home. Distributing invitations at school can cause hurt feelings for children who are not included.

P.E. CLASSES
Starting in Lower Elementary, students have designated P.E. class. Athletic footwear is required for P.E. activities. Students who are ill or unable to participate in required P.E. activities must bring a note from a parent or doctor describing the reason for abstaining.

HOMEWORK
The Montessori classroom provides an environment conducive to continuous work. An informal break is taken for snacks, and a half-hour lunch is part of the daily schedule. Because the school day is filled with meaningful work, students are encouraged to participate in outside interests and activities for recreation and enjoyment after school. The scope of the Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School, curricula requires that homework be assigned periodically to help students complete required work and to provide extra practice in particular subject areas.

Homework assignments are not excessive; rather, they complement the students’ outside activities by building a sense of responsibility for personal development. The Adolescent and High School student can expect to have daily assignments.

Late Homework
Homework that is not turned in on time will be discussed between the student, guide and parent.

GIFTS TO CLASSROOMS & GUIDES
On special occasions such as birthdays or at Christmas, students may present the class with a gift as a way of acknowledging this special event. Gifts benefiting the class such as books, science equipment, magazines, plants or pets are appreciated. Please contact the guide for other gift-giving suggestions. Any group gifts or money for a guide or assistant must be organized and collected by a parent in the class and must be voluntary.

MOVING UP TO THE NEXT LEVEL
In consultation with the Head of School, and after discussion with the parents, the decision to move a student from the current level to the next level is at the discretion of the classroom guide.
STANDARDIZED TESTING
The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) is administered in April starting in third grade. In addition, the Cognitive Abilities test (CogAT) is administered in grades 4, 6 and 8. St. Catherine’s Montessori participates in this Archdiocesan-wide achievement testing program both for the purpose of monitoring individual achievement and program evaluation. Each student’s test results are given to the parents and are included in the student’s academic file. If your child requires testing accommodations, contact Rose Ann Morello, the school registrar, rmorello@stcathmont.org.

SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS AND REFERRALS
Introductory Statement
Consistent with the contents of the Church document, “To Teach as Jesus Did”, and the “Pastoral Statement of the U.S. Bishops on Persons with Disabilities”, the Archdiocese seeks to include students with specials needs in our schools to the extent that the need of such students can be met within the scope of the programs and resources offered. The Catholic Schools Office is aware that it is unrealistic to serve all categories of special need students. However, St. Catherine’s Montessori and the other Catholic Schools are cognizant of the fact that admission of special needs students must be considered and reviewed on an individual basis.

Legal References to Special Services
The Individuals with Disabilities Educations Act (IDEA) requires that local school districts locate, identify, and evaluate all private school students suspected of having a disability (for St. Catherine’s Montessori, the local school district is Houston ISD). This “Child Find” process must be conducted in consultation with private schools representatives to ensure equitable access for private school students. In IDEA, these children are often referred to as “parentally placed private school children with disabilities,” and the benefits available to them differ from the benefits for children with disabilities enrolled in public schools.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 educational section (frequently called “Section 504), provides that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in any program receiving federal assistance. Catholic educators strive to recognize and address the needs of all those who seek a Catholic education. Within our resources, St. Catherine’s and other Catholic schools will offer services to eligible students with special needs, when possible. However, private schools are not required to significantly alter their programs, lower or substantially modify their standards to accommodate a child with special needs. Private educational institutions are only required to make minor adjustment to accommodate eligible students.

Records for Special Needs Learners
All psychological and educational evaluations/reports regarding special needs testing of students received from local public schools, persons, or agencies are forwarded to St. Catherine’s Montessori upon request. These records are kept on file at the school for a period of seven (7) years after the exit of the student. These records are kept in a secure file and area accessible only to the Head of School, Program Coordinator, and any other appropriate staff member working with the student. Parents may view their child’s record at any time. These records may not be forwarded to any other individual or agency.

Criteria for Acceptance of Students with Special Needs
In making a determination regarding the admittance of a particular student, the school will review the child’s ability to meet the school’s academic, behavioral, and physical qualifications. Each Catholic school determines its ability to meet the need of the student applicant. Consideration will be given to the following:

- The student’s demonstrated ability to meet grade level requirements;
- The record of student’s ability to follow school rules and regulations; and
- The students’ ability to meet the physical requirements of attendance.
St. Catherine’s Services for Special Needs Learners

New Students — When the Admission Office or the Head of School is notified that an incoming student may have special learning needs, the Head of School and Program Coordinator review current academic, social, medical, and psychological evaluations to determine if the applicant is qualified to enroll, with or without his/her disability. If the applicant is qualified for enrollment, the Head of School and Program Coordinator will then determine if reasonable adjustments can be made to the educational program which will accommodate the student’s needs. If an admission is determined the school will begin the procedures with parents to discuss a Catholic Accommodation Plan.

Currently Enrolled Students — If a guide (or parent) is concerned about a child’s academic, behavioral, or emotional progress and determines that testing may be needed, he/she will discuss concerns with the parent/family and the Head of School, and then meet the Program Coordinator as soon as possible. We work as a team to do what is best for the child and will discuss:

- The student’s current educational status, including attendance records, grades, assessment data, and classroom observations;
- Previous educational efforts and strategies provided for the students and the results;
- Documentation of recent vision and hearing screenings;
- Updated general health history inventory; and
- Other information provided by the parents or teachers.

Parents will be expected to disclose any pertinent information that may assist us in educating the student. The Head of School and Program Coordinator are responsible for recommending educational alternatives and/or referral to the local school district and/or private agency of the parent’s choice for further evaluation. In some cases, the campus may not have the resources necessary to help the child be successful. The Head of School or Program Coordinator will then assist the family to locate an appropriate educational program for the child.

If an evaluation determines the student requires minor accommodations the school will begin the procedures with parents to discuss a Catholic Accommodation Plan. Accommodations for a child will be noted in the child’s permanent folder.

Student Success Expectations for Special Needs Learners

All available school resources shall be utilized to promote student success. Lines of communication will be kept open to inform parents of student progress in all areas. Concerns about a student will be addressed initially by the classroom guide and parent. School success can only be attained through cooperation between parents and educators. Parents are expected to disclose any pertinent information from private resources (diagnoses and recommendations) that would be of specific educational value in programming adequately for their children. If it is determined that the school’s resources cannot meet the needs of a student, or if parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to act on the school’s recommendations for remediation or diagnostic evaluation, the Head of School may request withdrawal of the student or deny admission for the following year.

Accommodations for Special Needs Learners

The purpose of an accommodation of any type is to provide the appropriate instruction according to the individual student’s special needs. As a result of a diagnostic evaluation, a student may meet certain criteria to qualify for accommodations to his/her schoolwork. In many instances, accommodations (changed in methods of instruction) can be made in the classroom for students with special needs or for struggling students. Students who are diagnosed with a learning difference or who are diagnosed with a special need through the public school system, private doctors, or through special agencies may be referred for special assistance with the Intervention Specialist after the administration has verification of the student’s recommended accommodations. (Curricular modifications are not provided because modifications require alterations of curricular objectives.) The number of intervention sessions per week, length of sessions, and goals will be determined by the Program Coordinator, Head of School, and guide after all available information has been reviewed.
Standardized Assessment for Students with Special Needs

Standardized assessments are one of several means of evaluating student performance. All students participate in the Archdiocesan standardized assessment program. Students with disabilities identified through IDEA may require assessment accommodations. These accommodations should be provided on a weekly basis through the classroom teacher. These testing arrangements must be planned for in advance through a meeting with the Program Coordinator. Any adjustment made on the standardized assessment must be requested from the Catholic Schools Office via special request on the appropriate form.

Additional Programs

AFTER-SCHOOL MUSIC AND SPORTS

St. Catherine’s strives to help each individual reach his or her potential in all areas—intellectually, physically, socially, morally, and spiritually. It was Montessori’s view that the mind and the body should operate as one, that thought should be accompanied by expression in action—or to put it another way, that the action should be an expression of the developing will and thought processes.

The After-School Music and Sports schedule is designed to make it possible for every individual to participate in both activities if desired and to avoid interrupting the Montessori work cycle.

St. Catherine’s After-School Music and Sports:

- Offer the opportunity for children to recognize their role as a member of a team
- Develop skills through repetition and rehearsal
- Provide opportunities to perform in front of others
- Encourage the development of positive attitudes and values

Those who have a particular affinity for a musical instrument or specific sport may also choose to participate in outside classes or teams to further enhance their skills. St. Catherine’s encourages children to follow their interests and to experience time for unstructured play on a regular basis.

Music Eligibility

- Beginning Band and Orchestra is open to 2nd and 3rd years.
- Band/Orchestra is open to all returning 3rd players and Upper Elementary
- Ensemble is open to all Adolescent Community and High School students.

Sports Eligibility

- The After-School Sports program includes soccer, volleyball, girls basketball, boys basketball, and track. It is open to all 4th – 9th year students.
- The 10th and 11th year students may participate in cross country.

PRIMARY AND LOWER ELEMENTARY FALL SOCCER

Primary and Lower Elementary Soccer, also known as “Saturday Soccer,” is a parent-led soccer program for our younger students. This is a noncompetitive soccer league. There are no goalies, and the score is not kept. The emphasis is on sportsmanship, learning beginner soccer skills, teamwork and fun. Information and enrollment forms are available on the school website. This program is dependent on a parent or parents to volunteer to organize and lead Saturday Soccer.

GYMNASTICS

Creative Development offers after-school gymnastics classes for Primary AM and PM. Information and enrollment forms are available on ParentsWeb under Resource Documents.
Policies

ADMISSIONS
St. Catherine’s Montessori welcomes students of every race, color, creed, religion and national or ethnic origin who otherwise meet admission criteria. We believe that our admission policies, consistently applied, will result in the best Montessori experience for our students.

The admissions procedure begins with a mandatory school tour and classroom observation by prospective parents. More information about admissions procedures may be found on the school website, www.stcathmont.org, under the Admissions tab.

Infant Community
Children ages 14 months to 3 years who have established independent walking may begin their Montessori experience in our Infant Community.

Primary
The Primary level is a 3- to 4-year program, and the optimal time to enter is at 2 ½ to 3 years of age. Children remain in Primary through the age of 6. Admitting children during the first year of the Primary cycle is ideal so that they can derive full advantage of the materials and lessons designed for each phase of development.

Students are then prepared to move to the next level of Montessori when appropriate. By following this procedure, we are able to maintain the integrity of the classroom and to offer all students a quality Montessori experience.

Children ages 4 and 5 years old are considered for admission on an individual basis, with preference given to transferring Montessori students.

Elementary (Grades 1-6)
Lower Elementary (grades 1-3) and Upper Elementary (grades 4-6) students coming from another Montessori school are eligible for admission on a space-available basis. Students coming from non-Montessori backgrounds may be eligible for admission on a space-available basis, if it appears to be a good fit.

We require the most recent progress reports, report cards and achievement test scores. These must be submitted to the Admissions Office with the application. A confidential Teacher-Recommendation Form, obtained from the Admissions Office and signed by the parent, will be sent to the child’s present school. A visit will be scheduled for the student, and an informal assessment will be made of the child.

Adolescent Community (Grades 7-9) and High School (Grades 10-12)
Adolescent students coming from another Montessori school are eligible for admission on a space-available basis and after a meeting with the guides. Those without Montessori experience may be considered after meeting with the guides. All school records will be required as well as confidential Teacher Recommendation Forms.

ACADEMIC RECORDS
If a parent or student wishes to see the student’s cumulative records, it is possible to do so with 24 hours written notice. Student cumulative records include academic transcript and academic test results. Any request for official transcripts must be made by a receiving school in the case of a student’s withdrawal from St. Catherine’s Montessori.

All requests for transfer of records and for teacher letters of recommendation must go through the Registrar’s Office; do not give any of this paperwork directly to your child’s guide. Please inform the Registrar’s Office at minimum ten business days prior to the date that recommendations and records are required. We will forward the end-of-year evaluations, results from standardized tests, and letters of recommendation directly to the receiving school. Student accounts must be current and up-to-date for records to be forwarded.
In transferring to another school, timing must be considered. St. Catherine’s will expect parent to honor the terms of existing enrollment contracts. Upon receipt of an application to another school, the Admission’s Director will contact the family to discuss their plans and concerns surrounding changing schools.

**NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

The school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is up to the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

- If a child lives with a custodial parent, a complete and signed copy of the divorce decree is required to be on file in the office, by Archdiocesan policy.
- If parents share custody, the school provides duplicate copies of all relevant information upon request.

**Health & Safety**

St. Catherine’s Montessori attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. All faculty and staff are trained in CPR and first aid. Additionally, there is a school clinic and a Healthcare Coordinator on staff. Emergency drills are practiced throughout the year in accordance with our Crisis Management Plan.

**Use of School Grounds and Facilities**

The use of school grounds and facilities is for the St. Catherine’s Montessori community only unless otherwise approved by the Head of School.

**Asbestos**

We are an asbestos-free school.

**REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS**

Texas law requires that students be fully immunized against specific diseases. St. Catherine’s Montessori complies with the State of Texas Immunization requirements. Up-to-date immunization health records from a doctor’s office are required to be returned to the school **by August 9, 2018**. The only exception is medical exemption. The Archdiocese no longer allows moral conscience exemption.

A schedule of required immunizations can be found by contacting the school Healthcare Coordinator or at the following link: [http://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/school-requirements.aspx](http://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/school-requirements.aspx). Please read the schedules carefully.

A student may be provisionally enrolled provided he/she demonstrates evidence that he/she has begun and continues necessary immunizations as rapidly as is medically feasible.

**Medical Contraindications:** Exclusions from compliance to health policies are allowable on an individual basis for medical contraindications only. The child or student must present a certificate signed and dated by a physician licensed to practice medicine in the United States and must renew this certificate every year for the exclusion to remain in effect, unless a lifelong condition is specified.

**TB Screening:** A completed Student TB Screening Questionnaire is required for all students every school year. This form may be found on ParentsWeb under the heading Resource Documents.

**IF YOUR CHILD IS ILL**

If your child is not well enough to participate in usual school activities, you are urged to keep him/her at home. Communicable diseases spread rapidly in a school environment, and we do our best to protect students from illness.

A child having one or more of the following symptoms at school will be sent home:
• Fever 100.0 degrees or above
• Suspected contagious disease
• Vomiting
• Diarrhea
• Does not feel well enough to participate in usual school activities.
• Lice

If your child has any of the above symptoms in the morning before school, **he/she may not come to school.** If a child is absent, please contact the front office to inform us of the nature of the absence. If the child sees a doctor, please send a note upon returning to school.

Please inform the school of any communicable disease your child's doctor confirms, including conjunctivitis (“pink eye”), hand foot and mouth, flu, strep throat, scarlet fever, fifth disease, measles, German measles, mumps, or head lice. The Healthcare Coordinator will then notify anyone who might have been exposed about symptoms to watch for. Your child will remain anonymous. A child may not return to school until the child is symptom-free without medication (e.g., Tylenol, Advil, anti-diarrhea) for 24 hours. This includes a temperature of 100 degrees or above, diarrhea and/or vomiting. In the case of lice, the child may return when he/she is nit-free. He/she must be checked by the Healthcare Coordinator before returning to class.

**MEDICATION**

If your child needs medicine during the school day, it may not be sent in a lunchbox or backpack. Students must have a Medication Permission Form on file for the school to administer any medication—prescription or non-prescription. This includes Benadryl, Tylenol (Acetaminophen) or Motrin/Advil (Ibuprofen), cough drops, medicated creams and any other over-the-counter medication. Medication Permission Forms may be found on ParentsWeb under ‘Resource Documents’/’Medication Letter & Form’. The Medication Permission Form must be signed by the student’s parents, and his/her physician. We will not administer medications without this form on file.

All necessary information (name of child, name of medication, frequency of administration, expiration date, etc.) must be on the container provided to the school. Only the original prescription container will be accepted. Non-prescription medication must also be in the original packaging. Please turn in medication to the clinic in the morning. Please try to work out a medication schedule with your doctor that would eliminate administration of the medication at school. No stock medications are kept on campus.

If your child suffers from asthma, severe allergies, diabetes, epilepsy or any other serious medical condition, St. Catherine’s Montessori wants to ensure that special procedures are followed to guarantee the best care for the child at school and school functions. Before the start of the school year, parents will need to meet with the Healthcare Coordinator and guide and provide doctor’s orders, health care plans and completed medication forms. Please inform the Healthcare Coordinator about your child’s condition and she will arrange and coordinate the meeting.

For children with severe allergies, asthma or epilepsy, Action Plans are required and available from the Healthcare Coordinator and/or on ParentsWeb.

If students are able to self administer inhalers for asthma, the school requires that on the Asthma Action Plan written authorization is given by the health care provider that the student is able to self carry and self administer his/her inhaler. In addition, the school Healthcare Coordinator, guide and coaches need to be separately notified by the parents. Only rescue inhalers for the treatment of asthma may be carried by the child, all other medication needs to be stored in the clinic.

In case of any other emergency medication that requires storage in close proximity to the child (such as the classroom or gym), a duplicate medication needs to be in the clinic as a back-up. Parents will have to provide both medications.

**ANNUAL STUDENT SCREENINGS**

**Vision & Hearing Test**

Four-year old, five-year old, students in grades 1, 3, 5 and 9, first time entrants, and those with questionable vision/hearing problems must have a hearing and vision test during the course of the year.
Scoliosis (Spinal) Screening
All children in grades 6 and 9 must have a spinal screening. Exemption is granted only upon submission of a physician diagnosis.

Acanthosis Nigricans (AN) Screening
All children in grades 1, 3, 5, and 7 must have a screening for Acanthosis Nigricans. AN is a skin condition that signals high insulin levels in the body and serves as a risk indicator for Type 2 diabetes.

According to Texas State Law, vision and hearing, scoliosis and Acanthosis Nigricans screenings are required for all school children in the state of Texas. If you do not wish for St. Catherine's Montessori to administer the above screenings, you may select a health care provider of your choice. However, you must notify the Healthcare Coordinator’s office and submit a copy of screening results to St. Catherine's Montessori by October 2, 2018.

MANDATED REPORTING OF ABUSE/NEGLECT
School administration will refer all cases of physical and/or sexual abuse to the Children’s Assessment Center and Child Protective and Regulatory Services within 24 hours of notification, as is our legal responsibility. These professional experts will give direction for further action regarding student safety in or out of school.

MANAGING BEHAVIOR
Because the child has many freedoms in a Montessori environment, self-discipline is essential in maintaining a productive classroom. The Montessori philosophy is based on order and self-discipline, and these concepts are incorporated in the lessons presented.

The child is responsible for integrating self-discipline into his/her daily tasks and for his/her behavior. When we work with children exhibiting difficult behavior, the child is presented with alternatives to improve behavior, understanding that our responsibility as guides is to the child, as well as the other members of the group. Our goal is to support the child in recognizing that he or she has choices to make not only in his or her activities, but also in relation to behavior. Guidance can take several forms depending on the particular level of behavior and our knowledge of the child concerned.

Expulsion is an extremely serious matter, and generally every other possible solution will have been explored with the student and his/her parents prior to taking action.

A student’s continued enrollment at the school will be subject to his/her meeting the reasonable scholastic and behavioral standards set. If any student fails to meet these standards, and if the Head of School believes that continued enrollment of the student is not in the best interest of the student or the school, the Head of School shall so advise the Board of Directors. Parents may appeal the expulsion to the Board. Immediate expulsion may take place when a student or parent:

- Brings, sells or distributes harmful substances on school property.
- Has a weapon on his/her person or in his/her possession anywhere on school campus, including the parking lot, and/or at any school event.
- Engages in assault that results in serious physical injury to another student or any school personnel.
- Commits persistent acts of incorrigible behavior.

Administration and staff will exercise professional judgment and discretion to address each situation fairly and consistently.

Parent/Guardian Behavior
Parents/Guardians are expected to adhere to respectful behaviors that are consistent with good moral principles and do not interfere with the operation of, or reflect adversely on, the school.

Disruptive, threatening or illegal behavior of a parent may result in barring the parent from campus or in the expulsion of his/her student(s).
Bullying/Harassment/Cyberbullying
Parents and students are expected to conduct themselves, whether inside or outside school, or at sponsored activities, in a manner befitting the stated philosophy, expected behaviors and reputation of a Catholic school. Unacceptable behavior subverts the mission of Catholic education and threatens the educational experience and well-being of all affected persons.

Whether occurring inside or outside the school, when behavior jeopardizes the safe environment of the school, or is contrary to Gospel values, the student, staff member, volunteer or parent can be subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences, including expulsion, revocation of the volunteer’s services, or being asked to withdraw his/her student from the school.

Harassment, including bullying, is considered a severe infraction. The result of such behavior is the student being sent to the Head of School immediately. Therefore, consequences up to and including expulsion, shall be taken against any person who engages in any type of harassment including electronic harassment (cyberbullying).

Retaliation or intimidation for having reported or threatened to report harassment, or for assisting the school in the investigations, is strictly prohibited. Acts of retaliation will result in disciplinary action.

USE OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES
St. Catherine’s Montessori adheres to the Archdiocesan policy, stated below, regarding the use of controlled substances.

The use and unlawful possession of illicit drugs and alcohol is wrong and harmful. A student is subject to removal from class, which may result in suspension, expulsion or referral for prosecution if, while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property, there is question of:

- Chemical substance use, possession for consumption, sale or dispensing of illegal drugs and narcotics (hard or soft drugs; alcohol, inhalers, marijuana or a controlled substance).
- Acting under the influence of an illegal drug–alcohol, narcotic, marijuana, or a controlled substance.
- Medication misuse or overdosage.
- Giving medication, prescribed or over-the-counter, to another student.

The school Healthcare Coordinator, Program Coordinator, and Head of School should work together with the student and family towards bringing about a complete recovery and elimination of the drug abuse for the student involved. When removing a student from class, for the reasons stated above, the Head of School should:

- Report the incident to the superintendent of Catholic schools.
- Notify parent(s)/guardian(s) immediately and request a conference.
- Notify authorities when appropriate.

After the conference with the parent and student, the student may be suspended for a period of three days or expelled. During this time, it is recommended that the parents enroll in family therapy with the student, as suggested by the Head of School, a family physician or the Archdiocesan office. At the completion of the suspension, the student will return to school with a contract to continue the therapy until the therapist feels a complete recovery has been made.

GRIEVANCES
The purpose of this process is to provide parents/guardians of students enrolled in St. Catherine’s Montessori with an orderly procedure for the equitable and prompt resolution of complaints. This process is intended to resolve disputes at the lowest possible level in a cooperative, conciliatory Christian atmosphere.

No person shall be discriminated against because of filing or participating in this complaint process, and no reprisals of any kind shall be taken against any person because of participation in this complaint process.
The process is not intended to be adversarial in nature, and neither party to the complaint shall be represented by legal counsel during any phase of the process.

Although St. Catherine’s Montessori endeavors to establish a harmonious Christian atmosphere within its school, we recognize that misunderstandings or differences of opinion occur. Ideally, such matters can be resolved informally by a parent or guardian meeting first with the guide, then with the Head of School, if necessary. If, however, the matter is not settled to the parent or guardian’s satisfaction, the parent or guardian may institute a formal grievance. A formal grievance must be in writing and must be received in five (5) working days following the occurrence of the event on which the grievance is based. Please contact the Head of School for a copy of the current appeals process/grievance procedure for further details and forms. Also, please note that the current policy supersedes and replaces all previous policies and statements regarding institution and processing of formal grievances within Catholic Schools.

Nepotism
It is St. Catherine’s policy that an employee may not directly report to an immediate relative.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE
For Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School Parents & Students
St. Catherine’s Montessori is pleased to offer students access to technology resources for educational purposes, which may include computer hardware and software licensed to the school. To gain access to the technology resources, each year all students must obtain parental permission as verified by the signatures on the Agreement and Permission Form enclosed with this handbook. Should a parent prefer that a student not have email and Internet access, use of the computer is still possible for more traditional purposes such as word processing.

Internet, Email, Cell Phones, Smart Phones
Access to the Internet and email will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, museums and other repositories of information, and to exchange personal communication with other Internet users around the world. Families should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or potentially offensive. While the purpose of the school is to use Internet resources for constructive educational goals, students may find ways to access other materials. We believe that the benefits to students from access to the Internet outweigh the disadvantages. Ultimately, however, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. Therefore, we support and respect each family’s right to decide whether or not to allow access.

What is expected?
Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on the school’s computer network just as they are in a classroom or on a school playground. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. It is expected that users will comply with Archdiocesan standards and the specific rules set forth below. The use of technology resources is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. The user is personally responsible for his/her actions in accessing and utilizing the school’s technology resources. The students are expected never to access, keep or send anything that they would not want their parents or guides to see.

What are the Rules of Appropriate Use?

Personal Safety and Personal Privacy – Students will not post personal contact information about themselves. Personal contact information includes home address, telephone number, etc. This information may not be provided to an individual, organization or company, including websites that solicit personal information.

Social Networking – Accessing social networking websites, blogs, video sites (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.), except those used for educational purposes, is off-limits on school property. The use of
circumventors to get around school network security is prohibited.

St. Catherine’s Montessori expects Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School students to use the Internet for its educational potential, but to be careful of its many traps and opportunities for unhealthy and dangerous activity. We care about the safety and reputation of all of our students, families and friends. The following must always be avoided:

- Offensive and vulgar language
- Attacking a peer’s character or that of anyone on the faculty/staff of the school
- Cruelty toward others, assault, racial slurs, threats and demeaning comments including terrorist threats

When inappropriate websites and/or blogs created and maintained by our students mention the school’s name or that of any student or employee, current or former, or use the school logo, the school can and must hold the student responsible for the content.

The school may take the following actions:

- Call the student in for a conference to request that he/she modify his/her website/blog and/or take the school’s name and/or logo off the website.
- Communicate with a student’s parents/guardians about any inappropriate material on a student’s website/blog.
- If the student will not cooperate with the school administration as to making his/her website/blog free of anything that would cause harm to him/her and to his/her reputation and/or the reputation of the school, disciplinary action will be taken until compliance is heeded.

Illegal Copying – Students should never download or install any commercial software, shareware or freeware onto network drives or disks. Nor should students copy other people’s work or intrude into other people’s files. The download/upload of any material in violation of any U.S., State, Board, Archdiocesan or school policy is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted materials, threatening, violent or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret.

Inappropriate Materials or Language – No profane, abusive or impolite language is allowed, nor should materials be accessed which are not in line with the rules of school behavior. Use of technology resources for gambling, chain letter communication, unauthorized email, chat or instant message, blogs and discussion forums is also prohibited. Should students encounter inappropriate material by accident, they should report it to their guide immediately. Use of cell phones or smart phones to transmit unacceptable language and/or images that are harmful to self, other students, and/or other people is prohibited.

FIELD TRIPS

To expand awareness of the world outside our community, excursions off-campus are planned throughout the school year for Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School students. Preplanning and preparation with the students help make such excursions more meaningful. Before each trip, a Field Trip Form will be sent home for parent approval of planned activities. Please complete, sign and return the form to school by the requested deadline. An example form is located on page 25.

Transportation

Local trips, including Houston and surrounding areas, may make use of parent vehicles with no more than six students in each vehicle. Parent drivers must:

- Participate in VIRTUS training and have their certificate on file with the school.
- Provide a copy of their current driver’s license to the school.
- Provide a copy of their current automobile insurance to the school and understand that they, as the primary insurer, are responsible for the safety of the students they transport, as well as any traffic
accidents they may be involved in.
• Complete and sign the Going Out Form each time they drive students. TheGoing Out Form is available at the front desk or from your child’s guide.

All transportation will be arranged by the class guide, assistant, room parent or student.

Students will also be transported in a St. Catherine’s bus. Drivers will be authorized by St. Catherine’s and will have completed VIRTUS training, have a valid driver’s license, and will have their Driver’s Record checked annually.

**Overnight Accommodations**
Should a field trip involve overnight travel, every effort will be made to ensure that there is one adult in every sleeping area with two or more students. Overnight settings include dormitories, connecting rooms, or single rooms, either in cabins or motels.

Information necessary for the safety of all students and adults will be communicated prior to the trip and will include emergency contact information and a plan for the dispensing of medication. All medications being dispensed require both parent and physician signature on the Medication Permission Form.

**Adult Chaperones**
Names of adults to accompany the students will be sent to parents in a timely fashion. There will always be at least one class guide included in the adult group of chaperones.

**Packing List/Itinerary**
A student packing list and itinerary of student activities will be sent to parents in a timely fashion. Students who fail to meet academic and behavioral requirements may be denied participation. This decision is at the sole discretion of the guide. Participating in field trips is a privilege, not a right.
Parent Service Organization (PSO)

Our Mission
St Catherine’s Parent Service Organization (PSO) is dedicated to enhancing the experience of students, staff, and parents by creating a community founded on parent involvement and warm hospitality. We strive to build a school where we know we will be welcomed and our families are all known by name. Parental service reinforces the strong foundation of education, spirituality, social, and emotional development laid down by the school foundresses over 50 years ago.

Fulfilling the Mission
The PSO hosts a variety of fundraising, volunteer, and social activities during the year, and none of this would be possible without the participation of the parents; please join us! We look forward to an exciting and fun filled 2018-2019.

PSO Meetings and Events
You are welcome as a member of the PSO as soon as your child is enrolled. We encourage parents to attend the PSO meetings and social events to learn more about the organization and ways you can contribute. The dates for the PSO meetings are found on the school calendar, with reminders and new events in the weekly published Globe.

Volunteering
We hope that you will join us in serving this school year. If you have any questions, please contact pso@stcathmont.org. The Parent Volunteer form can be found on ParentsWeb under Web Forms.
# Tuition & Fees  2018-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Program Hours</th>
<th>Program Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant Community (16 MONTHS-3 YEARS)</td>
<td>8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>$9,949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary (3 YEARS-6 YEARS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary AM</td>
<td>8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>$9,949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary PM</td>
<td>8:30 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. (Friday Dismissal 2:15)</td>
<td>$11,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Elementary (Grades 1-3)</td>
<td>8:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. (Friday Dismissal 2:15)</td>
<td>$12,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Elementary (Grades 4-6)</td>
<td>8:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. (Friday Dismissal 2:15)</td>
<td>$12,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Community (Grades 7-9)</td>
<td>8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (Friday Dismissal 2:30)</td>
<td>$13,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School (Grades 10-11)</td>
<td>8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (Friday Dismissal 2:30)</td>
<td>$13,851</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After School Programs</th>
<th>Dismissal</th>
<th>Program Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary, Elementary &amp; Adolescent Community</td>
<td>6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>$250/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$20/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$10/day*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Discounted rate for siblings of students in after-school music or sports program picked up by 4:30 p.m. on scheduled music/sports dates. **Note:** Students picked up after 4:30 p.m. will be charged regular daily rate of $20.

## Tuition Deposit
Due with Enrollment Contract, non-refundable, applied toward tuition

$750/student

## Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Fee (for new applicants, non-refundable)</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Student Fee (One time fee due at initial acceptance, non-refundable)</td>
<td>$850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Fee (per student)</td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Community Fees</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Fees</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Elementary Fees*</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Elementary Fees*</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Community Fees*</td>
<td>$2,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Fees*</td>
<td>$2,250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Additional fees are incurred for in-class cooking, and food on trips. Varies by level.

All payments should be submitted through F.A.C.T.S.
Tuition Policy 2018-2019

I. Tuition and any applicable fees are due and payable on or before July 1, 2018. St. Catherine’s Montessori has contracted with FACTS Management Co. to manage tuition and other fees for 2018-2019 school year.

II. Tuition is payable through payment plan set up through FACTS. Tuition may be paid by automatic bank payment (no fee), credit card payment with 2.85% service fee, or payment by check made directly to school. Returned checks will incur a $30 fee.

III. Tuition payment plans are as follows (All fees are still due on 7/1/2018):
   - Annual Plan (one installment plan)
   - Nine equal tuition payments due on the first day of each month July, 2018 through March, 2019.

   Three and nine month tuition plans payment plans include interest at the rate of 7.5% per annum

IV. Tuition unpaid by the tenth day of the month in which it is due is considered delinquent and collection procedures will be pursued. Late payments will affect the ability to finance tuition in the future. If tuition becomes 90 days or more delinquent the financing arrangement is considered breached and the balance of the school year’s tuition will become due and payable immediately.

V. Families with more than one child enrolled in the school will receive a tuition discount of 10% for each younger sibling.

VI. No school records or teacher recommendations/evaluations will be forwarded to other schools until all past due tuition amounts have been paid in full.

VII. All exceptions to the tuition payment policy must be approved by the Head of School.

VIII. Online applications for tuition assistance are available through FACTS. Scholarships are awarded through Archdiocesan Scholarship Fund and St. Catherine’s Scholarship Fund based on financial need and funding availability. Scholarship applications will be available February 2019.