



# Parkside Montessori Family Handbook 2023-2024

*“Follow the Child.”*  
-Maria Montessori

June 2023

## Mission Statement

**Parkside Montessori:** Guiding a love of learning through child-directed, hands-on experiences in a multi-age setting.



Within the Parkside Montessori Program, all religions, races, and cultures are respected. We aim to include a variety of cultural experiences within our program. Our environment maintains a neutral perspective; however, religion and spirituality are discussed. Parents will be notified in advance of planned discussions regarding religion and spirituality.

## Vision/Collective Commitments

### Vision

At Parkside Montessori we envision a school community where.

- a. Children are the center of our practice and are encouraged to be life-long, independent learners.
- b. Children develop self-confidence and are proud of who they are.
- c. Children are inspired and encouraged to follow a natural curiosity for learning.
- d. Respectful interactions, empathy, understanding, kindness, and acceptance are commonly practiced by all community members.
- e. A global perspective is encouraged and fostered.
- f. Risk-taking in learning is encouraged and opportunities are presented to pursue excellence for each individual at his/her own level.
- g. Children develop self-motivation and confidently persevere through challenges.
- h. Collaboration between students, teachers, parents, and the community is common in our day-to-day interactions.

### Collective Commitments

In our pursuit of our Mission and Vision, the Parkside Montessori Team commits to.

- a. Embodying the Montessori philosophy of education
- b. Developing positive relationships
- c. Fostering a freedom of curiosity
- d. Providing consistent communication with the Parkside Montessori Community.
- e. Stewardship of
  - i. Self-awareness
  - ii. Cultural awareness
  - iii. Community awareness
  - iv. Environmental awareness



## Montessori At a Glance

All teachers, Montessori included, draw from a common source: the child and our “best practices” for teaching and learning. There are, however, unique aspects to a Montessori environment.

- **Multi-year age span** – (3-6 years, 6-9 years, 9-12 years)
- **Individually prepared lessons** – small group lessons (2-6 children)
- **Uninterrupted work periods (2-3 hours)** during which the child schedules work
- Hands on materials for self-teaching
- **‘Cosmic Education’** -describes the unique Montessori curriculum which gives the child a foundational sense of perspective of the interconnectedness of the universe.
- **Student Assessment** – assessment based on observation, student work journals, portfolios, and meetings with teacher



## General Information-Casa Dei Bambini

The Parkside Casa dei Bambini is for children aged three to six, Preschool and Kindergarten. The Casa dei Bambini program components include the following:

- Practical Life Exercises
- Sensorial Exercises
- Math
- Language Arts
- Cultural

## General Information-ELMO

The Parkside Elementary Montessori (ELMO) Program is for children aged six through eleven, grades one through six. Parkside Montessori combines the Alberta Education curriculum and the Montessori method. For the Alberta curriculum for Science and Social Studies in Grades 1-3, the curriculum covered rotates in a three-year cycle. Students learn within the same curricular theme and are assessed on expectations at the grade level that they are enrolled in. Grades 4-6 students cover the Alberta curriculum for Science and Social Studies that is designated for their grade level.

The Elementary Montessori program includes the following subject areas: Advanced Practical Life, Art, Botany, Cultural Geography, Health Sciences, History, Language Arts, Math, Matter and Astronomy, Music, Peace & Cosmic Education, Physical Geography, and Zoology.



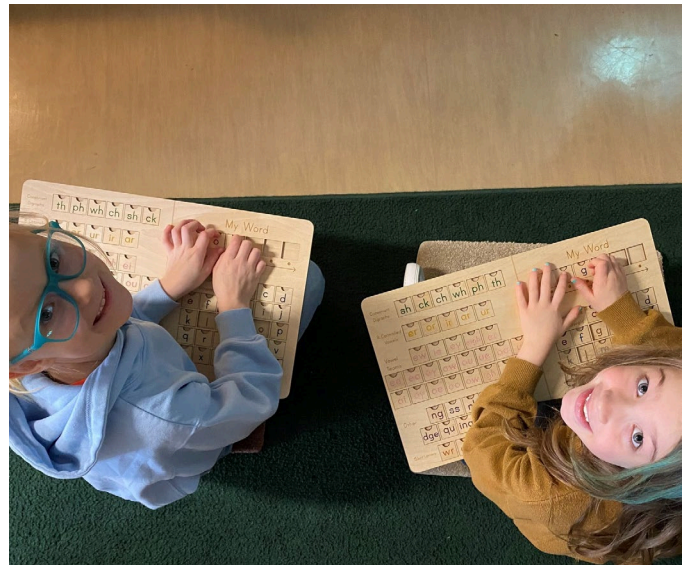
## The School Day

The school doors will open at 8:15 am. Early access to classrooms to complete homework or to work on projects needs to be arranged with the homeroom teacher. At specific times throughout the year school sports practices may be scheduled before and after school. Parents will be informed if a student will be staying longer than 3:11 pm at Parkside Montessori.

**All doors except the main doors by the office are locked during the school day.** All other doors at Parkside Montessori are opened by supervisors when needed for student entrance. This is for the safety of our students.

Parents and guardians are welcome to visit the school office at any time during the school day to book appointments with school staff. Anyone entering the school is required to follow the school procedures and practices and is asked to sign in at the office.

Please know that we will not give access to students to people we do not know. As much as possible, please make sure your child and their teacher are aware of who is picking them up at the end of the school day.



## Absent/Late Students

We understand that sometimes situations arise where a parent/guardian may be late. Please call the school office to advise of absences & late pick-ups. All students who are late will enter through the main office door when they arrive.

## Communication of Student Learning

Observations and student work sampling are the most prevalent methods of evaluating and assessing student progress in a Montessori program. As well students are assessed through school, division, and provincial tools. It is important that you feel informed about your child's progress. The primary source of information about your child's learning will be their homeroom teacher. Please connect with your child's teacher if you would like additional information on your child's progress.

Your child will receive a report card three times during the year. After each report card term, we will host Celebrations of Learning. This is an opportunity for you to meet with your child and their teacher to take a firsthand look at the learning your child is completing in their classroom. These are student lead celebrations, and it is important that you bring your child with you.

## Family Involvement

The Montessori program is based on the notion that family, working with the school, will provide the optimal success for each child. Parental involvement in the school life ensures the development of this partnership. Involvement is defined at multiple levels and begins when a child is registered into our program.



## Volunteers

Volunteers are utilized in the classroom for student and teacher support, special events, field trips, cultural presentations, and guest speakers. Volunteers are often needed for various tasks within the school year. Please be advised that a current Vulnerable Sector check is required for parents to work with students. A letter is available at the office to request the check at the RCMP with no cost to the volunteer. For some activities and Child Welfare check may be required as well.

## Field Trips

Dr. Montessori said that primary age children explore with their hands, elementary age children explore with their feet. She was referring to the need of this age child to 'go out' and explore the larger world. Students extend classroom learning through community resources, such as a trip to the museum, business, hospital, natural environment, etc. These experiences are a vital component of the program and will be arranged at various time throughout the year as a complement to our program. Permission slips are always sent home in advance of field trips. The student's permission slips **must** be returned for the child to participation and recommended health procedures will be followed.

## School Communication

We produce a Parkside Montessori Newsletter each month. This newsletter contains general information pertaining to the school, calendars, classroom updates and more. Please subscribe on our school webpage to receive the monthly newsletter. During the month each classroom teacher provides classroom notices via email updates. Our newsletters are also posted on our school web page. Each teacher will also send home a weekly email to parents that includes school information. Like our school Facebook page and follow us on Instagram to receive additional updates.



## Nutrition

Montessori philosophy encourages children to eat healthy foods. If your child is staying for the whole day, they will require a snack in addition to lunch. For student safety, there are no microwaves located in classrooms. If you are interested in sending a special snack for your child's class, please check with your child's teacher.

## Extra Clothes

Your child will require a change of clothing (in a large Ziploc bag with your child's name) and a pair of non-marking running shoes to be left at school. The child's name must be clearly printed on all items. This applies to students in all grade levels.

## Library

Once a week the children will have the opportunity to visit school library. During our first few visits we will be learning about how to use the library properly. After successful practice the children will begin to take a book home for the week to share with his/her family. Cost of books that are damaged or go missing while at home, will be the responsibility of the family. If a child has an overdue book, they will not be allowed to take a book out of the library until it is returned. Each student is provided with a book bag, this bag must be returned each week with the library book.



## Illness/Administration of Medication

For the overall health of our school community, if your child is sick, please do not send them to school. Children who develop symptoms while at school will be sent home.

Any child who needs medication or has allergies **must** have a '**Permission to Administer Medication**' form filled out for medication to be provided to the child at school. Medication will be administered at the school office. **This form requires a doctor's signature and explanation of the medication to be administered. It is sent home prior to the start of each year so that parents have it handy for future use.**

## Bicycles, Scooters, Rollerblades

Students who bring their bicycles to school must **wear a helmet**. All bikes must be parked in the racks provided. Each child is responsible for his/her bicycle and should lock it. The school cannot accept responsibility for bicycles on the school grounds. Students using rollerblades and/or scooters are expected to wear proper headgear/safety gear as well. Bicycles and scooters are to be walked on school property.



## Technology Use

Parkside Montessori supports the use of technology to enhance learning opportunities for students. Items such as cell phones, MP3 players and electronic games, however, are subject to getting lost, stolen, or broken. The school is not responsible for any items that may be lost stolen or broken. If these items are brought to school and it is interfering with the learning environment, they will be put away by the child's teacher and given back to the student at the end of the day. **If you do need to contact your child during the school day, please call the main school office.** With the growth and implementation of technology in the classrooms, teachers may, from time to time, invite students to bring devices for specific projects or days. Should this occur, parents will be notified in advance, and we request that all devices are labelled with the ~~student's~~ name.

## Internet Use

Parkside Montessori students will have School District access to the Internet to conduct research and to communicate with others. The network services will be given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. **Students who do not use their access to the Internet appropriately will lose their privileges.** The district requires a "Network Resources Acceptable Use Protocol" to be read and signed by students and parents of students in grades PreK-6.

## Professional Learning Fridays

On some Fridays throughout the school year, there are full days where students do not attend school. Please make a note of these dates on your family calendar so that alternate childcare arrangements can be made.

During Professional Learning time, our staff meet as teams to discuss student learning and develop strategies to further impact student success. This is a systematic look at what needs to be taught to meet the Alberta Education goals, how we are teaching it, how we will assess if it has been taught and what are we going to do if it has not been learned.

This is a critical time for our staff to have professional conversations, engage in learning opportunities and further develop our practice to create the best schooling experience for your child at Parkside Montessori!

## Outside Recess Breaks

There are two recess breaks in the school day. We believe that these breaks are important for students. Students are expected to go outside during recess breaks unless they have an injury that prohibits outdoor activities. There are teacher supervisors on the playground during the recess breaks. In the case of inclement weather, recess breaks will occur indoors. The temperature and wind chill are checked regularly in winter to ensure that the prevailing conditions are suitable for outdoor play. If the combined temperature and wind chill is -25 degrees or lower students will be kept inside. *Please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for the day's weather conditions before they leave for school.*

## Student Dress Code

Students are expected to dress in a positive manner, conducive to the elementary learning environment. In alignment with the Grande Prairie Public School District Administrative Procedure regarding student dress, the following elements are prohibited,

1. Clothing that is offensive, discriminatory, suggestive, violent, gory or has inappropriate language or graphics.
2. Clothing that promotes alcohol or drug use
3. Clothing that reveals undergarments
4. Clothing that exposes the midriff, breasts, buttocks

Students who need to have a dress code concern addressed should be handled in the following manner,

- Student will be asked to put on their own alternative clothing, if already available at the school.
- Student will be provided with temporary clothing to be dressed more appropriately for the remainder of the day.
- If necessary, students' parents may be called during the school day to bring alternative clothing for the student to wear for the remainder of the day.
- Staff will support students by ensuring **not to:**
  - Ask students to measure straps, skirts, shorts, etc.
  - Perform movements that 'check' attire.
  - Ask students to account for their attire in front of others.
  - Accuse students of distracting others with their choice of clothing.
- Staff will speak with students away from others so as not to create an embarrassment to the student

**\*We ask that parents who are visiting the school and/or participating in school events be respectful of the dress code expectations and be mindful of our elementary educational setting.**

## Footwear

To assist with keeping the school clean, students must have properly fitting shoes worn indoors and in gym. BLACK SOLED running shoes can mark the floors and should be avoided. All people entering the school are asked to remove outdoor footwear.

Students will require socks for PE class as wearing runners without socks can cause blisters and strong foot odor.

## Personal Property

The school is not responsible for personal property of students. We request that all items of clothing be identified with your child's first and last name. Toy guns, matches, lighters or sharp knives are examples of items not allowed at our school for safety reasons.

## Emergency Protocols

At Parkside Montessori we are committed to the safety and wellbeing of your children. On a regular basis we will practice Emergency Evacuation, Lock-Down, Hold and Secure and Shelter-In-Place drills. To ensure the safety of all students and staff all doors are locked except our northeast entrance. These doors are visible from the office area.



## Program Hours

<b>2023-24 Bell Schedule</b>	
<b>First Bell Rings</b>	<b>8:30</b>
<b>Block 1</b>	<b>8:33 - 9:03</b>
<b>Block 2</b>	<b>9:03 - 9:33</b>
<b>Block 3</b>	<b>9:33 - 10:03</b>
<b>Block 4</b>	<b>10:03 - 10:33</b>
<b>Block 5</b>	<b>10:33 - 11:03</b>
<b>Block 6</b>	<b>11:03 - 11:33</b>
<b>Recess</b>	<b>11:33 - 11:52</b>
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>11:52 - 12:22</b>
<b>Block 7</b>	<b>12:22 – 12:52</b>
<b>Block 8</b>	<b>12:52 - 1:22</b>
<b>Block 9</b>	<b>1:22 – 1:52</b>
<b>Recess</b>	<b>1:52 – 2:11</b>
<b>Block 10</b>	<b>2:11 - 2:41</b>
<b>Block 11</b>	<b>2:41 - 3:11</b>
<b>Morning Casa</b>	<b>8:33-11:23</b>
<b>Afternoon Casa</b>	<b>12:21-3:11</b>



**Parkside**  
Montessori