

A large, faded watermark of the York Montessori School logo is centered on the page. It consists of a circular border containing the text 'YORK • MONTESSORI • SCHOOL' and a central emblem with a stylized 'M' and 'S'.

Student & Parent Handbook

(Revised September 4, 2020)



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INTRODUCTION

The staff of York Montessori School (YMS) would like to welcome you to our school. In order to ensure that students have a happy, stimulating and successful school year, we have prepared a handbook, which outlines the school's policies and procedures. We kindly ask that you read this handbook carefully and retain it for future reference.

Please note that due to recent circumstances and rapidly changing guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health, all policies and procedures have the potential to change based on the most current information received. All families will be notified as these changes occur.

MISSION STATEMENT

York Montessori School seeks to become the one place where parents/guardians, with peace of mind, will leave their children in the hands of our educators. The primary focus of our school is to provide a high-quality educational setting in which the child can experience developmental excellence while being cared for in a healthy and enjoyable environment. We will provide a carefully planned and stimulating atmosphere which will help children develop within themselves the foundation, attitude and skills which are essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning. We will plant the seeds of discovery and exploration that will enable children to educate themselves throughout their lifetime.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

York Montessori School admits and does not discriminate against students of any sex, race, colour, creed, or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Likewise, the school does not discriminate against any employee on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, or ethnic origin. YMS is committed to providing an educational environment that is free of unlawful harassment and discrimination. YMS will not tolerate actions, comments, words or jokes based on an individual's sex, race, age, religion or any other legally protected grounds. Any person who becomes aware of possible harassment should promptly advise the Principal who will handle the matter quickly and confidentially.

PREREQUISITES TO ADMISSION

To complete the registration process, the following must be submitted to YMS:

1. A completed application form
2. A copy of the Public Health immunization form
3. Parent Handbook sign off
4. A non-refundable registration fee plus the tuition down payment dated the day your application is received. This deposit is applied to the tuition fee in full. However, the deposit is non-refundable, should you wish to withdraw your child.



5. Three (3) or Ten (10) post-dated cheques dated August 1st to May 1st (or post-dated balance in full, depending on the selected method of payment).

DEFINITION OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

The academic school year runs from September through June. During the December Winter Break and March Break the school is closed. YMS is pleased to offer an educational and exciting Summer Camp programs for the months of July and August. During this time, we have “theme-based weeks” featuring special visitors and activities for the children. The school is closed for the last week of June and the last week of the summer in order to allow for preparation of Summer Camp and the academic year.

HOLIDAYS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| - Labour Day | - Good Friday |
| - Thanksgiving Day | - Easter Monday |
| - Christmas Holidays (2 weeks) | - Victoria Day |
| - Family Day | - Canada Day |
| - March Break (1 week) | - Civic Day |

*** Please refer to the academic year calendar for specific dates and P.D. days.

THE FIRST DAYS

New students are often just learning to separate from their parents/guardians and are developing into autonomous and secure individuals. We ask you to help transition your child into the program by visiting the school with them prior to their enrollment.

Once the school year has begun, we ask that you help your child by dropping them off at the entrance of the classroom when they begin school. It is our experience that brief drop-off times encourage a positive adjustment. If parents/guardians linger, children may get mixed messages. They may translate their parent/guardian’s hesitation to leave as a sign of apprehension or uneasiness. Sending your child to class with a smile, a kiss and encouragement to have fun reassures your child that you approve. The teachers are more than understanding when it comes to children transitioning into the classroom and are very skilled at making them feel comfortable in a short amount of time.

Always remember to tell your child that you will return, and always say goodbye before you leave.

***Due to current visitor restrictions, transitional visits will be held outside on the playground. Visits will be arranged through the office and physical distancing measures will be in place. Any playground equipment that is touched will be cleaned and disinfected between visits.



Please refer to the following sections of the Pandemic Policies and Procedures for changes:

- Screening
- Visitors
- Physical Distancing
- Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfection
- Interactions with Children

SCHOOL HOURS

Before School Extended Hours: 7:30 A.M. – 8:30 A.M.

Academic Classes: 8:30 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

After School Extended Hours: 4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

***In order to allow for ample cleaning and disinfecting time at the end of each school day, After School Extended Hours will now be from 4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

DROP OFF AND PICK-UP POLICY

Arrival

The importance of timely arrival and departure cannot be over-emphasized. All children should arrive on time (between 8:20 – 8:40 A.M.) in order to prevent distractions for other students.

Parents/Guardians of children should walk their child to the classroom door. We strongly suggest that parents/guardians do not come into the classroom and stay for long periods as this is both distracting to the class and causes uncertainty in your child. The teacher or co-teacher will greet the child and welcome them into the classroom. Please close all doors behind you every time you enter and leave the school.

Departures

Daily dismissals take place between 3:30 – 4:00 P.M. Children will be released only to authorized persons who are designated on their Student Information Form. Please notify the school in writing if there is a change in authorized persons picking up your child. We WILL NOT allow your child to leave the school premises with anyone who is not on the contact list. Individuals on the pick-up list who are not familiar to YMS staff must provide identification before your child can be released. This should be explained in advance to avoid confusion for the individual who is picking up your child.

***Staggered drop off and pickup times will be put in place to ensure enough time for proper screening, while physically distancing, before each student enters the school.

Please refer to the following sections of the Pandemic Policies and Procedures for changes:

- Screening
- Pickup and Drop Off Procedures



EXTENDED HOURS AND LATE PICK-UP FEE POLICY

Regular school hours are from 8:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. The extended hours program operates from 7:30 - 8:30 A.M. and 4:00 - 6:00 P.M. Please refer to the tuition fee schedule for further details. Late pick-up is subject to a \$1.00 per minute fee and parents/guardians will be invoiced at the end of each term.

For those students without A.M. extended hours, morning drop off is between 8:20 A.M. and 8:40 A.M. For those students without PM extended hours, afternoon pick up is between 3:30 P.M. and 4:00 P.M. Should you require emergency use of extended hours please contact the office in advance for availability and fees.

*****In order to allow for ample cleaning and disinfecting time at the end of each school day, After School Extended Hours will now be from 4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.**

Please refer to the following sections of the Pandemic Policies and Procedures for changes:

- **Pickup and Drop Off Procedures**

ABSENCES OR MID-DAY APPOINTMENTS POLICY

If your child is going to be late, absent, or has a mid-day appointment, please notify the school no later than 8:00. A.M. (In case of absence due to illness, please inform the office of the nature of the illness.)

*****In order to help manage and track the spread of communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, it is imperative that parents/guardians notify the school of any and all symptoms or illness experienced by their children or members of their household.**

CLASS PLACEMENTS

YMS staff determines the placement of each child based on the following:

1. The welfare of the child
2. Ministry guidelines
3. Maintaining the Montessori principle of the three-year age mix
4. Developing balanced classroom composition related to age, gender, developmental maturity, toilet training, special needs, personality, etc.
5. Observations by the director, the program supervisor and classroom teachers. The request of parents/guardians will be carefully considered, but not guaranteed. Once an appropriate placement is determined, a change is made only if staff feels that the student's development merits the change.

Multi-age groupings are the heart of the Montessori methodology and any change may decrease the benefit of being in the same environment for a three-year cycle.

Please refer to the following sections of the Pandemic Policies and Procedures for changes:

- **Cohorting and Staffing**



CLOTHING AND POSSESSIONS

Help your child to dress appropriately for the activities of each day, both indoors and outdoors. Please remember that the children may be painting, sitting on the floor, participating in physical education activities, as well as working and playing outdoors during a typical day. No child should feel inhibited because of wet or dirty clothing; therefore, students should have spare clothes to change into at school. Please dress your child in clothing which they can manage independently. Practice with your child at home so that they will feel confident in their dressing skills.

ALL PERSONAL BELONGINGS MUST BE LABELLED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME

The following is a recommended list of items for each child to bring to school:

Spring and Summer:

- Indoor and outdoor shoes
- Water bottle – filled with water **ONLY**
- Extra pair of shorts
- Extra pair of underwear & socks
- Extra T-shirt
- Cap / sun hat
- Sunscreen

Winter and Fall:

- Indoor and outdoor shoes/boots
- Water bottle – filled with water **ONLY**
- Extra pair of pants
- Extra shirt
- Extra pair of underwear & socks
- Snow jacket
- Snow pants / splash pants
- Mittens or gloves – **NO STRINGS**, clips are okay
- Warm Hat
- Neck warmer – scarves are **NOT** permitted on the playground

Please note:

- Clothing and accessories depicting Superheroes and violent characters are **NOT** permitted at school.
- Only children who can tie their own laces are permitted to wear laced shoes to school.
- Sunglasses, sandals, mitten strings, and scarves are **NOT** permitted on the playground.
- All students who nap are requested to bring a blanket, which will be sent home every Friday to be laundered and returned to school on the following Monday.
- Toddler and Pre-Casa children who are not yet toilet trained must provide diapers, wipes, and any regularly used creams.



***Due to the current circumstances, YMS will be providing all bedding, including blankets, which will be laundered onsite daily. If you wish to provide and launder your own bedding, please know that it will be sent home daily as it must be washed between use. In order to ensure that your child has the required sleeping equipment at school each day, we ask that you purchase two sets so that there is always one spare set at school.

Please refer to the following sections of the Pandemic Policies and Procedures for changes:

- Laundry and Sleeping Equipment

LOST AND FOUND

Unmarked items left at the school will be deposited in the classroom Lost & Found box. Please check regularly for missing items. Items not collected at the end of each year may be taken to a local charity.

FIELD TRIPS AND PARENT PARTICIPATION

The scheduled school field trips are designed to complement our curriculum goals. Parents/Guardians will be notified of each trip in advance. Individual permission slips must be signed and returned before the child can participate. We welcome parent participation in these trips whenever possible. If you wish to volunteer for a trip, please let your classroom teacher know. All parent volunteers are required to complete a Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS) prior to the field trip.

***Due to the current COVID-19 Pandemic, all field trips will be suspended.

Please refer to the following sections of the Pandemic Policies and Procedures for changes:

- Visitors

STUDENT AND VOLUNTEER SUPERVISION POLICY

- Students and volunteers are required:
 - o To complete a Vulnerable Sector Screening.
 - o To read and sign-off on the required YMS policies and procedures.
 - o To complete the pre-employment medical certificate.
 - o To read and understand the guidelines stated in the YMS Parent Handbook.
- No child shall ever be supervised by a person who is under 18 years of age.
- Only employees will have direct unsupervised access to children.
- Volunteers and students may not be counted in the staffing ratios.

Please refer to the following sections of the Pandemic Policies and Procedures for changes:

- Visitors



BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

1. After speaking with the program supervisor and informing them of their behavioural concerns, the teacher will contact the child's parents/guardians to communicate their observations. All observations and communication will be documented.
2. The director must be advised of any child whose behaviour endangers the safety or the moral tone of the other children, who displays persistent resistance to authority, or who does not respond to efforts to modify his or her behaviour.
3. The director, after considering the concerns and suggestions of staff members and after consultation with the child's parents/guardians, will decide what is in the best interest for the child and for YMS. Actions taken may include:
 - Hiring extra staff.
 - Using the service of an independent professional, or
 - Asking the parents/guardians to withdraw the child from YMS.

DISCIPLINE PLAN

Minor/Infrequent Misbehaviours:

1. The teacher deals directly with the student(s).
2. The teacher informs the program supervisor/director.
3. The teacher informs the parent(s) of the misbehaviour. A meeting can be arranged between teacher and parent(s) if necessary. At this time, a Requested Meeting Form will be completed and filed in the students file, outlining the details of what was discussed.

Major/Frequent Misbehaviours:

1. The teacher informs the program supervisor/director.
2. The parent(s) are contacted and informed about the problem. The teacher meets with the parent(s) and director to develop a behaviour intervention plan together. All communication will be documented.
3. The teacher(s), parent(s) and director confer regarding the behaviour intervention plan. After a period of time (as specified) a course of action is decided.

HEALTH AND MEDICATION

At YMS, we maintain very high standards of hygiene. We use safe germicidal cleaning products when disinfecting our physical spaces and equipment. Hand washing is implemented before and after snack/lunch and frequently during the course of the day. Please notify the school if your child gets infected with any of the diseases that are common to children such as measles, chicken pox, or any other contagious diseases. Parents must play their part in trying to curb epidemics by not sending children to



school when they are sick. Please use your discretion if your child has a cold, runny nose, cough, etc. If you would like any medication to be dispensed to your child while at school, you must provide the following to protect the child and the staff:

- All medication(s) must be prescribed by a doctor. (A pharmacist's label must be attached to drugs, such as cough medicine(s) and decongestant(s) showing that they have been prescribed by your doctor.)
- All medication(s) must be in the original bottle and have your child's name on it.
- Antibiotics must be administered first at home by the parents, during the previous 48 hours, before being administered at school. (In case of any allergic reaction.)
- Outdated medication(s) will not be administered.
- A MEDICATION PERMISSION FORM must be completed each time your child requires medication.

The Public Health Act requires that children do not attend school when suffering from any communicable disease. In specified cases, the student must bring a doctor's note upon returning to school stating that they are free of communicable diseases and are able to attend school again.

Any children exhibiting signs of diarrhea, vomiting or fever must be picked up immediately and may return to school only after they have been **24 hours free of symptoms without the aid of medication**. Please be advised that if the symptoms re-occur upon child's return to school, parents will be contacted and required to obtain a doctor's note advising that the child is safe to return to school and not contagious. It is required that children who require fever reduction medication every four to eight hours (e.g. Tylenol, Advil, cough syrup, etc.) **NOT** be at school. Children must be fever free without medication for a minimum of 24 hours in order to return to school.

Please be aware that existing Ministry guidelines require outdoor play for all children. If you feel your child is too sick to participate in outdoor play, then it is deemed that your child is too sick to be at school.

Updated immunization information must be provided by parents prior to the first day of class.

All allergies must be listed on the student's enrolment form. If your child develops any new allergies not listed on the form, please notify the office and the teacher immediately.

Please refer to the following sections of the Pandemic Policies and Procedures for changes:

- **Screening**
- **Response Plan: Management of Children and Staff Displaying Symptoms of Illness**
- **Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfection**
- **Food Safety**
- **Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**



ACCIDENT/SERIOUS INJURY POLICY

The following outlines the procedures of YMS, in the event of illness or injury at the school or while attending school events off school premises.

In the case of minor injuries:

1. A qualified teacher(s) will administer first aid and make the child as comfortable as possible.
2. The parent(s) or contact person will be notified.
3. An incident report will be filled out and parents will be asked to sign and be given a copy.

In case of an emergency illness or injury:

1. The teacher will be in charge of administering first aid and to make the child as comfortable as possible.
2. An ambulance will be called.
3. The parents of the child will be notified.
4. A teacher will accompany the child in the ambulance and stay with the child until parent(s) arrive.

The school officials will act on behalf of the parents/guardians in case of an emergency. In order to take the best possible action on behalf of parents/guardians, parents/guardians agree to release and indemnify YMS from any and all claims for damages arising as a result of any accident or injury sustained by the child arising from participating in any school activities.

As per the requirements of the Ministry of Education, should a Serious Occurrence take place, it will be reported to the Ministry and a Serious Occurrence Notification Form will be posted at the entrance of the school near the license and Summary Licensing Chart and will remain posted for 10 business days.

Please refer to the following sections of the Pandemic Policies and Procedures for changes:

- **Response Plan: Reporting**

PARKING LOT AND PLAYGROUND SAFETY

- Please drive with caution and please slow down when pulling into the parking lot.
- Please do not leave your car idling in the parking lot.
- Please use the sidewalk to walk to and from your car and avoid walking across the parking lot.
- Please do not permit children to play in the parking lot or run on the sidewalks.
- Please only park in designated parking spots.
- When picking up from the playground, please allow only the teachers to open the playground gates. It is for the safety of all the children and it is our policy.



*****While dropping off and picking up your child(ren) from school, we ask that physical distancing guidelines are adhered to and that a distance of at least 2 meters is maintained between all individuals at all times for the safety of everyone within the school community.**

Please refer to the following sections of the Pandemic Policies and Procedures for changes:

- **Pickup and Drop Off Procedures**

NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY

YMS offers two nutritious snacks as well as a hot lunch program. Please ensure that your child eats a nutritious breakfast at home before coming to school as morning snack will not be available until after 9:30am.

YORK MONTESSORI SCHOOL OPERATES IN A NUT SAFE ENVIRONMENT. Nuts, or prepared foods that have come in contact with or contain nuts, are not allowed on the school premises. Children are not permitted to share their food with others nor are they permitted to bring gum, chocolate, or candy to school. Please inform the school of ANY allergies or special dietary requirements for your child.

Increasingly, a growing but significant number of the students in schools have severe allergies. When exposed to an allergen to which they have sensitivity, they may have a rapid, severe and life-threatening allergic reaction. Anaphylaxis is life-threatening and can appear suddenly without warning.

Working as a team, school personnel and others can make anaphylaxis a manageable condition. The anaphylactic student needs the support of the whole school community to stay safe and to prevent an anaphylactic reaction from happening and to be prepared to deal with it if it does.

It is imperative that all parents and caregivers understand the significance of allergies.

Please refer to the following sections of the Pandemic Policies and Procedures for changes:

- **Food Safety**

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AND LOOT BAGS

We acknowledge that celebrating children's birthdays can be very exciting. However, due to overwhelming health concerns from parents, we request that you only bring nutritious snacks to school. If you provide a baked good for your child's birthday celebration, please ensure that comes in labelled NUT-FREE packaging and that it does NOT have any icing on it.

For safety reasons, we are unable to distribute loot bags or party favours on behalf of children. Although thoughtful, please refrain from sending in loot bags for birthdays or any other occasions such as Halloween or Valentine's Day.

Your child may like to select a book to donate to the school in commemoration of their birthday. Your child's teacher can assist you in the selection of a book that will enrich our library.

Please refer to the following sections of the Pandemic Policies and Procedures for changes:

- **Food Safety**



PICTURES AND VIDEO CAMERAS

YMS may take various pictures and videos throughout the course of the school year that may be displayed within the school or on the school's website and on promotional material. These pictures can range from class trips to various activities the children participate in throughout the year. These pictures will NOT be used for any other purpose.

If you would NOT like your child appearing in these photographs with their friends on these occasions, please inform the office at the start of the school year in writing.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Sixty days written notice is required in the event of a child's withdrawal from the school. Tuition will be due for the sixty days following proper notification even if the student is no longer attending the school. If the sixty days written notice is not received, full program fees will be charged. A permanent space cannot be guaranteed if you wish to temporarily withdraw your child. School fees are based on registration for a full year and any temporary withdrawal does not necessitate a refund. The deposit with your application is applied to the tuition. However, the deposit is non-refundable, should you wish to withdraw your child before June. The school reserves the right to release a child if policies are not followed, fees are not paid, or if the school decides it is best for the child and /or the school

WAITING LIST POLICY

York Montessori School offers waiting list spaces to families once the existing spaces are filled. YMS does not charge fees to families placing their child/ren on the waiting list. YMS asks that the "Waiting List Request form" be filled out by prospective families. Once the form has been submitted to the school, families are placed on a numbered list for the program of their choice.

The order of the lists is based on the dates indicated on the waiting list form according to the contacted school date and requested start date. If a space becomes available, the spaces will be offered to families in sequential priority order starting with the first person on the list.

YMS siblings are always prioritized and offered a spot before it becomes available to those on the waiting list. If a family inquires to see where they are on the waiting list, the Director or designate will indicate their number without releasing information about other families on our waiting list.

Guarantees that spaces will open up are never made as this cannot be predicted by YMS.

SLEEP AND SLEEP SUPERVISION POLICY

At York Montessori School we aim to ensure that all children have enough sleep or rest time to support their development and their natural sleeping patterns in a safe environment. The safety of the children sleeping in the school is very important to us.



York Montessori School does not have an infant program.

- All children in our Toddler program (age 16 to 30 months), Pre-Casa (age 30 to 36 months), and Casa (age 36 months and up) are allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleeping.
- All students who require quiet rest time or sleep will be monitored visually while on their cots.
- Staff will periodically make checks while each child is sleeping and look for indicators of distress or unusual behavior.

At York Montessori School, we provide a safe sleeping environment by:

- Monitoring the room temperatures. The room temperature will be kept at between 65 and 75F
- Conducting regular visual checks of each child and ensuring that there is sufficient light in the sleeping area to do so
- Ensuring the use of clean bedding/blankets at the beginning of each week which are provided by the parents
- Providing safety approved cots that are compliant with the Ministry Standards.
- Keeping all spaces around cots clear from hanging objects (ie: hanging cords, drawstring bags)

Staff will not force a child to sleep or keep them awake against their own will. Staff will not wake children from their sleep before the end of the designated rest period.

Staff will discuss any changes in sleep routines at the end of the day/week and will share observations and information about the child's behavior when they do not receive enough sleep.

York Montessori School will assign a cot to each of the children whose parents have indicated that they would like their child to sleep. Each cot is labeled with the child's name and a bed plan is developed and implemented in order to best maintain each child's sleeping needs. Location of a cot in the sleeping area will only be changed if the child has difficulty napping. All changes will be updated on the posted bed plan.

In classrooms where not all children are napping, it is documented daily how many children are sleeping. There is also an up to date list of all napping children in each classroom where visual checks are documented.

At York Montessori School we recognize parent's knowledge of their children in regard to sleep routines. We will endeavor to work together to ensure each child's individual sleep routines and well-being continue to be met.

At the beginning of the school year, consultation with parents with respect to the child's sleeping arrangements will be conducted. (ie: sleep preferences, required accommodations, precautions, etc.) Parental requests and input will be documented in the *Sleep Preferences* section of the *Get to Know* form and placed in the child's file.



Parents will be verbally informed of changes to a child's sleeping arrangements and patterns, (ie: no longer sleeping during nap time) as the changes arise. Staff are also instructed to document any change in sleep and communicate when there is a significant change in sleep pattern. The ***Change in Sleep Pattern*** form will be completed by the staff who observes the changes, and the form will be submitted to the school supervisor to be placed in the child's file.

In each sleep area, a staff member will periodically perform a direct visual check of each sleeping child by being physically present beside the child while the child is sleeping and looking for indicators of distress or unusual behavior. Should distress or unusual behavior be observed, the staff member who makes the observation will document it on a Change in Sleep Pattern Form and adjust their monitoring accordingly.

Staff are instructed to take the following steps while checking children during sleep periods:

- The children are directly monitored visually while sleeping.
- Direct sleep checks are recorded daily.
- Staff will look for the rise and fall of the chest and if the sleep position has changed.

At this time, YMS will provide and assign all bedding, including blankets which will be laundered at school on a daily basis. Should you choose to provide and launder your child's personal bedding, 2 sets must be provided to the school in order to ensure that there is always clean bedding available. All bedding must be laundered after each use.

Please refer to the following sections of the Pandemic Policies and Procedures for changes:

- Laundry and Sleeping Equipment
- Physical Distancing

PARENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS POLICY

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the childcare licensee and York Montessori School staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

Definitions:

Licensee - The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each childcare centre it operates (i.e. the operator/director).

Staff - Individuals employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff, teachers, administrators, etc.).

Policy:

At York Montessori School, parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing within our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, childcare providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with



parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff is available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction. All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by York Montessori School and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible. Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved. An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 2 business days. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process. Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial, and respectful to all parties involved.

Confidentiality:

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children’s Aid Society).

Conduct:

York Montessori School maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication, and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party. If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or director.

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child:

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children’s Aid Society (CAS) directly. Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the “Duty to Report” requirement under the Child and Family Services Act

For more information, visit:

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>

Procedures:

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:
Program Room-Related: E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, Indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to the classroom staff directly OR the supervisor or director.



<p>General, Centre or Operations-Related: E.g: childcare fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the supervisor or director.</p>
<p>Staff, Supervisor, and/or Licensee-Related:</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the individual directly OR the supervisor or director. All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff that puts a child’s health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>
<p>Student/Volunteer-Related:</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student OR the supervisor and/or director. All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child’s health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>

Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to all issues/concerns:

1. Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised and report the issue/concern to the director/supervisor **OR** report the issue to the director/supervisor and arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian at the earliest mutual convenience, preferably within 2 business days.
2. Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:
 - The date and time the issue/concern was received
 - The name of the person who received the issue/concern
 - The name of the person reporting the issue/concern
 - The details of the issue/concern
 - Any and all steps taken to resolve the issue/concern
 - All information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.
3. Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.
4. Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within 2 business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.
5. Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.

Escalation of Issues or Concerns:

Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to York Montessori School. Issues/concerns related



to compliance with requirements set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act., 2014 and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

Contacts:

York Montessori School: 905-508-2000
Local Public Health Department: 1-877-464-9675
Local Fire Department: 905-883-5444
College of Early Childhood Educators: 416-961-8558
Richmond Hill Children's Aid Society: 1-800-718-3850

Ministry of Education 1-877-510-5333
Local Police Department: 1-866-876-5423
Ministry of Environment: 416-235-5743
Ministry of Labour: 1-877-250-7444

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear direction for York Montessori School staff to follow to deal with emergency situations. The procedures set out steps for staff to follow to support the safety and well-being of everyone involved.

Clear policies and procedures will support all individuals to manage responses and responsibilities during an emergency, resulting in the safest outcomes possible.

Definitions

All-Clear: A notification from an authority that a threat and/or disaster no longer pose a danger and it is deemed safe to return to the childcare premises and/or resume normal operations.

Authority: A person or entity responsible for providing direction during an emergency situation (e.g. emergency services personnel, the licensee).

Emergency: An urgent or pressing situation where immediate action is required to ensure the safety of children and adults in attendance. These include situations that may not affect the whole childcare centre (e.g. child-specific incidents) and where 911 is called.

Emergency Services Personnel: persons responsible for ensuring public safety and mitigating activities in an emergency (e.g. law enforcement, fire departments, emergency medical services, rescue services).

Evacuation Site: the designated off-site location where shelter is obtained during an emergency. The evacuation site is used when it is deemed unsafe to be at or return to the childcare centre.

Meeting Place: the designated safe place near the childcare centre where everyone is to initially gather before proceeding to the evacuation site or returning to the childcare centre if evacuation is not necessary.



Unsafe to Return: A notification from an authority that a threat and/or disaster continue to pose a danger and it is unsafe to return to York Montessori School: 10533 Leslie Street Richmond Hill, Ontario.

Policy

YMS staff will follow the emergency response procedures outlined in this document by following these three phases:

1. Immediate Emergency Response;
2. Next Steps during an Emergency; and
3. Recovery.

YMS staff will ensure that children are kept safe, are accounted for and are supervised at all times during an emergency situation.

For situations that require evacuation of the child care centre, the **meeting place** to gather immediately will be located in the playground, if it is safe to do so.

If it is deemed 'unsafe to return' to the child care centre, the **evacuation site** to proceed to is located at: Cosmo Music 10 Via Renzo Drive Richmond Hill, Ontario L4S 0B6

Note: all directions given by emergency services personnel will be followed under all circumstances, including directions to evacuate to locations different than those listed above.

For any emergency situations involving a child with an individualized plan in place, the procedures in the child's individualized plan will be followed.

If any emergency situations happen that are not described in this document, the Director or the designated Supervisor will provide direction to staff for the immediate response and next steps. Staff will follow the direction given.

If any emergency situations result in a serious occurrence, the serious occurrence policy and procedures will also be followed.

All emergency situations will be documented in detail by the Director or the Supervisor.

Additional Policy Statements

In order to ensure preparedness for emergencies, the following must be adhered to:

- All staff and students will participate in monthly fire/evacuation drills.
- All staff, students, and volunteers must review Emergency Management Policy annually.
- Classroom staff will be responsible for maintaining an emergency backpack which will include emergency information forms for each student, a complete first aid kit, disposable gloves, tissues, wet wipes, hand sanitizer, and all required medications, including EpiPens.

****Classroom emergency backpack must accompany students at all times.*



Procedures

Phase 1: Immediate Emergency Response

Emergency Situation	Roles and Responsibilities
<p>Lockdown When a threat is on, very near, or inside the child care centre. E.g. a suspicious individual in the building who is posing a threat.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The staff member who becomes aware of the threat must inform all other staff of the threat as quickly and safely as possible. 2) Staff members who are outdoors must ensure everyone who is outdoors proceeds to a safe location. 3) Staff inside the child care centre must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain calm; • Gather all children and move them away from doors and windows; • Take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • Take shelter in closets and/or under furniture with the children, if appropriate; • Keep children calm; • Ensure children remain in the sheltered space; • Turn off/mute all cellular phones; and • Wait for further instructions. 4) If possible, staff inside the program room(s) should also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close all window coverings and doors; • Barricade the room door; • Gather emergency medication; and • Join the rest of the group for shelter. 5) Director or Supervisor will immediately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close and lock all child care centre entrance/exit doors, if possible; and • Take shelter. <p>Note: only emergency service personnel are allowed to enter or exit the child care centre during a lockdown.</p>



<p>Hold & Secure When a threat is in the general vicinity of the child care centre, but not on or inside the child care premises. E.g. a shooting at a nearby building.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The staff member who becomes aware of the external threat must inform all other staff of the threat as quickly and safely as possible. 2) Staff members who are outdoors must ensure everyone returns to their program room(s) immediately. 3) Staff in the program room must immediately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain calm; • Take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • Close all window coverings and windows in the program room; • Continue normal operations of the program; and • Wait for further instructions. 4) Director or Supervisor must immediately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close and lock all entrances/exits of the child care centre; • Close all blinds and windows outside of the program rooms; and • Place a note on the external doors with instructions that no one may enter or exit the child care centre. <p>Note: only emergency services personnel are allowed to enter or exit the centre during a hold and secure.</p>
<p>Bomb Threat A threat to detonate an explosive device to cause property damage, death, or injuries E.g. phone call bomb threat, receipt of a suspicious package.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The staff member who becomes aware of the threat or Director or Supervisor must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain calm; • Call 911 if emergency services is not yet aware of the situation; • Follow the directions of emergency services personnel; and • Take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for. A. Where the threat is received by telephone, the person on the phone should try to keep the suspect on the line as long as possible while another individual calls 911 and communicates with emergency services personnel. B. Where the threat is received in the form of a suspicious package, staff must ensure that no one approaches or touches the package at any time.



Disaster Requiring Evacuation

A serious incident that affects the physical building and requires everyone to leave the premises. E.g. fire, flood, power failure.

1) The staff member who becomes aware of the disaster must inform all other staff of the incident and that the centre must be evacuated, as quickly and safely as possible. If the disaster is a fire, the fire alarm pull station must be used and staff must follow the centre's fire evacuation procedures.

2) Staff must immediately:

- Remain calm;
- Gather all children, the attendance record, children's emergency contact information any emergency medication;
- Exit the building with the children using the nearest safe exit, bringing children's outdoor clothing (if possible) according to weather conditions;
- Escort children to the meeting place; and
- Take children's attendance to confirm all children are accounted for;
- Keep children calm; and
- Wait for further instructions.

3) If possible, staff should also:

- Take a first aid kit; and
- Gather all non-emergency medications.

4) Designated staff will:

- Help any individuals with medical and/or special needs who need assistance to go to the meeting place (in accordance with the procedure in a child's individualized plan, if the individual is a child); and
- In doing so, follow the instructions posted on special needs equipment or assistive devices during the evacuation.
- If individuals cannot be safely assisted to exit the building, the designated staff will assist them to Cosmo Music: 10 Via Renzo Drive Richmond Hill, Ontario L4S 0B6, and ensure their required medication is accessible, if applicable; and
- Wait for further instructions.

5) If possible, the site designate must conduct a walk-through of the child care centre to verify that everyone has exited the building and secure any windows or doors, unless otherwise directed by emergency services personnel.



<p>Disaster – External Environmental Threat</p> <p>An incident outside of the building that may have adverse effects on persons in the child care centre. E.g. gas leak, oil spill, chemical release, forest fire, nuclear emergency.</p>	<p>1) The staff member who becomes aware of the external environmental threat must inform all other staff of the threat as quickly and safely as possible and, according to directions from emergency services personnel, advise whether to remain on site or evacuate the premises.</p> <p>If remaining on site:</p> <p>1) Staff members who are outdoors with children must ensure everyone who is outdoors returns to their program room immediately.</p> <p>2) Staff must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain calm; • Take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • Close all program room windows and all doors that lead outside (where applicable); • Seal off external air entryways located in the program rooms (where applicable); • Continue with normal operations of the program; and • Wait for further instructions. <p>3) Director or Supervisor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seal off external air entryways not located in program rooms (where applicable); • Place a note on all external doors with instructions that no one may enter or exit the child care centre until further notice; and • Turn off all air handling equipment (i.e. heating, ventilation and/or air conditioning, where applicable). <p>If emergency services personnel otherwise direct the child care centre to evacuate, follow the procedures outlined in the “Disaster Requiring Evacuation” section of this policy.</p>
<p>Natural Disaster: Tornado / Tornado Warning</p>	<p>1) The staff member who becomes aware of the tornado or tornado warning must inform all other staff as quickly and safely as possible.</p> <p>2) Staff members who are outdoors with children must ensure everyone who is outdoors returns to their program room(s) immediately.</p> <p>3) Staff must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain calm; • Gather all children; • Go to the basement or take shelter in small interior ground floor rooms such as washrooms, closets or hallways; • Take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • Remain and keep children away from windows, doors and exterior walls; • Keep children calm; • Conduct ongoing visual checks of the children; and • Wait for further instructions.



Natural Disaster: Major Earthquake	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Staff in the program room must immediately:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remain calm;• Instruct children to find shelter under a sturdy desk or table and away from unstable structures;• Ensure that everyone is away from windows and outer walls;• Help children who require assistance to find shelter;• for individuals in wheelchairs, lock the wheels and instruct the individual to duck as low as possible, and use a strong article (e.g. shelf, hard book, etc.) to protect their head and neck;• Find safe shelter for themselves;• Visually assess the safety of all children.; and• Wait for the shaking to stop.2) Staff members who are outdoors with children must immediately ensure that everyone outdoors stays away from buildings, power lines, trees, and other tall structures that may collapse, and wait for the shaking to stop.3) Once the shaking stops, staff must:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gather the children, their emergency cards and emergency medication; and• Exit the building through the nearest safe exit, where possible, in case of aftershock or damage to the building.4) If possible, prior to exiting the building, staff should also:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take a first aid kit; and• Gather all non-emergency medications.5) Individuals who have exited the building must gather at the meeting place and wait for further instructions.6) Designated staff will:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help any individuals with medical and/or special needs who need assistance to go to the meeting place (in accordance with the procedure in a child's individualized plan, if the individual is a child); and• In doing so, follow the instructions posted on special needs equipment or assistive devices during the evacuation.• If individuals cannot be safely assisted to exit the building, the designated staff will assist them to Cosmo Music: 10 Via Renzo Drive Richmond Hill L4S 0B6 and ensure their required medication is accessible, if applicable; and• Wait for further instructions.7) The site designate must conduct a walkthrough of the child care centre to ensure all individuals have evacuated, where possible.
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Phase 2: Next Steps During the Emergency

- 1) Where emergency services personnel are not already aware of the situation, Director or Supervisor must notify emergency services personnel (911) of the emergency as soon as possible.
- 2) Where the child care centre has been evacuated, emergency services must be notified of individuals remaining inside the building, where applicable.



- 3) If the licensee is not already on site, the site designate must contact the licensee to inform them of the emergency situation and the current status, once it is possible and safe to do so.

List of Emergency Contact Persons:

Local Police Department: 1-866-876-5423

Ambulance: 911

Local Fire Services: 905-883-5444

Site Supervisor: Nadia Bayrami and Jamie Bowditch

Licensee Contact(s): Nadia Bayrami

Child Care Centre Site Designate: Marina Ilic

- 4) Where any staff, students and/or volunteers are not on site, Director or Supervisor must notify these individuals of the situation, and instruct them to proceed directly to the evacuation site if it is not safe or practical for them to return to the child care centre.
- 5) Director or Supervisor must wait for further instructions from emergency services personnel. Once instructions are received, they must communicate the instructions to staff and ensure they are followed.
- 6) Throughout the emergency, staff will:
- Help keep children calm;
 - Take attendance to ensure that all children are accounted for;
 - Conduct ongoing visual checks and head counts of children;
 - Maintain constant supervision of the children; and
 - Engage children in activities, where possible.
- 7) In situations where injuries have been sustained, staff with first aid training will assist with administering first aid. Staff must inform emergency personnel of severe injuries requiring immediate attention and assistance.

8a) Procedures to Follow When “All-Clear” Notification is Given

Procedures

- 1) The individual who receives the ‘all-clear’ from an authority must inform all staff that the ‘all-clear’ has been given and that it is safe to return to the child care centre.
- 2) Designated staff who have assisted individuals with medical and/or special needs with exiting the building will assist and accompany these individuals with returning to the child care centre.
- 3) Staff must:



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take attendance to ensure all children are accounted for; • Escort children back to their program room(s), where applicable; • Take attendance upon returning to the program room(s) to ensure that all children are accounted for; where applicable; and • Re-open closed/sealed blinds, windows and doors. <p>4) Director will determine if operations will resume and communicate this decision to staff.</p>
<p>Communication with parents/guardians</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) As soon as possible, Director or Supervisor must notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation and that the all-clear has been given. 2) Where disasters have occurred that did not require evacuation of the child care centre, Director or Supervisor must provide a notice of the incident to parents/guardians by email, as well as by recording an outgoing voicemail message containing the pertinent information. 3) If normal operations do not resume the same day that an emergency situation has taken place, Director or Supervisor must provide parents/guardians with information as to when and how normal operations will resume as soon as this is determined.

<p>8b) Procedures to Follow When “Unsafe to Return” Notification is Given</p>	
<p>Procedures</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The individual who receives the ‘unsafe to return’ notification from an authority must inform all staff of this direction and instruct them to proceed from the meeting place to the evacuation site, or the site determined by emergency services personnel. 2) Staff must take attendance to confirm that all children are accounted for, and escort children to the evacuation site. 3) Designated staff who have assisted individuals with medical and/or special needs with exiting the building will assist and accompany these individuals to the evacuation site. 4) Director or supervisor will post a note for parents/guardians on the child care centre entrance with information on the evacuation site, where it is possible and safe to do so. 5) Upon arrival at the evacuation site, staff must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain calm; • Take attendance to ensure all children are accounted for;



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help keep children calm; • Engage children in activities, where possible; • Conduct ongoing visual checks and head counts of children; • Maintain constant supervision of the children; • Keep attendance as children are picked up by their parents, guardians or authorized pick-up persons; and • Remain at the evacuation site until all children have been picked up.
Communication with parents/guardians	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Upon arrival at the emergency evacuation site, Director or Supervisor will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation, evacuation and the location to pick up their children. 2) Where possible, Director or Supervisor, will update the child care centre’s voicemail box as soon as possible to inform parents/guardians that the child care centre has been evacuated, and include the details of the evacuation site location and contact information in the message.

Phase 3: Recovery (After an Emergency Situation has Ended)

Procedures for Resuming Normal Operations	<p>Director will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the decision to resume normal operations • Notify the Ministry of Education Program Advisor and Report a Serious Occurrence if applicable • Contact the insurance company if necessary • Arrange/organize temporarily relocation if necessary • Inform all families of the necessary details for resuming normal operations • Respond to all media and community inquiries <p>Supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the procedures for resuming normal operations with all staff <p>School Coordinator will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the catering company of the necessary details for resuming normal operations
Procedures for Providing Support to Children and Staff who Experience Distress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a staff member is experiencing distress as a result of the emergency, resources for support will be made available upon request. • Staff will monitor and observe children under their care for signs of distress and will document their observations in their anecdotal notes. • Both large and small classroom discussions will be held in order to help children feel supported. • If a child is experiencing distress as a result of the emergency, parents will be encouraged to speak with their pediatrician. Resources for support will also be made available upon request.
Procedures for Debriefing Staff, Children	<p>Director or Supervisor must debrief staff, children, and parents/guardians after the emergency. Debriefing for all involved parties will take place within two weeks of the emergency.</p>



and Parents/ Guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff will meet first to debrief and discuss the details and ramifications of the emergency. If possible, they will meet at York Montessori School (10533 Leslie Street Richmond Hill, Ontario). If it is unsafe to do so, they will meet at an alternate location.• Debriefing for parents/guardians will follow the staff information session and will take place at York Montessori School (10533 Leslie Street Richmond Hill, Ontario). If it is unsafe to do so, they will meet at an alternate location. It will be a large group information session followed by a question and answer period.• Debriefing and discussions with children will be conducted in their classrooms by their lead teachers.
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YORK MONTESSORI SCHOOL: PROGRAM STATEMENT

****Please note that as we are currently experiencing a global pandemic, where the content of the YMS Program Statement does not coincide with the guidelines provided in the YMS Pandemic Policy and Procedures, our Pandemic Policy and Procedures will be followed.*

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT:

The purpose of this document is to clearly state the program and pedagogy implemented on a daily basis at York Montessori School and to describe *How Does Learning Happen (HDLH)*. It also aims to establish consistency with the Minister's policy statement on programming and pedagogy. The Program Statement shall reflect a view of children as being competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential. It will also describe the goals that guide our program as well as the approaches that will be applied in order for us to achieve the goals stated. The Program Statement will be reviewed and signed off on annually by all staff, students, and volunteers, and the necessary changes will be implemented as needed. Continuing monitoring practices are also in place in order to ensure compliance with the established goals and approaches outlined in the Program Statement. The Program Statement will be included in the Parent Handbook and will be available to all current and prospective families.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

Mission Statement

York Montessori School seeks to become the one place where parents, with peace of mind, will leave their children in the hands of our educators. The primary focus of our school is to provide a high-quality



educational setting in which the child can experience developmental excellence while being cared for in a healthy and enjoyable environment. We will provide a carefully planned and stimulating atmosphere which will help children develop within themselves the foundation, attitude, and skills which are essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning. We will plant the seeds of discovery and exploration that will enable children to continue to educate themselves throughout their lifetime.

Rationale

A significant amount of human development happens in early childhood, primarily by the age of six years. It is during this time when a child is building the foundation of the person they will be for the rest of their lives. As caregivers and educators, it is our responsibility to ensure that we foster and encourage the development of: independence, problem-solving skills, empathy, the ability to relate to and cooperate with others, confidence, self-motivation, and creativity in each individual. On top of this personal development, it is equally as important to help each child achieve their academic potential. For many children, an environment such as this will be their first exposure to a school setting. The result of their experience at this age will shape the way they approach learning and participation in society for years to come.

In order to best meet the goals stated above, our academic program is based in five curriculum areas: Sensorial development, Mathematics, Language, Cultural understanding and awareness, and Practical Life skills including an expressive component. We believe that the highest form of learning is achieved once a child is able to recognize the connections between all of these working components. Our classroom environments are prepared so that the learning that takes place is child-directed. The adults in the classroom serve as guides and are there to support and encourage each student as well as present new concepts as the child demonstrates readiness. Following this model, not only are children able to progress at their own pace, but the teacher also has the ability to present new lessons in a variety of ways in order to help the child determine the style in which they learn most effectively.

At the very core of our beliefs is that everyone is capable of learning. We view all children as being competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential. Some children have special emotional, sensory, intellectual, communication and/or physical needs, which may affect the way in which they learn. Through observation and interaction, we aim to coordinate appropriate learning experiences in order to help meet the identified learning needs of each child.

Philosophy

At York Montessori School we recognize that children learn and develop in their own way and at their own pace and encourage them to work toward independence and self-motivation. We believe that



children are active contributors to their own learning and that educators should teach the way that the individual child learns as opposed to the child trying to adapt to the way the educator teaches. Through the use of the five traditional Montessori Curriculums, we instill appreciation and responsibility for the environment, a sense of cooperation, and respect for others. Children are provided with a wide range of meaningful experiences that empower them to explore their world. We help children gradually and sequentially expand their knowledge and skills as they grow into confident, self-directed individuals.

York Montessori School provides a curriculum for three age groups (*Toddler, Pre-Casa and Casa - Preschool/Kindergarten*) containing five identified learning areas:

- Sensorial Development
- Language
- Mathematics
- Culture and Science
- Practical Life skills (including an expressive component)

HOW DOES LEARNING HAPPEN? FOUNDATIONS FOR LEARNING

1. Belonging

The goal is that every child at York Montessori School will develop a sense of belonging, and that they are connected to others and able to make contributions to their world. York Montessori School aims to cultivate authentic, caring relationships and to form connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults, and the world around them.

2. Well-Being

The goal is for every child at York Montessori School to develop a sense of self, health, and well-being. The programs at York Montessori School nurture children's healthy development and aim to support their growing sense of self in a variety of ways.

3. Engagement

The goal is that every child at York Montessori School is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses. The programs at York Montessori School provide environments and experiences aimed to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play, and inquiry.



4. Expression

The goal is for every child at York Montessori School to recognize themselves as capable communicators who are able to express themselves in many ways. The programs at York Montessori School foster communication and expression in all forms.

GOALS AND APPROACHES:

(a) To promote the health, safety, nutrition, and well-being of the children.

In order to promote the **health** of all students, each staff member is CPR and First Aid certified. Each staff member, student teacher, and volunteer is also trained on the individual Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan for all children with life-threatening allergies. Policies and Procedures are in place and must be signed off on by all staff as well as parents for items such as: illness, medication, accidents, and approved outside food for special occasions such as birthdays. Sanitary and disinfection policies are also in place. All facilities are cleaned, disinfected, and maintained frequently and the school is subject to regular inspections by the Ministry of Health.

In order to promote the **safety and well-being** of all students, all staff, students, and volunteers must complete a vulnerable sector screening (Criminal Reference Check) before interacting with the children. An updated VSS is required by all staff, students, and volunteers every five years, and annually an Offence Declaration form must be submitted on years when an updated VSS is not completed.

Other ways that York Montessori School promotes the **safety and well-being** of its students is by having a Locked Door Policy. All parents, visitors and service persons must be greeted and escorted by a staff member in order to gain access to indoor facilities. Staff and students also participate in regular Fire and Lockdown Drills, and written procedures, approved by the local fire chief, is posted in each room as well as in common areas.

In order to promote the **nutrition** of all students, healthy beverages, two healthy snacks, as well as a nutritious hot lunch are provided for all students every day, regardless of allergies or other dietary restrictions. All meals contain all four food groups, and all snacks contain a minimum of two, therefore meeting the recommendations set out in the Health Canada documents.

HDLH (*Foundation: Well-Being*) The goal for our students is that by providing and adhering to the above listed items, each child will develop an individual sense of self, health, and well-being.

(b) To support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, and staff.

In order to support positive and responsive interactions with the **children**, all staff, students, and volunteers at York Montessori School adhere to a strict Prohibited Practices Policy (please see below).



In addition, all staff, students, and volunteers also read and sign off on *A Montessori Decalogue*, which outlines the ten fundamental rules for educators as outlined by Dr. Maria Montessori (please see below)

PROHIBITED PRACTICES:

- a) Corporal punishment of the child;
- b) Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- c) Locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- d) Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- e) Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- f) Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

A Montessori Decalogue:

1. Never touch the child unless invited by him (in some form or the other).
2. Never speak ill of the child in his presence or absence.
3. Concentrate on strengthening and helping the development of what is good in the child that its presence may leave less and less space for evil.
4. Be active in preparing the environment. Take meticulous and constant care of it. Help the child establish constructive relations with it. Show the proper place where the means of development are kept and demonstrate their proper use.
5. Be ever ready to answer the call of the child who stands in need of you and always listen and respond to the child who appeals to you.
6. Respect the child who makes a mistake and can then or later correct himself but stop firmly and immediately any misuse of the environment and any action which endangers the child, his development or others.
7. Respect the child who takes rest or watches others working or ponders over what he himself has done or will do. Neither call him nor force him to other forms of activity.
8. Help those who are in search of activity and cannot find it.



9. Be untiring in repeating presentations to the child who refused them earlier, in helping the child acquire what is not yet his own and overcome imperfections. Do this by animating the environment with care, with restraint and silence, with mild words and loving presence. Make your ready presence felt to the child who searches and hide from the child who has found.
10. Always treat the child with the best of good manners and offer him the best you have in yourself and at your disposal.

In order to support positive and responsive interactions with the **parents**, all staff at York Montessori School approach each parent with consideration and as individuals. The needs of each parent are respected, and open communication is encouraged. While scheduled parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year, teachers and administrators are always available to address any questions or concerns. York Montessori School aims to provide a welcoming atmosphere where parents feel comfortable and connected. In addition to open lines of communication, York Montessori School hosts several events and provides a multitude of opportunities for parents to be actively involved in their children's school community.

In order to support positive and responsive interactions among the **staff**, weekly meetings are held within each classroom, and full staff meetings are held once a month. All staff members are encouraged to contribute thoughts and observations to discussions during these times. While weekly and monthly meetings are previously scheduled, should additional discussions be required at any time, staff members are encouraged to communicate with each other openly and document the items discussed when necessary.

HDLH (*Foundation: Belonging & Expression*) The goal for our students is that every child feels a sense of belonging and that they are connected to others while making contributions to their world. The staff, students, and volunteers at York Montessori School aim to teach this through a combination of the modeling of desired behaviours, and by providing opportunities for children to engage in age-appropriate peaceful conflict resolution. The observable outcome is that our students feel confident and empowered by their ability to actively communicate and participate in their own problem solving as well as their ability to make important and necessary contributions in a variety of situations.

(c) To encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate.

Our students are encouraged to interact with each other as well as with staff members in a positive and respectful way. Our practice is to model desired behaviours through our own interactions with each other as well as with the children. In addition, regular community meetings are held within each class during circle times in order to discuss the following:



- Strategies for handling conflict resolution
- Language for describing feelings
- Outlining classroom expectations, with emphasis placed on respect for others

All staff are encouraged to observe and recognize the self-regulation behaviours of each child. We acknowledge that children require self-regulation outlets in order to reach their best potential. We also recognize that self-regulation may present in a variety of ways, many which involve movement, sound, repetitive motions, and irregular behaviours. It is the responsibility of the staff to help the children learn to balance their need for self-regulation with the expectation that they respect the needs of those with which they are sharing the classroom environment.

HDLH (*Foundation: Belonging & Expression*) Through active discipline, children learn that it feels better to approach others with kindness and compassion, even when conflicts arise. They are taught that interacting and communicating with others in a positive manor is another way in which they are able to make effective contributions to their world. This increases the child's ability to self-regulate as it reduces in-class stressors. Our students are taught age-appropriate mindfulness exercises such as deep breathing in order to help them process challenging situations. Their need for movement and other self-regulation tactics are never discouraged.

(d) To foster the children's exploration, play, and inquiry.

In the Montessori environment, we refer to the child's play as their *work*. This is not meant to devalue the importance of play, but rather to impart respect onto how and what they choose to engage in or with throughout the day. Our prepared environments (classrooms) are carefully arranged in order to maximize independence, freedom within appropriate limits, and to facilitate opportunities for independent exploration and discovery. Each piece of learning material available in the classroom isolates the development of a specific skill, and materials are introduced in a sequential nature to ensure that the children are prepared developmentally to engage in exploration with success. Each piece of material also contains a self-corrective component so that children are able to decipher and correct their own errors without involving an adult. Often times the best learning happens during this process, and as a result our students develop higher levels of confidence and the ability to problem-solve with greater independence in a variety of situations.

HDLH (*Foundation: Engagement*) The goal for our students is that every child is an active, engaged learner who is empowered to explore the world with their body, mind, and senses. The learning material available to all children in each of our classrooms encourages exploration and discovery through hands-on experiences. Very few of the lessons taught in our program contain abstract components, as we believe that children under the age of six years do their most effective learning in a tangible way. We



believe that experimenting with cause and effect can be an effective learning strategy and that there is value in exposing children to safe, appropriate, related and immediate consequences to their actions.

(e) To provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences.

At the core of the Montessori philosophy is the fact that all programming is child-directed. As was described in the *Philosophy and Rationale* component of this document, children at York Montessori School are free to choose from the materials available in the carefully planned environment and work with them repeatedly until their work reaches its natural conclusion. The role of the teacher within the environment is to connect the child to the materials, show them how to use them with their intended purpose, and then support the child in their exploration if and when they are invited to do so. The teacher also must observe the work of the child carefully so that they may know when a child is sufficiently prepared to work successfully with the next materials in the sequence. Children are free to choose from the materials they have been shown and are encouraged to practice and repeat exercises to the point of mastery.

HDLH (*Foundation: Belonging & Engagement*) Freedom within limits is how York Montessori School aims to provide child-initiated and adult supported experiences. Positive relationships are forged between staff and students through trust and respect. Both teachers and students must trust and respect each other's process in order for learning to happen most effectively. When the lessons and experiences provided are in the correct sequence and are presented only after adequate preparation and repetition has taken place, children engage in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play, and inquiry.

(f) To plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported.

Due to the fact that all programming at York Montessori School is child-directed, all program plans are prepared in an individualized fashion. No two children ever have identical programming, and plans may be subject to modification based on the child's ever changing and developing interests, curiosities, and skill level. The prepared environments (classrooms) are called so because they are just that, carefully planned and prepared learning environments. Each classroom at York Montessori School aims to provide opportunities for exploration and inquiry, catering to every learning style. It is the role of the educator to facilitate meaningful learning experiences, which match the needs to the individual child in all curriculum areas, and to take notice and reassess when they have not been successful. The materials from each of the five curriculum areas were carefully designed to meet the developmental needs of children at specific stages. Through careful observation and planning by the teacher, children are able to approach new challenges and experiences with confidence, preparedness, and positivity.



HDLH (*Foundation: Belonging & Engagement*) Each piece of material in each classroom is designed with specific purpose. While a child is engaged with an exercise, they are honing in on and practicing one isolated skill. Tasks become more complicated as skills continue to develop. The children understand that there is a sequence to the materials, and over time their motivation derives from within in order to practice and reach the next level. While each child is working at their own pace, there are rarely instances of competition as the strengths of each student are honoured and recognized. Due to the multiage groupings, there are opportunities for each student to play both the role of the mentor as well as the role of the novice.

(g) To incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play and quiet rest time into the day and give consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving childcare.

As mentioned under section (d) *To foster the children's exploration, play, and inquiry*, At York Montessori School, we refer to the children's play as their work. As such, children are provided with a daily-uninterrupted work cycle in the morning as well as in the afternoon. During this time a healthy snack is provided, and food preparation is incorporated into the daily activities as a means to help children feel as though they play an active role in their personal well-being. Quiet rest time is also provided and all students who require rest (namely those students under the age of 3.8 years, or for those whose parents have requested a nap) are offered the appropriate accommodations. Quiet rest time lasts for a period of 1.5 - 2 hours daily and alternative play/work time is provided for children who no longer developmentally require rest throughout the day.

Daily outdoor playtime is provided for each student at York Montessori School for a period no shorter than 2 hours for fulltime students. A spacious fenced playground containing a variety of play-based materials is available to each student and gross motor games are facilitated and encouraged. Should outdoor playtime not be available due to inclement weather conditions, indoor gross motor activities will be arranged for the day, or until weather conditions improve.

HDLH (*Foundation: Well-Being, Belonging & Engagement*) it is important for the healthy development of each individual child that they receive adequate rest and activity on a daily basis. By being exposed to a variety of differing learning environments throughout the day, children have the opportunity to engage in and explore various experiences. Different forms of play allow for different types of relationships to grow. Cooperative, active, gross motor play is especially important with regards to the development of communication, social skills, and problem-solving capabilities.

(h) To foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program.

York Montessori School believes that ongoing open communication between the parents, staff, and administrators is the key to the success of our program. As mentioned under section (b) *To support*



positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, and staff, the needs of each parent are respected, and open communication is encouraged. While staff and administration are always available to parents should they have any questions or concerns about their child's experience at York Montessori School, the following methods of communication and opportunities for involvement are available and provided on an ongoing basis:

- Monthly Newsletters
- Consistent communications via email
- Progress Reports (twice a year)
- Parent-Teacher Conferences (twice a year, or by request)
- Daily Reports (for Toddlers)
- Classroom Observations
- Telephone calls
- “Meet the Teachers” Evening
- Winter Holiday Social
- Graduation Ceremony
- Spring Family Picnic
- “Watch Me Work” Child-Directed Workshops
- Curriculum Nights
- Parenting Workshops
- Regular Open Houses (for prospective families)
- Private Tours (for prospective families)

HDLH (*Foundation: Belonging & Expression*) While we know that it is important for children to feel a sense of belonging and to feel as though their needs are being communicated and responded to effectively, it is equally as important for their parents to feel the same way. It is important to cultivate authentic and trusting relationships between parents, staff, and administration. York Montessori School aims to provide parents with a variety of experiences to help them feel an ongoing connection to their child's school.

(i) To involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families, and staff.

York Montessori School participates in several community outreach programs. Students and staff also participate in global awareness and outreach programs as a means to facilitate tangible experiences and promote the development of its students as global citizens. Some of the programs and annual outreach experiences that our students have participated in have been:

- Annual Winter Toy & Food Drives (with local fire department)



- Annual Playground Clean Up (for Earth Day)
- Annual International Day of Peace (participants include students from Montessori schools around the world)
- Sponsoring African students (children exchange drawings)
- Fundraising in order to sponsor a school to be built in Uganda
- Jump Rope for Heart
- Walk for the Cure (participants include families and staff)

HDLH (*Foundation: Well-Being & Belonging*) Not only does engaging in these types of experiences strengthen our school community as a whole, but it also empowers our students to be their best selves. They learn empathy, compassion, and the value of making necessary contributions to their world.

(j) To support staff, or others who interact with the children at the school, in relation to continuous professional learning.

The administration at York Montessori School strongly encourages professional development for all staff and facilitates opportunities for such learning throughout the year. Professional development days are scheduled in advance so that all staff are available and in attendance. Many of the workshops provided are hosted by Montessori organizations such as CAMT (Canadian Association of Montessori Teachers), or the CCMA (Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators). Other opportunities are also provided by The Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, The Regional Municipality of York and local community centers, or professional children's services.

HDLH (*Foundation: Engagement & Belonging*) Participating in ongoing professional learning unites staff as a whole and provides opportunities for them to grow together. Just as the children benefit from their time in the classroom, professional learning and development offers the staff the opportunity to engage in active, creative, and meaningful exploration and inquiry. Self-reflection and improvement can only help us all to become better educators.

(k) To document and review the impact of the strategies set out in clauses (a) to (j) on the children and their families.

Annually, all staff and administrators will meet for the sole purpose of reviewing and making necessary changes to the existing Program Statement. Throughout the year, staff and administration will participate in critical reflection, collaborative inquiry, and pedagogical documentation as a means to improve the impact of this document.

HDLH (*Foundation: Expression*) The Program Statement is a living document. It is ever changing for the purpose that it must be adaptive to the needs of our families, children, and staff. By including critical



reflection, collaborative inquiry, and pedagogical documentation in our ongoing process, we allow all voices and opinions of those involved to be heard. By reviewing the impact of our strategies, we learn what is working and what isn't working, and are therefore better equipped to make the necessary changes.

“When educators engage in continuous learning and questioning, exploring new ideas and adjusting practices, they achieve the best outcomes for children, families, and themselves.” *How Does Learning Happen* pg. 20.

Program Statement Implementation Policy

- All staff, students, and volunteers of York Montessori School are required to read and sign-off on the goals and approaches outlined in the Program Statement before interacting with children.
- All staff, students, and volunteers are required to implement the goals and approaches outlined in the Program Statement in their daily interactions with the students at York Montessori School.
- Annually, all staff will collaborate to discuss necessary changes to the Program Statement through the review of critical reflection, collaborative inquiry, and pedagogical documentation.
- All staff agrees to engage in ongoing professional learning and development as it pertains to the Program Statement.
- All staff, students, and volunteers are required to review and sign-off on the updated Program Statement annually (or when any changes are made and implemented).
- g) All staff, students, and volunteers will be monitored annually on the implementation of the goals and approaches outlined in the Program Statement. A checklist will be completed listing observed approaches set out in the Program Statement. The checklist will also include a list of prohibited practices. (Prohibited practices include the following):
 - a) Corporal punishment of the child;
 - b) Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
 - c) Locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
 - d) Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
 - e) Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use,



clothing or bedding; or

f) Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

- All instances of observed prohibited practices will be documented, reviewed by the Director and will result in the termination of the contract of the offender.
- Follow-up observation and frequent monitoring of prohibited practices will occur by the director should any instance of prohibited practices be witnessed and reported.

Process for Monitoring Staff Compliance and Contraventions

At York Montessori School, the safety and well-being of our students is our top priority. We have carefully developed and implemented the required, appropriate, and necessary policies, procedures, and individualized plans in order to ensure that all of our staff are knowledgeable and prepared on an ongoing basis.

Before the beginning of their employment or placement, and annually thereafter, all staff, students, and volunteers review, acknowledge, and agree to adhere by the following York Montessori School policies and procedures:

- Anaphylactic Policy
- Criminal Reference Check / Vulnerable Sector Check Policy
- Emergency Management Policy
- Fire Safety / Evacuation Procedures
- Individualized support plans (All anaphylaxis and other)
- Medication Policy
- Parent Issues and Concerns Policy
- Playground Safety Policy
- Program Statement
- Program Statement Implementation Policy
- Sanitary Practices Policy
- Serious Occurrence Policy
- Sleep Supervision Policy
- Staff Training and Development Policy
- Supervision of Volunteers and Students Policy
- Waiting List Policy

In addition to reviewing, acknowledging, and agreeing to these policies and procedures, all staff will be monitored by the school supervisor/director formally annually in order to ensure compliance and to address any observed contraventions. All observations will be documented and kept in the individual staff files for a minimum of three years from the date of creation.



Recorded observations will be discussed with each staff member annually, with the exception of when there has been an observed contravention. Should a staff, student, or volunteer be observed in non-compliance with York Montessori School's policies or procedures, the situation will be addressed immediately.

The process for addressing observed contraventions will be as follows:

- Contravention observed
- Staff, student, or volunteer in non-compliance will meet with the school supervisor/director
- Supervisor/director will review the policy, procedure, or individualized plan where compliance was not met with the staff, student, or volunteer.
- Each individual case will be addressed accordingly.

***Repeated observation of a contravention with a staff, student, or volunteer, may result in loss of employment or position.

***All policies, procedures, and individualized plans will be monitored in a similar fashion, and discussed annually with staff, with the exception of Fire Safety / Evacuation Procedures as drills are conducted and documented once a month.

*** All staff and students will be trained on the Pandemic Policy and Procedures prior to reopening, as well as any ongoing changes as they occur.



PANDEMIC POLICY AND PROCEDURES

MANAGING COMMUNICABLE DISEASES POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policy Statement

York Montessori School (YMS) is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, families and employees. YMS will take every reasonable precaution to prevent the risk of all communicable diseases, with this document pertaining to COVID-19 as the specific disease referred to at this time. All enhanced policies and procedures related to managing communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, are to be considered working documents and are subject to change as new and updated information is received. All YMS staff will be trained as changes occur and all families will be notified of pertinent updates.

Purpose

To ensure that all employees are aware of, and adhere to, the directive established by YMS regarding management, surveillance, and reporting of all communicable diseases.

Application

This policy applies to all employees, students, community members, and any other persons engaged in business with YMS. All staff and students will be trained on the Pandemic Policy and Procedures prior to reopening, as well as any ongoing changes as they occur.

Procedures:

1. COHORTING AND STAFFING

To reduce the spread of communicable diseases and facilitate contact tracing for confirmed COVID-19 cases or outbreak, cohorting will be implemented at YMS. A cohort is defined as a group of children and the staff members assigned to them, who stay together throughout the duration of the program.

- The maximum cohort size for each room at YMS is that of its original licensed capacity.
- Each cohort must stay together throughout the day and should not mix with other cohorts.
- YMS will refer to CCEYA regarding maintaining ratios and mixed age grouping.
- Supervisors and/or designates will limit their movement between rooms, doing so only when absolutely necessary.
- Supply/replacement staff will be assigned to specific cohorts and will not mix between cohorts or locations.

2. SCREENING

All individuals attending YMS including staff, children and any visitor who enters the building must be screened daily prior to entering the premises. Staff and students are to complete the daily screening between 6:00am-8:00am. Any essential visitors will be screened onsite. If you checked off any of the symptoms and/or answered YES to any of these questions, stay home and self-isolate right away, take



the online self-assessment offered by the Ontario COVID assessment centres <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/> or call York Region Public Health at 1-800-361-5653 select 1 and then select 5 OR 1-877-464-9675 and select 0.

Check off any symptoms that your child or any persons residing in your household currently have:

- Fever (temperature of 37.8C or greater)
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Altered smell or taste
- Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
- Runny nose, or nasal congestion (unrelated to seasonal allergies, postnasal drip etc.)
- Tiredness, feeling unwell or muscle aches
- Worsening of chronic conditions
- Chills
- Headaches
- Croup
- Pink eye
- Red/purple discolouration to hands, fingers, feet and/or toes, and skin may peel (COVID-toes)
- Increased tiredness/fatigue
- Difficulty feeding in infants
- Does your child or any persons residing in your household have any of the above listed symptoms?
 - Yes
 - No
- Has your child been given fever reducing medication in the past 24 hours?
 - Yes
 - No
- Has your child or any persons residing in your household travelled anywhere outside of Canada, including the United States, within the last 14 days?
 - Yes
 - No
- Has your child or any persons residing in your household had close contact with a person with acute respiratory illness who has been outside Canada, including the United States, in the last 14 days?
 - Yes
 - No
- Has your child or any persons residing in your household had close contact with a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case?
 - Yes
 - No

If your child or any persons residing in your household have new, worsening or unexplained symptoms related to COVID-19:

- Do not bring your child to school.
- Seek assessment and testing as early as possible at a COVID-19 Assessment Centre and self-isolate while waiting for result.



- If test result is negative, self-isolate for 24 hours after symptom resolution, unless you have been a close contact of an existing COVID-19 case in which case please follow instructions from York Region Public Health and isolate for 14 days since last contact.
- If test result is positive or test is not completed, self-isolate for 14 days (including any members of your household or people you had close contact with from 48 hours before symptom onset) and contact York Region Public Health.
- Parents/guardians will be reminded of this requirement when children are first registered for the program as well as through visible signage at the entrances and drop off areas.
- The screening station will be located at the main entrance of each respective building.
- Where possible, daily screening questions will be answered electronically (e.g., via online form, survey, or e-mail) prior to arrival at YMS.
- Daily temperature checks will be conducted onsite as needed.
- Touchless thermometers will be used and disinfected as needed.
- Designated screeners at YMS will take appropriate precautions when screening and escorting children to the program, including maintaining a distance of at least 2 meters (6 feet) from those being screened and wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) (i.e., surgical/procedure mask and eye protection (goggles or face shield)).
- All necessary equipment and supplies will be provided at the screening stations (e.g. alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR), thermometer, disinfectant, PPE for staff conducting the screening)
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol content will be placed at all screening stations. Dispensers will not be in locations that can be accessed by young children.
- YMS will maintain daily records of screening results and these records will be kept on the school premises.
- Children and staff will be passively screened for symptoms during operating hours.
- The supervisor/designate will conduct surveillance and maintain daily record of illness (respiratory and enteric).

3. PICKUP AND DROP OFF PROCEDURES

- YMS has implemented a staggered drop off and pickup schedule for each class in order to allow for enhanced physical distancing during high traffic times in common areas.
- As much as possible, parents/guardians will not be permitted past the screening area.
- In addition to the staff in the screening area, designated staff members will be assigned to bring the children to and from their respective classrooms during assigned pickup and drop off times. These staff members will wear proper PPE and complete proper hand hygiene between children.
- In order to allow for ample cleaning and disinfecting time at the end of each school day, After School Extended Hours will now be from 4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

4. ATTENDANCE RECORDS

- YMS is responsible for maintaining daily records of anyone entering the school and the approximate length of their stay (such as cleaners, people doing maintenance work, people providing supports for children with special needs, those delivering food).



- Attendance records are to be kept on the school premises.
- Attendance records including name, contact information, time of arrival/departure, and screening completion/result, must be kept up-to-date and available to facilitate contact tracing in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak.

5. VISITORS

- There will be no non-essential visitors permitted at YMS.
- Students completing post-secondary educational placements will be permitted to enter YMS, should only attend one childcare setting, and will be assigned to one group of children. Students will also be subject to the same health and safety protocols as other staff members such as screening, and the use of PPE when on the childcare premises and must also review the health and safety protocols.
- The provision of special needs services may continue, and the director/supervisor may use their discretion to determine whether the services being provided are essential and necessary at this time.
- Use of video and telephone interviews will be used to interact with families where possible, rather than in person.
- Ministry staff and other public officials (e.g., fire marshal, public health inspectors, etc.) are permitted to enter and inspect the premises at any reasonable time. In this case, attendance records will be maintained in accordance with Ministry regulations.
- As much as possible, parents will not be permitted past the screening area.
- There will be no volunteers permitted at the program.

6. RESPONSE PLAN

a. Management of Children and Staff Displaying Symptoms of Illness

- YMS staff, parents/guardians, essential visitors, and children must not attend the program if they are sick, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold.
- Staff who become ill while at school will be sent home immediately and directed to speak to a medical professional, contact public health, or seek assessment and testing at a COVID-19 Assessment Centre.
- If a child begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19 while in attendance at YMS, the below procedure will be followed:
 - The sick child will be separated from the program and parents/guardians or emergency contacts will be notified for pick up immediately. Parents MUST provide current contact information for all emergency contacts listed on their child's Student Information Form.
 - The sick child will be kept in a designated room/space with an assigned supervising staff or at least 2-metres (6 feet) from others.
 - The sick child will be provided with tissue and ABHR, or a handwashing sink where possible, and reminded of hand hygiene as well as proper respiratory etiquette and disposal of soiled tissues.



- Staff assigned to supervise the sick child will open doors or windows to increase air circulation into the designated room if possible.
 - The sick child will be provided with a surgical/procedural mask if tolerable and above the age of 2 years.
 - The designated staff who supervises the sick child must wear a surgical/procedural mask and eye protection at all times and not interact with others. They will also avoid contact with the child's respiratory secretions and perform meticulous hand hygiene.
 - All spaces and items used by the sick child will be cleaned and disinfected with an outbreak level disinfectant.
 - Items that cannot be cleaned (e.g., paper, books and cardboard puzzles), will be removed and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 7 days.
 - Contaminated items belonging to the symptomatic child (including soiled clothing) will be placed in a securely tied plastic bag and sent home immediately for cleaning. Soiled item will not be rinsed or washed at YMS.
 - Siblings of the sick child are also to be picked up and excluded from the program.
 - The supervisor/designate will record the symptoms of the sick child and these records will be logged and kept on the school premises.
 - Staff who have been in close contact with a sick child should self-monitor for symptoms for the next 14 days. They will be advised to avoid being in contact with vulnerable persons or centres where there are vulnerable persons (e.g., long-term care homes). If the child is a confirmed case, the staff member should also self-isolate and seek assessment and testing.
- YMS will contact York Region Public Health if two or more symptomatic individuals are in the school within 48 hours.
 - Staff and children with symptoms, who have not been tested for COVID-19, must either contact a medical professional or public health or be excluded from YMS for 14 days after the onset of symptoms.
 - Staff and children who are being managed by York Region Public Health (e.g., confirmed cases of COVID-19, household contacts of cases) should follow instructions from public health to determine when to return to the facility.

b. Testing

- Symptomatic staff and children will be directed to speak to a medical professional, contact public health, or seek assessment and testing at a COVID-19 Assessment Centre. Those who test negative for COVID-19 must be excluded from the program until 24 hours after symptom resolution. Those who test positive for COVID-19 must be excluded from the program for 14 days after the onset of symptoms and clearance has been received from York Region Public Health.
- Staff or children with symptoms, who have not been tested for COVID-19, will be excluded from YMS and must contact York Region Public Health for further direction.



- **Asymptomatic** contacts of a confirmed case should seek out assessment and testing for COVID-19 at a COVID-19 Assessment Centre as soon as possible after identification of the case. If they test negative and the contact becomes symptomatic, they should be re-tested.
- If the test result is negative, asymptomatic contacts of a confirmed case must remain in self-isolation for 14 days from their last exposure to the case.
- A single, symptomatic, laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 in a staff or child is considered a confirmed COVID-19 outbreak in consultation with the York Region Public Health.
- Staff and children who have been in contact with a suspected COVID-19 case should be monitored for symptoms and further cohorted until laboratory tests, if any, have been completed or until directed by York Region Public Health.
- Staff and children waiting for test results will be excluded from YMS.

c. Reporting

- YMS has a duty to report suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. YMS will contact their local public health unit to report a child suspected to have COVID-19. The local public health unit will provide specific advice on what control measures should be implemented to prevent the potential spread and how to monitor for other possible infected staff members and children.
- YMS will contact York Region Public Health (1-877-464-9675 ext. 73588 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., seven days a week or after hours 905-953-6478) if two or more symptomatic individuals are in the school within 48 hours and seek input regarding the information that should be shared with other parents of children at the school.
- In the event that a COVID-19 positive case is identified at YMS, a COVID-19 outbreak will be declared by York Region Public Health and further direction will be provided on who else at the school may need testing and/or isolation at that time.
- YMS will report and submit a Serious Occurrence when any child, parent/guardian, staff member, or student has a confirmed case of COVID-19 or a suspected case involving the individual exhibiting 1 or more symptoms AND the individual has been tested, or has indicated that they will be tested for COVID-19.
- YMS is required to post the serious occurrence notification form as required under the CCEYA, unless the local public health unit advises otherwise.
- The suspected or confirmed individual's identity will remain anonymous.

7. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- All adults at YMS (i.e., child care staff and adult students) are required to wear medical masks and eye protection (i.e., face shield) while inside in the child care premises, including in hallways.
- The use of masks is not required outdoors if physical distancing of a least 2-metres can be maintained between individuals.
- Masks are not recommended for children under the age of two years.
- YMS will follow local public health guidelines regarding the use of masks and PPE.
- Reasonable exceptions to the requirement to wear masks are as follows:



- Circumstances where a physical distance of at least 2 metres can be maintained between individuals
- Reasonable exceptions for medical conditions
- YMS staff will incorporate enhanced use of PPE:
 - In the screening area and when accompanying children into the program from the screening area.
 - When cleaning and disinfecting, especially blood or bodily fluid spills if there is a risk of splashing as well as when cleaning and disinfecting area/room of a suspected or confirmed COVID- 19 case.
 - When caring for a sick child or a child showing symptoms of illness.
- YMS will secure and sustain an amount of PPE and cleaning supplies that can support their current and ongoing operations.
- PPE is single use only, unless specified by manufacturer.
- Staff will be trained on the proper use of PPE including correct donning and doffing.
- Hand hygiene is performed for donning and doffing PPE.

8. ENHANCED CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

To stop the chain of transmission, cleaning and disinfection play an important role.

- Frequently touched surfaces including doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, and hand railings are most likely to become contaminated and must be disinfected at least twice a day.
- YMS will increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting objects, toys, and frequently touched surfaces using routinely used disinfectants.
- YMS will maintain cleaning and disinfecting logs to track and demonstrate cleaning schedules.
- All disinfectants used at YMS must have a drug identification number (DIN) if approved for use in Canada (common household bleach and isopropyl alcohol are the only exceptions).
- A sufficient supply of cleaning and disinfecting products are provided and accessible to staff.
- YMS staff will check expiry dates of disinfectant products and always follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- YMS staff will ensure that all materials/toys/equipment used within the classrooms are made of material that can be easily cleaned and disinfected. All plush and porous materials will be removed and stored.
- Shared toys and equipment will be cleaned and disinfected between cohorts at a minimum or as necessary.
- All materials, toys, and equipment used by the same cohort will be cleaned and disinfected as used throughout the day.
- Mouthed items will be cleaned and disinfected immediately after each use by the child.
- Indoor and outdoor materials, toys, and equipment will be designated for each cohort.
- If for any reason materials, toys, or equipment need to be shared, they will be cleaned and disinfected between use.



- Sensory material such as water will be single use only and discarded after each use.
- Play structures and playground equipment can only be used by one cohort at a time. YMS staff will clean and disinfect all touch surfaces before and after each use by each cohort.
- YMS staff will clean and disinfect all sleeping equipment after each use.
- All rooms where a symptomatic child or staff member were present must be cleaned and disinfected (outbreak level disinfectant), in addition to all items used by the symptomatic child or staff member.

9. DIAPERING AND TOILETING

- Washrooms and diapering areas will only be used by one cohort at a time.
- Toilets will be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Proper diaper change procedure will continue to be followed.
- No communal skin products will be used. Proper application of skin products will be used to avoid cross contamination.
- Proper PPE must be used for diapering and toileting.

10. LAUNDRY AND SLEEPING EQUIPMENT

- All sleeping equipment will be designated, labelled with child's name, and not shared.
- All bedding and sleeping equipment will be cleaned and disinfected/laundered after use or when visibly soiled.
- Individual pillows and plush sleeping toys will not be permitted at school.
- Contaminated (e.g., fecal) items belonging to the child (including soiled clothing) will be placed in a securely tied plastic bag and sent home immediately for cleaning. Soiled item will not be rinsed and or washed at YMS.
- Classroom bed plans will be developed which will incorporate physical distancing measures and the placing of children head to toe.

11. FOOD SAFETY

- “No Sharing” practices must be monitored and reinforced. There will be no sharing of food, water bottles or personal items and belongings. Personal items will be clearly labelled with each child's name and stored individually.
- There will be no food provided by parties outside of the regular meal provision of the program (except where required and special precautions for handling and serving the food will be put in place).
- Children will neither prepare nor provide food that will be shared with others.
- There will be no self-serve options or sharing of food or utensils at mealtimes.
- Proper hand hygiene must be practiced when staff are preparing food and for all individuals before and after eating.
- Meals and snacks will be portioned into individual size in a food preparation area before serving in the program area.



- Proper environmental cleaning and disinfection must be practiced before and after staff are preparing food.
- Children will practice physical distancing while eating.
- Foods are prepared, handled, stored and served in a safety manner as outlined in Food Premises Regulation 493/17.
- Multi-use utensils must be cleaned and sanitized between uses as per requirements outlined in Food Premises Regulation 493/17

12. HAND HYGIENE AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

- Handwashing with soap and water is the preferred method for cleaning hands.
- Sufficient supply of hand hygiene products (i.e., hand soap in dispenser, paper towels, sanitizer) are available in all rooms equipped with hand wash sink.
- When there is no access to soap and water, alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing minimum of 60% alcohol can be used, only if hands are not visibly soiled.
- If alcohol-based hand sanitizer is used on children, they must be supervised. To ensure proper use, follow the manufacturer's directions.
- YMS will incorporate additional hand hygiene opportunities into the daily schedule.
- YMS staff will provide supervision for hand hygiene practices and will provide assistance where necessary.
- Hands must be cleaned upon entering the school, touching any foods, eating, and preparing foods. Hands must also be washed after using the washroom, returning from playing outside and sneezing/coughing into hands. Hands must be washed when they are visibly soiled.
- Hand hygiene is performed for donning and doffing PPE.
- YMS staff will facilitate proper cough and sneeze etiquette (cough or sneeze into your sleeve or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and throw the tissue out immediately. Wash your hands afterwards.)
- Staff, children, essential visitors, and parents/guardians will be encouraged to avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- YMS will ensure that hand hygiene supplies are available and easily accessible.
- YMS will post signage to promote personal protective practices.

13. PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Although physical distancing (i.e., 2 meters) may be difficult to achieve at all times while working with young children, YMS is committed to maintaining a safe, welcoming, and caring environment for its students. A wide variety of strategies will be incorporated into all aspects of the program to encourage physical distancing between staff, essential visitors, students, and parents/guardians.

- Each cohort will have their own assigned indoor space, separated from all other cohorts by a physical barrier.
- Physical distancing (i.e., 2 metres) is to be maintained in both indoor and outdoor play space.
- Physical distancing is maintained between cohorts and children within the same cohort, if possible.



- When in the same common space (e.g., entrances, hallways) physical distancing of at least 2 metres must be maintained between different cohorts and should be encouraged, where possible, between children within the same cohort by:
 - Spreading children out into different areas, particularly at meal and dressing time
 - Incorporating more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between children
 - Planning activities that do not involve shared objects, materials, or toys
 - Using visual cues when needed to promote physical distancing
 - When possible, moving activities outside to allow for more space
 - Avoiding singing activities indoors
- In shared outdoor space, cohorts must maintain a distance of at least 2 metres between groups and any other individuals outside of the cohort.
- During quiet rest time, classroom staff will increase the distance between cots and place the children head to toe.
- Shared spaces and structures that cannot be cleaned and disinfected between cohorts will not be used.
- YMS will ensure that all staff is practicing physical distancing during staggered breaks/lunches. Chairs and tables will be rearranged to ensure physical distancing in staff room.

14. TOYS AND EQUIPMENT – USAGE AND RESTRICTIONS

- YMS will only provide access to materials, toys, and equipment which are made of materials that can be cleaned and disinfected. All other items will be removed from the classrooms and stored safely.
- Shared items that cannot be cleaned (e.g., paper, books and cardboard puzzles) will be removed and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 7 days between use.
- Personal belongings will be stored separately and inside containers which can be cleaned and disinfected, where possible.
- Classroom material, toys, and equipment will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day.
- Classroom material, toys, and equipment will not be shared between cohorts.
- Mouthed items will be cleaned and disinfected immediately.
- If sensory materials are offered, they will be provided for single use only.
- Outdoor stationary play structures must only be used by one cohort at a time. Play structures will be cleaned and disinfected between use by each cohort.
- Each cohort will be provided with their own selection of outdoor play equipment and it will be cleaned and disinfected daily.
- YMS will minimize sharing of toys and equipment within cohorts and between cohorts.

15. INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

- YMS staff will refrain from getting close to the faces of all children, when possible.



- Physical distancing measures will be incorporated into all aspects of the day, including greeting routines. Handshaking practices will be suspended.
- While completing tasks where physical distancing is not possible, proper PPE will be used.
- No communal selfcare products will be used (sunscreen, diapering creams, etc.) Proper application of skin products will be used to avoid cross contamination. Proper hand hygiene will be completed before and after application.
- YMS staff will avoid singing activities indoors.

16. INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- Unless deemed necessary, parents/guardians will not be permitted past the screening area.
- All new policies will be shared with families, for their information and to ensure that they are aware of the expectations in place to protect the health and safety of the school community.
- YMS will communicate with families regarding the updated and relevant information received, links to helpful information, policy revisions, as well as detailed instructions regarding screening and protocols if a child or staff member becomes ill.
- COVID-19 information will be posted and available to parents/guardians (e.g., COVID-19 fact sheets, hand hygiene, physical distancing, self-monitoring, etc.)
- The use of in-person communication will be limited and parents/guardians will be discouraged from engaging in conversation with staff members in the screening area.
- YMS staff and parent/guardian communication will take place through email, over the telephone, or via video conference where possible or necessary.

****All enhanced policies and procedures related to managing communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, are to be considered working documents and are subject to change as new and updated information is received.*

**** Although York Montessori School remains dedicated to taking every precautionary measure to ensure the health and safety of our community, we cannot guarantee that we will not end up with a case of Covid-19 at our school. It will take a collective effort to minimize the possibility of such an occurrence and we sincerely appreciate your support and cooperation.*



I have read and understand all of the above policies and procedures as outlined in the September 4, 2020 Student & Parent Handbook and I agree to abide by them.

Name of Student: _____

Name of Parent: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Name of Parent: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____