

Part 2: DAY TO DAY



Our objectives are to help the child develop:

- ◆ academic excellence
- ◆ positive self-image
- ◆ independence
- ◆ self-discipline
- ◆ moral development
- ◆ respect for and love of learning



Supplies

The staff and administration are responsible for preparing the school environment and providing the materials necessary for each level of your child's education. However, there are some notable exceptions. Personal supplies are listed below. In addition, a comprehensive list of school supplies, workbooks, etc. will be provided for each elementary class before school begins in September. (Bulk ordering of supplies may be offered to families in May or June for the next school year.)

All children

1. Please label all items.
2. Please ensure that your child is properly dressed and ready to participate in outdoor activities.

Preschool

1. Carry-all bags are provided by the office.
2. Indoor shoes — something appropriately sturdy, should we have to evacuate the building (e.g., for fire or earthquake drills). Velcro fasteners are really an asset. Please avoid furry slippers or ballet-type shoes.
3. A complete change of clothing — underwear and outer wear. Please let the child choose the clothing, so he or she will be happier to wear it when needed.
4. Plastic bag — for soiled clothing.

Elementary

1. All elementary students have a locker for personal belongings. Please provide a non-locking closer, in case of earthquake.
2. Indoor shoes — something appropriately sturdy, should we have to evacuate the building (e.g., for fire or earthquake drills). Velcro fasteners are really an asset. Please avoid furry slippers or ballet-type shoes.
3. A change of clothing — pants, shirt and socks.

A note about toys

Children are encouraged to bring things of special interest to their classes, especially things that relate to the current themes. Items from nature (such as bird nests, unusual shells and rock specimens) or handmade artifacts are most welcome.

However, toys from home are not allowed in the school. If a child finds it hard to part with a particular toy, perhaps the toy can accompany the child to school and remain in the car to wait for the child's return at the end of the day.



Medical Concerns and Allergy Alert!

We all have some knowledge of or direct experience with medical concerns and allergies. Every year, there are a number of children in the school for whom these are a minor inconvenience. However, there are also children in the school for whom they are life-threatening.

For this reason, we ask all families not to use any peanut products or derivatives in any part of a child's food. (Please check that commercially prepared foods do not contain peanut oil). For some children in our care, peanut breath is not a joke! It may be a life-threatening situation.

Teachers will inform you of any medical concerns or allergies, in the school or classroom, you will need to be aware of. Thank you for your understanding and concern about the welfare of all children in your child's program.

Snacks and Lunches



Children who stay all day bring their own lunch. Please follow the Canada Food Guide, and send no chips, candy, cake, pop, or any other junk food.

1. **Remember:** Peanut products must not be sent to school, because of a number of children in the school who have life-threatening allergies.
2. **Placemats:** Please send a cloth placemat in your child's lunch kit daily. (Dishcloths are ideal for the younger children; elementary children seem to prefer standard-sized cloth placemats.)
3. **Packing:** Please keep things as easy to open as possible. Twist ties, pull tabs and vacuum-sealed containers are often beyond the coordination and physical strength of young children. Lunch time then becomes a time of frustration as children wait for a teacher to help them. Also, we are a "green" school and want to generate as little garbage as possible. A compost bucket is available for apple cores, banana and orange peels, etc.
4. **Leftover food** will be sent home. This will give you a good idea of your child's eating habits.
5. **Food may not be shared**, because of allergies.
6. **An extra snack** for children staying for the afternoon extended day is helpful.

Communications

Communications from school

1. Our **website** is an important regular source of information. The administration and staff regularly post announcements, reminders of events and other information to the site. Policies are also posted
2. **School Bulletin Boards.** Notices are posted on them from the administration, from parents to parents, from service groups, and from the staff. The administration clears the board regularly.
3. **Classroom Bulletin/White Boards.** These are outside each class and updated daily by teachers.

4. Each class produces a **monthly calendar** that outlines the main areas of study for the month and the dates of any trips or special events that will be taking place. This calendar is sent home with your child or posted to the website.

5. The office, teaching staff and Selkirk Parent Group use the **family files** to pass on fundraising information and other communiqués. Parents are encouraged to use them to contact one another for social reasons. Family files are **not** intended to be used to further personal or business interests. Please leave messages for the teachers at the office, rather than in their family files.

6. **Accidents**—If your child has a serious accident at school, you will be called immediately after first aid is given. If you cannot be reached, the emergency number you indicated will be called. If that person is not available, your child's doctor will be called. If your child's doctor cannot be reached, an alternate doctor will be called or your child may be taken to a medical clinic. (For this reason we require you to sign the emergency release form before your child starts school.)



Communications from home

1. The **voice mail** is our mechanical receptionist—please use it. The staff regularly checks messages and posts or passes them on to the appropriate person. **E-mail** is also available (office@selkirkmontessori.ca) and is checked regularly. However, e-mail should not be relied on for messages of an urgent nature.

2. If your child is going to be **absent or late**, please call the school. If your child has a verified communicable disease, please call the school immediately, so that other parents can be notified. (Health regulations require the school to post this information.) For elementary children, please arrange to have homework picked up after two days of illness.

3. If your child needs to leave school early or for part of the day (e.g., for a dentist's appointment), please write the details in a brief note to the teacher and send it with the child in the morning.

4. In the event that a **significant change** occurs in your home, please plan to inform the administrator as soon as possible. All information will be regarded as confidential. We will accept your judgment as to the kinds of changes that may affect your child's behaviour, security and general well-being. Common causes of distress include:

- either or both parents being away from home for any reason for an extended time
- a new person living in the home
- illness of either parent or sibling
- any hospitalization, accident or death in the family
- a new caretaker or employee
- moving
- death of a pet

The teacher and/or administrator will also keep you informed of any significant changes in the school environment that may affect your child.

Charting your child's progress

Opportunities to see your child at work

In October, child-hosted visits give families an opportunity to visit classrooms with the child as tour-guide. Sign-up sheets are posted outside the classrooms.

Formal classroom observations take place in November for all children (see Observations). Sign-up sheets are posted outside the classrooms.

Open House is held in February. Extended family and guests are welcome to come and explore the school.

Parents are welcome to observe again throughout the year. A convenient time can be arranged with the teacher.

Reporting

1. Scheduled parent/teacher meetings take place in late November or early December for all children. Beginning in Grade 3, these meetings are three-way conferences that include the child. Sign-up sheets are posted outside the classrooms. Report cards are handed out at this time for elementary students.
2. All children receive a written progress report in early spring.

Important!

If at any time you are concerned about some aspect of your child's progress, you are encouraged to contact the teacher or the administration and plan either a school meeting or a telephone conference.

Observations

Parent observations usually begin in November, after the children have had an opportunity to settle in. The teachers will post observation schedules for parents to sign. Both parents are welcome and encouraged to observe. Repeat observations are also encouraged.

Observation guidelines

Plan to stay for about 30 minutes. In order to observe as typical a day as possible, please note that visitors are asked to:

- remain seated
- observe the children's activities
- save questions for a post-observation chat with the administrator or a teacher
- just look—don't touch the classroom materials
- refrain from photographing the children

Here are some things you may wish to observe:

1. Observe the children's responses to the whole classroom.
2. Notice how the children initiate activities (i.e., their independence).
3. Check the activities that are initiated by the children and the ones initiated by the classroom teacher(s).
4. Note the ability to concentrate and to be absorbed, and how it varies from child to child.
5. Notice how some children, even when disturbed, return easily to their own work.
6. Notice the number of small groups and the number of individual activities.
7. Notice how the Montessori teacher presents the lesson. You will see some children react differently to the same presentation.
8. Note the different lengths of time children are involved in the activities.

Please feel welcome to meet with the administrator or speak with one of the teachers afterwards.

Homework

The school's expectations for homework vary considerably according to the age and capabilities of the child and the requirements of the teacher. For the younger child, homework may consist of remembering to bring a leaf to school. By the time the child reaches Grade 3, there are more expectations, including practising spelling each evening and doing more involved assignments twice a week. Senior students have homework every weekday evening, in addition to completing the day's assignments at home. Children who need more practice may be asked to work more often at home.

Homework is one way to teach children about responsibility. In order to complete assignments, they must learn to organize, plan and complete tasks on their own. Then, they must remember to bring the work to school and hand it in.

Children in Grades 3 to 7 use agendas, where they write their homework assignments. Parents are asked to sign the agenda each day to confirm that the work has been done. Parents can also write questions and messages for the teachers in the agenda.

It is essential to provide a table or desk in a quiet place -- away from the television -- where your child can work.

It is also essential to support your child when he or she is doing homework. **Parents are the key to making homework a positive experience.** Occasionally, children will need some help or guidance, but parents do not need to be teachers. What is important is your encouragement and a "Let's see you try" atmosphere at home. Never do your child's homework, but do show interest in what your child is doing and show your appreciation for his or her efforts. Be available, but don't intrude.

Most importantly, please read stories with your child!



The Library

What is in the library

There are three main components of the library:

- **Children's library**—There are three groupings of materials in the children's library: picture books, juvenile fiction and non-fiction. The books are organized on the shelves according to the Dewey decimal system.
- **Reference library**—The reference library is made up of additional non-fiction material (e.g., encyclopedias, videos and audio tapes). This area is not self-serve, but is under the direction of the classroom teachers or the teacher librarian.
- **Parent's library**—The parent's library includes a selection of books and periodicals about the Montessori method in particular and concerns of parents in general.



In addition, there are some videotapes and computer software available. Please ask the teacher librarian for a listing.

Using the library

The children's and parent's libraries are both self-serve. However, preschool children need parental assistance when borrowing books to take home. The library is open for parents and children between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. and between 3:00 and 3:30 every day.

Families are responsible for all books taken out under their name; there will be a charge for lost or damaged books.

Note: Reference materials will be on overnight loan only, and must be handled through the classroom teacher.

Returning books:

1. Put books into the RETURN BOX.
2. Books will be shelved by the staff and parent volunteers.

Clubs

Club activities are popular at Selkirk Montessori School. Over the years, we have had an Art Club, Chess Club, Knitting Club, Spanish Club and Sports Club that meet weekly. Club members are supervised by staff and/or parent volunteers.

Japanese and Spanish language instruction are also available through the school's Japanese and Spanish Clubs, which meet before or after regular school hours. Club activities are usually announced early in the school year.

Holidays and Celebrations

Holidays

1. The provincial government requires that all children from kindergarten age upwards attend school for a specific number of days/hours per school year. If you plan a family holiday during the school year, your child's teacher may prepare a homework program for completion on your trip. The homework will be evaluated and a note put in the child's file to confirm completion. In addition, you may be asked to provide a letter for the file to confirm the details of your trip for our auditor, as too many days missed may affect your eligibility for provincial funding. Parents are responsible for any shortfall the school might experience.
2. Please inform your child's teachers if you are going to keep children home to observe family religious or ethnic celebrations not already planned in the school calendar.

Celebrations

1. Thanks to our multi-cultural school community, we celebrate many religious and cultural events each year. If you would like your child to share their cultural experiences with their class, please speak to the teacher at the beginning of the school year.
2. Each year, individual classroom teachers decide if they will celebrate events such as International Children's Day, Halloween or Valentine's Day.



Birthdays

1. Children's birthdays are special events and are celebrated as such in each class.
2. Summer birthdays are usually celebrated in June.
3. When home parties are planned, please use the family files to pass on invitations. This approach helps reduce potential hurt feelings when the whole class is not involved.

School Closure

Closure because of weather conditions

It is our sincere hope that any snow that falls will do so on Saturdays and disappear before school on Mondays! If our hopes are not fulfilled, please note the following:

1. If District 61 closes, so will the Selkirk Montessori School—automatically. In other words, if the district closes because of bad weather conditions, we will too. That doesn't mean we won't close if SD61 doesn't. The administration will use its best judgment on weather closures.
2. Selkirk Montessori School will close if we can not arrange for a minimum of five teachers to be present.
3. Closure will be announced over local radio stations and/or on the school website. (www.selkirkmontessori.ca)
4. Each family should arrange back-up care for these eventualities.



Closure for any other reason

Selkirk Montessori School is closed for a number of staff professional days throughout the year. These and other special closures will be listed on the annual calendar, in the newsletter and on the monthly calendar for each class.

Emergency Preparedness

The Selkirk Montessori School building complies with building codes and regulations. The steel frame construction provides outstanding protection against earthquake damage. Earthquake and fire drills take place monthly, and we have recently instituted an emergency lockdown drill. A comprehensive emergency preparedness plan is in place, with individual emergency kits and supplies on hand. Staff are first aid trained.



Lost and Found

The lost and found box is in the hallway outside the office. Plan to check the lost and found box regularly. Responsibility for lost items rests with each family. Contents of the lost and found box will be donated to charity at regular intervals.

Parking

STREET PARKING ALONG JUTLAND: One hour parking is available on Jutland Road but these spaces fill up quickly. Please do not invent your own parking space or double park when there are no other spots available. Even if you stay in your vehicle, other cars will cross the center line to go around you, putting our children at an increased risk. Remember U-TURNS are illegal on Jutland Road and might result in a hefty traffic fine. Also, be aware that there is a fire hydrant in front of our school near the crosswalk and 5 minute drop off zone. Please do not block access to the hydrant.

KISS AND GO ZONE: This area is for elementary and middle school children. It is located in the parking area at the back of the school on Jackladder Lane. In the morning, 3 spots are roped off for the Kiss and Go. Pull in, kiss your child goodbye, watch them enter the school through the back door, then go. Please stay in your vehicle. If you need to get out of your vehicle please don't use the Kiss and Go. Also, please note that Jackladder Lane is a two-way street. If you park near the cardboard and garbage disposal bins you will be blocking the entire lane and your car could be towed.



LEGION PARKING: To make parking easier, we are fortunate to have the support of the Pro Patria Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. Located at the corner of Jutland and Gorge, this spacious parking lot is the place to park if you need to accompany your child into the school at drop-off or pick-up times. Be sure to get a special parking pass from the school office and remember there is a 15 minute limit for these spaces. Our cross-walk guards make both street crossings safe and the walk is great exercise!



There is also a Robbins lot near the school for longer term parking. Parents are encouraged to park responsibly. Local transit, carpooling and walking to school are options many of our parents enjoy.

Volunteers are invited to use the drop-off parking spaces when working at the school on volunteer activities. However, you must obtain a parking pass from the office and place it on your vehicle's dashboard.

Facility rental

School facilities, such as the gymnasium, music room and multi-purpose room, are available to community and sports groups for rent. Arrangements can be made through the office.