



Parent Guidebook

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www.collegeoak.org

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Welcome!

We are an independent, non-profit school dedicated to providing preschool and kindergarten aged children with a nurturing, safe and stimulating environment. This parent guidebook will help you understand our programs, policies and schedules. Please keep this guidebook for future reference; we will notify you of any changes or updates. We're happy you are part of the College Oak Montessori School (COMS) community.

College Oak Montessori School offers a program based on Dr. Maria Montessori's philosophy of development and education regarding young children. Our goal is to promote independence and responsibility, while allowing children to experience the joy of learning at an early age.

We welcome children ages 18 months through 6 years of age, which includes kindergarten.

About Montessori Education

Montessori education has been used worldwide for over one hundred years. Dr. Maria Montessori utilized her scientific background to form her philosophy by carefully observing young children. Dr. Montessori noted that children learn best through self-discovery, that they enjoy real work including caring for themselves and their environment. Dr. Montessori designed a "prepared environment", with specific materials to explore, and provided child-sized tools and furniture so children would feel comfortable.

Rather than telling children what to do and when, Dr. Montessori recommended that adults (called guides rather than teachers) "follow the child". Children, given freedom to move around the classroom, select activities of interest, explore and make discoveries.

By allowing children to choose their work, they are able to tap their natural curiosity and self motivation which leads to self-confidence and positive self-image. Of course, freedom requires boundaries such as respect for others and care for the environment which classroom guides and staff model. Children thrive in this rich, stimulating environment. At COMS we often hear children say, "I did it myself!"

Classrooms

COMS has four classrooms named after trees found on our campus:

Willow class welcomes children 18 months through 2 years old

Mulberry class welcomes children 2 to 3 years old

Maple class welcomes children ages 3 to 6 years old, including kindergarten

Sequoia class welcomes children ages 3 to 6 years old, including kindergarten

Children have the opportunity for individual and group work, child-to-child teaching, problem solving, and socialization allowing their self-confidence, creativity and compassion to grow.

Schedule of the day

8:00 am	campus opens for “before care” for all classes
8:30 am	school day begins for Willow and Mulberry classes
9:00 am	school day begins for Maple and Sequoia classes <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Work times inside● Snacks● Group circles● Outside play times● Lunch served● Nap time for Willow, Mulberry and younger Sequoia/Maple children as needed
3:00 pm	school day ends for Willow and Mulberry classes Extended day aftercare available
3:30 pm	school day ends for Maple and Sequoia classes Extended day aftercare available
5:30 pm	campus closes

A limited number of partial days are available in Mulberry, Maple and Sequoia classes. Children will leave after lunch at 12:30 pm for Mulberry and 1:00 pm for Sequoia and Maple.

During **nap time**, Willow and Mulberry classrooms are converted into calm, quiet spaces. All children in these two classes nap, while younger Maple and Sequoia children are invited to nap as needed through pre-arrangement. COMS provides nap mats and children bring their own nap supplies including a fitted crib sheet to cover their mat.

Before and Aftercare

Extended care is offered beginning at 8:00 am and ends at 5:00 pm for Willow/Mulberry and 5:30 pm for Maple/Sequoia. The additional fee for extended care may be added to tuition as a prepaid flat rate billed monthly or purchased as needed on a drop-in basis billed in quarter-hour increments. Please see the Tuition Schedule for current rates for these programs. Charges for extended care are applied for children arriving 5 minutes before their scheduled start time and departing more than 5 minutes after their scheduled departure time.

Open all year

Our **school year** runs from mid-August through the end of May/beginning of June. We incorporate a flex week at the end of each school year to make up for unforeseen campus closures such as poor air quality, extreme weather, etc. If we have no school closures during a given school year (let's hope for that!), campus is closed during flex week.

Summer school is offered in sessions. During our enrollment period, usually in early March, summer school dates and sign up are available.

Campus is closed for major holidays (including a week for Thanksgiving, two weeks for Winter Break and a week for Spring Break), a week before the school year and a week before summer school begins to allow for campus restoration.

Classes meet Monday through Thursday.

Weeks with a Monday holiday, classes are held Tuesday through Friday.

We make every effort to remain open as scheduled throughout the year. In the event that campus is closed due to unexpected circumstances such as wildfires, extreme weather or pandemic restrictions, we will make up days on Fridays and/or during flex week. We reserve the right to close campus, at the discretion of the Director, for the safety of our students and staff.

Arrival and departure

Bringing your child to school can be an exciting part of your day. Your child enters an environment created with child-size furniture, a personalized cubby and environments to explore. Some children are comfortable when they walk onto campus, while others need more time to adjust to the new environment. Some children may experience separation anxiety (especially when a parent or loved one is still on campus) but such anxiety dissipates once the children are engaged in the classroom or outside. Your child's lead guide (teacher) is available to help at drop off time. You are also welcome to call the office if you would like an update on your child's day.

After your arrival at school please walk your child to the play yard or classroom where the other children are gathered. Make contact with one of the supervising guides so they may greet your child. When picking up your child, please also make contact with your child's guide.

Each classroom has a slightly different drop off and pick up routine. Your child's guide will provide you with information and instructions to help make these transitions easier for your child and for you.

For your child's protection, we will release children only to those people listed on your child's Emergency/Release Form. You may also provide written permission to the office in advance of your child being picked up. In an emergency, you may call the school and grant permission. Anyone picking up a child from COMS should be prepared to show identification to a staff member.

Check in/out

Children are signed in/out of school in the front office using our electronic tablets. Each authorized person signing in/out must have a unique PIN to do this. Our office staff will help your family set these PINs at time of enrollment in **Curacubby**, the third-party platform we use for check in/out, registration, billing and more. In order to expedite drop off and pick up, you may authorize administrative staff to electronically check in/out your child.

Suggestions for Drop Off:

Clearly communicate with your child prior to arriving:

- Let your child know where you will say good-bye (inside the classroom door, next to the gate, etc.)
- Let your child know what you will do just before you depart (“I’ll give you one big hug and a kiss then I’ll be going”, etc.) - then do it! Parents who linger after saying good-bye may prolong their child’s sadness.
- Be enthusiastic and positive about school (“I know you will have so much fun today. I can’t wait to hear about it when I pick you up after school.”)

Speak with your child’s lead guide if you would like additional suggestions for transitions.

Food

Food is an important part of our program. All snacks, lunch and drinks are provided and included in tuition. COMS has a healthy food policy using wholesome, fresh foods with no refined sugar or sugary items such as cookies, chocolate, etc. We have a commercial kitchen on campus where snacks and lunch are prepared.

Snacks are offered in the morning and afternoon in all classes and again at aftercare. Snacks include fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, whole grain crackers/cereals/breads, dips such as hummus and cream cheese, toasted seeds and more.

Lunch is vegetarian and consists of a main dish, side dish and fresh fruit. Lunch is freshly prepared daily on campus using wholesome ingredients. Plant-based milk is offered and water is always available. A monthly menu is posted in the office and emailed to families.

During lunch, children are served “family style” by our staff, allowing children to request more servings of the foods they like. Grace and courtesies are encouraged and children are responsible for cleaning their plates after eating. When eating with friends, children will often try new foods. This important time of day allows children to enjoy a meal together, share time with friends and eat delicious food.

We are a nut-free campus. Please communicate with the administration if your child has food allergies.

Filtered water is available for the children to drink throughout the day. We encourage children to use their special cup or mug to serve themselves water whenever they are thirsty. Outside, children have their own water bottles or cups.

Clothing

Clothing worn to school should allow freedom of movement and be able to get a little dirty. Our indoor and outdoor environments are inviting to children and may also cause wear and tear on your child's clothing (paint, dirt, sand, etc.) Help your child select comfortable and functional footwear that will allow running, jumping, climbing, and other activities. We have found it best if shoes have some sort of strap to hold them onto the foot. Please label all clothing with your child's name.

Children play outside year-round and we keep classroom windows open for increased airflow as much as possible. Layers of clothing allow children to find the right mix of clothing to feel comfortable through the changing temperatures of each day. Rain gear (jacket and boots) will allow children to explore our fabulous campus when the weather is wet.

Children are encouraged to attend school in "character free" clothes and shoes (no super-heroes, action figures, Disney characters, princesses, etc.)

During warm and sunny weather, if you would like your child to wear **sunscreen**, please apply it before arriving at school. After lunch, staff will reapply sunscreen to your child if the following two criteria are met: 1) you have a signed release on file at school and 2) you have provided sunscreen with your child's name on the container (please no aerosol spray) to keep at school.

Health and Illness

Our highest priority is your child's well-being. In order to be at school, children must:

- be able to function normally
- be fever-free for at least 24 hours without medication
- not have vomited in the last 24 hours
- not have heavy nasal discharge, a constant cough or symptoms of a communicable illness

Before coming to school each morning, please answer the following questions about your child:

1. Does my child feel well enough to participate comfortably in daily activities?

Yes - we will see you at drop off!

Maybe - speak with your child's teacher about your concerns.

No - keep your child home to rest and recover; let us know.

2. Does my child have an illness or symptoms of a potential illness that may affect the other children and staff?

Yes - keep your child home to rest and recover, seeing medical assistance as needed; let us know.

Maybe - speak with your child's teacher and/or administrative staff before leaving your child for the day.

No - we will see you at drop off.

Illness may come on suddenly. Our staff members will assess your child throughout the day and contact you should your child become ill, have symptoms of illness or is seriously injured. If your child

has a medical emergency, we will also call 911 and a staff member will accompany your child until you or your designated authorized person is able to do so. You will be expected to assume responsibility for any resultant expense associated with the emergency not covered in whole or in part by the school's insurance.

Keep contact information up to date so we may reach you in case of an emergency.

Children who become ill at school must be picked up promptly. It is the staff's prerogative to make the determination that a child is too ill to remain on campus.

Contact the school immediately if your child has a communicable illness.

We follow the latest state, local and federal guidelines regarding communicable illness including COVID. Check with administrative staff for the latest requirements regarding return to school.

All intermittent healthcare, first aid and incidental medical services (IMS) shall be provided by College Oak Montessori School (COMS) staff, including but not limited to the Director and Qualified Teachers. IMS include carrying out medical orders when a child's physician has determined that a layperson can be trained and safely carry out the order. Common IMS include:

1. Blood glucose monitoring and administering insulin and/or glucagon injections
2. Gastronomy tube (G-tube) feeding and care
3. Administering
 - a. Inhaled medication
 - b. EpiPen Jr. and EpiPen
 - c. Anti-seizure medication

Our complete IMS Plan of Operation is available. Please ask for a copy if this pertains to your family.

For children needing short-term medication, the following criteria must be met:

1. Medication in original packaging
2. Child's name on medication
3. Written permission and instructions from parent/guardian

All medication must be handed directly to staff for safe storage. DO NOT send medication with your child.

Minor accidents such as scrapes, cuts, bumps, etc. may occur while your child is at school. When these require first aid, you will be notified with a copy of our "Treatment Report".

Our emergency preparedness plan describes actions to be taken by staff and children in the event of a man-made or natural disaster. Classes take part in regularly scheduled drills including evacuation of buildings. In case of a severe earthquake or other disaster, children will be kept at school until a parent or other authorized adult specified on the child's Emergency/Release card arrives and signs the child out. If campus is unsafe, we will evacuate to Finley Center across the street.

What to bring to school

Your child will need the following items for use at school:

Change of clothes - all children keep at least one complete change of clothing on campus, including underwear and socks.

Mug (Sequoia, Maple and Mulberry classes only) - your child will use his/her own ceramic mug for drinking water throughout the day. Mugs are washed daily.

Nap supplies (Willow, Mulberry and some Maple/Sequoia children) - All nappers need a fitted crib sheet to cover their nap mat. Your child's guide will help with other needed items. Nap supplies are sent home on Thursday for laundering and should return with your child on Monday.

Diapers/pull ups - If your child is not yet potty trained, please bring a supply of diapers/pull ups and wipes. Your child's guide will advise you when supplies need to be replenished.

Personal items such as toys, jewelry, money, etc. are best kept at home. These treasures may break or get lost at school.

Sharing items such as objects from nature, photographs, books and artwork are encouraged. Your child's guide will discuss how and when sharing takes place in your child's classroom.

Lost and found is located in the front office. By labeling your child's clothing and personal items, we will be able to return missing items quickly.

Changes at home can alter behavior in your children. By keeping your child's teacher informed, you help us serve your child better. A parent going on a business trip, a death in the family (including pets), medical issues involving someone close to your child and separation/divorce are a sampling of events that may affect your child. All information shared with staff is kept confidential.

Communication between school and home is essential. Please check the following for communication and information:

- All school and class-specific newsletters
- Big white board in the front office
- Office bulletin boards
- In-class communication boards
- Emails from staff

Your child's guides are preparing the classroom environment and helping children with transitions immediately before and after school. This is not the best time to conference, but a quick exchange may be appropriate. To convey important and timely information to your child's guide, you may relay a message via office staff, leave a note, send an email (understanding guides do not check email while with children) or write information on an in-class communication board.

Parent/guide conferences are scheduled twice each year in fall and late spring. At these meetings you will be able to discuss your child's development and activities as well as confer about concerns or questions. Your child's guide is also available via email, phone or in person by appointment through the rest of the school year.

Paperwork, forms and other information

Registration typically takes place in March for the following school year and summer. For each school year and summer program a registration agreement is required and will be offered to current families as well as families on our waiting list. Priority registration is given in the following order:

1. Currently enrolled students
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students
3. Siblings of alumni
4. Waiting list in order of appearance on Waiting List

Enrolling a new child at College Oak Montessori School requires taking a campus tour to help determine if our campus is a good fit for the child's family. Interested parents then complete an application and submit a deposit. Upon acceptance, numerous forms are due to comply with state regulations including an Admission Agreement, various forms to help us understand the child better, and a copy of the child's immunization records. Required documents must be completed and returned by due dates to allow processing time prior to the child starting at COMS.

Please see our Tuition Schedule for the most current information regarding fees and payments.

Tuition rates are based on the current expenses to operate a high quality program for the entire school year. Families are, therefore, required to pay full tuition regardless of school holidays, absences due to illness or family vacations, etc. Children enrolling after the first day of school will have prorated tuition based on the number of school days remaining in the school year.

School year - each child is enrolled for the entire school year. Annual tuition is divided into ten (10) equal installments and payable according to the following schedule. The first installment is due June 1st (less deposit made at time of enrollment) with the remaining nine (9) installments due the 1st of each month September through May.

Summer school - summer school is generally billed in mid-June and mid-July.

Extended care fees are due and payable on the 1st of each month and will be billed along with tuition.

It is our hope that all family/school relationships will be supportive and beneficial. If for some reason a relationship is not mutually beneficial, COMS reserves the right to refuse service.

Should it become necessary to withdraw your child from COMS, thirty days notice is required.

Tuition discounts are given for siblings concurrently enrolled (10% for second sibling, 15% for third sibling). Tuition discounts are applied to the sibling with the lesser financial obligation. This family discount does not apply to extended care or other fees.

Late pick-up charge of \$20.00 per 5 minutes is applied after 5:30 pm.

Other fees are incurred for late payments, returned checks and credit card processing fees (cash, checks and debit cards/ EFTs are free.)

COMS does not discriminate in employment or services rendered with respect to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, or political beliefs.

Volunteering

Volunteering helps make our school a thriving community. Parents and other family members have opportunities to volunteer including special events, campus maintenance, classroom support (including weekly laundry of placemats), fundraising and Board of Directors participation to name a few.

COMS is a non-profit organization governed by a Board of Directors consisting of staff, parents and community members.

Community Care Licensing (1450 Neotomas Ave., Ste. 100, Santa Rosa, CA 95405, 707-588-5026) issues our license. Parents have the right to call or write to the agency if fault is found in the operation of the facility or treatment of their child. Further, the licensing agency has inspection authority to interview clients (including children and staff) and to inspect and audit client and facility records without prior consent. The licensing agency shall have the authority to observe the physical condition of the client, including conditions which could indicate abuse, neglect or inappropriate placement and to have a licensed medical professional examine the client.

Please note the important information from the state of California on the following pages.