

# Parent Handbook

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1187 Magnolia Avenue

Corona, CA 92879

(951) 432-7787

[info@belltowermontessori.com](mailto:info@belltowermontessori.com)



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## *SECTION 1: THE MONTESSORI PROGRAM*

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### **PHILOSOPHY OF BELLTOWER MONTESSORI ACADEMY**

The Montessori system of education is both a philosophy of child growth and a rationale for guiding such growth. It is based on the child's developmental needs for freedom within limits, and a carefully prepared environment, which guarantees exposure to a wide range of materials, experiences and grace and courtesy, through which a child can develop intellectually, as well as physically and socially.

Montessori education recognizes that the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child. The Montessori classroom, is designed to capture the unique ability of children to develop their own capabilities. The adult prepares the environment, provides the activity, functions as the resource person or exemplar, offers the child stimulation and guidance; but it is the child who learns, who is motivated through the work itself to persist in his/her chosen task.

The Montessori environment invites the child to progress at his/her own pace. Montessori introduces the child to the love of learning at an early age with the hope of building the foundation for a lifetime of creative learning. Montessori is not only a contemporary and progressive method of education, but it becomes a way of life.

### **THE MONTESSORI METHOD**

#### ***Key Philosophical messages that makes Montessori Unique***

- Deep respect for children as individuals.
- The multiage classes (which spans over three years) allows the Directress and the children to develop a close and long-term relationship. Older students are encouraged to become role models, and mentors for the younger students. In turn they are developing leadership and nurturing skills. The younger students truly look up to their older classmates and this gives them the incentive to behave and strive to achieve more challenging work.
- The integrated curriculum is carefully structured through the use and repetition of concrete materials which lays the foundation for later abstract concepts.



- Independence is nurtured and leads to children becoming purposeful, motivated, and confident in their own abilities.
- Grace and Courtesy, Peace and Conflict Resolution are guided daily and children learn to be a part of a warm, respectful, and supportive community.
- The child creates, in a very real sense, the adult that is to be, through his/her experiences, interactions, and environments.
- Hands-on learning is central to the curriculum in all programs and leads to children being engaged rather than passive with their work.
- The environments are responsibly and carefully prepared with multisensory, sequential, and self-correcting materials to support self-directed learning.
- School faculty, children and parents work together as a warm and supportive community.
- Self-expression is nurtured in all children. Children experience art, music, poetry, writing, and other forms of creative arts with confidence and passion.

### ***Desired learner outcomes common to Montessori Education***

Dr. Maria Montessori, was the first Italian female surgeon and educator. She developed a method of teaching based on her scientific observations of young children's behavior. Her first "Children's House" was established in Rome in 1907. She found children learned best in a homelike environment filled with developmentally appropriate materials that provides real-life experiences, which contribute to the growth of self-motivated, independent learners.

Dr. Montessori carried her message across the globe, including the United States in 1912.

The outcomes we aspire to teach are lifelong developments.

**Independence:** Is the child able to choose his or her own work freely, work with it in concentration and repetition and return it to the proper place, prepared for the next child's use?

**Confidence and Competence:** Are the child's self-perceived successes far more numerous than his or her self-perceived failures? Is the child capable of self-correcting work, upon observation, reflection, or discussion?

**Autonomy:** Can the child accept or reject inclusion in another child's work or work group with equanimity?



**Intrinsic Motivation:** Is the child drawn to continue working for the apparent pure pleasure of so doing? Does the child, once having achieved a particular competence, move on to revel in mastery by showing others?

**Ability to Handle External Authority:** Is the child able to accept the “ground rules” of the group as appropriate in his or her interactions with other children? Is the child, while distant from the Directress, able to function as if the Directress were nearby?

**Social Responsibility:** Independent and autonomous persons are always a part of a group and must attain independence and autonomy through participation in group activity. The loss of these qualities by one of a group is a loss for all. Do students attain independence and autonomy and, at the same time, develop social responsibility?

**Academic Preparation:** Academic preparation entails activation and cultivation of inherent powers and processes through which the learner becomes a supplier of meanings or of things-meaningfully-known. Academic skills are essential to learning and knowing, not the aim of learning and knowing. Do students acquire academic skills and apply them in learning to learn?

**Citizens of the World:** All children are part of both a world political system and a world ecological system. Both systems have their constitutions and all must learn to live by the letter and spirit of their laws. As a naturalist, Montessori knew about the laws of mind and of nature and understood the consequences of disobeying either of them. What are the citizenship outcomes of school experience? Are the children acquiring civic virtue? Are they acquiring dispositions to understand the natural world, to cherish it, and to live harmoniously within it?

### ***Some Important Aspects of the Montessori Method***

1. It is based on years of patient observation and study of children by Dr. Maria Montessori, who was a scientist uniquely educated and qualified for this task. She was a surgeon, a student of psychology, and a professor of anthropology, a science that is concerned with man in a unique way. She developed her methodology by letting the children show her what worked and what did not work. It is not a "franchise" or "patented" operation. It is in the public domain.
2. Currently, Montessori is the largest growing pedagogy in the world. Within less than 100 years, Montessori schools span 6 continents.
3. It has revealed the small child as a lover of order and of intellectual work, spontaneously chosen and carried out with profound joy, capable of concentration and eager to learn for the joy of learning.



4. It is based upon the child's imperious need to learn by doing activities, which develop his faculties at each stage in his mental growth. These stages are called "sensitive periods," and he more readily absorbs knowledge during those periods. While the method offers the child a maximum of spontaneity, it enables him to reach an even higher level of scholastic attainment than under other systems.
5. Though it does away with the necessity of coercion by means of rewards and punishments, it achieves a higher discipline. It is an active discipline, which originates within the child and is achieved through concentration on work, which he has chosen. Children with extremely active and curious minds are stimulated and utilize their intellectual energies constructively.
6. It is based on a profound respect for the child's personality and removes from him the preponderate influence of the adult, thus leaving him room to grow in biological independence. The child is allowed a large measure of freedom, within limits.
7. It enables the Directress to interact with each child individually in each subject and thus guide him according to his individual needs. Each child works at his own pace.
8. It does away with pressure and its trail of challenges. More than this, at every turn it presents endless opportunities among the children for mutual help, which is joyfully given and gratefully received.
9. The Montessori method develops the whole personality of the child, not merely his intellectual faculties but also his powers of deliberation, initiative, and independent choice, with their emotional complements. By living as a free member in a real social community, the child is trained in those fundamental social qualities, which form the basis of good citizenship.

### ***Ground Rules for the Montessori Classroom***

**The following are guidelines established to enable the partnership of parents and Directress to help develop the students at Belltower Montessori Academy. The expectation is that Directress will abide by these guidelines in every way.**

### **THE DIRECTRESS:**

The prime responsibilities are:  
To help each child help himself experience success.  
To protect the child's right to engage in activities of his choice.

1. The first duty of the Directress is to prepare the classroom environment.



By preparation of the environment we mean that the Directress programs into the environment materials and outcomes of activity designed to ensure success and satisfaction for the child, as well as providing a challenging and stimulating intellectual growth as well as the development of sensory-motor and communication skills.

"There is a place for everything and everything has a place." Within the environment, the materials are displayed in easily accessible places and are ordered within areas defined for certain activities, e.g., Practical Life, Sensorial, Geography, Science, Mathematics and Language.

Within each activity area, materials are beautifully displayed in a pleasing and orderly manner. Everything that would be needed to carry a particular type of activity through to completion is displayed together in a convenient and self-evident arrangement. This helps the child complete his activity without the interruptions.

Preparation of the environment includes the general atmosphere created within the classroom as a result of visual displays, floor plan and arrangement of developmentally appropriate furniture. Within this context, the condition of the equipment is of the utmost importance. Materials are maintained in good repair, clean, pleasingly arranged, and colorful. The materials are changed frequently to insure interest in the environment as well as progress in concepts as presented in the materials and activities. This standard must be maintained at all times.

2. The Directress is an observer, and her effectiveness in meeting the needs of the child is a direct result of her ability to observe.

In order to develop keen observation, the Directress keeps regular observation records in which she records the materials and activities that most interest the child. Special skills that he is developing, needs, problems, etc. are also noted. The Directress records lessons presented, working progress and mastery.

In addition to keeping observation records, the Directress must also keep a journal, detailing key pieces of work carried out by the child, along with pictures.

3. The Directress is a mediator and guide.

"Never allow a child to risk failure unless he has a reasonable chance of success." The Directress's goal as mediator is to maximize success for the child and to minimize error. In order to minimize error, she provides materials, which have built-in Control of Error. He thus becomes an independent learner who experiences success as he corrects his own errors.

The entire environment is prepared in such a way that error is self-evident and as the child internalizes the ground rules he no longer needs the gentle reminder of the Directress on these rules but has developed these as his own habit of working.



4. The Directress maintains ground rules and guides appropriate behavior in the classroom by the use of Grace and Courtesy lessons.

The Directress treats the children with warmth, patience and respect, guiding them to freely observe the rules of the classroom.

Ground rules are extremely important, for only after the child has internalized the ground rules of social behavior (i.e., made the ground rules his own) is he truly free to learn and to create on his own or with others.

The Directress establishes a peacekeeping curriculum to guide students in problem-solving behavior and language skills. Peacekeeping becomes a way of life in the classroom for adults and students. The Directress acknowledges and reinforces students' attempts at adhering to the peacekeeping curriculum in the classroom.

5. The Directress never arbitrarily interrupts the child from his work.

If she wants to invite the class to a group activity, the Directress does this at an appropriate time so as not to interfere with the absorption and concentration of the children in activities of their own choice. She is extremely careful of imposing her personal interests, wishes, or needs on the children without the sincere interest of the children involved.

6. The Directress "corrects" a child who is breaking the ground rules in a one-to-one private relationship.

The Directress's manner can be described as gentle but firm, her voice is quiet so as not to call attention of others. She never calls a correction to a child from across the room as this causes embarrassment for the child being corrected and creates a general disturbance. She goes up to the child and catches his attention either by stooping to his eye level or she may put her arm on his shoulder as a gesture of understanding.

7. When a Directress must "correct" a child or interrupt him, she does so in a positive manner.

She says, "Please do it this way," or "We do it this way," or "May I show you how to do this?" The Directress never derides, criticizes, or corrects in a negative way. If a child spills something or makes a mess of some kind the Directress will softly and kindly reply, "It is alright, accidents happen, and you already have received a lesson on how to clean up this spill; please get the mop."

Clean-up is like any other activity to the young child and involves water play and other motor activities, which the child enjoys a great deal.



8. If a child is behaving in an uncontrollable manner in the classroom and is disrupting the activities of others, doing harm to himself or others or the environment, the Directress removes the child from the environment.

She does this in a calm, controlled manner with no implication of punishment. She removes the child as a measure of protection for himself and the rights of others.

The Directress attempts to help the child by diverting his attention toward a productive kind of activity and does not attempt to render the child immobile. She takes her cue from the nature of the child's outburst, the possible cause of the problem, and the individual needs of the child. Her attitude must be, "This child is trying to tell me something. He needs help. How can I help him?" There is no room for pride or anger in the teacher of young children. Above all, there must be respect and understanding.

### **UNINTERRUPTED WORK PERIOD:**

As per the American Montessori Society we are to uphold and to respect the "Three Hour Work Cycle", the standard of providing an uninterrupted work time-

The purpose of long, uninterrupted blocks of work time is to allow students to freely select work, eventually becoming absorbed in work that has a particular fascination for them at this point in their development. Interruptions disturb the development of the child's focus, concentration, and opportunity to deeply delve into work. During this uninterrupted work time, Directress's also have the opportunity to present lessons to the children, ensuring that lessons are given and work is explored in all areas of the classroom.

### **The Child:**

1. Children may work alone or in spontaneous groups. No one may touch another's work without being invited; therefore, there is no forced sharing.
2. Everyone walks around the work rugs.
3. Line rules for group stories or lessons include sitting quietly with arms and legs folded.
4. Each child is responsible for dressing himself and gathering his belongings.
5. Athletic shoes with ties make us sure-footed.
6. Children serve themselves refreshments and are in charge of cleaning the environment.
7. Children are directors of work and Directress's are there to serve their needs-



8. Children talk quietly and ask for help on a one-to-one basis, not by yelling across the room. They do not interrupt a lesson but wait quietly in close proximity to the Directress until noticed before asking for help or direction.

**Parents:**

1. Please leave toys at home.
2. Please try to bring happy, relaxed children to school by allowing adequate time and a very slow pace in preparing for school.
3. Talk about ground rules with children in a "positive" manner, and practice talking quietly at home.
4. Encourage the ability to distinguish between appropriate indoor behavior and outdoor behavior.
5. Parent conferences are scheduled twice each year.
6. Please avoid tangible rewards for accomplishments children naturally receive pleasure from.
7. Order is very important to children to give them a sense of security and peace.
8. Return folders and Directress's communications promptly.
9. Notify the directress if you have a question or concern. A telephone message can be left with the office.
10. Parents are the child's primary teacher. The faculty and staff at Belltower Montessori Academy can love, support, and encourage parents best by setting excellent examples. We must address parents' needs as well as the needs of our children. We must also trust one another and share the goal of providing the best educational environment for children to develop.



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## SECTION 2: PROGRAM STANDARDS

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### PROGRAMS

#### Infant / Toddler Program:

Our infant Program starts at the age of 6 weeks and continues until 24 months of age. Our Directress's provide your babies with constant support and encouragement to build self-esteem, self-confidence, and their overall values. Our infants are given the best of care and nurturing to create a peaceful, spotlessly clean and tranquil dwelling while they are away from home. As infant development progresses rapidly and changes day to day, our Directress's use a daily communication form to exchange information with parents and chart the needs of these children until they transition into preschool.

#### Pre-Primary Program:

Children ages 2 to 3 years old will be considered for enrollment into the Pre-Primary Program. This program is a training program designed to help prepare the children for the Montessori Primary environment. The children in the Pre-Primary program don't have to be toilet trained. However, they must show a social maturity to adapt to the group interactions and activities. Our Pre-Primary children are encouraged to be independent and learn important skills such as socializing, sharing, using their words, and toilet training. As the child's development progresses, master language, toilet skills, and respect and knowledge of the materials, they will be considered for a promotion into the Primary program.

#### Primary Program:

Children ages 3 to 6 years old will be considered for enrollment into the Primary Program. Children need to be completely toilet trained and must show a social maturity to adapt to the group interactions and activities. Our preschoolers will have the opportunity to develop their skills in: Practical Life, Sensorial, Geography/Science, Language and Mathematics. Following the Montessori philosophy throughout their time at Belltower Montessori Academy, we will encourage a daily respect for their Directress's, friends and the environment.

### CLASSROOM SCHEDULE

The classroom daily schedule will be posted in each of our classrooms.



### *SCHOOL HOLIDAYS*

We will observe Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, 1 week Winter Recess, New Years' Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents Day, 1 week for Spring Break, Memorial Day, Fourth of July and up to 5 x Teacher's In-Service Days. Please see school calendar for actual holiday dates.

### *PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES*

There will be two conferences per child each calendar year.

### *FIELD TRIPS*

All field trips are onsite. Occasionally, special activities will be scheduled at school which may include specialist and educational vendors. A small participation fee may be charged per child.

### *DIVERSITY WEEK*

Individual classes may observe celebrations from the many cultures around the world. Parents from these cultures are welcomed to participate in the celebrations.

### *"THE CELEBRATION OF LIFE!"*

Children are welcome to share their birthdays with their friends at school as long as the parent arranges a date with the Directress **at least a week in advance**. This is a celebration of the child's life as well as a science lesson.

We celebrate with a special ceremony using Montessori number rods, globe, candle and pictures depicting the child's timeline of life. Parents are invited to send a "store bought special healthy treat," such as a vegetable or fruit platter. We are a nut-free school; therefore, we ask of you to please respect and follow our policy. Please refrain from sending party favor bags.

### *FAMILY COMMUNICATION*

Notice Board – Bulletin boards are located throughout the school to communicate news, events, staff notes, holiday closing dates etc. Depending upon your child's age, you may also receive daily logs of their experience, typically for those aged 23 months and under.

Mailboxes – When school management or Directress's have information to share with all families, this information could be emailed to you.



Website / Electronic communication – Our school’s website has a parent portal which is a password protected family area providing a portal of communication. Here, the school may post relevant pictures and other correspondence, such as the classroom curriculum and schedules. You will also receive a monthly newsletter by email.

### *CONFLICT RESOLUTION*

Within the Montessori methodology we guide our students with a precious conflict resolution procedure, which is called the “Peace Rose.” The children take turns holding the rose and sharing their feelings with one another. Likewise, the staff at Belltower Montessori Academy is committed to responding to all family questions and concerns graciously and resolve those matters as quickly as possible.

Concerns are most effectively addressed within the school. If a specific classroom concern arises, you can discuss the issue with the lead Directress. However, we encourage you to discuss more general school/facility concerns with school management, who will involve staff members as needed.

### *TRANSITIONS*

We recognize how important new beginnings are in each child’s development and to each child’s family. We call these new beginnings transitions. We take great effort to make transitions as special and as smooth as possible for children and their families. This is done by slowly integrating children into a new program and by customizing care and communication throughout the transition period.

#### *Initial transitions from Home to School:*

The first transition families experience is from the home to the school. We realize that this can often be a difficult period for families as everyone adjusts to new routines and new people. During the transition from home to school, you will receive general information on the program and a daily schedule, meet with your child’s Directress, tour the classroom and meet the other children in the classroom. You are encouraged to discuss the communication methods that work best for you with your child’s Directress. Please mention any adjustment problems you anticipate and together we will work to foster the best possible transition. We also recommend that you visit the school prior to your child’s first day.

#### *Transitioning to a New classroom:*

As children grow and develop, they need new challenges and social interactions with other children in their peer group. Children will make a transition to the next program based upon many factors relating to their readiness. During the transition from one program to another, current and future Directress’s meet with you and your child is gently integrated into the new environment through a series of visits to the new classroom. We encourage you to visit the new classroom, so that you too can become accustomed to the environment and bond with your child’s new Directress. Special attention is given to your family to support you through these changes. You are encouraged to discuss communication methods that work best for you in order to maintain ongoing dialogue throughout your child’s transition.



## POSITIVE GUIDANCE

The staff at Belltower Montessori Academy consistently emphasize basic respect for the individual child and exemplifies grace and courtesy. Young children are striving for understanding, independence and self-control. Children learn by exploring, experimenting and testing the limits of their environment and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. In this way, they begin to understand how the world works, their own limits and appropriate assertiveness. Children learn self-control in a relaxed, positive atmosphere of support and understanding that recognizes the child's struggle toward independence.

Children are accepted as they are – development is viewed as a process of growing, with each age and stage having its own characteristics, its own challenges and needs. Behavioral guidance is viewed by adults as an important aspect of teaching and learning, Through positive guidance of behavior and modeling, staff members help children to feel good about themselves and to behave in responsible ways.

In our approach:

- Expectations are limited to what is realistic for the developmental level of the child, and they are clarified for children so they understand what is expected of them.
- A 'yes' environment is created, which enhances and encourages children's positive behavior.
- Directress's model appropriate behavior.
- Directress's encourage children's efforts to build feelings of self-worth.
- Children are given alternatives, which enable them to turn difficult situations into constructive ones.
- Natural and logical consequences are used to motivate and empower children to make responsible decisions about their behavior.
- Behaviors such as cooperating, helping, negotiating and problem solving are encouraged.

The following methods of discipline are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment, including spanking.
- Shaking, jerking, squeezing or physically indicating disapproval.
- Shaming, humiliation or verbal abuse.
- Labeling, such as indicating a child is a 'bad' girl or boy, or otherwise implying that he or she, rather than the behavior, is the problem.
- Using bribes, false threats or false choices.
- Withholding of food or drink, outdoor time or unrelated activities as punishment.
- Retaliating or doing to the child what he or she did to someone else.
- Punishment for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.



## *HANDLING OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION IN INCIDENTS OF CHILDREN'S AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS*

In social settings where young children are just beginning to explore and experiment with ways of interacting effectively with their peers, it is not unusual for moments of aggression to occur. At certain stages in early childhood development, children's desire to communicate their feelings and the need to assert themselves as individuals may often be expressed in non-constructive ways. As an organization committed to the education and development of young children, Belltower Montessori Academy understands the developmental context in which these behaviors may occur and we provide an environment where children can develop and grow as individuals as they learn more constructive ways of interacting with their classmates.

When incidences of aggression do occur, parents/guardians of the children involved are informed of the incident and of any specific information pertinent to an understanding of the situation. The information shared typically includes the details of the incident itself (e.g. the time and the place, preceding and subsequent events, the specific steps taken to comfort the child who was hurt and, more generally, to handle the situation).

However, the identity of the child who engaged in aggressive behavior is not disclosed. Knowledge of the aggressor's identity is not necessary to parents'/guardians' understanding of an incident of aggression, or of the actions taken by the school staff to ensure the well being of their own child. In fact, such knowledge may serve only to stigmatize the other child unnecessarily (and inappropriately, given the developmental context of such behaviors). It may even add to the stress of this child's parents/guardians, who already find themselves in the midst of a difficult situation. The interfamilial conflicts that could also result add nothing constructive to the situation and may hinder its speedy and natural resolution. Therefore, it is in the best interests of all involved parties to maintain a policy of confidentiality in such cases.

If, in our judgment, any child's behavior places the well-being of others at risk of injury, we will act quickly and decisively to resolve the situation (e.g. through closer supervision, redirection to more appropriate activities, removal from tense situations, firm and consistent limit-setting, and/or provision of alternative outlets for the expression of feelings). If necessary, a Behavior Plan will be implemented, with the co-operation and involvement of the child's parents. Plans are developed to teach more appropriate interactions and to prevent the recurrence of the aggressive behavior. If the aggressive behavior continues after exhausting our resources, we may conclude it is in the best interests of the program to suspend a child's enrollment until appropriate outside resources are identified and implemented to both support the child in our program and to reduce the opportunity for injury to others. Our commitment is to provide a quality group-learning environment for every child.



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## *SECTION 3: WE CARE: HEALTH AND SAFETY*

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### *HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES*

Staff members undergo a thorough screening and hiring process, including a state and federal required background check and fingerprinting. All staff members are also certified in first aid and CPR, and at all times there will be a member of staff trained in Health, Safety and Nutrition.

No child will be allowed to leave school in an emergency without parental permission. The Directress will stay with the children and determine the safest place to keep them until the problem has passed. Fire drills will also be practiced in school as per regulation.

In addition to security measures promoting indoor and outdoor safety on the school grounds, Belltower Montessori Academy provides its own security keypad and/or fob system and secured access, ensuring that access is available only to parents/guardians and authorized personnel. To make certain that the school is kept as secure as possible, we ask that you not allow others to 'piggyback' on your entrance or enter the school upon your departure.

### *MEDICAL RECORDS*

In order to protect the health of all children and to satisfy child care regulations, current medical information for each child is required prior to enrollment. These records need to be updated annually, or as required by state licensing if more often, and when new immunizations are given to younger children.

### *CHILD ILLNESS*

On average, babies experience eight to ten illnesses a year and preschoolers can experience almost as many. If a child is ill, it may be more difficult for families, staff and children to balance their respective needs. For example, it may be inconvenient for the family member who has to leave work or school or difficult for staff who are trying to care for a sick child despite other demands of the day. We are committed to implementing policies that balance and respect the needs of the children, families and staff in these circumstances.



## *CHILD'S WELLNESS CHECK*

If your child appears to be ill when brought to school and he or she cannot be made comfortable, you will be asked to take your child home. If we feel that your child is well enough to attend school but may be becoming ill, we will monitor your child and update you as necessary.

## *REPORTABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES*

When Belltower Montessori Academy is notified that an enrolled child or an employee has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. Authorities may require further information, testing, or preventative measures.

Belltower Montessori Academy will give serious consideration to all recommendations made by the public health agencies in order to promote the health and safety of all staff members and the children and families we serve. We believe it is extremely important to notify families about exposure so their children can receive preventative treatment if available.

Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:-

- Bacterial meningitis
- Chicken pox
- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus influenza (invasive)
- Hepatitis A
- Measles (including suspected)
- Meningococcal infection (invasive)
- Pertussis
- Poliomyelitis (including suspected)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella congenital and non-congenital (including suspected)
- Tetanus (including suspected)
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

## *INFECTION CONTROL*

All Directress's are trained in proper hygiene practices, which include hand washing procedures, general infection control safe food handling and diapering and toileting procedures. In addition, you will find hand sanitizing stations located near the entrance and also within the infant center and adults are encouraged to sanitize their hands before entering classrooms as an additional precaution to prevent the spread of



germs; however, this does not replace hand washing with soap and water. Directress's will also engage children in learning activities designed to teach healthy habits.

The following duties are performed on a regular basis:

- Crib and infant materials are washed and sanitized daily or after they have been mouthed.
- Infant crib sheets are sent home for washing daily. Blankets and other machine-washable fabric materials are washed on a weekly basis or more often if needed.
- For children that are 2 years old and over, cot sheets and blankets that belong to children are sent home at the end of each week for washing.
- Diapering surfaces are cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Food preparation surfaces are cleaned and sanitized before and after each use, including tables and chairs.
- Toilets, toilet seats, flushing handles, containers/lids used to hold soiled papers, water tables or water play equipment, play tables and smooth nonporous floors are cleaned and disinfected daily or whenever there is visible contamination.

### *ALLERGY PREVENTION*

Families are expected to notify the school regarding children's food or environmental allergies. Parents/guardians of children with diagnosed allergies or asthma are required to provide the school with an individualized health care plan, signed by the child's physician, detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, care, and all necessary medication (see medication policies in Section 4). A list of children's allergies complete with the child's picture is posted in all the classrooms throughout the school including the kitchen. Staff members are trained to familiarize themselves with the list and to consult as appropriate to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Contact with peanuts or products containing traces of peanuts or peanut oil, can be critical or even fatal to a child with a severe peanut allergy. Belltower Montessori Academy takes a proactive approach to create a "Nut Free" environment and all families and staff are asked to carefully monitor all food ingredients to avoid all types of nut products.

Despite our diligent efforts it is impossible to eliminate all risk for children with food allergies. Some allergies are so severe that the presence of the allergen in proximity of the child causes a reaction. Similarly, it is impossible to prevent children from sharing food or for an allergen to be brought into the school by a family member or child, despite our best efforts to educate families and raise awareness. Ultimately, parents/guardians will need to decide whether group care is appropriate for their child with allergies in light of the risks that cannot be eliminated.



## FOOD PREFERENCES AND INTOLERANCES

While we certainly respect all cultures and religions, we are not able to provide and manage food substitutions for the many families we have in our school, whether that substitution is motivated by religious or cultural reasons, food intolerances, or simply child's preference. Menus are posted and families are always welcome to bring lunch and snacks from home.

## DIAPERING

Baby's diapers will be checked every hour and changed every two hours and will be changed promptly when soiled or wet.

We understand that as part of the diaper-changing process, you may request that we use baby powder. However, it is our school policy not to use baby powder as it can get into the baby's lungs, causing swelling and irritation, and could lead to breathing problems. It can also cause an inflammatory reaction in some children when exposed to the broken skin of a diaper rash. An alternative for reducing rubbing and preventing diaper rash is cornstarch, which is coarser and safer than powder (see the medication policies in Section 4 for information regarding the use of diaper cream).

## TOILET LEARNING

Learning to control one's bodily functions is a childhood rite of passage, and it is of no small concern to all the adults in a child's life – at home and at school. In our environment, a family partnership that supports the child is the most important factor in making this experience successful. There are different views on the *when* and *how* of toilet learning, and every culture approaches it differently. Research indicates that young children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, mentally and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Thus, toilet learning is generally most successful when it is started around that age or later. Most positive toilet learning will occur only after children show signs of physical control (or awareness) of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

The following guidelines will be followed:-

- Children will be supervised during toilet learning and will be encouraged for their efforts and accomplishments.
- Toilet learning will not be coerced. The individual developmental abilities of each child will be considered. Children will not be punished emotionally or physically for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.



- Families will provide sufficient extra clothing for their children to change into in the event of a toileting accident. Any extra clothing that are worn home should be replaced the next day.
- Families will be kept advised of their child's progress on a regular basis according to family wishes.

### *INJURY PREVENTION*

Directress's for each age group are responsible for daily safety inspections of their assigned area and equipment. Defective equipment will be removed or repaired as soon as possible to prevent injury.

#### *Balloons*

Broken balloon pieces can be ingested and cause an obstruction of a child's airway. This is possible whether a balloon is inflated or not as children may bite the balloon or suck it is while attempting to inflate it. As a result, latex balloons are not allowed in the school.

#### *Clothing Hazard*

Playground safety is a major concern in child care. One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment and created a hazard that might lead to strangulation or other serious harm. Parents/guardians should be aware of the potential strangulation hazards of drawstrings on clothing. To prevent injuries from strangulation, children will not be permitted to wear any shirts, jackets, sweatshirts, jewelry, or articles that are tied around the neck or waist, included scarves and mittens or gloves secured with a string through the sleeves of a jacket. Please check your child's clothing carefully and remove all drawstrings.

#### *Footwear*

Footwear (e.g., sneakers) that is appropriate for active outdoor play such as climbing, running, and jumping on various surfaces is strongly recommended. No open toe shoes are allowed at the school.

#### *Bibs and Pacifiers*

Bibs will not be left on babies when they are placed in cribs or while mobile due to the potential strangulation hazard.

If your child uses a pacifier, you will need to provide staff with at least two pacifiers and instructions for use. Infants will not be forced to take a pacifier for any reason. Pacifiers attached to strings or ribbons cannot be placed around the infants' necks or attached to the infants' clothing at any time, including activity time and while in their crib, due to the risk of strangulation. Pacifiers should be labeled using only a non-toxic marker. Tape, adhesive labels, or similar products may become loose over time, becoming a choking hazard.



## *BITING*

Biting is commonly seen in infants and toddlers, and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that almost all young children will try at least once. It is a natural phenomenon and not something to blame on children, families, or the Directress. Still, it is very unfortunate when this occurs. Brief episodes of biting do not mean that the child is having a social or emotional problem. Nor does it mean the family is to blame. It simply indicates that your child is going through that particular stage in his or her development. As with developmental stages, biting soon ends.

In all cases of biting, our response will be to care for the child who was bitten, to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior, and to examine our program to maintain an environment that is consistent with children's needs. Our focus will not be on punishment but rather on effective techniques that address the specific reason for biting. We encourage you to talk to your child about the behavior, but we also caution that delayed punishment at home, hours after the incident, will not be understood by the child.

*Note: Biting may occur for any of the following reasons:*

- *Oral exploration*
- *Teething*
- *Hunger*
- *Fatigue*
- *Lack of awareness that biting hurts*
- *Frustration, anxiety, or stress*
- *Inability to express feelings or needs verbally*
- *Mimicking behavior*
- *Inexperienced peer interactions*
- *A way of showing affection*
- *Exploring cause-and-effect relationships*
- *Exploring holding on and letting go of relationships*
- *Making an impact*
- *Impulsiveness and lack of self-control*
- *Excitement and overstimulation*

We will work with you as much as possible, to help alleviate the biting problem. We must stress the importance of consistent reactions to such occurrences to ensure that the problem passes swiftly so we will talk through with you how we can work together to alleviate the problem. We do have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all children and staff at the facility so proactive attention to episodes of biting is essential to remain in the program. If necessary, a Behavior Plan will be implemented, with the cooperation and involvement of the child's parents. Plans are developed to teach more appropriate interactions and to prevent the recurrence of biting. If biting continues after exhausting our resources, we may conclude it is in the best interests of the program to suspend a child's enrollment until appropriate outside resources are identified and implemented to both support the child in our program



and to reduce the opportunity for injury to others. Our commitment is to provide a quality group-learning environment for every child.

### *CHILDREN'S INJURIES*

If your child sustains a minor injury while at the school (e.g., scraped knee), you will receive an Occurrence Report outlining the incident and course of action taken by the staff member. Minor wounds, such as cuts, scrapes, or bites, will be washed with cool running water. A dry bandage or dressing may be applied as appropriate. You will be contacted immediately if the injury produces any type of swelling, is on the face or head, or needs medical attention.

If a serious medical emergency occurs, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, and a staff member will contact you (or a designated emergency contact if you cannot be reached).

Please sign the Occurrence Report and leave it with the Director. The school is required by State Law to keep these reports in your child's file.

### *INFANT SLEEP POSITIONS AND CRIB FURNISHINGS*

At Belltower Montessori Academy, your child's health is our primary concern. The U.S. Public Health Department and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) strongly recommend that infants be put to sleep on their backs to reduce the chance of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). At first, some babies do not like sleeping on their backs, but most quickly get used to it, and this is the best sleep position for your baby. At Belltower Montessori Academy, infants will be put to sleep on their backs in a crib. Where allowed by state regulations, parents/guardians may have their child put to sleep in a different sleep position only if the parents/guardians and the child's physician sign a release authorizing Belltower Montessori Academy to make an exception to its policy and to release Belltower Montessori Academy from any liability.

Additionally, recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, to reduce the risk of SIDS, suffocations, entrapment and strangulation, no large soft items of any kind may be placed in the crib with you child at Belltower Montessori Academy. This includes large blankets, pillows, sheepskins, bolsters, toys, bumper pads, and other crib furnishings. Only a small comforter item will be allowed.

The AAP recommends using a "Sleep Sack" as an alternative to blankets, using no other covering. The use of swaddling is only allowed using a swaddling sack. Swaddling using a square cloth of any kind is not allowed.



### **REPORTING ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Individuals working with children are mandated reporters and are required by law to make a report to the appropriate state authorities if they have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect. All staff members receive training in identifying and

reporting suspected abuse or neglect. The particular State child protective service agency involved will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It is the agency's role to determine if the report of abuse or neglect is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Belltower Montessori Academy will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect. Our foremost concern is always the protection of the child.



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## *SECTION 4: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES*

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### **REGISTRATION PROCEDURE**

Admission to Belltower Montessori Academy is open to any child from 6 weeks of age to 6 years of age whose parents satisfy the policies listed below:

Parents must tour our facility and meet with the Director to review school programs, policies and obtain a registration packet, which includes the following:

#### *State Requirements*

- \* Pre-Enrollment application
- \* ID & Emergency form
- \* Child's pre-admission health history form (to be completed by parent)
- \* Consent for emergency medical treatment
- \* Child's pre-admission physician's report & immunization records
- \* Parent's rights
- \* Personal rights
- \* Receipt of School Admission Agreement (there will be a 30-day notice of any changes to the Admissions Agreement)

#### *School Requirements*

- \* Permission for application of sunscreen and/or diaper cream
- \* Video recording & photography release form
- \* Family Questionnaire or Infant Service Plan
- \* Tuition Express form for ACH or credit card payment processing

Please inform the office of any changes in your work schedule, phone numbers or emergency contact numbers so that in the event of an emergency, our records are up to date and we are able to contact you regarding the health and welfare of your child.

### **REGISTRATION FEES**

The registration process includes completion of all registration forms, along with the following payments:-



- Non-refundable registration fee: \$150.00 (payable at the time of enrollment). Thereafter, a re-registration fee of \$75 is charged each April to re-enroll for the new school year.
- Annual Materials fee of \$100 which covers the academic year, September to June: (pro-rated at registration)
- Emergency Earthquake kit: \$20
- Non-refundable tuition deposit of \$250 which will be applied to your first month of tuition.

### *TUITION*

Tuition is due in advance with no deductions for any absences, holidays, illness, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond Belltower Montessori Academy's control.

Tuition is due on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month, for the following month of care. All tuition will be collected by Tuition Express. There is no charge for payments processed by ACH checking account. Credit card processing will attract a 2% fee. If the tuition is not paid by the day it is due, a late fee of \$20 will be added to the tuition. When a payment is delinquent for one week or more, care may be suspended until the balance is current, and your child's space will not be reserved. Tuition is due regardless of your child's absence from the program for any reason, and is required to hold the child's space. A fee of \$25 will be charged for a payment returned for insufficient funds.

There may be additional fees associated with special activities or events for the children.

Should it become necessary to pursue payment through a collection agency or court action, the parent or guardian agrees to be heard and have judgment rendered in the Riverside County Judicial District and to pay all attorney's fees, court fees and collection fees incurred by the school in pursuit of collection.

### *WITHDRAWAL*

When you withdraw your child, you must give one month's notice prior to withdrawal, in writing, to the Director. You must pay tuition for that one month notice period.

### *SCHEDULE CHANGES*

In order to provide sufficient supervision and to appropriately schedule staff, families are asked to carefully adhere to the schedule that they choose for their child. We ask that schedule changes be requested in writing to the Director at least one month in advance and we will try our best to accommodate this change. If you have an emergency and need to alter your child's schedule, please do not hesitate to contact the Director.



### *DROP OFF AND PICK UP*

To ensure each child's safety and to encourage daily communication between families and staff, parents/guardians are responsible for physically checking their child in and out of school each day. Directress's ensure safety throughout the day with roll-calls, head counts, and signing children in and

out whenever a child leaves or enters a classroom. Parents/guardians must accompany each child into the classroom and confirm that their child is under adult supervision before leaving the premises. Families are required to re-enter the school when picking up their children, and sign them out, at the end of the day.

Please note: children must be under direct adult supervision at all times while on the premises and parents or guardians are responsible for children once they are checked out. Children will be released *only* to parents, legal guardians, or persons whose names are listed on the Child Release form. Authorized persons picking up children will be required to show photo ID. For the safety and trust of the children in our care, we will not release children to a person they do not know.

On occasion, you may wish to allow friends, co-workers, or family to visit your child(ren) at school. The names of those permitted to visit must be specified in writing. All visitors will be asked to present a photo ID and sign the Visitor's Log.

### *CHILD CUSTODY*

So that all parents/guardians feel equally welcome at Belltower Montessori Academy, we strive to remain neutral in all custody matters. Legally, unless there is an active restraining order, court order, or court-ordered visitation schedule on file at our school that designates otherwise, we cannot deny any parent or guardian access to his or her child. We require all families to resolve their differences or unsettled court orders through legal channels. Ultimately, Belltower Montessori Academy's primary concern is the safety of all children and staff. For that reason, our school cannot be used as a place for scheduled visitations, nor can we be responsible for supervising parent or guardian visits.

### *LATE PICK UP*

Children should be picked up at the scheduled time. Because it can be distressing for a child to be left in the care of others after hours, late pickups should be prevented. Please allow enough time to arrive promptly at school, pick up your child, and leave by closing time.

We do, however, understand that special circumstances arise. If, in the case of an emergency, you cannot pick up your child on time or send one of your emergency contacts, please notify the school



immediately. Children left in our care after hours will be supervised as long as possible. In the absence of contact from a parent/guardian, we will call all the numbers listed on the Child Release form; please make sure these numbers are up to date. Child Protective services will be called if we are unable to reach you or an emergency contact after one hour. A late fee of \$1 per minute after 6:30pm will be charged if a child is picked up after closing time.

### **PROGRAM PLACEMENT**

Children are placed in programs based upon a combination of their developmental and chronological age, as well as space availability. State regulations classify the specific age range and the number of children that may be enrolled in each program/classroom.

### **ABSENCE**

Tuition is due in full regardless of absences due to sickness, vacations, holidays and Spring/Winter breaks etc.

During the summer sessions, families are permitted to select two weeks in which they do not attend and will not be charged. If you will be absent for more than a two week period and do not wish to pay tuition to hold your place, you will be dropping your place and you would need to re-register to commence at a later date. Please note that we cannot guarantee that a place will remain available upon your return.

If your child attends a part time program, there will be no make up or switching of days.

Please call the school if your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:00 a.m. or after his/her normal arrival time. If we do not hear from you, we will be concerned about your child. If your child has a contagious illness, please let management know so other families can be alerted to look for symptoms in their children.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION/CONFIDENTIALITY**

Belltower Montessori Academy programs are designed to support children's growth and to challenge them to learn. Belltower Montessori Academy views each child as an individual with a unique learning style and way of responding to the world. Given the diversity of the families and communities we serve, it is incumbent upon us to recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child brings to our programs. Our hope is to build programs that are responsive to the wide range of individual learning styles and needs in our classrooms – programs that truly celebrate and value the individuality of each child.



Belltower Montessori Academy provides full-day and part-day education and child care to children between the ages of infancy and Kindergarten without regard to race, religion, color, creed, gender, cultural heritage, parent/guardian marital status, parent/guardian political beliefs, parent/guardian sexual orientation, disability or special needs, child's toileting ability, medical condition, HIV status, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws.

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided to people with disabilities. The law covers children with disabilities seeking reasonable accommodations in a child care setting, as well as the parents/guardians served. Belltower Montessori Academy will conduct an individualized assessment of the particular needs of a child and family and engage in an interactive dialogue with parents/guardians, caregivers, and medical professionals to identify reasonable accommodations and to safely integrate the child into the program, given each individual's capabilities, and to give the family full access to and participation in our programs to the extent feasible. Any information regarding a child, a child's family, or other matters discussed with school management or staff will be held in the strictest confidence.

Any information regarding a child, a child's family, or other matters discussed with management or staff will be held in the strictest confidence.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN'S RECORDS**

The information in your child's record is considered privileged and confidential. Only those persons directly related to the care of your child, management, or regulatory agencies will have access to the record unless your written permission is given. As a parent/guardian, you may have access to your child's records within a reasonable time upon your request. Upon withdrawal of your child from the school, files will be retained for three years. A small fee may be charged, if necessary, to retrieve your child's file from off-site storage. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to add information, comments, data, or other relevant material to your child's record. You also have the right to request, in writing, deletion or amendment of any information contained in the record. When your child leaves the school, management will provide a copy of your child's record to you within a reasonable time of your written request.

### **REGULATORY AGENCIES**

Regulatory agencies may review your child's record in order to ensure the school has followed its requirements. All information in the record is kept confidential. Belltower Montessori Academy is required to have a copy of all state regulations. These regulations are available to all parents/guardians.



### *CLASSROOM OBSERVATION*

As part of the school's activities, outside childcare professionals not employed by Belltower Montessori Academy may observe children in their classroom from time to time. If this occurs, families will be

notified and the confidentiality of child information will be maintained. In addition, Directress candidates may spend supervised time in the classroom with our regular staff as part of our hiring process.

### *UNRELATED ACTIVITIES*

Belltower Montessori Academy will not authorize any activities unrelated to the direct care of children or allow any third parties to contact you without your written, informed consent. Belltower Montessori Academy does not share customer information, for any reason, without your consent. "Activities" include, but are not limited to, email addresses, publicity or media events, taking of photographs or videos, media, and participation in surveys (other than those carried out by Belltower Montessori Academy).

### *BABYSITTING BY SCHOOL STAFF*

In an effort to maintain the professional status of Belltower Montessori Academy staff and prevent any potential conflict of interest, babysitting by school staff is strongly discouraged. However, if a staff member elects to babysit for a family, all such activities must occur outside school premises and with the understanding that such arrangements and payment for services is solely between the staff member and the child's family and that Belltower Montessori Academy is in no way responsible for the child's care in connection with these activities. The arrangements are not sanctioned by the school and should not interfere with the staff member's school schedule. If a babysitting arrangement should be made between a staff member and a family, the family is required to complete a Babysitting Release form, which can be supplied by management.

### *CHILD ILLNESS POLICY*

Our Child Illness Policy is based upon the standards developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Belltower Montessori Academy understands that it is difficult for a parent/guardian to leave or miss work; therefore, it is suggested that alternative arrangements be made for occasions when children must remain at home or be picked up due to illness. Exclusion from school is sometimes necessary to reduce the transmission of illness or because the school is not able to adequately meet the needs of the child. Mild illnesses are common among children and infections are often spread before the onset of any symptoms. In these cases, we try to keep the children comfortable throughout the day, but will find it necessary to exclude them from the child care setting for the following reasons:



- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than our staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- Illness that poses a risk of spreading harmful disease to others.
- Fever of 100.4 F and behavior change or other signs and symptoms such as sore throat, runny nose, mucus, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, irritability, constant crying, or difficulty breathing.
- Diarrhea — more watery stools or decreased form of stool that is not associated with change of diet. Exclusion is required for all diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper, and toilet-trained children if the diarrhea is causing “accidents.” Diapered children with diarrhea will be excluded if the stool frequency exceeds two or more stools above normal for that child.
- Blood or mucus in the stools not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet. Special circumstances that require specific exclusion criteria include the following: – Toxin-producing E. coli or Shigella infection, until the diarrhea resolves and the test results of two stool cultures are negative for these organisms. – Salmonella serotype Typhi infection, until diarrhea resolves. In children younger than 5 years with Salmonella serotype Typhi, three negative stool cultures are required.
- Vomiting more than two times in the previous 24 hours unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Mouth sores with drooling unless the child’s medical provider or local health department authority states that the child is noninfectious.
- Abdominal pain that continues for more than one hour or intermittent abdominal pain associated with fever, dehydration, or other signs of illness.
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes, until a medical provider has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge) until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Strep throat (or other streptococcal infection) until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Head lice until after treatment and all nits are removed.
- Rubella, until six days after the rash appears.
- Scabies until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Chicken pox, until all lesions have dried or crusted (usually six days after onset of rash).
- Pertussis (whooping cough), until five days of appropriate antibiotics.
- Mumps, until five days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until four days after onset of rash.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after onset of illness or jaundice or as directed by the health department (if the child’s symptoms are mild).



- Tuberculosis, until the child's medical provider or local health department states the child is on appropriate treatment and can return.
- Any child determined by the local health department to be contributing to the transmission of illness during an outbreak.

We ask that for your child's comfort and to reduce the risk of contagion, children be picked up within one hour of notification. Until then, your child will be kept comfortable and will continue to be observed for symptoms. Children need to remain home for 24 hours without symptoms before returning to the program. This means that the child needs to remain out of school for the remainder of the day he/she is sent home and the following day (if a child is sent home on Friday, he/she may return on Monday), unless the school receives a note from the child's medical provider stating that the child is not contagious and may return to the school. In the case of a (suspected) contagious disease, rash, or continuing symptoms, a note from the child's medical provider may be required before returning.

Children who have been excluded may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for a full 24 hours. – Readmission after diarrhea can occur when diapered children have their stool contained by the diaper (even if stools remain loose) and when toilet-trained children do not have toileting "accidents."
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for a full 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual program activities, including outdoor time.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
  - The child's medical provider signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious.
  - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.

If a child is excluded because of a reportable communicable disease, a note from the child's medical provider stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return is required.

The final decision whether to exclude a child from the program due to illness will be made by management.

*Note: Notes allowing for a child's return to the school after an exclusion due to illness must originate from the child's medical provider. Unfortunately, Belltower Montessori Academy cannot accept a signed doctor's note from a physician parent/ guardian.*

### **MEDICATION POLICY**

Every child has an occasional need for medication. We encourage you to discuss with your child's medical provider dosing schedules or once-a-day regimens that can be administered at home. You are



also welcome to come to the school to administer medication to your child during the day, but we ask that you do so away from the other children.

When such options are impractical, we can be authorized to administer medications to your child. Such occasions are governed by specific state regulation.

All medications (including non-prescription acetaminophen and antihistamines, as well as all ointments, lotions, etc.) will require a parent's or guardian's signed Parent Consent for Administration of Medication (available from management). Diaper cream and sunscreen is authorized through a separate consent form.

- Non-prescription medication necessary for more than three days will also require a written order from the child's medical provider or nurse practitioner/physician's assistant.
- The current prescription label from the pharmacy with complete information and instructions will suffice as the medical provider's authorization for prescription medication.

Unfortunately, Belltower Montessori Academy cannot accept signed doctors' orders from physician parents/guardians.

Doses will be tracked on the consent form; all unused medications will be returned to parents/guardians. We ask that the first dose of any new medication be given at home to note any side effects.

Please note that we are unable to administer expired medications of any kind.

*Note: Designated staff members will administer medication according to the Six Rights of Medication:*

- 1) *Right Child*
- 2) *Right Medication*
- 3) *Right Dose*
- 4) *Right Time*
- 5) *Right Method*
- 6) *Right Documentation*

Other general medication rules:

- All medication—prescription and nonprescription —must be brought to the school in the original container and labeled with the child's full name, instructions (precise dosage, time to be administered), current date, and name and telephone number of physician, where necessary. Medication spoons and other dosage implements must be provided and be labeled with the child's name (medication cannot be given without this).
- Medication cannot be administered in a child's bottle without specific orders from the child's medical provider.



- All medications must be handed directly to management. Please do not leave medication—including ointments, lotions, and lip balms—in lunch bags, backpacks, or a child's cubby.
- Changes in medication/dosage require a new Parent Consent for Administration of Medication form and, where pertinent, an updated prescription or note from the child's medical provider

*Note: Non-prescription medications (antihistamines and acetaminophen, as well as all over-the counter ointments and creams including eczema ointment, insect repellants, lip balms etc.) require written authorization from the child's medical provider if the medication is not designated for the age of the child, if the instructions specify "consult a physician" for the age of the child, if the request is for a higher dosage than what is prescribed on the label, or if it is to be used for more than three days.*

#### *Medication for Chronic Conditions*

Children with chronic illnesses such as severe allergies or asthma, or those children with special circumstances such as monitors or catheters, must have an individualized health care plan on file from the child's medical provider. Professional training for staff caring for the child will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian. New medications, those not included on the child's individualized care plan, or changes to doses or instructions for existing medications are subject to the general medication rules (above). Information must be updated annually.

#### *Note:*

- *Fevers: Fever-reducing medications such as acetaminophen cannot be administered by staff or parents/guardians so that a child can remain at school.*
- *Orajel: Due to the recommendation of the FDA and the AAP, benzocaine products, such as Orajel, can only be administered to children less than two years of age with a medical provider's written permission, and not for more than 7 days.*

#### *Non-Prescription Topical Ointments*

Before staff can administer any non-prescription topical ointments (e.g., diaper cream, sunscreen, Vaseline, lip balm, and other ointments free from antibiotic, antifungal, or steroidal components) to a child Belltower Montessori Academy requires written authorization signed by the parent/guardian. For diaper cream and sunscreen, consent is requested at registration. For all other non-prescription topical ointments, the parent/guardian should provide a completed Parent Consent for Administration of Medication form and instructions (precise dosage, times to be administered). Duration of administration cannot exceed one year. If the child has open and/or oozing sores, the ointment can be applied for three consecutive days with written authorization and instructions from the parent/guardian.

Written authorization from a medical provider will be required after the three days or any time within the three-day period if it appears the sores are worsening.

#### *Homeopathic/Herbal Medications*

Before staff can administer any form of homeopathic or herbal medications, Belltower Montessori Academy requires written authorization signed by the parent/guardian and the child's medical provider.



The parent/guardian should provide a completed Parent Consent for Administration of Medication form along with instructions (precise dosage, times to be administered, start date and end date, method), and the medication in the original container, labeled with the child's full name.

**All medications will be stored in a locked medication cabinet in the kitchen or in the refrigerator if required.**

### **INFANT FEEDING: BOTTLES AND FOOD**

In order to maintain consistency from home to school and to meet the individual needs of children, babies under the age of 12 months will eat according to their own schedule. Fresh formula or breast milk (refer to breastfeeding procedures below) and baby food will need to be supplied to the school daily. All bottles should be capped and labeled with your child's full name. All bottles and food containers must be plastic and labeled with the child's name and date.

It is Belltower Montessori Academics' policy that all leftover contents of a bottle shall be discarded after 60 minutes to avoid contamination. All bottles will be sent home at the end of the day.

*Note: Solid food and cereal will not be fed in a bottle unless the child has specific written instructions from their medical provider. Solid food in a bottle is not only a choking hazard, it also teaches the child to eat solid foods incorrectly. Additionally, please note that medications should not be put in a child's bottle. If your child is not feeling well and does not complete the bottle, he/she may not get the full dosage of the medication.*

*Note: As recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)*

- *Infants younger than 12 months will be fed formula or breast milk; no cow's milk.*
- *Infants between 12 and 24 months will be fed formula, breast milk, whole milk or 2% milk.*

### **BREASTFEEDING**

A meaningful benefit of having child care near or at the work site is the opportunity for a new mother to breastfeed throughout the day. If you are a nursing mother, we will be more than happy to make arrangements for you to visit your infant at any time. If the school is not convenient to your workplace for nursing visits, please feel free to supply us with expressed milk to feed your baby.

### **MEALS AND SNACKS**

Belltower Montessori Academy believes that meals and snacks are critical to a child's health and development. They are also an important part of the school's curriculum. When meals are provided by



the school they are carefully planned to provide children with the necessary nutritional content. Every effort is made to ensure that mealtime is enjoyable for children.

If the school does not provide meals for your child and you need to bring them from home, we offer the following suggestions. We have found that most children like “finger foods” as an alternative to the traditional “lunch box” meal. Plastic food containers are a great idea for packing fruits and vegetables,

cheese, pieces of meat or chicken, and homemade leftovers from the night before. All food should be cut into bite-size pieces that are easy to swallow. Please make sure all lunch boxes, bags, and containers are labeled with your child’s full name. Lunches are kept in your child’s cubby, they are not refrigerated. We suggest that you use insulated lunch bags and ice packs to keep food cool, and thermoses to keep food warm. When sending dairy products in your child’s lunch, extra ice packs may be required to keep food at the proper temperature. We are not able to heat or prepare meals for children as this not only keeps the children waiting for their lunch, but also takes the staff away from their time with the children. Additionally, we strongly recommend avoiding foods that are high in fat or sugar in your child’s lunch and using the USDA’s MyPlate recommendations to ensure your child’s meal is well-balanced. Providing a healthy lunch will ensure your child has the energy and stamina to get the most out of their day and fully participate in all of the fun learning experiences.

Each morning and afternoon, children are provided with a healthy snack. Ask management for a menu of snacks and meals served. If your child has special dietary needs or food allergies, please work with management to find suitable accommodations.

### **REST**

In order to maintain consistency from home to the school, and to meet the individual needs of children, babies under the age of one will sleep according to their own schedule.

At Belltower Montessori Academy, infants will be put to sleep on their backs in a crib. Where allowed by state regulations, parents/guardians may have their child put to sleep in a different sleep position only if the parents/guardians and the child’s physician sign a release authorizing Belltower Montessori Academy to make an exception to its policy and to release Belltower Montessori Academy from any liability.

Following lunch, toddlers and older children will have an afternoon rest period of up to 2 hours. However, if your child struggles to nap during this time, the Directress will provide alternative quiet activities, such as reading a book so that your child’s body is still resting.

### **CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS/ITEMS NEEDED**

Proper dress is an important part of the Belltower Montessori Academy experience. In general, durable clothing that can withstand the energetic activity of young children—digging in dirt, exploring sand,



experimenting with water, or tending to a garden, among other activities—is best. We consider our playground to be an extension of our classroom and, as required by state licensing, we conduct

programs outside whenever weather permits. That makes it important for your child to dress for the elements. If the weather is extremely cold, it's also a good idea to send an extra sweater or jacket. We also ask that you leave a complete extra set of weather-appropriate clothing, especially socks, at all

times. For newly toilet-trained children, it is helpful to keep an extra set of underwear on hand. Please replace the items when they become soiled. When buying indoor or outdoor clothing for school, make sure older children can put them on themselves.

Each child attending the program must a complete change of clothing labeled with his or her name. These items will be kept in each child's cubby and used as needed. Upon registration, you will be given a list of all clothing required for your child. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing. We will take all precautionary methods to be certain that your child's belongings are well cared for; please keep in mind, clothes that look a little less clean at the end of the day are a sign that your child was actively engaged in learning.

Each child is to have a crib-size sheet and a thin blanket. You will be provided with a school bag to use for your child's nap supplies. Bedding should go home with you every Friday for laundering and be returned the following Monday. For our Infant and Toddler Program, crib sheets need to be changed every day. You should also bring a water bottle into school each day and take it home at the end of the day for washing.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Belltower Montessori Academy takes photographs and videos of children enrolled at its school on a regular basis for its business purposes. Belltower Montessori Academy takes care that any use, display, or dissemination of photographs or videos of children, whether at a particular school where the child attends or for its general business purposes, is accomplished in a thoughtful, safe, and secure manner appropriate under the particular circumstances.

For example, at your school these materials may be used to better communicate with families and to illustrate the daily curriculum, to chronicle a child's development, or to document school activities.

### **CHILD'S DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Given the diversity of families and communities we serve, we recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child brings to our programs. Our positive guidance policies and procedures are designed to help children learn appropriate behavior. Children under six learn best by



example and the Directress will demonstrate to the child how to behave and what to say in a particular situation.

#### *Definitions of Consequences:*

- **Verbal Warning:** Warning given to remind student of the expected/desired behavior or response;
- **Redirection:** Directing the child to an activity to change his/her focus of attention, and promote positive activity and interaction;
- **Removal from Environment:** The child will be positively redirected and asked to go to the peace area, for thinking time, which is a designated area in the classroom for a few minutes within Directress's supervision but missing the group activities.

#### *Occurrence Reports:*

An Occurrence report will be completed by your child's teacher if your child has exhibited behavioral issues that day and/or caused injury to another child. A copy of this will also be presented to the parents of the child that has suffered an injury. Per our confidentiality policy, details of your child will remain confidential.

#### *Conference with Parents:*

The Directress or school Director may meet with parents/guardians to discuss behavior issues so that both parties can agree on possible actions that can be taken both at school and home to resolve behavior issues. Co-operation between the school and families is paramount to successfully implementing techniques and experiencing positive change in a child's behavior. The school may require parents/guardians to seek professional assistance, such as an occupational therapist, in circumstances where it is deemed necessary to provide added support for the child in determining his or hers individual needs and challenges.

### **PROCESS OF SUSPENDING A CHILD'S ENROLLMENT**

Our child-centered approach seeks to accommodate a wide range of individual differences; however, on occasion a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child cannot participate safely in our program or appears to be a danger to him or herself or others, despite our best efforts to reasonably reduce the risk of harm or injury.
- Medical, psychological, school district, or social service personnel working with the school or child determine that continued care at the school could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of, the child.



- Any other situation in which the accommodations needed for the child's success in the program conflict with the fundamental nature of our group environment, or when a different environment is in the best interest of the child or the school.

At any point that a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern to a Directress or administrator, written documentation and family/teacher communication will begin as the first steps to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges, and to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

If in the opinion of the Director a child is not able to adjust to the school environment, the Director will counsel the parents or guardian and suspend enrollment until such time that the child care setting is suitable for the child. In this case only will liability cease upon withdrawal of the child and a refund of the tuition paid in advance will be made.

### **PROCESS OF DISENROLLING A FAMILY**

Our programs are based on developing partnerships and supporting families; however, despite our best efforts, on rare occasions a parents'/guardians' actions or requests may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for themselves and their child. Examples of such instances include:

- The parent/guardian fails to abide by the school policies or those requirements imposed by the appropriate licensing agency.
- A parent/guardian demands special services that are not provided to other children's families and that cannot reasonably be delivered by the program (including requests that are outside the philosophy of the program).
- A parent/guardian is physically or verbally abusive to school, staff, children, or anyone else at the school, including any communications they may have posted on any social media sites.