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## WELCOME

***Thank you*** for choosing Whispering Farms Montessori Academy.

We appreciate the confidence you have in our ability to teach and care for your child. Please read this handbook thoroughly, as it covers very important policies and procedures that not only govern our school, but also pertains to the care of your child. If you have any questions regarding any policies, please do not hesitate to ask.

You are invited to visit us. The best assurance for the success of your child's experiences is the close cooperation, interaction, and understanding of both parents and staff.

The staff of Whispering Farms Montessori Academy is dedicated and experienced in providing the kind of caring attention that your child needs. We welcome you to our school and hope that it will be a growing experience for your child.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Whispering Farms Montessori Academy will maintain and conduct all practices relating to enrollment and discipline in a manner which does not discriminate against any child, parent or family on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or sex.

***Whispering Farms Montessori Academy is open to all children ages 6 weeks to 6 years.***

## CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Each child has a right to confidentiality. All information pertaining to the children in our program, including all reports, records, and data are confidential and used for internal purposes only. Information pertaining to children enrolled at Whispering Farms Montessori Academy will not be released to third parties without the express written permission of parent or guardian, unless required by statute, court order, or licensing mandate.

## MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a purposefully structured environment for children up to six years of age, where they not only develop emotionally, physically, mentally as individuals, but also learn good work habits and ethics which will enable them to be a productive part of a group.

## VISION STATEMENT

To provide a safe and controlled environment where children will be motivated to learn through exploring their environment to develop a well rounded personality.

## CORE VALUES

- To inspire a child to lay a foundation of life time learning.
- To help a child develop imagination and establish strong self esteem.
- To instill integrity, responsibility, respect and community leadership, so that our children are independent, compassionate and engaged citizens of our world.
- To encourage them to be independent thinkers, so that they can get through not only school but also life.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Whispering Farms Montessori Academy is located at 2460 Prosper Trail. Our operating hours are 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.**

**Our phone number is 972-346-3553**

**Our mailing address is:**

**2460 E. Prosper Trail**

**Prosper, TX 75078**

**Email: [info@prosperchild.com](mailto:info@prosperchild.com)**

**Website: [www.prosperchild.com](http://www.prosperchild.com)**

## HOW TO CONTACT LICENSING

Montessori Academy is licensed by the State of Texas under the Department of Family and Protective Services. The telephone number for the Licensing Division is 1-800-582-6036. Their web site is <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us>. A copy of the Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Child-Care Centers is on file in the office at Whispering Farms Montessori Academy.

## HOW TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it. To make a report call the abuse and neglect hotline at 1-800-252-5400.

## ENROLLMENT

Whispering Farms Montessori Academy serves children ages 6 weeks to 6 years. We offer open enrollment when space is available. We operate on a modified school calendar and are open all year. Our admission process begins with a tour of the school. This gives you an opportunity to become acquainted with our school and receive a personal orientation to the Montessori classroom. Our Director meets with you and your child to ascertain your child's readiness for his class, so that we may make a decision regarding which class will be the best fit for him/her. **Each child is admitted on a six-week provisional period.**

For your child's safety and to comply with state regulations, all WFMA enrollment papers and health records must be completed before your child can begin school. These forms and records are kept in the school office and must be updated yearly in order to comply with licensing requirements. These documents are very important as they also specify who is authorized to pick up your child from school, or who should be contacted in case of an emergency.

## REGISTRATION FEE

Upon enrollment, an application and enrollment fee is required for each child and is renewable each spring when you register your child for the following fall program. Application and enrollment fees are not refundable.

## SECURITY DEPOSIT

If you choose to pay on a monthly basis, your security deposit amounts to your total monthly tuition, it is non-refundable and applied to your child's last thirty days in school. You are required to give WFMA a written thirty day notice and the security deposit is applied to those last thirty days in school.

## TUITION POLICY

Tuition rates are based on a full school year. The security deposit is due upon enrollment. Tuition for the first month is due on the child's first day in our program, and then by the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. A late fee will be assessed for overdue tuition after the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month and a service fee is charged in the event that a check is returned.

Tuition covers the regular school curriculum only. Additional fees are assessed for Extra Curriculum Programs. There will be no adjustment in tuition for holidays, academic program closing days, emergency closing days or any other day your child does not attend school.

You do have a choice of paying the fee by the semester or by the year. You will receive a 2% discount if paid by semester and a 4% discount if paid by the year.

## RETURNED CHECKS

You will be charged a fee of \$25.00 for all checks that are returned due to insufficient funds. You will be responsible for making the payment for the amount the check was written, the return check fee and the late payment fee in full and payable in cash. Future payments may also be subject to cash only payments. "Ex: Amt. of Ck. +\$25.00 +\$10.00".

## RIGHT TO CHANGE TUITION FEES

Whispering Farms Montessori Academy reserves the right to adjust the child care rates with thirty days of written notice.

## LATE PICK-UP FEE

Children become upset when parents are late picking them up. The school closes at 6:30pm. Please let us know if you will be late so we can reassure your child. Parents who pick up their children after closing will be charged a fee of dollar per minute after 6:30pm.

## HOLIDAYS

WFMA closes in observance of the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Good Friday
Memorial Day	Independence Day
24 <sup>th</sup> Dec half day	Labor Day
25 <sup>th</sup> Dec– 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan	In-service days
Thanksgiving- Thursday and Friday	

## STAFF

All teachers at Whispering Farms Montessori Academy are qualified by Texas Department of Family and Protective Services guidelines and are experienced in handling all aspects of your child's development and welfare. Their education is an ongoing process with 15 hours of training per year. Additionally, all lead teachers have additional training in the Montessori method of teaching.

Please keep your child's teacher or the director informed if anything major or minor happens in your child's life so that we may be aware of what he/she may be going through. If you are concerned about a behavior or need to talk about your child's progress please make an appointment to meet with the teacher or call the office to set up a phone conference with her. It is difficult to talk to parents during regular class time.

## ACTIVITIES

Children are divided into small groups according to age and level of development. It is in these groups that the child is exposed to a variety of guided and self-directed activities. Children are given individual attention and opportunity to learn at their own pace. A daily routine and a short summary of the day's happenings are posted in each classroom.

## FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL

To assure a happy and a successful school experience for your child we have dedicated two days, just before school starts in August when the new student's parents will be welcome to come to class with the child to meet the teacher and get oriented with the class room and the work that they can expect.

Children AND Parents suffer from separation anxiety on the first day/or week of school. This is very natural and the best way to ease all parties involved is to stay calm, pleasant and be prompt to exit. The prompt exit by parents is the most helpful. A lingering, tearful and uncertain departure only makes it more difficult for the child to let go. Your child will soon respond to the care of a reassuring staff member and become adjusted to the new experience.

## MEALS

A nutritious breakfast, lunch and snacks are provided every day. You can send a packed lunch or purchase a hot lunch for a fee of \$95.00 a month. We encourage all children to eat, or at least taste, each food. Menus include foods children love, but are also planned to meet children's daily nutritional requirements and our licensing requirements.

Our caterer's menu is posted in the school, in our newsletter and on our website. Each month it will be updated on each. If, for medical reasons, your child should require a special diet or has a food allergy, please discuss this with the Director. A signed statement from your physician is required if certain meal components (for example milk or eggs) must always be omitted from your child's diet. The appropriate staff will be notified of any special, prescribed diets.

Please discuss special diet needs with the Director. Because we must conform to USDA child care food program requirements, our ability to individualize diets is limited. However, whenever possible and when given advance notice, we are able to make substitutions for specific food items.

We recommend that you use the caterer for your lunches, not only is it a healthy warm lunch, it also helps when all the children are eating the same food and are not distracted by their neighbors packet of chips or box of cookies. When sending a packed lunch from home please remember to send cooked foods that can be reheated quickly. Frozen foods are not advisable due to the long microwave times and cool down times. The lunch period is 30-45 minutes in length and to cook and cool down lunches takes time away from the4 children to eat and enjoy their lunch.

We ask your cooperation when supplying snacks for birthdays and special occasions. Snacks or treats to share with other children must be store bought, nutritionally based, prepackaged, and pre-approved by the Director.

## ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE

The staff at WFMA is here at 6:30am for the early extended care hours. The car pool car is operational from 7:00 am to 8:30am. You may drop your child off using the car pool line. If you walk your child in, please check in using our computerized system and escort them to the proper classroom. Please be sure that a teacher receives your child. This is for their safety. However if you are dropping off your child after 8:30am, please let one of the office staff walk your child to class as having a parent in the class at that time disrupts the whole class. **Children need to be school by 8:30 a.m.** A phone call is necessary if you are going to be late.

When picking up your children we ask that you keep them with you at all times. If you pick up your child at the school release time, which is 11:15am or 2:45pm you may pull through the car line and a teacher will escort your child to your vehicle. Please enter on the west side of the lot. If you pick up at any other time of the school day, please park in a parking place and enter the building using your designated security code. The receptionist will retrieve your child from class to minimize classroom disruptions. If you pick up during the after school period, check in using the security system and go directly to your child's after school classroom to pick them up.

## ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

Parents are requested to contact the school office before 9:00am if their child is to be absent for any reason. Written notes of illness will be required for all Kindergarten students. Excessive student absences and late arrivals will be documented to determine the student's standing with the school.

## PARKING

Parking places are available in the parking lot directly in front of the main entrance to Whispering Farms Montessori Academy. Overflow parking is on the west side of the building. Please drive slowly and with caution while entering the parking lot.

## TRANSPORTATION

Whispering Farms Montessori Academy provides transportation to pick up children from Elementary schools for their after school care.

## DESIGNATED PERSONS TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD

People who are sent to pick up your child **MUST** have a picture I.D. They must be on the enrollment form "pick up list" and the parent must give written or verbal permission. We will not release a child to a minor under any circumstances. We will check I.D. whenever there is any doubt. Please inform anyone on your pick up list of this policy.

## WELL CHILD POLICY

Because Whispering Farms Montessori Academy is concerned about the well being of all children in our care, it is important that everyone take precautions to prevent the spread of contagious illnesses. ***Please DO NOT send your child to the classroom if you feel that your child is too sick to go outside to play, or to join in on normal activities.***

***An ill child will not be permitted to attend school if one or more of the following exists:***

- The child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, until medical evaluation determines that the child is no longer communicable and is able to participate in the facility's activities.
- FEVER — Oral temperature 100.4 degrees or greater; rectal temperature 101.4 degrees or greater; armpit temperature 99.4 degrees or greater; accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness until medical evaluation indicates that the child can be included in the facility's activities; especially when accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache and stiff neck or undiagnosed rash.
- RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS — difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing...child makes high pitched croupy or whooping sound after they cough...child is unable to lie comfortably due to continuous cough.
- DIARRHEA — After a child has experienced two loose stools, the school will call the parents to pick up the child. Observe the child for other symptoms such as fever, abdominal pain or vomiting.
- VOMITING — two or more episodes of vomiting within the previous 24 hours.
- EYE/NOSE DRAINAGE — thick mucus or pus draining from the eye or nose.
- PINKEYE — Your child may return 24 hours after the treatment has begun.
- SORE THROAT — sore throat, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present.
- STREP THROAT — Your child may return 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- SKIN PROBLEMS — RASH — skin rashes, undiagnosed or contagious.
- INFECTED SORES — sores with crusty, yellow or green drainage which cannot be covered by clothing or bandages.
- PERSISTENT ITCHING or scratching of body or scalp.
- CHICKEN POX — All pox must be crusted over and no fever present before the child returns to class.
- APPEARANCE, Behavior, unusual color — Child looks or acts differently: unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, confused, irritable, difficult to awaken...yellow eyes or skin, gray or white stools, dark or tea colored urine. These symptoms can be found in hepatitis and should be evaluated by a physician.
- LICE — Your child may attend after treatment and when all nits have been removed.
- RINGWORM, SCABIES — Your child may attend when treatment has begun.

If a child becomes ill while in our care, we will move the child to a quiet supervised area away from the other children. We will notify you or whomever you have indicated we should notify immediately so that you may pick the child up. ***When you are contacted and told your child is ill, we require you to make arrangements to pick them up immediately.*** If you know this is a problem, please make sure your next two emergency contacts will be available to pick up your child. Let the staff know within 24 hours if your child has a communicable or childhood disease such as measles, chicken pox, mumps, strep throat, scarlet fever, head lice, scabies, impetigo, pinkeye, or ringworm so we can alert the other parents to be on the lookout for possible symptoms in their children. Parents will be notified immediately if their child has been exposed to an infectious or communicable disease and of what symptoms to be aware of. We reserve the right to determine when a child, who has been sick, can return to school.

The child should be kept home until a doctor has decided that the symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease, the child is no longer contagious, or the symptoms have gone away.

## WATER ACTIVITIES

Parents will be notified in advance of any water activities planned by the school. This will include sprinkler play of any kind. WFMA will stay within the state ratio and will not allow any child to participate in a water activity without permission from his/her parent or guardian.

## CHANGE IN POLICIES PROCEDURE

WFMA reserves the right to change any policy or procedure. The school will give written notification to each family when any policies or procedures change if they are related to the care of the children.

## VISION AND HEARING SCREENING

The Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36, requires a screening or a professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems for children of certain ages and grades. This information may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/vhs>.

We must keep one of the following in your child's file:

- 1) The individual visual acuity and sweep check results; or
- 2) A signed statement from the child's parent that the child's screening records are current and on file at the pre-kindergarten program or school the child attends away from the center. The statement must be dated and include the name, address and telephone number of the pre-kindergarten program or school.
- 3) An affidavit stating that the vision or hearing screening conflicts with the tenets or practices of a church or religious denomination of which the affiant is an adherent or member.

## TREATMENT AND MEDICATIONS

Whispering Farms Montessori Academy's staff members have passed current CPR and standard first aid courses and will administer to cuts, scratches, bruises, etc. with our first aid kit. **No child will be given prescribed oral or surface medication without physician permission.** Non-prescribed medicine, diapering products, sunscreen lotions, and insect repellents will be given with parental permission and administered according to the manufacturer's instructions unless there are written instructions for their use provided by a licensed physician or dentist.

Medication must be in its original container and have a legible label with the child's name and current prescription information. Non-prescription drugs must have the child's age and appropriated dosage listed on the container. If it is not listed we need a written and signed notice from a licensed physician or dentist with the correct dosage. The administration of medicine is recorded and the record is available to the child's parent(s) or guardian(s). Any expired or unused portion will be returned to the child's parents or destroyed. Anytime medication needs to be administered, Whispering Farms Montessori Academy needs a guardian or parent to sign a medication permission form. Medication is only administered by the Director or Assistant Director.

## EMERGENCY CARE FOR YOUR CHILD

If your child should become seriously injured you need to be notified immediately. There is a release form you sign as part of the admission application. This gives us the authority to get medical attention for your child in the event of an emergency. The source of emergency care would be the CLOSEST HOSPITAL or a hospital you designate. By signing the identification and emergency information form you grant permission for the staff to take whatever steps may be necessary to obtain emergency medical and dental care if warranted. The steps may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Attempt to contact parent or guardian
2. Attempt to contact parent or guardian through any people listed on the form
3. Attempt to contact the child's physician or dentist

The child's family will be responsible for any expenses incurred. If the emergency is such that a child's life is determined to be in danger, 911 will be contacted first before attempting to contact a parent or guardian.

## REST PERIOD

For toddlers and preschoolers, a quiet rest time will be daily from approximately 12:00 p.m. until 1:45 p.m. Although children are not required to sleep, everyone is required to lie on a mat and rest quietly for at least 30 minutes. Any child (of napping age) remaining at school at 12:00 will be expected to lie on a mat. After the 30 minute period of quiet rest, a child may read, play or work at various quiet activities offered. Non-napping children will also have quiet time for part of their day. This is a one hour time when the children need to do something quietly and alone. This is not a time that the children lie down unless they choose to do so. When children are together all day, we feel it is important to have some time quiet, alone time.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND DRESS

Uniforms are required and should be purchased at Parker Uniforms (located at Park and Preston in Plano). Visit their web site at <http://www.parkersu.com>. Our school code is DA242727. Although we do take precautions to prevent clothes from getting damaged, accidents do happen. Whispering Farms Montessori Academy assumes no responsibility for damage to or loss of a child's clothing. Children 3 years and younger **need to bring one extra set of labeled clothing** (shirt, pants, underwear and socks) on your child's first day of school. When a child has occasion to use the extra set, parents need to bring another set to school the following day for future use. This extra set of clothing does not need to be a uniform.

***Keeping track of your child's clothing:*** Each season presents its own challenge for parents and the school staff regarding clothing. We try to teach the children responsible habits such as hanging their coats on hooks, stuffing mittens, hats and scarves into sleeves, etc. **We encourage you to label clothing, especially those items which can easily be misplaced or forgotten.**

## WHAT NEEDS TO REMAIN AT HOME

**Please leave toys at home.** We cannot assume responsibility for toys or other materials brought from home. Unless your child's diet requires that you bring special foods from home, please do not send food with your child.

## BLANKETS

Blankets must be taken home and washed weekly. Please provide a blanket from home for rest time if your child wants one. Whispering Farms Montessori Academy does not provide these items. Please label these items with your child's name if you choose to send these items from home.

*Blankets and other nap items should fit in a 2 gallon ziploc bag unless your child uses their own nap mat/roll.*

## OTHER REQUIRED ITEMS

Whispering Farms Montessori Academy does not provide the following items. Diapers or Pull-ups, wipes, diaper rash ointments, insect repellents and medications. If your child needs any of these items, please bring them from home labeled with your child's name.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to become as involved in the school's operation as their schedule will permit. Suggestions for involvement include:

- Reading your child's daily or weekly activity sheets and works.
- Showing interest in your child's activities and carrying on related activities/conversation at home.
- Helping with fundraisers, class or school activities like splash day, 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade.
- Sharing customs, hobbies, and careers with the children.
- Helping your child bring something from home that relates to the weekly topic.

If you are interested in sharing your talents, let the staff know. Whispering Farms Montessori Academy maintains an open door policy for parents. You are welcome to visit at anytime, however we do ask that you make an appointment to observe any class. Classroom observation times are between 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. and can be arranged by appointment.

## BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Each staff person and child at Whispering Farms Montessori Academy is special and will be treated with respect at all times. Any type of behavior intended to physically or emotionally hurt someone will not be tolerated. Whispering Farms Montessori Academy uses positive guidance as a learning tool to provide children with the guidance and security necessary for emotional and social growth. Positive guidance methods used in this learning process include: redirection, ignoring the behavior, positive reinforcement, alternatives and choices, problem solving techniques, modeling, limit setting, and as a last resort, time out away from the situation and group to calm down for a period of time geared to the age of the child. Maximum time out will not exceed (5) five minutes, the child will then be directed to a constructive activity in a positive way. Parents will be notified if frequent "time out" is needed. Individual behavior plans will be developed for children who have persistent behavior problems. **Whispering Farms Montessori Academy reserves the right to exclude a child from school when the emotional and physical well being of the staff and other children is in danger and all other positive methods and resources have been exhausted. This notice can come without warning if the situation warrants.**

## MANDATED REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

By law, any employee of Whispering Farms Montessori Academy who knows or has reason to believe that a child is being neglected or physically, emotionally, or sexually abused, shall immediately report the information to the local welfare agency or police department.

## PERMISSION SLIPS

Written parental permission is required for all field trips. Parents will be notified in advance to sign a permission slip. Adequate supervision will be provided during the entire trip.

## PETS

The school has fish and a turtle on site currently. We may add more pets in the future. If this is a problem, please notify the director.

## OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is an important part of your child's day and total health. Weather permitting; the children will play outdoors each day. You can help your child to enjoy this by being sure that he or she is dressed for the existing weather conditions. **All children who are well enough to be at school will be expected to participate in this activity.**

## PARENT/STAFF COMMUNICATION

To ensure that parents are involved with their child's progress in school, we have an open door policy. If at any time you wish to have a conference with your child's teacher, please feel free to schedule a time with that teacher. Notes to parents are placed in each student's activity folder or cubby to keep you up to date on your child's intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development. Again, you are encouraged to seek out your child's teacher to discuss your child's progress.

**Should you need to discuss a matter with the director, appointments may be scheduled at your convenience. Whispering Farms Montessori Academy welcomes parents to visit at anytime!**

Always check your child's papers that are collected in his or her folder. Important information to parents will be sent home in this fashion and parents are responsible for checking for these communications. We ask you to promptly bring all concerns and questions regarding your child to the attention of the Whispering Farms Montessori Academy staff and to cooperate fully in the investigation and solution of problems if such arise. We ask that you keep the Whispering Farms Montessori Academy staff fully informed regarding behavior patterns or problems your child may exhibit at home.

## WINTER STORM CLOSING POLICY

Whispering Farms Montessori Academy will remain open if possible in the event of snow or ice. The school has the authority not to open if the weather threatens the safety of children and staff.

***In general, we will follow Prosper Independent School District's bad weather schedules.***

## TELEPHONE CALLS

**Phone number: 972-346-3553**

Parent questions are always important to us. You may call and leave a message if the staff member you need to speak to is unavailable. You may also email the director at [info@prosperchild.com](mailto:info@prosperchild.com). We will respond to email inquiries/issues within 24 hours.

## EMERGENCY DRILLS

Periodically, we hold emergency drills to acquaint children with evacuation procedures. These drills and practices are done so children will know what to do in case of an actual emergency. Our school is equipped with a firm alarm system. Fire extinguishers are placed throughout the building.

## INSURANCE

The state of Texas requires that parents receive written notification of the type and level of liability insurance coverage held by license holders. Whispering Farms Montessori Academy carries adequate comprehensive general liability policies for the operation of a child care center.

## WITHDRAWAL NOTICE

To withdraw your child, you must give 1 months' written notice to Whispering Farms Montessori Academy. Should a two week written notice not be given, the family is required to pay for the additional days to meet the two-week requirement.

## MULTI-CHILD DISCOUNT

A discount of 5% on the lesser tuition will be extended to families with two children are enrolled. A discount of 10% on the least tuition

## EXTRA CURRICULUM PROGRAM

Whispering Farms Montessori may offer extra curriculum opportunities such as Art, Karate, Computer classes. These enrichment classes vary and are not a part of WFMA curriculum.

## SUMMER SEMESTER

We offer Montessori education through the summer months. Usually this time is spent to help them reinforce and keep up their skills they have learnt through the year. We do have a more relaxed curriculum which includes gardening, fun stuff like visits from Story Teller, Petting Zoo and the Track less Train. The summer program does have the same hours as our fall and Spring Semester.

## THANK YOU

We would like to thank you again for choosing Whispering Farms Montessori Academy for your child's care and educational needs. We hope you find this handbook helpful. Feel free to approach us with any additional questions or concerns.

