



# Parent Handbook

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## **Mission Statement**

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

## **Motto**

Love how you learn, learn what you love!

## **Core Values**

### *Academic Excellence*

Because of the individualized nature of instruction and student teacher ratio, students often progress more rapidly in reading, language and math than in public settings. We have a 1 to 9 teacher/student ratio which allows children to learn in small groups and individually

### *Whole Child Approach*

We address the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional needs of each child. We do this by ensuring our curriculum and school day include opportunities for

- Individualized Instruction
- Opportunities for gross and fine motor skill development.
- A curriculum that includes art, drama, music, movement, and mindfulness.
- Opportunities to be outdoors in nature.
- Social skills and conflict resolution development.
- Incorporation of each child's interests, personality, strengths and challenges in our instruction.

### *Independence*

The Montessori environment provides a sequence of developmentally appropriate academic and social experiences in which children naturally build their confidence and academics through increasing levels of freedom with 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 easily communicate with teachers and staff.

### *Diversity*

Multiage classrooms build the expectation that differences between children are normal. We embrace, value and celebrate our differences and encourage diversity in our student, staff and parent community. We do not discriminate based on race, national or ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, Identification or gender expression in our hiring practices and acceptance of students.

### *Conflict Resolution*

We teach and model peaceful problem-solving skills. We assist children 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 or help one another.

### *Global Perspective*

We look beyond our classroom to better understand the needs of others around the world. We value cultural differences by studying cultures and inviting guests in to help us learn about our similarities and our differences. We emphasize respect for nature and humanity as we share our planet's resources. We value the importance of service and participate in public service projects. Our school seeks to reduce its environmental impact by learning about and discussing our planet's needs, recycling, reusing materials and cleaning with green products.

## **Welcome!**

By enrolling your child at *Cedar Tree Montessori*, 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.

### ***A special message for our Children's House Classroom***

This is a special time in your child's life filled with wonder and curiosity. The curriculum is vast, including math, language, music, geography, practical life skills, sensorial impressions, botany, zoology, foreign language, nature studies and more.

The term "Children's House" is "Casa de Bambini", translated from Italian. This was the name of Maria Montessori's first classroom in Italy, more than 100 years ago. It is a place where children take responsibility for their classroom and learning. It becomes a place they come to take care of, love, and respect.

## **Montessori Philosophy**

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

1. Teachers have a profound respect for each child's uniqueness.
2. Each child is born with a purpose to fulfill. If their physical, psychological, emotional, 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 are the hope for peace in the world when they learn to understand and get along with others different from themselves. 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 more 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. Multiage 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: [amshq.org/families/why-choose-montessori](http://amshq.org/families/why-choose-montessori)

## **What Montessori education looks like at Cedar Tree Montessori Elementary**

1. Each child is navigating his/her classroom with an individualized work list. Children are working on different activities. During work time, some children are working in small groups and others are working independently. For example, 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 another student.
2. In the Lower Elementary, children have work lists prepared by the teacher. Children are grouped by ability, as assessed at the beginning of each year and informally throughout the year. In the Upper Elementary, students create their own work plans with teacher guidance. Work plans contain follow up and review activities for individual, small group or whole class lessons given previously. Teachers follow a Montessori scope and sequence plan available for parents to review.
3. When the basic work plan is complete, children are free to follow their own interests, projects or other curriculum-related pursuits.
4. There are two full time teachers in each elementary classroom with a third teacher who comes in to address the needs of our students during the morning work period. The Lower Elementary contains first through third graders and has maximum of 27 students; the Upper Elementary has fourth through sixth graders and has a maximum of 24 students. One teacher may be giving lessons, while the other circulates. The teachers review completed work, reteaching or extending lessons as needed.
5. Because of the individualized nature of instruction and student teacher ratio, students often progress more rapidly in reading, language and math than in public settings.
6. Enrichment classes are provided by qualified instructors or classroom teachers: Music, Spanish, Drama, Movement, P.E., Art, Computers.
7. In addition to regular class work, students work on three to five “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, 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

## **Diversity of Student Community**

Cedar Tree welcomes and celebrates diversity. Working and playing with children from various religious, ethnic and heritage backgrounds, gender identification 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 three parent members and three or more community members. The Director and Administrator are advisory members of the Board.

## **Communication**

Parent-teacher communication is a high priority at Cedar Tree. You will receive regular updates via email that explain the day-to-day happenings of your child's classroom. We also email our 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*

Email Kim at [kim.feerer@cedar-tree.org](mailto:kim.feerer@cedar-tree.org) to make an appointment for a before or after school at a time that works best with your schedule.

#### *Children's House*

Email Robin at [robin.koolen@cedar-tree.org](mailto:robin.koolen@cedar-tree.org) to make an appointment for a before or after school at a time that works best with your schedule.

### **Phone:**

School Office Phone: 360-714-1762  
Children's House: 360-739-0289 (cell)  
Lower Elementary: 360-220-2819 (cell)  
Upper Elementary: 360-319-8135 (cell)

Our administrative office is open between 9am and 3pm. Feel free to call us with questions. For time sensitive and emergent matters, please call or text 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  
Bellingham, WA 98225

## **Email**

Carrie Bishop-Cruz, Office Administrator: [administration@cedar-tree.org](mailto:administration@cedar-tree.org)

Kate Ferry, Administrative Assistant: [kate.ferry@cedar-tree.org](mailto:kate.ferry@cedar-tree.org)

Children's House: [robin.koolen@cedar-tree.org](mailto:robin.koolen@cedar-tree.org)

Lower Elementary: [kim.feerer@cedar-tree.org](mailto:kim.feerer@cedar-tree.org)

Upper Elementary: [amanda.richeson@cedar-tree.org](mailto:amanda.richeson@cedar-tree.org)

## **Online Calendar**

Visit our website: <http://cedar-tree.org> and go to the **Calendar** under the Parent Resources tab to see scheduled individual classroom and all school 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, three to four times per school year via email as this saves trees and copy costs. The Seedling is your main source of non-time sensitive 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**

Classroom teachers each publish regular 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 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 for new, incoming families in the Lower Elementary and all families, returning and new, in the Children's House and Upper Elementary.

## **Parent Conferences**

Parent conferences are held twice a year. *Attendance at your child's conference is mandatory.* You will receive your Elementary child's written progress report at the conference. Written reports addressing all areas of instruction are provided for all third year Children's House students. 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. There is also the option to have your child be in the entry way with school-provided activities during the parent 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. Sign-ups will be available 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**

Cedar Tree is located in a neighborhood with limited parking options. The city of Bellingham requires that we do not block Irving Street and/or traffic in any way. Please do not use the Cedar Tree parking lot as children and adults will be walking through the lot. Our neighbors at Fountain Community Church have kindly allowed us to use their parking lot for picking up and dropping off students. If there is no parking available in the Fountain Community Church parking lot, please use street parking on side streets surrounding Cedar Tree. The parking lot at Fountain Community Church is not a car line. Please be mindful of holding up traffic. Please pull fully into a designated parking spot when dropping off or picking up your student. If you are planning to park for an extended period of time and drop your child off or walk them in to school, please use the Fountain Community Church parking lot or Irving Street.

Please be mindful of our neighbors and thru-traffic. All cars must be fully off the driving portion of the road when dropping and/or picking up children. Do not park in the handicap designated parking on Irving Street, indicated by a blue painted curb. The police department has issued hefty fines to our community parents who have mis-used this parking zone.

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**

Children's House doors open at 8:30 am.

Elementary doors open at 8:50 am.

Please wait until this time to send your child into school since the teachers use the first half-hour before school for planning and meetings. In the Children's House, please enter in the main entrance facing the playground. Children must be signed in using our electronic system located inside the door. For the

Lower Elementary, you can walk your child in or watch them walk in the door. Upper Elementary children can enter through the exterior entrance at the top of the stairs.

Prompt arrival 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.

We offer early drop-off for Elementary students at 8:30 am. Please contact [administration@cedar-tree.org](mailto:administration@cedar-tree.org) for additional information and cost.

In the Children's House, if your child is crying, please be assured that they will settle in and become involved in a school activity in a short period of time. We will certainly call you if your child is crying extensively or is upset, and together we can make a decision whether it would be best for you to pick them up.

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

School is dismissed at the following times:

Children's House 12:00 pm and 2:30 pm

Lower Elementary 3:00 pm

Upper Elementary 3:30 pm

At dismissal, the teachers will walk the children out to the asphalt and playground areas. Prompt pick-up is appreciated.

For Children's House parents, please sign your child out using the electronic system we have inside the classroom door. If someone other than the primary parent or guardian is picking the child up, please email with the authorization information or let the teacher know at the time of drop-off.

For Lower Elementary families, please come over to your child and walk with them 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 15 minutes after dismissal. **Supervision ends at 12:15 pm and 2:45 pm for the Children's House, 3:15 pm for the Lower Elementary and 3:45 pm for the Upper Elementary.** After this time, we are not responsible for children at school. Parents and/or caregivers must supervise students on the playground after school supervision ends. After school care is available at Gabriel's Art Kids. A teacher from Gabriel's Art Kids will pickup your child or walk them from Cedar Tree to Gabriel's Art Kids. We offer after school care from 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm for Children's House kindergarteners and Lower Elementary students. Please contact [administration@cedar-tree.org](mailto:administration@cedar-tree.org) for additional information and cost.

If you have a child in the Children’s House, Lower Elementary and/or the Upper Elementary, plan on supervising your child from 2:45pm to 3:30 pm, or arrange with another parent to do so. No school supervision is available between these times.

### **Afterschool Parent Supervision**

Afterschool play is encouraged. It can be a helpful way to transition from school to home and fosters friendships and community. It is important that every child has an adult physically present on the playground supervising afterschool play so that in the event of injury or altercation, there is someone who can intervene with support.

### **Schedules in Children’s House**

Cedar Tree offers three schedules: a half day morning program three or five days a week and a full day program five days a week.

Our three day schedules are best suited for children entering school for the first time. Our five day full day schedule is a kindergarten readiness program designed for our older 5 and 6-year-old students who can sustain their energy and attention for a full day of small group instruction.

Half Day	8:30 am - 12:00 pm
Full Day	8:30 am – 2:30 pm

### **Playground Rules**

We cannot legally release your child to anyone else other than you, the parents or guardians, without written permission. Please give ongoing permission by listing friends and relatives on the student information form on the enrollment contract. 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.

Upper Elementary parents may sign a release for their child to leave school independently. This form is located in the Upper Elementary classroom.

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

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

To check out a book in the Upper Elementary, the child writes down the book’s information and their name on the clipboard located in the “Library”. Books can be checked out for a total of two weeks.

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

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!

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.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips off-site for Children's House, Lower and Upper Elementary will be made with advanced notification via email in classroom updates. Occasionally there will be impromptu field trips involving walking to the park, library or other nearby off-site location. 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. 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 can be spontaneous and 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 vehicle 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 Trip/Transportation of Students Policy**

One component of the Montessori program is what is called "Going Out." Leaving the school and visiting local community opportunities allows us to expand our exploration and learning beyond our classrooms.

There will be teachers and/or parents supervising and accompanying the children on each trip. We will either walk, use public transportation or use parent drivers for transportation. All whole-class field trips will have a minimum of two adults supervising students. Small group trips include all off-campus trips that have fewer than 8 students and will have one adult supervising.

Cedar Tree staff who are supervising students off campus will have the following with them:

1. First aid kit including all student medications (Epi-pens etc.).
2. Cell phone.
3. Parent Emergency Contact information.

- Parent/Guardian must sign the field trip permission/release on the enrollment contract.
- The school will publish all whole-class field trip details in advance.
- Transportation to and from all off-campus trips will be provided by one of the following: 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.
- Student accident insurance covers students on and off-campus.
- Children under 13 years old are to be transported in the back seat where it is practical to do so.
- Children under 8 years of age are to be transported with a booster seat.
- Children age 8 and over AND 4'9" are to be transported with a booster seat, unless the parent provides a written release of liability and permission to ride in a car without a booster seat.
- Parent drivers are required to observe and obey all WA. State driving and seatbelt laws.

**\*Washington State Law RCW 46.61.687 states:** (*updated and effective January 1, 2020*)

(1) Whenever a child who is less than sixteen years of age is being transported in a motor vehicle that is in operation and that is required by RCW [46.37.510](#) to be equipped with a safety belt system in a passenger seating position, or is being transported in a neighborhood electric vehicle or medium-speed electric vehicle that is in operation, the driver of the vehicle shall keep the child properly restrained as follows:

- a) Children ages 3-6 years old should use a **forward-facing car seat with a harness** when they have outgrown the rear-facing seat (check *maximums* of car seat's rear-facing height or weight). Children should use a forward-facing car seat with a harness for *as long as possible*. Keep child in car seat with harness up to the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat.
- b) Booster seats are for older children who have outgrown the forward-facing car seat (check car seat's height or weight maximums). A **belt-positioning booster seat** is used until the vehicle's lap-and-shoulder seat belt fits properly. Booster seats must be used with a lap AND shoulder belt. **If your child climbs out of the booster seat or will not sit upright for an entire trip, it is not safe and too soon to switch.** Find a car seat with harness that will fit his/her height and weight.
- c) Children are large enough to use the **vehicle seat belt, without a booster seat, when they reach 4'9" tall.**
- d) The driver of a vehicle transporting a child who is under thirteen years old shall transport the child in the back seat positions in the vehicle where it is practical to do so.  
<https://apps.leg.wa.gov/Rcw/default.aspx?cite=46.61.687>

**Cedar Tree will only allow students ages 9-12, in the front seat when all the below are true:**

1. There are not enough drivers for students to ride in the back.
2. We have written permission from a parent/guardian that their student has parent/guardian permission to ride in the front seat of a vehicle.
3. We are making a short trip through town to get to our destination and no freeway driving is involved.

**Cedar Tree will allow students who are 4'9" or taller to ride in a car without a booster when both below are true:**

1. We have written permission from a parent/guardian of a child who is 8 years of age or at least 4'9" that their student can ride without the use of a booster seat.
2. We are making a short trip through town to get to our destination, and no freeway driving is involved.

### **Student Food Allergies & Dietary Preferences**

If your child has any food, pet or environmental (including scents and other airborne allergens) allergies, please let your child's teacher know. If your child has an allergy to soy, wheat, gluten, eggs, dairy or nuts, or other food, or they 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 (Children's House Only)**

We ask each family to provide snack for our students and teachers for at least two weeks during the school year. 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 does not need to be prepared and should be dropped off on the Monday of your assigned snack week. Our staff will prepare the food, often with the children's help. Snack list schedules for the school year will be shared with parents via email at the beginning of the school year. Monthly reminders will be sent out via the classroom update.

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

We ask each family to provide snack for our students and teachers for at least one week during the school year. ***Snack is brought in on the Monday of the week that you are assigned. Parents should plan to check in with the teachers on Wednesday to see what additional snack is needed to replenish supplies. Families have the choice to opt out of snack and pay a \$100 fee to offset the cost and time involved in having Cedar Tree purchase snack. Families must choose to opt out by October 1<sup>st</sup> if they will not be bringing in snack for their week.*** In the classroom, children can have snack at any time after they have finished one work on their work lists. The children pour water to drink and serve themselves their snack, then wash and dry their cups and plates.

The snack schedule is provided at the beginning of the school year. The snack is also available online on the public calendar on our website [www.cedar-tree.org/calendar](http://www.cedar-tree.org/calendar).

### **Snack Information (All Children's House & Lower Elementary)**

Snack is an important time in our classroom; both socially and nutritionally. 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. 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.

**One portion of each column:**

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

**Snack Ideas:**

Choose one item from each column to create a balanced snack for each day. These are suggestions and allow for the choice of something similar to the options given.

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
Cheddar cheese	Muffins	6 cucumber slices
		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. Sunflower seeds and/or sunflower seed butter are great alternative options to nuts.
- **Lower Elementary Only** - Yogurt, applesauce, Jello or other foods that necessitate a bowl.
- We do not have a microwave in the Lower Elementary, so please don't send items that need to be heated. There *is* a microwave in the Children's House and Upper Elementary.
- 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. Chocolate chips in a granola bar are fine.

**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 (Children's House)**

If your child is with us a full day, they will need to bring a lunch. Reusable and recyclable containers are consistent with our commitment to the environment at Cedar Tree. A sturdy lunch set will cut down on the number of non-recyclable packages that come to school.

Balanced, nutritious lunches (protein, grains, fruits and vegetables) will help your child learn and play in the afternoons. It is easiest for the children if lunch is in one container, such as a lunchbox, a single container or thermos. A bag or backpack is helpful to carry the lunch to and from home. (As with clothing, kindly choose items without advertising, action or movie characters.)

Please do not send juice. Also, do not send candy or chocolate bars for snack or lunch. Keep those items for an after-school treat. Chocolate chips in granola bars are fine. All uneaten food will be sent home so you can see what your child has consumed.

We strongly discourage sharing food during lunch with the goal of eliminating trading food and the increased risk of exposing a student to an unknown allergen. We explain that you, the parent, packed that lunch just for your child and you expect them 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 their home

**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 lunch set will cut down on the number of non-recyclable packages that come to school.

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. Chocolate chips in a granola bar are fine.

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 age. Rest assured, however, that your child does sit with their lunch for twenty to thirty minutes. If your Lower Elementary child needs more time, they are 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 they are not eating, please let us know.

Please emphasize that it is your child's responsibility to remember to bring lunch. If your child forgets their 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 strongly discourage sharing food during lunch with the goal of eliminating trading food and the increased risk of exposing a student to an unknown allergen. We explain that you, the parent, packed that lunch just for your child and you expect them 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 lunch food from their home.

## **Special Days**

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are a special time for children in both classrooms. Please sign up in advance to schedule your children's celebration. 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, fruit roll, bar, cookie or something your child enjoys. Please do not send candy or heavily frosted cakes or cupcakes. Do bring napkins, plates or utensils for items that need them. Drinks are not needed. Water is available to children at all times.

Student birthday celebrations happen at the end of the day and this often includes a birthday treat. The treat is given to students as they are leaving for the day. Parents, please prepare your student's siblings that this is a special birthday celebration for the students. Siblings will not be included in the end of day birthday treat. Parents are asked to bring enough birthday treats for the students and teachers, but not the siblings. This will help us reduce the inevitable tears if siblings are prepared with this information.

### **Birthdays – Children's House**

The teacher will contact you before your child has a birthday to brief you on how we celebrate this event. It is not necessary for you to bring food or treats to birthdays, but please bring a few photographs of some stages in your child's life. We will sing a song and your child will hold the globe and walk around a lit candle signifying the sun for as many years that have passed since they have been born. This is a typical Montessori birthday celebration.

### **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 their life, one for each year of their 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. Parents who have created poster timelines with their children often save these and add a photo each year.

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. The Birthday Snack is served as the students are dismissed for pickup.

### **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 3:00pm, 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 or religion.

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 do not 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, Serbian, 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 in the Elementary. 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.

## **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.

In Montessori schools, we do a lot of work on the floor. We remove our shoes before leaving the 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 their toes toasty in the fall and winter. Indoor footwear can stay in the cubbies at school.

We will go outside every day to experience nature regardless of the weather. (A dangerous storm will keep us inside for safety reasons.) It is very important for children to experience all aspects of their world as the outdoor environment offers fresh air, play, freedom, and larger body movements.

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 their 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.

Please send your child to school in sturdy, weather-appropriate shoes that are comfortable for walking and playing. Flimsy shoes such as Crocs, flip flops, and sandals with no traction, and jellies are a hazard while climbing, running or jumping.

We suggest practical comfortable clothing, so your child is free to move and learn without feeling hindered by clothing. They will get dirty, so please do not send your child in overly fancy, or expensive clothing (party dresses) that will be a disappointment if it becomes stained. Please do not send your child with action figures on clothing or other distracting advertising or media features.

## **Clothing & Shoes - Children's House**

In the Children's House, children will need a pair of slippers to wear inside the classroom and rubber boots and outside shoes for playground use. These boots will stay at school. These boots are worn regardless of weather. It helps keep dirt/dust out of our classroom as well as gives all the children the opportunity to get ready for outside quickly and independently. It is important to give the younger children the opportunity to keep up with the rest of the class in the excitement of transitioning inside and outside.

Kindly label your child's clothing with their first name and last name.

We have a good rule of thumb: dress your children in as many layers as you are wearing, plus one more. If they become uncomfortable, they can remove one layer and still keep their core warm. A t-shirt over a long sleeve t-shirt is a good combination.

This is also a time of social development and they need as much freedom to express themselves as possible. Therefore, it is crucial that your child have good-quality raingear and insulated layers for cool days to be worn under the waterproof outerwear. Also, please send a sweater or jacket on all but the hottest days as the weather changes quickly in our region. Extra layers and warm socks are also helpful. If one child does not have appropriate gear, then this prevents the whole class from being able to go outside.

Comfortable elastic waists encourage success in the bathroom.

A warm hat that covers ears from wind in winter is essential and a soft cloth hat with a brim for sun protection is helpful during sunny days. If the forecast is for anything below 45 degrees, please send a warm, winter coat for your child. If the temperature drops lower, children must have a pair of mittens or gloves and a hat that covers their ears as well.

We work with heavy items and real glass and we want your child's feet to be protected. Outdoor and indoor shoes need to cover the child's foot completely – that means toes and heel covered.

## **Extra Clothing at School**

At the beginning of the year, you will be asked to send an emergency set of clothes to be kept at school.

In the Lower Elementary, 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 water on their 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.

In the Children's House, please send two sets of shirts, pants, underwear and socks to use as emergency clothes. It is not uncommon for a child to change their clothes two to three times during a day, either due to toileting accidents, water play or outdoor mud. If your child is still potty training, please include an additional pair of underwear and pants. Check your child's hook daily for clothes that need to be dried or laundered.

**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. Please mark your student's name in permanent ink on the bottom of the plant's pot and saucer

**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 – Children's House**

Your Children's House child may bring something to share one time per week. We do not have a set schedule and sharing begins after the first two weeks of school. If your child has a special book, object, project or collection related to a unit of study, they are 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.

**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, they are 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, realistic 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. Sports equipment, cards, clothing or medals/ribbons are also acceptable. 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 for Elementary**

In addition to school supplies, please send a ceramic plate and ceramic mug to school for your child to use at snack time. Please write your student's name on the bottom of each dish. Kindly avoid plates or mugs with cartoon, T.V. or movie characters.

### **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!

## **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. 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 each year in February. Tuition is 95% of our total income.

### **Re-Enrollment**

Returning families pay an annual, non-refundable re-enrollment fee 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 an enrollment agreement in March will be financially responsible for the year's tuition.

### **Tuition and Fees (See also "Enrollment Policies")**

Families pay a enrollment or re-enrollment 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 October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Tuition is due the first calendar day of each month and considered late on the 5<sup>th</sup> after 3:30pm. If you are writing a check on or after the 5<sup>th</sup>, please include the \$25.00 late fee.

Monthly tuition cost does not represent the number of hours that your child is at school but represents the costs of your child's education divided among 10 months. Therefore there are months (e.g. November, December, April and June) where children are not attending but full tuition is due. Tuition is not discounted for school or family vacation, illnesses or holidays.

*Payment Options Include:*

1. Place tuition payment in one of the two tuition boxes located in the Lower Elementary entry or inside the Children's entrance with a note in the memo of your check explaining what your payment is for.
2. Send your check in the mail to the Broadway location (address below) or use the mail slot at the Broadway location at your convenience (day or night)

**Cedar Tree Montessori**  
**2114 Broadway**  
**Bellingham, WA 98225**

3. Schedule monthly bank automated check using your banking institution (e-pay)
4. Direct transfer from your Whatcom Education Credit Union account to Cedar Tree's Whatcom Educational Credit Union account. Contact [administration@cedar-tree.org](mailto:administration@cedar-tree.org) for instructions on setting up this transfer.

**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 themselves, 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 \$75.00 per child for Children’s House, 100.00 per child for Lower Elementary and \$150.00 per child for Upper Elementary students, which covers materials for the school year. This fee is due at the beginning of the school year.

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

There is a \$100.00 P.E. 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 at the beginning of the school year. 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 91-1953283. The school can write a receipt or letter of acknowledgement for your tax records.

As a non-profit organization, we are eligible for grants and matching funds from employers with these types of programs. Please let us know if your employer has such a program when you make a donation or contribute financially to a fundraiser.

**Fundraising**

The entire cost of teaching your children cannot be met through tuition alone. Our need for fundraising is generated by a \$15,000 deficit between our revenue and expenses. Historically, our board has voted to stand behind their value to keep tuition costs low, which means that there is a need for fundraising. The question for years to come is whether to make tuition more accurately reflect our expenses (which would increase tuition and decrease the need for annual fundraising) or increase our fundraising efforts.

We have the following annual fundraisers:

- |             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| Jog-a-thon  | Fall           |
| Read-a-thon | Winter         |
| Carnival    | Spring         |
| Scrip       | Annual/Monthly |

We expect 100% participation in these fundraisers with donations of money or time. Past fundraising has allowed us to buy technology for Lower and Upper Elementary classrooms, and replace carpet, leaky windows, skylights and our old, gray siding with light green Hardie plank siding. In 2019, we purchased and installed new playground equipment for the student community with fundraised dollars. Your monetary contributions to any fundraising event are tax deductible. Your volunteer time for these events is much appreciated.

## **Elementary 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 performance skills with games, skits, interpreting children's literature and poetry, short plays and/or improv in addition to attending 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**

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 as 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 supportive 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. 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.

#### **P.E. Driving Volunteers – Lower & 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 before driving. You can use the copier in the main office if you wish.

#### **Reading Volunteers – Children’s House & Lower Elementary**

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 & 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 – Children’s House, Lower & 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 at the beginning of the school year.

### **Math Facts Volunteer**

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

Grade 2 – addition facts to 18

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

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.

### **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 - Elementary**

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.

### **School Observations – Children's House**

We welcome you to our Children's House preschool classroom. We invite you to observe the classroom in-action and see the methods, materials and culture.

As an observer, we ask that you read through these guidelines—they will assist you in understanding the Montessori classroom, provide you with the information to have an enriching observation experience, and allow the children to work within their environment undisturbed.

You will notice that most of the classroom is "sized" for the children in it. Shelves are low to ground and designed to be at the child's eye/hand level, chairs and tables are smaller to accommodate "younger" bodies and to make the children feel at home. You will not see multiple desks and chairs, but instead see a classroom environment that reflects how children really work, play, and learn providing work spaces for individual and group activities at tables, on rugs, mats, and pillows.

Montessori classrooms welcome observations of parents and visitors, but usually not during the critical first three weeks of school. This is a time when the children begin to familiarize themselves with a new routine and a new environment. They are just learning new ground rules and the social aspects of sharing the classroom with many new "friends". For this reason, we ask parents to avoid classroom observations right as the new year begins. Feel free to move to a different part of the room during your observation and do take a close look at the activities on the shelves and that the children are working with. In order to see the classroom as it normally operates, it is important to remain as unobtrusive and quiet around the children as possible. The children are, by nature, curious and will often engage a visitor in conversation. Please feel free to tell them, "I'm just being a watcher today!"

*Look for these key elements of a Montessori classroom:*

- Secure sense of independence
- Degree of concentration demonstrated
- Ability to choose one's own work
- Respectful of each other and the classroom
- Positive social interactions
- Children of varying ages working together
- Peaceful and calm body movements

### **Events**

Each month there is an opportunity 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 they have 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. 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 carnival fundraiser and our science fair. Please visit our website ([www.cedar-tree.org](http://www.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 a schoolwide email and/or 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.

### Emergency Items

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

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

- 2 small, sealed bottles of water (8-12 oz. size)
- 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

#### *Inclement Weather*

You and your child's safety is our highest priority. The decision about whether your child will attend school always rests in your hands. We follow the Bellingham Public Schools decision to close school. They will post their decision to close school on their website: <http://bellingshamschools.org/>. You can also tune to local media 790 AM, 96.5 FM, 104.1 FM. We will send an email to all families by 6:30 am to report a school closure. When Bellingham Public Schools have a delayed start, due to severe weather, Cedar Tree will start on time and have a regularly scheduled day.

In the event that Bellingham Public Schools are closed on a day that Cedar Tree has school, we will make an independent determination about whether or not to close school. We do not take this decision lightly and understand the impact that this decision has on families. Our school community lives across Whatcom and Skagit Counties. We will make the best determination based on the factors below and will always stand behind a parent's decision to keep their child home from school due to safety. We will send an email to all families by 6:30 am to report a school closure.

With the goal of being consistent and judicious we consider the following when we decide if we should close school. In any situation where we decide to close school we will send an email to all families by 6:30 am.

1. We will close school if we believe that the weather presents considerable safety challenges for the majority of our families. We will determine this by getting road conditions from different locations around Bellingham and Whatcom County.
2. We will close school if there is enough snow/ice at school to make it dangerous for people to drive, drop off and/or walk to school.
3. We will close school if the weather has caused power outages for a period of time that prevents us from heating our school building.
4. We will close school if there are predictions of snowfall during the day that might pose a danger for pick up.

If there is snow on the ground, we're going to want to play in it! Please label ahead of time gloves and hats as there will plenty of them around! A warm layer under a wind/water-protective shell is ideal.

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.

### **Immunizations**

We are required to have current immunization records on file for each student. Parents are asked to provide these up to date records with their enrollment/re-enrollment paperwork each year.

#### *MMR Vaccine Exemption Law Change 2019*

In 2019, the Washington State Legislature passed a bill that removes the personal and philosophical option to exempt children from the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine required for school and child care entry.

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Schools/Immunization/ExemptionLawChange>

The bill went into effect July 28, 2019 and applies to public and private schools and child cares. The law removes the option for a personal/philosophical exemption to the MMR vaccine requirement for schools and child cares. It also requires employees and volunteers at child care centers to provide immunization records indicating they have received the MMR vaccine or proof of immunity. Religious and medical exemptions are still honored.

### **Toileting**

Teachers will assist children as needed. Please bring in a Ziploc bag with your child's name clearly labeled on it and include a full change of clothing.

Please check to be sure that your child has extra clothing throughout the school year. Keep this stocked up – especially pants and underwear, as the transition to school often creates a brief setback in potty training.

Also, since we work with water daily, it is common for your child's clothing to become wet from working with water. Look for plastic bags on hooks with wet clothes to be taken home and laundered.

### **Head Injury Protocol**

If we have reason to believe that a child has experienced an injury to their head or neck (either someone witnessed an injury to their head/neck or a child comes and shares that they have hit their head/neck) we need to determine:

Whether a child has symptoms that are consistent with a concussion.

Whether it is safe for a child to return to play.

#### *Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion*

A child may appear:

- Dazed or Confused

- Answers questions slowly

- Loses consciousness (even briefly)

- Shows a behavior or personality change

- Cannot recall events prior to or after the fall/hit to the head.

Ask questions to determine if the child is experiencing any of the following symptoms:

<i>Physical Symptoms (Body)</i>	<i>Cognitive Symptoms (Mind)</i>	<i>Emotional Symptoms (Feelings)</i>	<i>Maintenance Symptoms (Energy)</i>
Headache	Fogginess	Irritability (Grumpy)	Fatigue (Body is Tired)
Nausea	Feeling "Slowed Down"	Sadness	Drowsy (Mind is Tired)
Vomiting	Trouble Concentrating	More Emotional than Usual	Sleeping Less than Usual
Balance Problems	Trouble Remembering	Nervous or Anxious	Sleeping More than Usual
Dizziness	Change in Smell		Trouble Falling or Staying Asleep
Sensitivity to Light	Change in Taste		Change in Appetite
Sensitivity to Noise	Ringing in the Ear		Change in Energy Levels
Visual Problems			
Numbness or Tingling			
Neck Pain			

Determining if the brain was hurt is complex and therefore every head injury should be treated like a serious injury until a doctor says it's not.

When a child complains of any of the above symptoms and/or a staff observe any of the above symptoms after a fall or injury to his/her head, staff will follow the below protocol:

1. Call 911 in all circumstances where symptoms worsen or if a staff feels that medical support is needed to treat the child.
2. Treat swelling and pain with an ice pack.
3. Medications
4. 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.

### **Handling or Dispensing Medication**

The Washington State Health Department does not allow school staff to administer any prescription drugs or over-the-counter medicine unless a specific procedure is followed. Aspirin, cough drops, lozenges, inhalers, Epi-pens, antiseptic cream and even vitamins and supplements are considered medications.

If parents ask us to give medication to a child, parents must fill out a Medication Form indicating the following information. This form can be found in the office.

- 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 this information on file before we can administer any prescription or non-prescription medications. Medication must be in the original container labeled with the student's name, name of medication and dosage information. For non-prescription drugs, we must also have a doctor's consent form.

Children may self-administer only if:

1. Parents have filled out a medication form with information stated above
2. Parents have secured a written doctor's permission (for non-prescription drugs only) AND
3. All labeling information indicated above is marked clearly on the container

Sunscreen is not considered a medication and may be administered with oral consent of the parent.

### **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 they have 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 home your child 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.

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 anti-bacterial soap at school. Anti-bacterial soap irritates many young children's skin. According to the health department, anti-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 their 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 during field trips, while engaged in school activities and while traveling to and from school during field trips. For example, if your child breaks their 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. Exposure to physical or sexual abuse and other violent acts can impact children and their ability to learn.

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, we also address personal and physical safety, safety at home, and calling 911 in emergencies.

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

During a child's education, evidence of possible 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.

None of the teachers are trained as special education teachers and cannot fully address the needs of all special needs students, beyond simple accommodations. Children deserve to know why they are not able to do the things other children do with ease. Without a reason, children often begin to label themselves negatively. Learning how the brain works and what the positive attributes of a particular learning disability or difference empower children to learn work arounds, celebrate their brains and assist teachers in adjusting work to fit each particular diagnosis.

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 them 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 themselves 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 Director 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 their placement. See the section under enrollment and re-enrollment for additional information.

## **School Policies**

### **Accident Policy**

Minor accidents at school shall be treated promptly by staff according to first aid protocol and state guidelines. Any injury that requires follow up of any kind shall be reported to the child's parent, via phone, email or face to face, the day of the accident. 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 the nearest available 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. We 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 students 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 they are exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and they have difficulty defending themselves. 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, ability 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.

### **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)

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. We value students from diverse environments. We allot a certain percentage of spots to children from non-Montessori backgrounds, each year. 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 to 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/Transportation of Students Policy**

See page 16 for information on Field Trips and Transportation of Students

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

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

### **Non-Violence Policy**

Cedar Tree strives to maintain a campus that is 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 their 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 their 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 their 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

### **Pets in the Classroom**

We have witnessed the many social and developmental benefits that result in children having pets in their prepared environment when it is supervised and intentional. For these reasons classroom teachers may choose to host an animal in their classroom when there is no negative impact to the health of students within that classroom.

### **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. Cedar Tree will provide a specific permission form if we have photos that we would like to publish on our website or Facebook page. This permission form is a case-by-case use.

### **Student Support 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.

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.

### **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 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 their 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.

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 compromises the safety or the needs of the other students in the class, the Director may dismiss a student without asking for additional support first.

### **Student Behavior**

At Cedar Tree, we understand that behavior is a means of communication for our children and our role, as educators, is to help identify what need they are trying to meet and how to best help them adapt their behavior to meet that need. As a staff, we work collaboratively with parents and other support services to find a plan that will best support the child. We have resources to reference for parents for occupational, physical, speech and mental health therapies. If you have additional resources to add to our list, please share them with our staff.

In the case of behavior that adversely affects the operation of the classroom, the teacher must intervene directly. Certain behaviors require immediate, direct intervention. Swearing, hitting, kicking, biting, or other violent behaviors are not permitted. The child will be removed from the situation immediately to prevent harm to others or themselves. The parents of children involved in such an incident will be contacted as soon as reasonable. The Director has the authority to take additional measures to prevent reoccurrences of the behavior, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

In cases where there are frequent or extreme 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.

### **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. Cedar Tree has a "transition fee" equal to one month's tuition 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.

### **Conflict Resolution Between Children**

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 their 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, they must come up with a counter suggestion until both can agree. Later, we check in to see how the solution worked.

### **Procedure for Conflict Resolution Between Parents and Teachers**

We expect that at some point you will have concerns or experience conflict during your years at Cedar Tree. When concerns arise, we ask that you share your experience with your lead teacher so that they are aware and can be a part of solution building. If you have ongoing concerns or feel that you were unable to reach an agreement about resolving conflicts, please direct your concerns to our Director, Kim Feerer. Cedar Tree has a board member designated to hear issues concerns or complaints that have not been resolved by first consulting the lead teacher and director.

### **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.

Our employee policy contains rules to prevent sexual mistreatment of students and employees. These include fingerprint and backgrounds 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**

We are 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 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, gender identity, 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.

### **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 them a life-long passion for learning.