



UPSTATE FAITH MONTESSORI COMMUNITY

PARENT HANDBOOK *(Primary-Upper Elementary)* 2025-2026

This handbook is issued prior to the start of the year. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must sign the Parent Handbook Receipt agreement in the Student Contract to indicate that they have received the handbook and understand and agree to abide by all stated policies. Please save this handbook for reference as needed throughout the year. This handbook is subject to revision. *Revised 7/29/2025*

Parent Handbook

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Dear Families,

Welcome to Upstate Faith Montessori Community (F.M.), a Homeschool Community! We hope that this handbook will be helpful and serve as a guide through the academic year as you become better acquainted with our program. Please take the time to read this handbook thoroughly and keep it in a handy place for frequent reference. We look forward to working together during the years your child will be with us.

Some of the information in this handbook will be updated over the summer to reflect an accurate school calendar, more precise drop-off procedures for each age group etc.

Communication between F.M. and your family is an essential part of making this program a rewarding experience for you and your child. We have prepared this handbook as the first steps toward essential communication.

Although our name is Faith Montessori, we are not a religious program. We are a faithful group; we have faith in our children's inherent ability and desire to learn, we have faith in the power of community, and we have deep respect for the individual religious and spiritual paths of all our families.

Your comments, concerns and questions are very much welcomed. We endeavor to keep communications open and direct, and we ask that you do the same in sharing information that can help us serve you and your child. Due to the essential nature of body language, tone of voice, etc., if there are any serious concerns or questions, we will always prioritize face-to-face conversation, or at the very minimum a phone conversation.

Faith Montessori

Physical Address:

18 Cunningham Rd

Taylors, SC 29687

Contact Information:

Faith Number: 864-808-0583

Faith Office Email: office@faithmontessori.org

Admin Team: Melissa Covert, Director; Amy Hunter, Operations

Website: faithmontessori.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FaithMontessoriSchool/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/faithmontessorischool/>

Who Do I Contact?

Please call the Faith number 864-808-0583 for urgent needs, late pick ups, or emergencies.

For all billing, enrollment, or general inquiries please email office@faithmontessori.org.

Teachers will provide families with classroom contact emails upon complete enrollment.

[School Calendar Link](#)

Primary & Elementary



AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

SEPTEMBER

WK	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2		1	2	3	4	5	6
3	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
4	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
5	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	28	29	30				

OCTOBER

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7	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
8	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
9	26	27	28	29	30	31	

NOVEMBER

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	30						

DECEMBER

WK	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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	28	29	30	31			

JANUARY

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25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

FEBRUARY

WK	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
18	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
20	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	

MARCH

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22	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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	29	30	31				

APRIL

WK	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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25	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
26	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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MAY

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31							

2026 Summer Theater Production Camp
M-F July 6th-23rd
Productions:
July 24th & 25th

Co-Op In Session
Parent/Teacher Conference Sign-Ups
Oct & Feb Dates will be offered based on teacher's individual schedules

General Daily Schedule

8:20-8:30am	Drop-Off
11:30am	½ Day Pick-Up
2-2:05pm	Pick-Up

Arrival and Departure Procedures

Arrival

Follow the drop-off times listed in the chart above. We will keep the main doors locked during the day.

We have a car line for morning drop-off. Please pull up outside the door and the volunteer for the morning will assist your child out of the car.

Children will exit their parent's car in the car line and will be escorted by a teacher or volunteer to the appropriate place. Please do not walk your child in. Keeping this process brief will help your child acclimate to the morning drop-off, if they are feeling emotional.

For the safety of all children and volunteers please avoid using your cell phone in the car line.

Lateness

Late arrivals interrupt the learning environment and distract the other students in the class. Please avoid chronic tardiness. The doors will be locked at 8:35am. If you arrive after 8:35am, you will need to walk your child in to check in with the office and call the office number to get the door unlocked for you if needed. Continuous late arrivals may result in a meeting with the admin team to discuss further action.

Departure

If you have a personal emergency and cannot pick-up your child on time, please call us as soon as you are aware of the problem.

If you have not arrived by 5 minutes after your pick-up time you will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute. Continued abuse of late pick-up will result in the child's dismissal from the program. These fees are mostly to motivate "repeat offenders" to be timely. We understand that traffic jams and unforeseen emergencies happen... so of course, the staff will use judgment. There is no substitute for considerate behavior. The children and the teachers deserve respect; chronic lateness communicates a message contrary to this.

Carpool

It is important that we know with whom your child leaves co-op each day. At the beginning of the year you listed your authorized driver(s). If a temporary change is made (i.e your child is going home with a friend) there **must** be a written communication indicating the change(i.e. Text or email). We cannot let your child depart with anyone not on the list if there is no written permission. For last minute pick-up arrangements, please call so the team can confirm they received your written communication!

Absences

Enrollment at F.M. requires a family commitment for the full academic year. As we are a co-op environment and not a day care facility, we do not offer limited enrollment for short periods of time (by month or by week). This policy allows our classes to remain consistent and for the class to grow as a group academically. All enrolled families are expected to remain in their commitment for the entire school year.

Please email your child's class email address and the main school email as soon as you know your child will be absent. Parents are expected to notify the co-op before 8:15am if the child will be absent. Please provide advance notice of any pre-planned trips or other conflicts for our planning purposes.

F.M. does not have make-up days or refunds for illnesses, absences or vacation.

Volunteering

We ask that each family be responsible to contribute ten (10) volunteer credits per school year. We create and send a sign-up form at the beginning of the school year.

We understand that in some situations it may just be impossible for working families to be able to find a way to be present during the times needed. Two "opt-out" options are available.

Full opt-out: zero (0) credits required \$350 (available to returning families only)

Half opt-out: five (5) credits required \$175

Enrollment

Non-Discrimination Statement

Faith Montessori is committed to providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students, families, and staff. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, disability, or any other protected status in the administration of our educational programs, admissions policies, hiring practices, or any other school-administered programs.

We believe that every child deserves a nurturing and respectful learning environment where they can grow, explore, and thrive. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion reflects our core values of kindness, respect, and a love for learning.

Special Needs

F.M. is not currently equipped to modify its instructional or evaluation practices or procedures in response to a student's learning disabilities or other special challenges. If your child's teacher notices learning or behavior challenges in your child, we will report this to you. If the challenges prove more complex than we are equipped to manage, we may require that you acquire an assessment so we can more appropriately assess your child's specific challenges and tools needed to meet their needs.

Enrollment Agreement

A child is officially enrolled in the program when Faith Montessori has received both the payment for registration fees (enrollment and materials) and a Student Contract. Enrollment in all programs is binding. Parents are responsible for paying tuition according to their chosen payment plan.

Withdrawal

Withdrawing your child from Faith Montessori does not relieve your financial responsibilities for the entire year's tuition. Families are expected to meet their financial commitments even if they choose to discontinue enrollment.

- Dismissal: If a child is dismissed due to disciplinary or other reasons, tuition and fees remain non-refundable.
- Relocation: In rare cases where a family relocates more than 50 miles from Faith Montessori, a partial refund of tuition may be considered. Refunds are prorated based on attendance and are subject to approval.

Returned Payments

If a payment is returned due to insufficient funds or a closed account, a \$75 fee will be applied to your account. Payments must be made via cash or money order within 48 hours of notification. Stop-payment checks will also be treated as insufficient funds.

Tuition Policy

Tuition may be paid annually, semi-annually, or over the course of 8 monthly payments. There will be a \$40 late fee for payments received past the due date. Late fee is assessed after the 10th of the month your payment arrangement is due. Unpaid tuition is grounds for dismissal. Please see the [Tuition and Fee Schedule](#) for the exact plans and dates.

Tuition rates are not adjusted for holidays, inclement weather, staff development or if a child is absent due to illness, family events, power outages or other situations beyond our control. We base our annual budget on tuition from each child and need a guaranteed amount to meet our expenses.

Re-Enrollment

Re-enrollment for currently enrolled students begins in January. During this period, re-enrolling families have priority in securing enrollment for their children. Parents/guardians must return a Student Contract and registration fees to Faith Montessori to secure enrollment for the next fall. Public/open enrollment begins in February of each school year.

During open enrollment, the co-op will consider all spaces for which it does not have an enrollment agreement 'open' and will begin filling these openings with new applicants. Registration is first come, first serve during open enrollment.

Family Agreements

The following is an explanation of what F.M. offers to your child's education:

- Faith Montessori is a prepared environment. Maria Montessori believed that the environment can be designed to facilitate maximum independent learning and exploration by the child.
 - *We are a Montessori-inspired supplemental program. By partnering with us, your child gains access to a Montessori environment.*
- We are a 28-week homeschool cooperative supplemental program that totals 84 days.
 - *We are not a full-time school planned to fulfill requirements for all academic subjects. SC homeschoolers must record 180 days of attendance to legally homeschool.*
- We are a community of parents-learning together, growing with our children on this homeschool journey, offering support to each other.
 - *Parents also are required to sign up with a South Carolina 3rd Option Homeschool Accountability Group. It is also the responsibility of the parent to report to the Homeschool Accountability Group and keep their own records.*

As a parent in our homeschool community, you understand and agree to...

- Have open communication between you and teachers
- Stay involved in your child's learning journey via online and/or in person correspondence with F.M.
- Adhere to health and safety policies
- Be a positive and contributing member of our homeschool community

Family Communication

Faith Montessori uses email and sometimes phone to communicate with families. If your contact information changes throughout the year it is your responsibility to notify us at office@faithmontessori.org.

Faith Montessori will use Google Classroom to communicate with parents. Families will be invited at the start of the school year to the "Whole School" Classroom. Teachers will invite families to their specific google classroom. Announcements, photos, etc will be shared in the google classroom.

Faith Montessori will also use email and the private Facebook group to communicate.

Family Court Dispute Policy

Due to student privacy and other concerns, Faith Montessori Community will comply with court mandated subpoenas. During all matters of family dispute, any legal documents requesting information on behalf of the Co-op, family enrolled in the Co-op, or student enrolled in Faith Montessori must be submitted to the Director. All of these requests will be handled by the director. We choose not to involve

our teachers in these disputes. Any request for info should be requested via email. All the information shared with one party will be shared with the other as well.

Any changes to a parent's access to their child or information regarding their child must come through the court. All parent emails submitted through the release forms/emergency forms will remain on the email list unless a parent personally asks for themselves to be removed.

Mandated Reporting and Co-op-Wide Notification

Faith Montessori Community is committed to the safety and well-being of every child. As mandated reporters, our team is required by law to report any suspected abuse or neglect to DSS and/or Child Protective Services (CPS). If an incident occurs between students—whether during class or outside of Co-op—that requires a report to CPS, we will notify the families of all students enrolled in the co-op. This transparency is part of our commitment to maintaining a safe and respectful environment for every child.

Discipline Policies

Our approach to discipline is based on empowerment, mutual respect, and trust. Methods of discipline or interactions that frighten, demean, or humiliate a child are prohibited. When any child finds it difficult to meet the co-op's expectation of positive conduct, every effort will be made to bring the child, family, and staff together to achieve a solution.

There are some basic expectations we have for all members of our community. Please review, discuss, and model these guidelines with your child.

- Respect yourself, others and the environment.
- Demonstrate responsibility, respect and self-restraint.
- Keep your hands to yourself.
- Walk safely and calmly inside. Use “walking feet.”
- Use quiet, calm, and gentle voices, no calling or yelling across the classroom. Use “indoor voices.”
- Be kind and gentle to others; no aggressive behaviors will be tolerated.
- Respect privacy and concentration; do not disturb others who are working.
- Respect others personal belongings; do not touch them without permission.
- Take responsibility for care of our classroom; return work in good order to shelves, treat all classroom materials with great respect and care.
- Keep the environment clean and orderly.

Empathy and being considerate of others are adult qualities that take many years to develop. It begins in childhood and in a Montessori environment it is nurtured as children learn to respect the people and the materials in that environment.

- We encourage cooperative behavior.
- We set clear limits and expectations for behavior to ensure a safe and peaceful environment for all.
- We model appropriate behavior for the children.
- We modify the classroom environment to encourage cooperative behavior.
- We listen to the children.
- We provide consistent redirection of any inappropriate behavior towards meaningful and purposeful activity.
- We respect the individual needs, desires, and feelings of each child.
- We explain things to the children on their levels.
- We remain consistent in our efforts to maintain a safe and peaceful environment for all our students.

If a student is not meeting the standards of behavior expected in the Montessori classroom, the following sections will explain the actions taken based upon the particular situations and behaviors. We hope this process will open a positive channel of communication between home and Co-op. A child's behavior becomes a problem when his/her negative actions disrupt the classroom's environment and affects the positive values of the co-op.

For the safety and well-being of all individuals in our co-op, the following are unacceptable behaviors:

- Disrupting the learning environment.
- Misuse of the materials.
- Not following directions in all the areas of the co-op.
- Encouraging others to misbehave.
- Disrupting or impeding the work of others.
- Showing rudeness or disrespect to others.

Disruptive Behavior

If a child exhibits unacceptable behavior, the following disciplinary actions may be taken, according to the severity of the misbehavior.

1. The teacher and the child will remove themselves and will discuss the unacceptable behavior.
2. The child will be asked to sit next to the teacher or assistant until the child is ready to work again peacefully.
3. The child will be separated from the class and the parent will be called. The child may be sent home.

4. If the disruptive behavior continues upon the child's return to co-op the parents will be immediately called and a conference will be held to discuss a path forward. A conference with parents that may include a behavior plan will be developed that may include but not be limited to: Recommendations for evaluations, plan of action for when the behavior occurs, and journaling of behaviors by parent(s) and teacher(s). At any stage of the disciplinary action plan, a teacher may contact the parent by phone to discuss the student's behavior and work out a home/co-op plan for improvement. The teacher or parent may request a conference at any time to discuss behavior issues. Each child will be treated individually and with respect.
5. If a child reaches more than 3 misbehaviors in a 2-week period, it may be considered a severely disruptive/harmful behavior pattern. A conference will be scheduled to devise a path forward. The administration will use their own discretion as to how best to support the individual child and the rest of the F.M. community. If a solution cannot be reached, it may result in dismissal from the Co-op.

Note: Physical restraint is used only when necessary to protect a child or others from immediate harm, such as when a child is running into a street or harming another. In the case of preschool-aged children, brief and gentle physical redirection or holding may occur during tantrums when required for safety. This is considered developmentally appropriate and does not require a formal incident report or parent notification unless injury occurs.

Aggressive Behavior

If a child exhibits aggressive behavior toward another student or staff member such as, but not limited to, aggressive hitting, aggressive choking, aggressive biting, aggressive kicking, spitting, physical harm with an object, the following actions will be taken. All action steps taken will be based on age appropriate behavior.

1. First occurrence: Parents will be notified.
2. Second occurrence: Parents will be notified, the child will be asked to leave immediately.
3. Third occurrence: Parents will be notified, and a conference will be held. The child will be asked to stay home for one week.
4. Any additional occurrences may result in dismissal from the Co-op.

Biting Policy

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among preschoolers. When biting happens, we will care for the child who was bitten. If the skin is broken first aid may be administered and parents will be notified. We will redirect the biter to learn a more appropriate behavior and parents will be notified. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting. However if biting behavior persists we will follow the action steps laid out under Aggressive Behavior.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted on the premises. In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

As an exception to the rule, we offer classes that require the use of knives for kitchen skills, whittling lessons or nature/survival lessons. The knives will be used with adult supervision.

Behavior Agreements

Students enrolled in the Co-op range from 3 years old through high school. To ensure interactions between all aged students are appropriate and respectful we ask students ages 9 and up to sign a Behavior Agreement which reiterates our core values to respect yourself, others and the environment and demonstrate responsibility, respect and self-restraint.

In addition, if a THRIVE student would like to interact on the playground with an age group younger than their own they will submit a formal request to a staff member requesting access for that day's recess. Any student who does not uphold the policies of care and respect for young children will not be approved to play with younger age groups at recess.

Adult Guidelines and Rules

The entire co-op community, including staff, children, parents, and friends are responsible for modeling appropriate behavior, helping to maintain the order and neatness of the co-op environment, and reporting any violations of guidelines or safety concerns.

- We will not tolerate irresponsible or dangerous behavior, acts of violence, threats of violence, emotional or sexual harassment or verbal abuse directed toward anyone. We have a zero tolerance policy regarding threats or threatening behavior.
- We have a duty to provide a safe environment for our staff, students and their families. Corporal punishment is prohibited while on our property (this includes parking areas and bathrooms).
- Children are always listening, so we ask that parents and their guests use appropriate language while on property (no foul language or degrading language).

By enrolling at F.M. parents have agreed to cooperate with Faith Montessori personnel in a positive and supportive manner concerning the operation and the implementation of the education program. Parents agree to apply the principles of respectful communication in resolving any questions or matters of disagreement. This requires **direct communication with persons involved** as opposed to general discussions or gossip with other parents or teachers who are not directly involved in the matter. It is inappropriate for parents to seek out other parents to discuss inappropriate behaviors – either on site or outside of co-op. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher’s attention. At that point, the teacher will address the issue. At F.M., we abide by a confidentiality policy. We refrain from discussing any discipline issues about another child with you. In addition, no information about your child’s discipline issues will ever be shared with another parent. Any parent with a concern about a staff member should follow the following procedures: 1) The concern should be brought to the attention of the staff member; 2) If the concern is not properly addressed by the staff member, it should be brought to the attention of the co-op director.

Gender Policy

At Upstate Faith Montessori Community, we uphold a traditional approach to gender as part of our broader commitment to a peaceful, developmentally appropriate environment rooted in Montessori philosophy. For the sake of clarity, consistency, and alignment with the expectations of our community, we refer to children and staff as either boys or girls.

This approach reflects our desire to maintain a focused, age-appropriate environment centered on learning, growth, and respect for all.

Smoking

The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on campus.

Personal Belongings

Clothing

Dress your child in comfortable clothing which he or she can easily fasten that is weather-appropriate. When selecting clothing, check to see if your child can put them on, or fasten and unfasten them himself. Choose shoes that your child can put on and take off independently. Rubber boots (rain boots) can be worn to co-op for rainy or muddy days. Do not send your child in dressy clothes or clothes which hinder active participation. Provide clothing that is easily washable, because children will participate in outdoor play, art, cooking, water play, and other activities that can get clothes dirty. We recommend allowing your child to dress themselves for co-op within seasonally appropriate limits.

Please send a complete change of clothes in a zip-lock bag to be kept at the co-op. Please include: a pair of socks, underwear, shirt, and pants. Please mark each item with your child’s name. Clothes should be

appropriate for the current season and need to be exchanged as the weather changes. We will send home soiled clothing in a plastic bag in your child's backpack.

It is imperative that you replace any soiled clothes on the following co-op day!

Personal Items

Each child should have the following personal items for co-op:

*****Please label all items with your child's name** If not labeled, we may do so for you.***

- Spare clothes (left at F.M. in a ziplock bag)
- Seasonal outerwear (jacket, hat, gloves in the winter)
- Backpack to carry belongings
- Water bottle
- Snack bag/container
- Lunch box (labeled with name) if child stays full days
- Slippers or Indoor Shoes (optional)

Taking Work Home

Most communication regarding what your child is working on will be handled through your child's colored folder and google classroom. You may want to save art and academic work for a portfolio or progress report if your child is school aged. Please understand that we encourage learning through hands-on materials as well as pencil and paper work, so the work your child brings home most likely will not accurately reflect the complete work they are doing in the classroom. The process of using the materials *is* the learning experience and can be hard to communicate. This is another reason we encourage teachers to try to take some photos throughout the day. Researching Montessori philosophy also helps to bring clarity to the benefits found in the Montessori environment. Please contact us with any questions.

Classroom Materials

The materials in the classroom are there to be used by all the children and we attempt to make them as inviting as possible. Sometimes we are too successful and materials get "invited" home. Should this occur, we ask that parents return items as soon as possible.

Health/Wellness and Medical Treatments Policies

We depend on parents' awareness of their child's health to keep the other children and teachers in the co-op community well.

F.M. members (children or adults) will not be permitted to attend co-op or co-op related activities when exhibiting the following contagious illnesses such as, but not limited to the following:

- FEVER: May return when fever free (under 100 degrees) for 24 hours, without medication.
- DIARRHEA / VOMITING: May return when symptom free for 24 hours
- STREP THROAT: May return after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment and no fever for 24 hours
- CONJUNCTIVITIS (pink eye): May return 24 hours after treatment begins and eyes are free of discharge
- HEAD LICE: May return after treatment and removal of all live lice and nits from hair
- RINGWORM: May return after treatment begins; area should be covered while in co-op for first 48 hours of treatment
- IMPETIGO/STAPH MRSA: May return 24 hours after treatment starts; wound must be covered with dressing taped on all 4 sides
- UNUSUAL RASH OR SKIN LESIONS: May return 24 hours after treatment starts; wound must be covered with dressing taped on all 4 sides
- COMMUNICABLE DISEASES such as, but not limited to influenza, chickenpox, measles, mumps, pertussis, meningitis, mononucleosis, Covid-19 and all flu-like viral illnesses: May return after symptom-free for 24 hours

It is important to have emergency numbers (other than parents) listed on the emergency contact form. These persons must be easily reached during the day. Should a child become ill during co-op, the parents will be contacted first. The emergency contacts will be called to pick up the child if the parent is unreachable.

Medications

Staff may administer life saving prescription medications (e.i EpiPens) during the school day only if a Medication Authorization Form is completed and signed by a parent and/or physician. Medications must be clearly labeled, stored securely in the classroom emergency bag, and will be administered only by trained staff.

Injuries

In the event of a serious accident, 911 will be called, first aid will be administered, and the parent (or emergency contact) will be notified. If the parent or emergency contact can not be reached via phone then the child may be taken to the hospital if the incident is deemed serious enough.

If your child is injured during the day, an incident report will be completed. For head injuries or visible facial injuries, we will notify you immediately by phone. Minor injuries will be communicated at pickup.

Emergency Dismissals

In the event of a building evacuation, children will be escorted to a designated safe location. Children will only be released to individuals listed on their emergency form. Photo ID may be requested unless the teacher knows the individual personally.

Food and Snack Policies

Children are expected to eat breakfast before arriving at co-op. Half-day children will likely be hungry for lunch immediately following co-op. Please plan accordingly.

Some of our primary work is food preparation, such as carrot or apple slicing and cheese cutting. Apart from this, children should bring their own lunch and snacks to Co-op. **Snacks should be packed separately from your child's lunch.** This will allow them to independently choose their snack during work time without accidentally eating their entire lunch in the morning, leaving them nothing to eat at lunch time. A reasonably sized lunch box should be used. Lunch boxes should be clearly marked with your child's name. Please make sure your child is able to open and close their lunch boxes and snack containers.

Please send a nutritious, balanced lunch and snack for your child each day. Teachers will call parents if they notice a pattern of eating which they feel does not support the student's learning and physical activity through the course of the day.

Please exclude the following from your children's lunch:

- *Lunchables*® or similarly over-packaged foods
- Highly sugared foods
- Any candy or gum
- Foods with excessive additives and preservatives
- Juice boxes or pouches

****Any of the above foods will be sent home for your child to enjoy once co-op is over. A note may be included in your child's lunchbox, reminding of the importance of a nutritious well-balanced meal.**

Lunch Tips:

- The staff cannot facilitate the heating of individual lunches. Foods that need to be served warm should be sent in thermoses or insulated containers.
- In order to respect individual family food choices, children may not share or trade food.
- Most children prefer small quantities of a variety of foods rather than a large quantity of only one or two items.
- If your child cannot finish his or her lunch, the remaining food will be sent home in the lunch box. This will help you to better gauge the amount needed for your child's lunch.

- Please pack yogurt in re-sealable containers (i.e. Tupperware type). Pre-packaged yogurt spills easily and is often wasted as most pre-packaged containers cannot be re-sealed adequately.
- Please choose non-breakable water bottles for your child (metal or plastic)

****Make sure you include all allergy information on the Emergency Information in the Contract and remind your child's teacher, so staff are aware of foods your child needs to avoid. Please provide your Allergy emergency plan given to you by your child's physician.****

Celebrations

Birthdays

Birthdays are a special time. We enjoy celebrating them at co-op to affirm each child's significance as a person. We use simple ceremonies to recognize each child's birthday. In the Primary classrooms, the child is honored in a special celebration called "The Birthday Walk," an international Montessori tradition, during which we create a timeline of your child's life. You are welcome to take part by joining your child's class for the birthday ceremony. Please bring pictures of your child at birth, and each year thereafter, so the entire class can see how he or she has grown or changed. Every birthday child will be honored by participating in the birthday walk where the child carries a model of the Earth around the sun (a candle in the center of our circle) for each year of his or her life while the parent or teacher talks about their life. If you are unable to attend, please send a short description that we can read for each picture. We follow up by singing Happy Birthday, and the child can blow the candle out. [Template of the Birthday Story](#) for you to fill out.

Each Elementary classroom has their own traditions about which the teacher will inform you.

We will celebrate on the child's birthday if it falls on a co-op day, or on the closest co-op day to their birthday. Children with summer birthdays may select a date during the school year to celebrate their birthday.

If you would like to bring in a special treat, please consult your teacher with your suggestion. We ask that a parent notify the teacher at least twenty-four hours in advance if any special treats will be brought to F.M. This gives time to notify families with food allergies to be sure their child has a suitable alternative. Birthdays at co-op are not intended as the child's primary celebration, so please no party favors, balloons, hats, etc.

Holidays

We acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of our co-op community and the diversity of the much larger world community. We feel it is important to broaden our children's horizons to encompass the entire planet. Our goal is not just to transmit information about other cultures but also to celebrate them. We teach with great respect for the child, his or her family, and his or her background. We encourage each family to share their heritage through stories, food, and celebrations. Child-initiated

activities, discussions, and questions are supported, and parents are encouraged to inform their child's teacher of what and how they celebrate holidays.

F.M. Co-op does not teach religion, although we do present many universal spiritual themes such as love, kindness, and joy. Many of the holidays we celebrate may be religious in origin. We approach them instead from a cultural perspective, sharing food, music, dance and traditions related to the day. This helps us build a sense of community by celebrating our similarities as well as our differences. If we want to achieve peace, we must begin by teaching children how to accept each person for who they are.

We encourage children from all cultural backgrounds to share their holidays and festivities with us. Please share your culture, special talents, educational or professional training, or life experiences with us! Let us know if you would be willing to do a short presentation on a topic you specialize in. Bring in photos from a recent vacation or special objects relevant to your country of origin. Cultural studies are an integral part of the Montessori curriculum and we welcome your contributions. If you have questions or concerns about your child's participation in any birthday or holiday celebrations, please let us know.

Field Trips

Field trips may be scheduled throughout the year. Field trips may be scheduled during co-op days for older children. Fees may be associated with these field trips. Children requiring transportation by a teacher will need to have a parent/guardian permission slip signed. Parents will be notified well before a field trip to give ample time to make arrangements for payment and transportation.

Field trips for families of all students will be scheduled during home days (non-co-op days). These trips are recommended, but not required, and any admission fees and other costs will be covered by the family directly. We require parents to accompany their child. Parents will be notified well before a field trip to give ample time to make appropriate arrangements to accompany their child. Other family members and children are welcome to attend field trips, but may need to pay an additional fee depending on the field trip location.

Lost and Found

With so many children, it is sometimes difficult to keep track of clothing and other belongings. Having each article of clothing clearly labeled helps prevent losing items. A "lost and found" box is kept. Clothing that is not claimed after a reasonable amount of time may be kept as extra items for children who need it on any given day or donated to a good cause. Please check the box regularly.

Photography and Video

During our time at co-op, we take photographs of students working and playing. Because Montessori work is done mainly with the materials themselves, often there is little "paperwork" sent home to show the work your child is doing each day. In addition, we like to document our field trips and other special events. These photos show your child happily learning and growing, and we may use them to create gifts

for the parents and for end of the year slideshows or photo books. We post photos to our private and secure photo sharing account so that our families can see their children at work in the classroom. We may also post photographs on our Facebook page to share the Montessori Method with our larger community.

The safety and privacy of your child is of great importance to us. The Photo Consent Form within the Student Contract gives you the opportunity to decide under which conditions you give consent regarding photography and videography by F.M.

Agreement:

This Parent handbook is found on our website www.faithmontessori.org/handbook.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to the terms of the 2025-2026 Faith Montessori Parent Handbook.

Parent's Name _____

Parent's Signature _____

Child's Name _____

Date _____