



## ***Elementary Parent Handbook***

**\*Note: There are no pages 14 and 15\***

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**Website: [www.cedar-tree.org](http://www.cedar-tree.org)**

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## Table of Contents

Our Mission Statement	4
Core Values	4
<b>Welcome!</b>	5
Montessori Philosophy	5
Diversity of Student Community	7
Board of Directors	7
<b>Communication</b>	8
Parent/Teacher Meetings	8
Phone	8
Communication Folders	8
Mail	9
Email	9
Online Calendar	9
Newsletter	9
Classroom Updates	9
Parent Orientation	9
Parent Conferences	9
<b>School Procedures</b>	10
Parking	10
Arrival	10
Departure & Pick-up	10
Library Book Check Out	11
Field Trips & Car Seats	11
Food Allergies	12
Snacks	12
Lunch	16
<b>Special Days</b>	17
Birthdays	17
Lower Elementary Birthdays	17
Upper Elementary Birthdays	17
Birthday Invitations	17
Cultural Celebrations	18
Holidays	18

## **Table of Contents continued**

<b>Financial Information</b>	19
Income and Expenses	19
Re-registration	19
Tuition and Fees	19
Withdrawing a Student	20
Materials	20
P.E. Fees – Lower Elementary	20
P.E. Fees – Upper Elementary	20
Donations	20
Fundraising	20
<b>Enrichment Curriculum</b>	21
Art	21
Music and Movement	21
Drama	22
P.E.	22
Spanish	22
Technology	22
<b>Parent Involvement</b>	23
Parent Volunteer Jobs	23
Events	25
<b>Health and Safety</b>	26
Emergency	26
Emergency Items	26
School Closures	26
Medications	27
Student Illnesses	27
Student Accidents	28
Traumatic Experiences	28
<b>Documented Special Needs and Suspected Learning Differences</b>	28
<b>School Policies</b>	29
<b>Accident Policy</b>	29
Anti-Bullying Policy	29
Confidentiality Policy	30
Discipline Policy	30
Enrollment Policy	31
Field Trip Policy	32
Non-Discrimination Policy	32
Non-Violence Policy	32

Student Dismissal Policy	33
Student Withdrawal Policy	34
Conflict Resolution	34
School Photos on the Internet	34
Child Abuse	36
State of Washington Approval as a Private School	36
Statement of Non-Profit Status	36
Statement of Non-Discrimination	36
Statement of No Religious Affiliation	37
Cedar Tree Smoke-Free, Drug-Free Policy	37
<b>Items from Home and School</b>	37
Clothing and Shoes	37
Indoor Plants	38
Toys from Home	38
Money	38
Sharing – Lower Elementary	38
Sharing – Upper Elementary	38
School Supplies	39
Snack	39
Found Items	39
<b>In Closing</b>	39

## Mission Statement

*Cedar Tree Montessori cultivates a passion for learning, advances academic skills, and promotes peace and global awareness in a nurturing community.*

## Core Values

Academic Excellence –By teaching children in small groups and individually, Cedar Tree helps students naturally accelerate their learning. Independent research shows that students who attended Montessori through elementary school have significantly higher scores on tests associated with math and science compared with their non-Montessori peers in high school; academic skills of Montessori students are equal or superior to those fostered by a pool of other types of schools; and Montessori students tend to score higher on standard achievement tests.

Independence – The Montessori environment provides a sequence of developmentally appropriate academic and social experiences in which children naturally build their confidence, learning and communication skills through increasing levels of freedom and responsibility. Children explore their own interests through independent projects several times a year.

Community – Cedar Tree values and encourages community. We provide opportunities for parents to volunteer in school, to gather for monthly social or school events, to congregate at drop-off and pick-up times, and to communicate easily with teachers and staff.

Diversity – Multi-age classrooms build the expectation that differences between people are normal and allow us the opportunity to learn from each other. Cedar Tree embraces families of any race, national or ethnic origin, religion, or sexual orientation.

Cooperation – Cedar Tree staff teaches and models peaceful problem solving skills. We assist children with language and strategies to resolve conflicts both in the classroom and on the playground. Children take care of the classroom environment, consider the impact of their words and actions on others, and frequently collaborate and help one another.

Global Perspective –We emphasize respect for nature and humanity as we share our planet’s resources. It is our goal to demonstrate ways to protect our natural world and celebrate earth’s natural and social diversity. We do this by minimizing our impact on the earth, and taking steps to become more energy efficient. We recycle, reuse materials, and clean with non-toxic, environmentally friendly products. Children participate in public service projects. The Montessori curriculum reflects a value for the earth and its diverse cultures and customs.

## Welcome!

By enrolling your child at *Cedar Tree Montessori Elementary*, you and your family have joined a caring, dedicated community of students, parents, teachers and staff.

In the following pages, you will find the answers to many of your questions about the school. More information can be found at [www.cedar-tree.org](http://www.cedar-tree.org), including our school calendar. If at any time you have a question or concern about your child or the school, please call your child's teacher or office staff at 714-1762.

## Montessori Philosophy

Below are some key concepts of Maria Montessori's philosophy.

1. Teachers should have a profound respect for each child's uniqueness.
2. Each child is born with a purpose to fulfill. If his/her physical, psychological, educational and spiritual needs are met, he/she will fulfill that purpose for the benefit of all of humanity.
3. We cannot know what that purpose may be, so we support each child's interests and passions and give each child the skills to pursue whatever path he/she chooses. This means Montessori teachers must provide a rich educational environment, with lots of opportunities to "try on" experiences inside and outside of the classroom. The child's job is to construct the adult he or she will become.
4. Children who learn to understand and get along with others different from themselves are the hope for peace in the world. Conflict resolution is modeled, taught and practiced in Montessori classrooms. Teachers help children use this process in the classroom and on the playground.
5. Children pass through developmental stages in a certain sequence. Academic and social education should be appropriate for each stage of development.
6. Children learn through their senses. Montessori materials are multisensory. After many concrete experiences, children are ready to form abstract concepts. Children learn best by exploring a topic in depth, rather than experiencing shallow "coverage" of many topics. Presenting the "big picture" of concepts first helps children fit detailed knowledge into an existing structure.
7. Teachers believe that children naturally love to learn and are, for the most part, internally motivated.
8. Self esteem is built by increasing independence. Montessori classrooms provide freedom within limits and independence with responsibility.
9. Children learn at their own paces and levels, following developmental stages. The teacher is a facilitator or guide, rather than an authority in the classroom. Much learning can take place in the absence of the teacher, with only an initial introduction.
10. Multi-age classrooms build diversity. They offer younger children the chance to learn from older students and older students the opportunity to nurture and help younger children and reinforce their own learning.

For a good article on Montessori schools in general, see [http://www.montessori.org/sitefiles/montessori\\_101\\_nonprintable.pdf](http://www.montessori.org/sitefiles/montessori_101_nonprintable.pdf)

## **What this looks like at Cedar Tree Montessori**

1. Everyone is doing a different activity. During work time, perhaps a group of three children is working on an art project. Another child is working by himself doing math on a mat on the floor. Two children are giving each other practice spelling tests at the tables. The teacher is working on the floor with four children on a writing lesson. The assistant teacher is helping to solve a social conflict with two children at the snack table. An Upper Elementary child is listening and coaching a younger child in reading. A parent volunteer drops in to read with a student.
2. Children receive lessons in small groups or individually. Children are grouped by past learning, or by special interests. Work lists contain follow-up and review activities for individual, small group, or whole class lessons given previously. The younger children have weekly work lists prepared by the teacher. Older students create their work lists with teacher guidance. When the basic work list is complete, children are free to follow their own interests (perhaps art, chess, music or a math game), projects, or other curriculum-related pursuits.
3. A Montessori scope and sequence plan is available for parents to review, as well as a list of units covered over the three-year grade span. Two to three times a year, we informally assess students on lessons taught, using observation to see if children can perform the task independently, with some support or if they need re-teaching. We also do informal assessments at the beginning of the year in math, and we get a writing sample. We use a nationally normed test of reading twice a year to assess reading levels. We do not participate in standardized testing.
4. Two teachers, a lead teacher and an assistant teacher, are in the classroom at all times, with a maximum of 27 students. The Lower Elementary contains first through third grades; the Upper Elementary has fourth through sixth grades. One teacher may be giving lessons, while the other circulates. The teachers review completed work, re-teaching or extending lessons as needed. All work is reviewed by a teacher during the day in the Lower Elementary or during the week in the Upper Elementary. Students receive feedback quickly on their work.
5. Because of the individualized nature of instruction and the low student-teacher ratio, students often progress more rapidly in reading, language and math than in public school settings.
6. Enrichment classes are provided by qualified instructors or classroom teachers in the areas of music, Spanish, drama, P.E. and movement, art, and technology.
7. In addition to regular class work, students work on three or more “passion projects” per year. A passion project may be a work for the shelf, a report on a country, a science experiment, an informative display, a computer slide show presentation, an independent art project related to a subject area, etc. The topics are chosen by the students, within parameters. Younger students may need family support to complete their projects. Older students complete theirs more independently.

8. Students take field trips for P.E., cultural events, and academic studies, with the number of trips increasing in the upper grades.
9. There is a happy, industrious, friendly, busy atmosphere in the classroom. School is a welcoming place for students, teachers, staff and parents.
10. Our lead teachers are American Montessori Society certified and evaluated using AMS standards by an independent consultant. We combine Montessori instruction with some aspects of public education. For example, we seek out parent volunteers to help in the classroom, and our teachers add most public school Common Core objectives to their instruction in language arts and math that are not included in the traditional Montessori curriculum. A list of Montessori objectives by grade level correlated with Common Core Standards is available upon request.

### **Diversity of Student Community**

Cedar Tree welcomes and celebrates diversity. Working and playing with children from various religious, ethnic and heritage backgrounds, gender and gender expression, lifestyles and life circumstances fosters communication, acceptance and appreciation of differences. In its enrollment policy, scholarship awards and in all other matters, Cedar Tree Montessori does not discriminate on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender or gender expression or sexual orientation.

Cedar Tree celebrates families, recognizing all the unique forms they take. All kinds of families are included: children who live with their grandparents, children with two moms or two dads, children with stepsiblings or stepparents, children who are adopted and, children with single parents and children who live in two houses. The goal is to make each child feel accepted and valued.

### **Board of Directors**

Our Board members support the vision of the school and approves policies consistent with our mission statement and core values. They plan fundraising events, oversee the budget and set long term goals for the school. The Board consists of two parents members and three or more community members. The Director and Administrator are advisory members of the Board.

If you are interested in serving as a Board member, contact the school administrator. The Board meets once a month and all Board meetings are open to parents, unless the Board is meeting in closed session. The minutes of Board meetings are available from the office. Biographies of current Board members can found on our website.

## Communication

Parent-teacher communication is a high priority at Cedar Tree. You will receive updates via email that explain the day-to-day happenings of your child's classroom. We also email our monthly newsletter, The Seedling, to each family. This newsletter highlights upcoming school events and all-school news.

We also invite you to visit our website at <http://cedar-tree.org> to view our online calendar.

### Parent Teacher Meetings

Both Kim and Amanda have after school hours designated for parent meetings. Please don't ever hesitate to bring up an issue or problem. Together we can solve little problems, before they become big ones.

#### *Upper Elementary*

If you wish to make an appointment to talk with Amanda, please do so by using the sign-up sheet located in the classroom.

#### *Lower Elementary*

Kim's monthly office hours posted in the upstairs foyer. Please sign up for a time that works best with your schedule.

### Phone:

School Office Phone: 714-1762

Lower Elementary: 220-2819 (cell)

Upper Elementary: 319-8135 (cell)

We pick up phone messages at 9:00am and 2:45pm. For emergencies please call the lead teacher's cell phone. Please use the cell number with your good judgment as we will be interrupting a lesson or work with students to answer.

### Communication Folders

Each student has a "Communication Folder." This will act as a mailbox for parents and will hold school information (homework, work lists, notes from teachers, notices of classes of interest in the community, etc.) It is each family's responsibility to check the communication folder each week. These folders will be outside on Fridays and accessible any day of the week in the entry area for the Lower Elementary and in the classroom for the Upper Elementary.

**Mail**

For all correspondence and tuition checks, please use the following address:

Cedar Tree Montessori  
2114 Broadway Ave.  
Bellingham, WA 98225

**Email**

Office: cedar-tree@cedar-tree.org  
Lower Elementary: kim.feerer@cedar-tree.org  
Upper Elementary: amanda.richeson@cedar-tree.org

**Online Calendar**

Visit our website: <http://cedar-tree.org> and go to the **Calendar** tab to see all scheduled Lower and Upper Elementary events. They are organized by month, and you can get more detailed information by clicking on a specific day. Here you will find out about class field trips, school events, and P.E trips. If you use Google, you can transfer these dates to your personal calendar.

**Newsletter**

We will send out our newsletter, The Seedling, every other month via email as this saves trees and copy costs. The Seedling is your main source of information about all-school events. If you would like to publicize an event, or place a classified ad in The Seedling, please email us your text and we will add it to the next issue of The Seedling.

**Classroom Updates (Lower and Upper Elementary)**

Both Upper and Lower Elementary teachers each publish weekly updates which will be sent via email. Please take the time to read these. Classroom updates will provide you with topics studied, school and classroom events and other important information.

**Parent Orientation**

We provide separate parent education evenings for Lower and Upper Elementary parents. We strongly encourage parents to attend this annual event as we will discuss Montessori philosophy, explain the classroom curriculum, and allow parents to mingle and get to know each other! Please make alternative arrangements for your children these evenings. This meeting is mandatory for new, incoming families in the Lower Elementary and all families in the Upper Elementary.

**Parent Conferences**

Parent conferences are 30-minutes each and are held twice a year. *Attendance at your child's conference is mandatory.* You will receive your child's written progress report at the conference. You may wish to write up a list of discussion topics beforehand. If you have any concerns about your child, please don't wait until your conference date to bring them up. A quick phone call or email can help us collaborate on solutions to any problems that may pop up.

Please make other arrangements for the care of your Lower Elementary child on conference days. Many families in the school trade childcare on these days. If the weather is nice, you might ask another parent watch your child on the playground during your conference.

Students and their families are given the choice in the Upper Elementary if the student would like to lead the conference.

Parent conferences will be scheduled in both the fall and spring. See the school calendar for these dates. Evening conferences are available if needed. Sign-up sheets will be available at drop-off and pick-up two weeks before conferences so you can choose a convenient day and time. Conferences are scheduled for every half-hour. If you feel you need more time after thirty minutes, we will be happy to schedule additional conference time for you on a different day.

## **School Procedures**

### **Parking**

Please use street parking anywhere on side streets surrounding Cedar Tree. Our neighbors at Fountain Community Church have kindly allowed us to use their parking lot for picking up and dropping off students. Please do not use the Cedar Tree parking lot during drop-off and pick-up times as children and adults will be walking through the lot. Please be alert at all times if you are using our parking lot as children and parents often congregate in this small space.

It's been a Cedar Tree tradition for parents to talk in the parking lot at drop-off and pick-up. Chatting with other parents is an important way to build community! You are welcome to socialize inside the building in the entry as well.

### **Arrival**

Doors open at 8:50 a.m. Please wait until this time to send your child into school since the teachers use the first half-hour before school for planning and may be discussing specific students. For the Lower Elementary, you can walk your child in or watch him or her walk in the door. Upper Elementary children can enter through the amphitheater.

Prompt arrival by 9:00 a.m. is greatly appreciated by all the teachers. Children who arrive late miss out on important announcements and the first lessons of the day. Late arrivals distract the children who arrived on time. Please make a special effort to get your children here consistently on time.

### **Departure & Pick-up**

At 3:00 p.m., for the Lower Elementary and 3:30 for the Upper Elementary, the teachers will walk the children out to the parking area. Prompt pick-up is also appreciated. For Lower Elementary families, please come over to your child and walk with him or her to the car. Make sure a teacher knows you are taking your child. If the weather is extremely wet or cold, we ask that you come inside the building to pick up children, so we can avoid children standing out in extreme conditions. If you come inside before school has ended, please chat quietly in the upstairs entry so as not to disturb the classrooms.

Cedar Tree supervises children 10 minutes after dismissal; until 3:10 for Lower Elementary and 3:40 for Upper Elementary. After this time, we are not responsible for children at school. Kindly call the school at 360.714.1762 to let us know if you are going to be late. After school care is available at Gabriel's Art Kids. A teacher from Gabriel's Art Kids will walk children from Cedar Tree to Gabriel's Art Kids.

### ***Pick-up***

We cannot legally release your child to anyone else other than you, the parents or guardians, without written permission. You can give ongoing permission by listing friends and relatives on the student information form. There is also a permission form located in the entry of the building for you to note the person who will be responsible for picking up your child on a particular day. This is required by state law.

If you would like for your Upper Elementary child to leave Cedar Tree campus on his or her own, please provide us with permission on the form located in the Upper Elementary classroom.

### **Library Book Check-Out**

Every child can check out books from the Lower and Upper Elementary bookshelves. To check out a book, the child removes the library book's blue card and writes his or her name on it. Only one book can go home at a time. When your child returns the book, he or she puts the card back in the book and returns it to the shelf it came from. This system will prevent check-out of multiple books.

For new readers in the Lower Elementary, we send home books to read once or twice a week. These should be returned in one or two days, as we use them with other children. Lower Elementary books may be checked out for a week. Upper Elementary students may check out books for longer periods.

Each year we lose a few books. We charge a fee for the replacement cost of any lost or unreturned books. This cost is based on the market value. We gladly accept replacement books, including gently used copies, in lieu of the fee.

Keeping books from school in a consistent place at home (in your child's backpack, by the bed, or by the door) will minimize mislaid books. Thank you in advance for helping your child keep track of books from school!

### **Field Trips**

Field trips off-site for both Upper and Lower Elementary will be made with advance notification. We have a universal permission slip for parents on our enrollment forms. By signing it, you give the school permission to take your child on any school field trips. All the trips are announced in the newsletter email or classroom update. You can contact the teachers at any time during a field trip by calling the teachers' cell phone numbers on the class list. Please note our children are covered by school insurance wherever they are during school hours.

One exception to publishing field trips ahead of time is a walk to Elizabeth or Broadway Parks. These will be dependent on the weather.

Would you like to drive students or accompany us on a bus field trip? Any parent who wishes to drive must turn in a copy of a valid driver's license and a copy of a current insurance policy. This information is collected annually and needs to be up to date before driving. We are always grateful for parent help on our trips! (Please see Field Trips in the policies section for more information.)

Please remember to drop off your child's booster or car seat at 9:00am and pick it up at dismissal.

### **Field Trips: Car Seats**

Families of children, who are legally required to use a car/booster seat, need to bring a labeled car/ booster seat to school for each field trip. We are unable to allow children to ride in cars without their car/booster seat.

### **Washington's Child Restraint Law\* requires that:**

- Children under 13 years old are to be transported in the back seat where it is practical to do so.
- Children up to their 8th birthday, unless they are 4'9" tall (whichever comes first), must use a child restraint.
- The restraint system must be used correctly according to the car seat AND vehicle manufacturer's instructions.
- Vehicles equipped with lap-only seat belts are exempt from the requirement to use a booster seat for a child weighing more than 40 pounds.
- Children 8 years of age or at least 4'9", whichever comes first, who wear a seat belt **MUST** use it correctly (never under the arm or behind the back) or continue to use a child restraint.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and guidelines for both the child restraint and the vehicle.
- Students must be transported in the backseat of a vehicle during school field trips.

For the purpose of field trips, we ask that students ride in the backseat unless a waiver is signed.

\***RCW46.61.687** [apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/Default.aspx?cite=46.61.687](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/Default.aspx?cite=46.61.687)

**Rules for car seats and booster seats can be found at: <http://www.800bucklup.org/laws/index.asp>**

### **Student Food Allergies**

If your child has an allergy to soy, wheat, gluten, eggs, dairy or nuts, or he or she reacts to products produced on machinery with these ingredients even if they are not ingredients of the food itself, please send some alternative snacks to school. We will keep these in a bin marked with your child's name for times when they are needed. Please check your child's bin periodically to make sure it is well-supplied with snack items. In addition, please send alternative items for birthday celebrations (such as a fruit roll or something your child enjoys). We have 30 birthday celebrations per year.

### **Snacks (Lower Elementary Only)**

We ask each family to provide snack for our twenty seven students and three teachers for two weeks during the school year. In the classroom, children can have snack at any time after they have finished one work on their work

lists. The children pour water and serve themselves their snack, then wash and dry their cups and plates. To comply with state health regulations, an adult sterilizes the dishes at the end of each day.

Snack is an important time in our classroom; both socially and for the much needed nutrients. Our students rely on this snack for a boost in energy and brain power. Because snack is such a vital ingredient for learning, we ask that parents who are bringing snack to please choose snacks that are rich in protein and nutrients and low in sugar and sodium. Below is information that provides some examples of snacks and portion size:

**Cost**

We want to acknowledge the cost that comes along with providing snack. If providing snack creates a financial hardship for your family, please tell us so that we can help supplement snack.

**Allergies**

If your child has an allergy to soy, wheat, gluten, eggs, dairy or nuts or he or she reacts to products produced on machinery with these ingredients even if they are not ingredients of the food itself, please send some alternative snacks to school. We will keep these in a bin marked with your child’s name for times when it is needed. Please check your child’s bin periodically to make sure it is well-supplied with snack items. In addition, please send alternative items for birthday celebrations (such as a fruit roll or something your child enjoys). We have 27 birthday celebrations per year.

**One portion of each column:**

- 2 T bean dip, 6 tortilla chips, One half banana
- One cheese stick, 6 crackers, 3 apple slices
- 1 T of cream cheese, ½ of a bagel, 6 grapes

**Snack Ideas:**

Choose one item from each column to create a balanced snack

Protein	Grain	Fruit/Veggie
Hummus	Bagel halves	4 carrot sticks
Cream cheese	Pretzels	4 snap peas
String cheese	Rice Cakes	½ banana
Sunflower butter	Crackers	3 apple slices
Bean dip	Corn tortillas	¼ cup dried fruit
Canned garbanzo beans	Pita bread	¼ cup raisins
Almond butter	Muffins	6 cucumber slices
Cheddar cheese		6 red pepper slices

Please avoid bringing:

- Nuts of any kind. We have a student with a nut allergy in class and nuts cannot be a part of snack.
- Yogurt, Applesauce or other foods that necessitate a bowl.
- We do not have a microwave, so please don't send items that need to be heated.
- You will not need to send juice or drinks for snack as there is water for students to drink throughout the day.
- All snacks that are high in sugar (Jello, cookies, soda, cupcakes, and doughnuts) as excessive sugar can adversely affect some children.
- Shredded cheese or other hard to eat foods.

### **Snacks (Upper Elementary)**

Students are asked to bring in snacks from home and eat them as they feel hungry throughout the day. Many students do not eat snacks and others need a snack daily. Please do not send sugary snacks such as cookies, candy, jello etc. Low sugar, nutrient-dense food is preferred.

### **Lunch (Upper and Lower Elementary)**

Your child will need to bring a lunch daily. Reusable and recyclable containers are consistent with our commitment to the environment at Cedar Tree. A sturdy thermos will cut down on the number of non-recyclable packages that come to school. Most juice box containers can be recycled in our food waste bins.

Balanced, nutritious lunches will help your child learn and play in the afternoons. Please do not send candy or chocolate bars for snack, lunch or birthday celebrations. Keep those items for an after-school treat.

You may notice, especially during the first few weeks of school, that your child does not eat much lunch. Sometimes socializing is more exciting than eating for any ages. Rest assured, however, that your child does sit with his or her lunch for a minimum of twenty minutes. If your Lower Elementary child needs more time, he or she is welcome to bring lunch out to eat during afternoon recess. If you notice that your child is coming home with a lunch box that looks un-touched and you are concerned that he or she is not eating, please let us know.

Please emphasize that it is your child's responsibility to remember to bring lunch. If your child forgets his or her lunch, however, we will call you at home or work and you may bring a lunch if you like. If we make the discovery too close to noon or if you cannot drop off a lunch, then we can provide snack items to tide your child over until pick up.

We do not allow children to share food at school. We explain that you, the parent, packed that lunch just for your child and you expect him or her to be the only one to eat that food. Children may be allergic to food from other lunches. Since we cannot check all ingredients, Cedar Tree's policy is to allow each child to eat only food from his or her home.

## **Special Days**

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are a special time for children in both classrooms. We like to recognize the uniqueness of each child through a celebration at school. Your family is invited! It is a tradition that the family of the birthday child brings a snack for each student, such as fruit or fruit kabob, popcorn, brownies, cake, cookies or muffins. Please do not send candy or heavily frosted cakes or cupcakes. Do bring napkins, plates or utensils for items that need them. It is not necessary to bring juice. Water is available to the children at all times.

### **Birthdays - Lower Elementary**

In the Lower Elementary, children create a timeline of life for their celebration. The day before the celebration, have your child pick out five to nine photos of his or her life, one for each year of his or her time on the planet. You may wish to send color photocopies, rather than originals, to school. At school, your child will post the photos in chronological order to create a timeline of life. Or, you may wish to make a poster of the timeline together at home. If your child is going to post these at school, please write a note or indicate on the back of the photo the approximate age or year the photo was taken. This will help your child arrange the photos in order. Please be assured that we will return any photos you send.

Kindly arrive a few minutes before 2:30 pm for your child's celebration. To start the celebration, we will light a candle. Next, you and your child will present the timeline of your child's life. (We will keep the timeline photos for the children to look at during the next week.) Each student then gets an opportunity to give a compliment to the birthday child. The ceremony ends by blowing out the candle and singing "Happy Birthday" in English, Spanish and/or Mandarin. We wash our hands and sit down to eat. The children wait until all have been served and the servers have been thanked. Lastly, we all enjoy our snacks together.

### **Birthdays - Upper Elementary**

In the Upper Elementary, the birthday celebration is begun by sharing your hopes, dreams, compliments and wishes for the birthday child. The dreams are represented by scoops of rice, beans and rosemary (symbolizing the food and seasonings of life) that are tied into a little bag to take home as a remembrance of everyone's good wishes. Families are welcome to join in the celebration and bring photos to share.

Please sign up in advance to schedule your child's celebration. We usually hold our celebrations at 3:00 pm, unless other arrangements are made. Arriving a few minutes ahead of time will allow us to get organized for the celebration.

### **Birthday Invitations**

If you have invitations to a birthday party, please mail them. Anyone who has ever seen the sad face of a child who feels left out will understand the need for this policy. For this same reason, we ask children not to talk about their upcoming birthday parties at school unless everyone is invited. The children are usually heartwarming cooperative on this issue. If you are inviting everyone in the class, passing out invitations at school or in the parking lot is fine.

## **Cultural Celebrations**

We use social studies units throughout the year to study cultures in depth. Looking at cultures through the theme of common human needs promotes cultural understanding. In the Montessori curriculum, there is an emphasis on connecting the geography of the countries with their peoples' choices of food, shelter, clothing, and transportation.

At Cedar Tree, we value cultural and religious traditions. We encourage families to share their family heritages. We welcome your presentations of holidays, customs, stories or foods typical of your family's culture.

Respect for differences is a key part of the Montessori curriculum. Derogatory comments about race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender expression or sexual orientation are not tolerated. All families are honored. If negative comments do occur, we have a class meeting on the value of all people, how such comments might make others feel, how to restore the harmony and how we can handle an incident if it happens again. We may also contact parents of children involved. Through personal interactions with others, stories, role playing and recounting historical events, children learn to empathize with others different from themselves.

## **Holidays**

Montessori schools typically don't hold Halloween, Christmas or Easter celebrations. At our school, not all families celebrate these holidays. We respect all cultures and religions and therefore do not focus on any one in particular. However, we do promote exposure to a variety of holiday celebrations through sharing.

Children are welcome to share items from their families' celebrations of these or any other holidays. Oral sharing is another good opportunity for children to learn that not all families have the same traditions.

Parents may wish to visit the classroom to tell about ethnic, religious, and family celebrations. In the past, we have had the good fortune to learn about Egyptian, Persian, Polish, Saudi Arabian, and Bhutanese traditions. We have had presentations on Muslim, East European Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, and Bahai celebrations from parents and relatives.

We do, however, celebrate Valentine's Day. We use this opportunity to talk about love and the expression of love between family members and friends. There is a card-making work out on the shelf. We have an afternoon party with a valentine card exchange and a special snack. We ask the older children to write a compliment for each child on a card over two weeks' time as homework. Participation in the Valentine's Day party is voluntary. Please let us know in advance if you would prefer that your child not participate on this day.

## **Financial Information**

### **Income and Expenses**

Cedar Tree Montessori is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit. Our school income comes from four sources: tuition, donations, fundraising and rental of classrooms. As a nonprofit, we are also eligible to receive grants. Each fall, the Cedar Tree Board reviews the past budget and sets the new budget for the coming fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). The Board sets next year's tuition in February.

We work hard to keep expenses down. We want school to be affordable. Tuition is 95% of our total income. Your tuition reflects the true cost of private education for your child. The Board does raise tuition from time to time to match our increased expenses.

### **Re-Registration**

Returning families pay a non-refundable re-enrollment fee due in February in order to reserve a spot for your child for the following year. We charge a deposit equal to one month's tuition and a re-enrollment fee. This will allow us to calculate how many spots are available for families on our waiting list.

Parents who sign a tuition agreement in March will be financially responsible for the year's tuition until **Tuition and Fees (See also "Enrollment Policies")**

Families pay a registration or re-registration fee, a P.E. fee, and a materials fee, per child. These fees are non-refundable. Our current tuition and fees can be found on your tuition agreement. Tuition discounts are available for enrolled siblings at the elementary level and for paying in full by Sept. 15.

Additional Information:

1. Tuition is due the first calendar day of each month. A late fee of \$25.00 will be charged for payments received or post-dated after the 5th.
2. Tuition is not discounted for school or family vacations, illnesses or holidays.
3. By signing this agreement, you are agreeing to pay monthly or annually until the annual tuition is paid in full.
4. There is a transition fee of one month's tuition for each student for all withdrawals.
5. An unpaid tuition balance will prevent Cedar Tree from relinquishing academic files, re-enrolling or continuing services to your child.
6. Cedar Tree Montessori does not discriminate on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, religion, sexual identification or orientation.
7. All fees (material, PE and enrollment) are per student and non-refundable.

### **Withdrawing a Student**

Enrollment may be canceled by a parent or guardian with thirty days written notice. In addition to tuition for days attended, the family will be responsible for the payment of a transition fee equal to one month's tuition. If the teacher believes that addressing the student's needs will be detrimental to the class as a whole, or if the student poses a threat to others or himself/herself, the Director may request the family to withdraw the student immediately. In this case, tuition will be refunded only for days not attended, with no fee.

### **Materials Fee**

There is a non-refundable annual materials fee of \$100.00 per child for Lower Elementary and \$150.00 per child for Upper Elementary students, which covers construction paper, lined paper, art supplies, books and other materials for the school year. This fee is due at the beginning of the school year for new families.

### **P.E. Fee: Lower Elementary**

There is a \$100.00 PE Fee for students in the Lower Elementary. This fee is due at the beginning of the school year. The fee covers the costs of contracting services from a variety of teachers who come to the school to teach (yoga, dance, etc.). The fee also covers off-site P.E. activities, such as swimming and ice skating. If fees exceed P.E. expenses in any one year, the excess will be applied to the general fund.

### **P.E. Fee: Upper Elementary**

There is a \$150.00 P.E. fee for students in Upper Elementary and is due the beginning of school. The Upper Elementary students will participate in P.E. twice weekly, and these classes occur both at school and off-campus. The fee covers the cost of specialist instructors and venues such as the Bellingham Athletic Club, Boys and Girls Club, Circus Arts, etc. If fees exceed P.E. expenses in any one year, the excess will be applied to the general fund.

### **Donations**

Cedar Tree Montessori School is a state and federal non-profit organization. This means that any profits are channeled back into the school. Any time you make a donation to Cedar Tree, you can request a receipt and deduct this amount on your taxes. Our non-profit tax number, as granted under section 501 (c) (3) of the federal tax code, is 91-1953-283. The school can write a receipt or letter of acknowledgement for your tax files.

As a non-profit organization, we are eligible for grants from other non-profit agencies. Does your employer provide grants or matching funds for non-profit organizations? Let us know!

### **Fundraising**

The entire cost of teaching your children cannot be met through tuition alone. Fundraising brings in seven to ten thousand dollars a year. We have the following annual fundraisers:

Gather & Give Gala	Spring
For Small Hands – Montessori Services	Fall
Jog-a-thon	Fall
Read-a-thon	Winter

Scrip  
Scholastic Books

Annual/Monthly  
Annual/Monthly

We encourage 100% participation in these fundraisers at a level comfortable for each family. In addition, we have campaigns for particular items or projects which vary from year to year. Past parent fundraising over time allowed us to buy technology for lower and upper elementary classrooms, and replace carpet, leaky windows, and skylights. Through past fundraising, we were able to replace our old, gray siding with light green Hardiplank siding. Your monetary contributions to any fundraising event are tax deductible. Your volunteer time for these events is much appreciated.

## **Enrichment Curriculum**

### **Art**

Cedar Tree recognizes the importance of art as an integral part of an elementary curriculum. Technical skills, art appreciation and self expression through a variety of media are the goals of art instruction.

The Lower and Upper Elementary art programs contain the following elements:

1. The study of elements of art or art history and related student projects
2. Instruction in techniques of drawing and painting
3. Creation of handicrafts

In addition, art activities are available throughout the year as choice activities. In the Lower Elementary, the art shelves are regularly refreshed with new art, craft and sewing projects. In the Upper Elementary, art projects follow the progression of areas of study. For example, when studying Persia, students have made tile mosaics in the Persian tradition.

### **Music and Movement**

We hire a music specialist to teach music the latter half of each school year. In addition to these one hour a week classes, classroom teachers may incorporate music and movement into the classroom activities. For example, in the Lower Elementary, we use music to call students to the circle. In this way, we expose children to many different genres of music over the course of the school year, with brief lessons on each.

The Lower Elementary has a complete set of percussion instruments which the classroom teacher uses to teach basic rhythm reading (quarter notes, half notes, eighth notes and rests in 4/4 time). The Lower Elementary often sings songs. The Upper Elementary has one ukulele per student and a music teacher or assistant teacher gives lessons to the group.

In addition to music classes, both the classrooms have at least one unit on movement. In the past, we have had guest teachers instruct our students in Latin dance, round dance, Bollywood dance, Five Rhythms, current pop line dances and other genres. For additional movement activities, see the P.E. sections that follow.

## **Drama**

We contract with a drama teacher to instruct our students in drama one semester each year. Our students practice acting skills with games, child-created skits, children's literature and poetry, short plays, improv and attend local performances.

## **Physical Education Curriculum**

The mission of Cedar Tree Montessori School's physical education program is to ensure that all students acquire the knowledge and social and physical skills that will enable them to maintain a healthy, active and enjoyable lifestyle.

Physical education provides the opportunity to learn positive behaviors, values and attitudes, along with sportsmanship, teamwork, self-discipline and rules in a safe, meaningful way. The P.E. program emphasizes the development of a broad foundation of motor skills for all students through curriculum while fostering respect and responsibility for others and self through instruction, practice and education.

The P.E. program includes the following components:

1. Personal fitness (agility, strength, yoga, aerobic fitness, coordination, movement, dance, balance, gymnastics)
2. Organized games (skill-building, rules, experience playing games--not necessarily competitively, team-building and sportsmanship)
3. Health, safety and nutrition information (hygiene, human development)
4. Exploration of physical activities that may become lifelong activities (for example, rock wall climbing, swimming, ice skating, walking, biking, hiking, outdoor activities)

This rationale and curriculum was developed by a task force of parents and staff members. To these ends, elementary students enjoy two P.E. periods a week. In the Lower Elementary, these will be mostly on-site, with some off-site activities after the new year. In the Upper Elementary, one activity a week will be off-site to take advantage of facilities not available at Cedar Tree, and one activity will be on-site or near our site.

## **Spanish**

Students receive two classes of Spanish each full week. In the Lower Elementary, these classes are taught by Kim, who is fluent in Spanish and lived in Mexico City for four years. In the Upper Elementary, these classes are taught by a specialist Spanish teacher. Our classes are intended to expose children to a second or third language and culture and will not result in fluency.

## **Technology**

Technology is not considered a separate subject, nor an enrichment subject at Cedar Tree. Rather, it is integrated into our regular curriculum, as part of our practical life curriculum. First year students learn to use a basic word processor. Second year students compose on the computers and use a graphing program. Third year students compose and edit on the computer, as well start keyboarding. Lower Elementary students do not have access to the Internet.

In the Upper Elementary, much of the writing is composed, edited and published on the computers. In addition, students conduct research on various topics, within teacher guidelines. Students also may use spreadsheets and internet presentation software.

Teachers have access to computer projectors and projection cameras.

## **Parent Involvement**

Cedar Tree Montessori has a generous and supporting parent community and is a well-respected and admired institution within our county. Blessed with the wisdom and leadership of many friends and supporters of Montessori education, Cedar Tree is a “can do” school.

### **Parent Volunteer Hours**

Cedar Tree Montessori seeks to provide a partnership between home and school as a means of creating optimal opportunities for developing each individual’s talents, skills and resources. The Parent Volunteer program is designed to give each family an option to contribute a certain number of hours each school year or to cover the costs of hiring others to help maintain a quality program. Families are asked to commit 5 hours of volunteer time or \$125 over the course of the school year. Volunteering ensures the fullest benefits of a Montessori education for your child and provides a tangible means for each family to contribute to that goal.

### **Parent Volunteer Jobs**

We love our parent volunteers! Parent participation is encouraged at Cedar Tree and fosters a feeling of community. You, the parent, get to meet your child’s friends and see the classroom in action. The following are several opportunities for parent (or grandparent!) involvement. We will list these in the first *Seedling* newsletter and post sign-up sheets in the fall.

#### **Room Parents – Lower Elementary**

You will be the right-hand man/woman for our classroom teachers. We need one or two parents to find volunteers, get messages out to other parents, help out occasionally in the classroom, make materials, help with fundraisers, etc.

#### **Room Parents – Upper Elementary**

Our Upper Elementary classroom has need of the occasional help listed above.

#### **P.E. Driving Volunteers – Lower and Upper Elementary**

We need Upper Elementary parents to drive students to various locations around town for P.E. activities regularly on Fridays. The Lower Elementary has sporadic off site P.E. classes, usually on Tuesday afternoons, later in the school year. Please let the classroom teachers know if you can drive. Please give us a copy of your driver’s license and current proof of insurance. You can use the copier in the main office if you wish.

### **Reading Volunteers – Lower Elementary Only**

We need parents to listen to children read. Helping children with reading is the most important volunteer job and we hope to have lots of parents join us. If you have a spare half hour to an hour or more once a week in the morning or more often and would like to volunteer, please let us know. We need readers from 9:30am to 11:30 a.m. each day.

### **Spelling Volunteers – Lower and Upper Elementary**

In order to maintain an individualized spelling program, we depend on parents to come each Friday on one morning and give spelling tests. This job involves correcting the spelling, recording each child's unit number for the teacher and on the worklist. You may also pretest children who are ready to skip easier units. This is a challenging and rewarding job as you can see much progress from one month to the next!

### **Art Class Volunteers – Lower and Upper Elementary**

Are you curious about our art classes? Come and see our art curriculum first hand. Come once a week for 1 ½ hours to help prepare the classroom and tidy up the classroom after art class. We will announce specific days and times in our newsletters.

### **Math Facts Volunteer**

Children always need extra practice at school and at home to memorize math facts. Here are the ages we work on each set:

Grade 2 – addition facts to 18

Grade 3 – subtraction facts to 18 and multiplication facts to 81

Grade 4 – division facts

As a math facts volunteer, you use flashcards and worksheets to determine which facts have been memorized and give guidance to parents and teachers as to which types of facts are missing.

### **Book Order Volunteer**

Scholastic Books sends us lots of catalogs for books and software! As the Scholastic volunteer, you can choose the catalogs you think are most valuable. This job entails labeling forms with each child's name once a month, receiving payments and order forms, tallying the orders and sending them off. When the books and software arrive, you make them available for parents to pick up at school or for students to take home. Any extra points we earn from book orders, we use to order new books for the school. We earned over \$300 from Scholastic books last year!

### **Handyperson**

A parent or family member to help with the small jobs that routinely pop up at the school.

### **Family Traditions and Talents**

The Montessori curriculum supports multiculturalism and diversity. If you have a religious holiday, family tradition, ethnic food or project you'd like to share with the children, we would love to have you come in!

Similarly, if you have a special hobby or talent you'd like to share, let us know. In the past, parents have shared crafts, cooking, knitting, construction with shop tools, amateur astronomy, outdoor games and fitness activities. Children this age especially benefit from a hands-on approach. You might invite them to handle objects used in the hobby or invite them to do a project related to your presentation. Please arrange your visit at least a week in advance with the teachers.

### **Field Trip Volunteers**

We also need drivers for our field trips. Transportation to and from field trips may include: parent or teacher drivers, Whatcom Transit Authority buses, or walking. We always attempt to walk or use public transportation if at all possible. We take into consideration the routes and schedules when we plan field trips and work diligently to avoid disrupting and inconveniencing the Cedar Tree parents' busy schedules. We use parent drivers as a last resort after evaluating and exhausting all other options.

When we take public transportation or walk, we still need extra adults for supervision. If you would like to drive on a field trip, please let us know. You must have a seat belt for each child. School policy requires families to provide booster seats or car seats for children under 4' 9". You must also furnish the school with a copy of your driver's license and current car insurance required by our insurance company.

### **School Observations**

After the first month of school, when the students are bonding with the teachers, we welcome observers. You may find that your child wants to sit next to you as he or she works. Or, you can try to be a "fly on the wall" in the corner. Either is fine. Please be warned that your child's behavior with you present may not be the same as when you are away! If you would like to observe, please call to check the day and time with the teachers. We like to schedule only one parent observation at a time when possible.

You are also free to "drop in" at any time to reassure yourself and your child that all is well. If you choose to make a drop-in visit, please do so quietly to minimize disruption. If you need to speak with the teacher during class time, please wait until the teacher is finished with the current child or lesson.

### **Events**

Each month there is a chance for Cedar Tree families to get together. At the beginning and end of the school year there are school picnics. In addition, we offer "Family Nights" as a time for your child to show you what he or she has been working on in class. Parent Nights are for parents only, with an education or parenting topic. Work parties can be indoor or outdoor, with or without children joining in. "Parents' Night Out/Students' Night In" is an event designed for parents to have a night out while children come to school to enjoy games, snacks and fun while supervised by volunteer parents and staff. As well as being mutually fun events, these nights are successful fundraisers for Cedar Tree. We also look forward to annual events such as the Gather & Give Gala fundraiser, our science fair and drama

performance. Please visit our website (cedar-tree.org) and go to the “Calendar” tab. This online calendar will give you a month by month view of upcoming events!

You may wish to organize your own all-class or all-school potlucks, play dates at the park or family excursions. We want to encourage any social events that build a stronger parent community. If you wish to organize an all-class or all-school event, you can email us for publication in the newsletter.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Emergency**

Cedar Tree Montessori has an Emergency Handbook that is available for review for anyone who would like to learn more about our classroom and staff procedures for emergency situations.

We ask that parents bring the following items to use so that we can better care for your children during a 24-48 hour period in the event of any major disaster.

### **Emergency Items**

Please place the following items inside a Ziploc bag labeled with your child’s name.

- 2 small, sealed bottles of water (8-12 oz.)
- 2 protein/power/granola bars
- 1 small package of moist wipes
- 1 package of facial tissues in a travel-pack size (example: Kleenex brand)
- 1 poncho (large garbage bag with 3 holes cut out – one for head and two for arms)
- 1 emergency blanket (available at Yeager’s, Fred Meyer or Target in the camping section)
- A reassuring note from parents
- A family picture
- A small working flashlight

We will return any unused items at the end of the school year.

### **School Closures**

If Bellingham Public Schools close due to inclement weather, Cedar Tree will also close. Check your email for school closings by 7:00 am. You can listen to KGMI (790 AM) or KAFE (104.1 FM) for school closure announcements, beginning at 6:00 a.m. The station also maintains a website of school closures. If Bellingham Public Schools are on a delayed schedule, Cedar Tree will hold class during our normal hours. Even if we are open, please use good judgment whether to venture out on snow or ice-covered streets. You and your child’s safety is the highest priority.

In case of a power outage, we have flashlights and lots of windows for natural light. Although we have gas heat, the heat is circulated by fans which use electricity. If loss of electricity prevents us from keeping your children warm or if snow falls so rapidly during the school day that the teachers suspect cars will not be able to get to school by dismissal time, school will be closed early. Staff will stay with

students until each one is picked up. We will use the emergency contact list to call people to pick up the children. Please make sure your emergency contacts sheet is up to date.

### **Medications**

The Washington State Health Department does not allow us to administer any prescription drugs or over-the-counter medicine unless a specific procedure is followed.

If you wish us to give medication to your child, the medication must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name and dosage. You, the parent, must fill out the required paperwork in order to comply with state requirements. It also best if you can have your doctor write a note that includes the following:

- Name of the medicine, dosage, instructions for administration
- Name of the person authorized to administer the medication (usually a teacher)
- Date authorization starts, date authorization ends and what to do if a dose is missed

**The State of Washington requires all schools to have the above information on file** before we can administer any prescription or non-prescription medication (including aspirin, decongestants, lozenges, cough drops, vitamins and supplements).

### **Student Illnesses**

A fever, runny nose, diarrhea, vomiting, excessive coughing or skipped meals are all indications that a child is sick and needs to stay. Kindly call our school office or your Child's teacher to report an absence.

**Please keep your child home until he or she has been fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours, free from nausea or vomiting for 24 hours, or on antibiotics for at least 24 hours.** This will prevent the spread of germs to other children and staff. If your child becomes sick at school and needs to go home, we will first attempt to contact you, the parents, at the phone numbers that you have provided in your student information packet. If there is no answer, we will call the emergency contacts.

If your child contracts chicken pox, lice, H1N1 influenza, pink eye or strep throat, please call the school. We can alert other families to the symptoms. In case of lice, we will send your child home and send a confidential email alerting everyone in the class. If your child has lice, please comb out nits daily before school for two weeks. The school may send home your child if more nits are identified or may ask for a doctor's note stating your child is free from nits and lice. We will check all children in the affected class for 2 weeks after the reported outbreak.

At school, we teach the children to cough and sneeze into the crooks of their elbows, rather than cover their mouths with their hands. This reduces the possibility that germs will be passed while handling Montessori materials.

We have all children wash their hands with soap before lunch and snack. We do not have bacterial soap at school. Bacterial soap irritates many young children's skin. According to the health department, bacterial soap may contribute to bacteria's increasing resistance to antibacterial drugs. However, if you would like to send a small bottle of hand sanitizer with your child's lunch, you are welcome to do so.

Please explain to your child how to use it and that we will still ask your child to wash his or her hands before lunch.

### **Student Accidents**

The school staff seeks to maintain a safe environment for students, parents and staff. If you see anything unsafe, please report it immediately to a staff member for correction.

The school has purchased student accident insurance. Students are covered during school hours, on or off campus, while engaged in school activities and while traveling to and from school during field trips. For example, if your child breaks his or her arm on school property, the school's insurance will pay for items not covered by your insurance, such as a deductible or unpaid percentage of medical bills. The school has information on additional insurance available upon request.

### **Traumatic Experiences**

Please let us know if your child experiences the death of a family member, relative, friend or beloved pet. Separation, divorce or the move of a live-in partner, friend or relative can be traumatic for children as well. Exposure to physical or sexual abuse and other violent acts can create strong reactions in children.

Children who have undergone traumatic experiences may act in unexpected ways. The parents, teacher and child can put together a plan for when the child feels overwhelmed at school. We will handle any behavior issues differently if we know the child has experienced emotional or physical trauma. Therefore, communication with the school is very important in these instances.

### **Safety Drills**

We practice three kinds of safety drills: earthquake, fire and lockdown. We practice the first several times during the school year. In the Lower Elementary, personal and physical safety, safety at home, and calling 911 in emergencies are also addressed.

## **Documented Special Needs and Suspected Learning Differences**

During a child's education, suspected learning differences or special needs may arise. The child's teacher will meet with the parents to determine a course of action. Actions might include special accommodations at school and at home, testing to determine how to address the child's needs, in-class or at-home tutoring, and/or pull-out classes with special education at the local public school. If parents are not willing to pursue actions recommended by the Director, the family may be asked to find another school for the child.

Children with mild physical, mental or educational difficulties are considered for admission, five per classroom, and with both the administrator's and teacher's approval.

Consideration will be given to:

1. The child's probable success in a Montessori classroom
2. The teacher's ability and training to provide accommodations suited to the needs of the child
3. The amount of time teachers need to spend with the child for him/her to be successful

Reasonable accommodations will be made, provided that no changes to the overall program are required and that the child does not pose a risk to himself or others. A recent diagnostic assessment by qualified professionals which identifies the child's needs within a mainstream environment is required. Periodic assessment may also be required during the school year and prior to re-enrollment.

If the program is not meeting the needs of the child, the teacher, the program or the other students in the classroom, the administrator may require parents to find additional resources or support as a condition of the child's continuing attendance. If need be, the school reserves the right ask the family to find another school that better meets the needs of the child and will often make recommendations for his or her placement. See the section under enrollment and re-enrollment for additional information.

## **School Policies**

### **Accident Policy**

Minor accidents at school are treated promptly by the staff according to first aid protocol and state guidelines. All staff are required to hold current pediatric first aid and CPR cards from the Red Cross. In cases of emergency, the school will try to reach a parent or other person designated by the parent on the emergency form. In severe cases, such as anaphylactic shock or breathing emergencies, the school may call 911 first, and then contact the parents. There is a consent form to this end in the student information packet. The child will be taken to Peace Health Hospital emergency room.

The school carries student accident insurance, which covers children on and off campus during school events, regardless of school hours. Parents may be eligible for reimbursement of medical expenses by applying to the student accident insurance company. Advise parents to talk to the school administrator if they are interested. The school also carries liability insurance for children or adults who are injured on campus.

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

Everyone has the right to feel safe and secure at school. With our focus on conflict resolution in the classroom and on the playground, Cedar Tree kids experience very few instances of bullying. Bullying is defined for students in the Lower Elementary, and they are given strategies to cope with bullying. Upper Elementary students generate strategies for dealing with bullies through class council and discussions.

Bullying is prohibited at Cedar Tree. Any parent who believes a child has been bullied should talk with your child's teacher so that we can support your child at school.

Cedar Tree teachers or an administrator will talk with both children and contact parents of both. Behavior will be monitored with consequences set for reoccurrence. If there are repeated instances or if the teacher or administrator feels we are unable to stop the bullying behavior, the child may be suspended or expelled permanently.

What is bullying? A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself. Victims often have less status and may be different in some way from the bullies themselves (differences can include race, learning differences, physical abilities, etc.).

This definition includes three important components:

1. Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
2. Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
3. Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

### **Confidentiality Policy**

All staff and Board members are asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Staff and Board members are allowed to share information about students and information from student files when doing so is necessary for the instruction of the child or if the child is involved in an incident when such information would be helpful to staff. Student records are available for view by parents of their students at any time.

### **Discipline Policy**

The growth of self-discipline is an important goal at Cedar Tree. Early in the year, the children and teachers set rules for a smooth classroom. Children are expected to be respectful of and cooperative with their classmates and teachers. Teachers show the same respect toward the students.

In the case of behavior that adversely affects the operation of the classroom, the teacher must intervene directly. We first try to redirect the child to the activity at hand. Sometimes a child may need to change his or her seat or activity. If this does not produce a change in behavior, the child may be asked to sit with the teacher until he or she can control his or her behavior.

Certain behaviors require immediate, direct intervention. Foul language, hitting, kicking, biting, or other violent behaviors are not permitted at school. The child will be removed from the situation immediately to prevent harm to others. We contact the parents of children involved after such an incident. The Director has the authority to take additional measures to prevent reoccurrences of the behavior.

Parents will be notified if there are frequent behavior issues. Often, children who do this are very frustrated and need some education about managing anger. Parents, teachers, and the student will develop a plan. Behavior contracts are one way of dealing with ongoing behavior issues. A contract is developed with the child and parents and allows the child daily, consistent feedback about his/her behavior with consequences for both undesired and desired behavior. Consistency on the part of both the staff and the parents usually will clear up repeated undesired behavior.

In cases where there are frequent behavior issues, staff will meet with parents to share their observations and offer any resources that may address the problem behavior. In rare cases, parents may be asked to remove their child from the school to protect the other students.

Please report any repeated, unusual, harmful or violent behavior to the lead teacher responsible and to the Director. We will alert the other staff members by e-mail, word of mouth, or meetings.

### **Enrollment Policy**

We have two or more teachers per class. We do this to ensure personal attention by the teachers. This low student-teacher ratio is optimal for elementary-aged students, when so much academic and social development takes place.

Please call us to schedule a time to visit our school. We welcome observations on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays at 9:30am. During this visit you can view our classrooms, observe our teachers and find out more about classroom openings. The first visit usually takes up to an hour, however you're welcome to stay as long as you like. We recommend that parents first observe the school without children and then we are happy to schedule a time for parents and students to observe together. Please call our office to schedule an observation at 360.714.1762.

If you decide to submit an application for enrollment, please submit the following:

- an application (request an email or paper application)
- \$50.00 nonrefundable registration fee.
- a copy of your child's most recent report card.
- a completed parent questionnaire

We screen students for indicators that they will be successful and independent learners. This might take the form of discussing learning styles with former teachers, making an observation, or reviewing documentation of special needs. Children with documented or suspected special needs that might interfere with their ability to learn in the Montessori setting will be redirected to a more appropriate academic setting. (See "Special Needs" section above.)

Completed enrollment packets will be held until we do our internal re-enrollment process in February. Returning students and their siblings are given first priority in re-enrollment. New students with previous Montessori experience are accepted next. As much as possible, we balance each class by gender, grade level and need. We will sometimes suspend our priorities to achieve this. For example, even if there are many Montessori-experienced boys enrolled, we may accept a girl with no Montessori experience to provide gender balance.

After our internal re-enrollment is complete we contact families who have submitted all their application materials to inform them of openings. We also contact families for whom we do not have room at the time to ask if they still would like to be on the waiting list in case a family withdraws before the start of the school year or for a possible mid-year entry.

Cedar Tree Montessori maintains a waiting list. It is not unusual for families submit applications a year ahead of time. If you know of a family interested in Montessori elementary school, please advise them to register early. If a family applies and cannot be accommodated in September, we do not automatically keep the application on file for the next year unless instructed to do so.

### **Field Trip Policy**

- All field trips must have two adults minimum supervising students.
- An adult supervisor will have first aid kit including all student medications (Epi-pens etc.).
- An adult supervisor will have a cell phone.
- An adult supervisor will carry parent contact (emergency) information.
- The school will publish field trip details in advance.
- Field trip permission slip must be signed by parent/guardian at the beginning of the year.
- Transportation to and from field trips may include: parent or teacher drivers, Whatcom Transit Authority buses, or walking.
- Parent drivers are required to provide Cedar Tree with a copy of the driver's current auto insurance and driver's license.
- Families will receive an email to inform them of all field trips.
- Student accident insurance covers students on and off campus.
- Cedar Tree Montessori requires all students under 4'9" to use a car seat or booster seat on field trips.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

We do not discriminate on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, religion or gender and expression, sexual orientation in hiring practices and acceptance of students.

### **Non-Violence Policy**

Cedar Tree strives to maintain a campus free of intimidating, threatening or violent behavior, including, but not limited to, verbal and/or physical aggression, attack, threats, harassment, swearing, intimidation, or other behavior in any form or by any media that causes or would cause a reasonable person to fear physical harm to his/her person and/or property. Cedar Tree makes a reasonable effort to prove a safe workplace and learning environment on its campus. However, it cannot guarantee the protection of safety of everyone under every circumstance.

Cedar Tree will not tolerate violent behavior or threats of violent behavior directed at an employee, student, parent, guardian, affiliate, or visitor on Cedar Tree's grounds or during a school-sponsored activity. Such behavior is strictly prohibited and may result in corrective or disciplinary action, criminal charges when appropriate, or both. For any student who breaks this policy, the parent or guardian will be required to come to school or the place where the incident occurred if off campus and remove the student.

Any person who engages in behavior prohibited by this policy may be subject to exclusion from campus, arrest, prosecution, termination of his or her business relationship with Cedar Tree, and any other appropriate action. Students or adults who violate this policy during an off-campus activity may be terminated from participation in that activity and future activities. Reasonableness of a particular

behavior will be determined by the Director or staff member in charge of supervision at the time of the incident. The Director has the discretion to take further actions.

Decisions of the Director under this policy may be reviewed by the Board if brought to the Board's attention within 14 calendar days.

Violent behavior is defined as any threat or act of physical aggression or of destruction or abuse of property. Threats include veiled, conditional or direct verbal or written threats intended to harass, endanger, or harm the safety of another and which would cause a reasonable person to fear physical harm to his/her person and/or property. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to:

1. Intimidating behavior which includes language or actions that unreasonably disrupt the work or learning environment, unreasonably causes undue emotional distress to another, or creates a reasonable fear of injury to persons or property;
2. Threatening behavior, which includes physical actions without physical contact or injury and implied threats to people or property;
3. Any behavior which involves any physical assault with or without weapons, throwing objects, damaging or destroying property, and specific or expressed threats to inflict harm to people or to destroy property, including vandalism.

Individuals who witness or have been subjected to any behavior prohibited by this policy or who witness the possession or display or use of any weapon should immediately report the incident to one of the following:

- Emergency or life threatening situations: Call 911
- Non-emergency situations: Cedar Tree Director

### **Student Dismissal Policy**

Cedar Tree staff will work with each child to fulfill the needs of that child, and every effort will be made to provide a positive learning experience. Specific needs will be accommodated when possible.

Cedar Tree Montessori Elementary reserves the right to ask parents to find counseling, attempt behavior modification or seek other information or support and make additional support contingent on continued enrollment. The school also reserves the right to ask parents to make alternative arrangements for schooling if it is determined that a child's needs cannot be met, even with additional support. In the event that behavior becomes severely disruptive in the classroom or becomes a problem that poses an unsafe situation for your child or other children in the class, the Director may dismiss a student without asking for additional support first.

If a parent continuously interferes with the running of the classroom, a teacher's ability to do his/her job or a child's ability to learn, or disregards school policies, your child may be dismissed at the Director's discretion. If you, as a parent, are uncooperative in completing and returning forms, fail to pay your tuition on time, fail to follow any state or county regulations, or fail to follow any Cedar Tree policy or procedure, your child may also be dismissed, at the Director's discretion.

### **Student Withdrawal Policy**

There is a financial hardship to the school when a family withdraws mid-year. The time and resources spent with the withdrawing family, and inviting and orienting a new family, taxes the school's resources. The Board decided to initiate a "transition fee" to help us with these situations. Enrollment may be canceled by a parent or guardian with thirty days written notice. In addition to tuition for days attended, the family will be responsible for the payment of a transition fee equal to one month's tuition.

### **School Photos on the Internet**

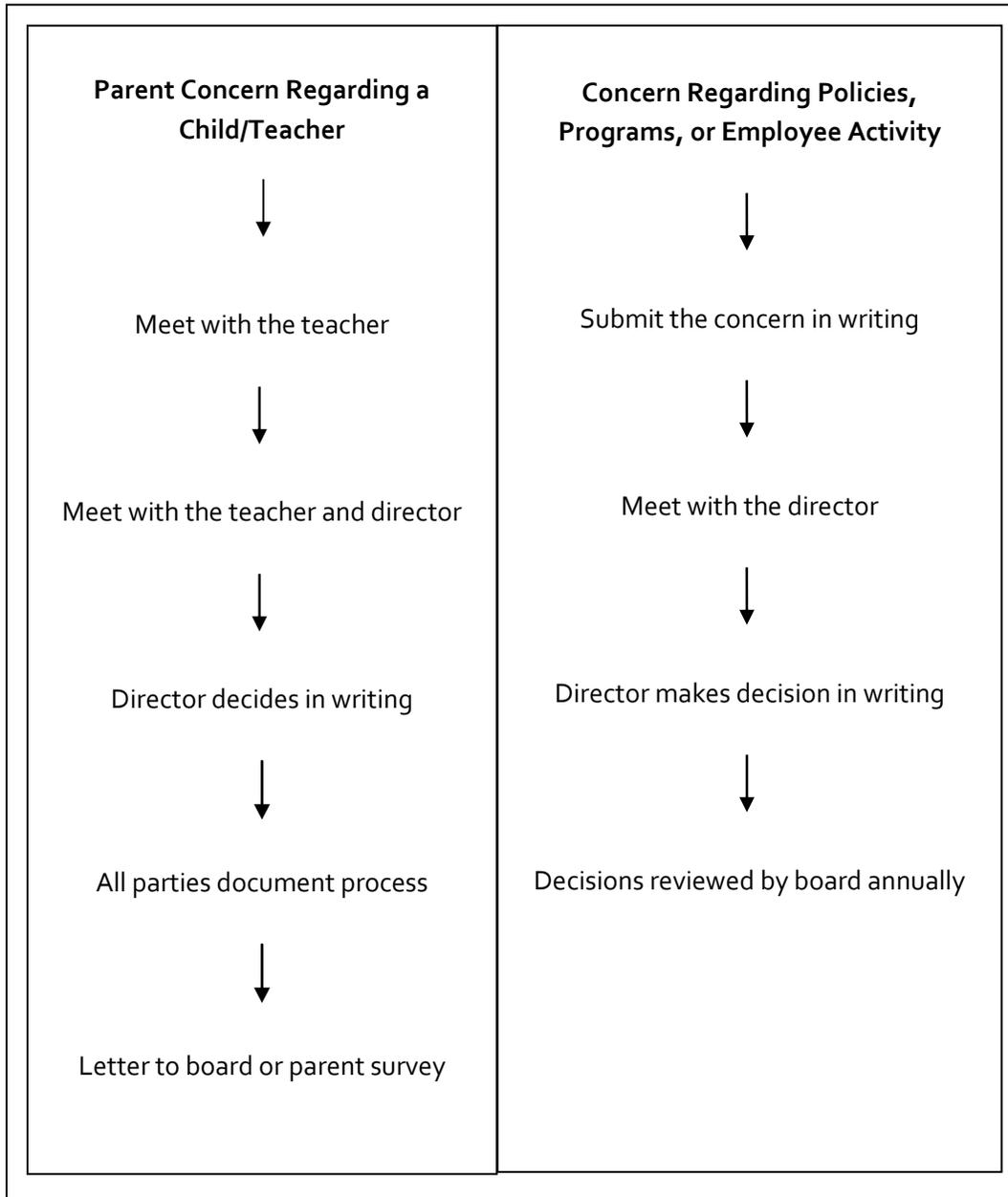
We have a policy at school that we do not upload photos to the Internet, without family approval. By checking "Yes" and signing our Photo Release form, a parent allows Cedar Tree to use photos taken of students for use only in school- related publications, including our web site, school newsletter, and brochures. This permission does not authorize use on Facebook, or other websites other than our own. Please do not post pictures taken at school events on the web, unless you have permission from the parents of the children pictured.

### **Conflict Resolution**

When conflicts arise between students, we use a conflict resolution model. We teach this model in the first few weeks of school each year. When conflicts arise, we help children to use these strategies. At first the teacher may need to model the steps and suggest language to the children. Eventually children learn to solve many problems themselves. Some older students even help solve the problems of others! We also spend time introducing concepts from Marshall Rosenberg's model of Non-Violent Communication. This model teaches that problems in solving universal needs are caused by conflicting strategies. With this model we focus on each person's needs and alternate ways to meet them. Conflicts can be resolved to meet everyone's needs.

During conflict resolution, the children must agree to solve the problem and listen to each other (A cooling off period may be necessary before this can happen). One child states an observation (vs. a judgment) about the behavior and his or her feelings about the issue. The second child does the same. Children are encouraged to state these in "I" messages as in "When you stood in front of me in line, I felt angry." The two children brainstorm solutions to the problem. Finally, they choose one solution that is agreeable to both children. If one child cannot agree to the solution, he or she must come up with a counter suggestion until both can agree. Later, we check in to see how the solution worked.

## Conflict Resolution Model



### **Child Abuse**

State law requires teachers to report all known and suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services. Child abuse or neglect is defined as any injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or negligent treatment or mistreatment of any child by any person such that the child's health, welfare or safety is harmed. Hitting a child hard enough to leave a mark is considered child abuse. School policy prohibits teachers from using corporeal punishment to discipline students. Please see our discipline policy above.

Our employee policy contains rules to prevent sexual mistreatment of students and employees. These include fingerprint and background checks on all employees and dismissal for employees engaged in inappropriate sexual behavior. As a precaution, we allow one student at a time in the bathroom when the door is closed. This includes adults as well. At recess time, children must first check with an adult before using the bathroom to prevent two children from using the facilities at one time. However, two children may use the bathroom to wash hands before lunch with the door open.

Education and conversations at home about your child's changing body, and establishing body boundaries about good and bad touch are effective measures to protect your child from physical and sexual abuse. Ask your librarian for good, age-appropriate books on this topic. At school, we teach the children that no one has the right to touch another's private parts and that includes other children, relatives, teachers, and adult friends. Children are asked to tell a trusted adult immediately if this happens to them. If at any time you suspect your child may be engaged in sexual play or sexual harassment at school, please tell a teacher immediately.

### **State of Washington Approval as a Private School**

Each year of our twenty two years of operation, we have been approved as a private school in the state of Washington. In order to comply with state requirements, we undergo fire inspection, maintain copies of important records, submit enrollment information to the state including ethnicity and immunization status, file credentials, and guarantee a minimum of 1,000 hours of instruction in standard curriculum areas. By obtaining state approval, your child's education at Cedar Tree will be accepted at any other public school in the U.S.

### **Statement of Non-Profit Status**

Any time you make a donation to Cedar Tree, you can request a receipt and deduct the amount on your taxes. Our non-profit tax number, as granted under section 501 (c) (3) of the federal tax code, is 91-1953-283.

As a non-profit organization, we are eligible for grants from other nonprofit agencies. If you have a grant idea or know of grant funds available to schools, please let us know.

### **Statement of Non-Discrimination**

Cedar Tree Montessori School is a state and federal non-profit institution under federal code 501 (c) (3). This means that any profits are channeled back into the school. Cedar Tree Montessori School admits

students from families of any race, color, national and ethnic origin, religion, gender and gender expression or sexual orientation to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded to or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, religion, gender or gender expression or sexual orientation in hiring practices, or in administration of its educational policies, administrative policies, financial aid and loan programs, or any other school programs.

### **Statement of No Religious Affiliation**

Cedar Tree Montessori is not affiliated with any religious organization. Cedar Tree does not teach religious doctrine.

### **Cedar Tree Smoke-Free, Drug-Free Policy**

Cedar Tree Montessori is a tobacco and drug free campus. Tobacco (cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, chew, etc.) is not permitted anywhere on the property — indoors or outdoors. The illegal possession, use or distribution of drugs or alcohol by students, parents and employees is a violation of this policy. Use of tobacco or drugs at school is grounds for dismissal for employees and enrolled families.

Because smoking and drug use cause serious health risks, we want to model healthy lifestyle choices to all students and prevent any chance of students suffering health issues related to second hand smoke.

## **Items from Home and School**

### **Clothing and Shoes**

Independence is the foundation of good self-esteem. For this reason, please send your children to school in shoes they can take off and put on by themselves. Practice tying at home and we will practice at school. When children can successfully tie their own shoes, then they can wear them to school with a great feeling of accomplishment.

Please send your child to school in sturdy, weather-appropriate shoes that are comfortable for walking and playing. Flimsy shoes such as flip flops and jellies are a hazard while climbing, running or jumping. Also, please send a sweater or jacket on all but the hottest days as the weather changes quickly in our region.

In cold weather, we ask children to put on their jackets or sweatshirts before going outside. However, with all the running they do, they can become quickly overheated. Please do not insist that your child wear his or her coat the entire recess. The exception is rainy weather. We will not allow children to play outside without some second layer of clothing if it is raining. This is to prevent children from sitting in wet clothing for the remainder of the day.

In Montessori schools, we do a lot of work on the floor. We remove our shoes before leaving the carpeted entry to keep outdoor dirt and mud to a minimum. Your child might want to bring a pair of slippers, slipper-socks or rubber-soled indoor shoes to keep his or her toes toasty in the fall and winter. Indoor footwear can stay in the cubbies at school.

Some families send shoes or boots to be worn only at recesses. Extra outdoor footwear, such as boots, can cut down on the amount of mud in your car during winter and spring months!

### **Emergency Clothes (Lower Elementary)**

At the beginning of the year, you will be asked to send an emergency set of clothes to be kept at school. This should include a shirt, pants, underwear and socks. If your child has an accident, falls in the mud or spills a major amount of juice on his or her clothes, your child can change into a clean set of clothes. We will send the soiled clothes home in a bag. Please remember to send a replacement item of clothing if one is sent home.

### **Indoor Plants**

To create a more natural and pleasant environment, we ask each family to send a houseplant to school the first week. The children will be the caretakers. A plant that can stand over-watering would be ideal! We will send these plants home in June.

### **Toys from Home**

Toys need to stay at home or in the car. Past experience has shown that the presence of toys from home disrupts the atmosphere of the classroom. Remind your child that school time is for school work. Save that special toy in the car for a pick-up time treat.

### **Money at School – Lower Elementary**

Please do not send your child to school with money. If this is not possible, please give the money to a teacher for safe keeping.

### **Sharing – Lower Elementary**

After the start of the school year, we will set up a sharing schedule. If your child has a special book, object, project or collection related to a unit of study, he or she is welcome to share it with the class. Dolls, toys, stuffed animals, movie and cartoon figures and related merchandise are not appropriate objects to share. Pokemon cards, Transformers, battling robots, toy weapons and similar toys fall in this category. Better choices include craft projects, objects from nature, books on a current topic of study, artifacts from a country, photos from a trip, etc.

The exceptions to this policy are toys related to an area of study. For example, toy dinosaurs would be appropriate to share while studying dinosaurs. Objects constructed from building materials, such as Legos, are also fine if the design shows creativity. If you have any doubts about appropriate sharing items, please contact the teacher the day before your child's sharing day.

Each day, all children are welcome to orally share events or topics of interest to them at circle. This is good oral speaking practice and often generates discussion among the children who have had similar experiences.

### **Sharing – Upper Elementary**

Children are encouraged to bring interesting items to share with their classmates. There is a nature table where students can add items from the natural world and articles on current events to be discussed daily.

Cultural items are appreciated as well. Students are always welcome to bring items from home that are related to what is being studied in the classroom. As with the Lower Elementary, toys are not appropriate.

### **School Supplies**

Collecting school supplies cuts down on school expenses. For this reason, we ask for a list of school supplies from home. There is a supply list specific to each classroom. You will receive this list in your Student Information Packet. We collect the items each September.

### **Snack Supplies**

In addition to school supplies, please send a ceramic plate and ceramic mug to school for your child to use at snack time. (Kindly avoid plates or mugs with cartoon, T.V. or movie characters.)

- Ceramic plate with name in permanent ink
- Ceramic mug with name in permanent ink

To give our classroom a more pleasant look, please also send an indoor plant. One that can stand overwatering would be ideal! Plants will be returned in June.

Potted house plant and saucer with name in permanent ink

### **Found Items**

We have many small, appealing items on the shelf that may find their way home in your child's pockets. Often this is unintentional. If you find small items such as beads, cubes, play money or unfamiliar objects, please call the school. The item may be a small, but essential piece of very expensive Montessori equipment. Thank you for your cooperation!

### **In Closing...**

We hope to make the years here at *Cedar Tree Montessori* educational and joyful for children and their families. If you have any remaining questions or concerns, at any time of the year, please call or talk in person with the teachers. Together we will make school an exciting, rich experience for your child and develop in him or her a life-long passion for learning.