

# The Casa Program at



## **Casa Parent/Student Handbook 2025 – 2026**



### **SCHOOL HOURS**

The school day is from 8:30 am to 3 pm/2pm on Wednesday (early release day).

Drop off from 8:00 am through 8:30 am. Pick up from 3:00 to 3:30 pm

Wednesday is early release day

Drop off is the same. Pick up from 2:00 pm through 2:30 pm.

### **SCHOOL INFORMATION**

**PHONE:** 407-654-2045

**FAX:** 407-654-2046

**EMAIL:** primaryoffice@innovationmontessori.com

**WEB PAGE:** [www.innovationmontessori.com](http://www.innovationmontessori.com)

**ADDRESS:** 1610/1644 North Lakewood Avenue, Ocoee, FL 34761

**Executive Director:** Heather Clay      **Principal:** Cathy Tobin      **Assistant Principal:** Ilene Costello

**Primary School Director** Hilda DeLeon Going

### **ABOUT THE CASA PROGRAM**

The Casa Program is a private 3 and 4-year-old pre-school and pre-k program run in connection with Innovation Montessori Ocoee (IMO). The Casa Program and IMO K-12 are separately funded and licensed entities. The Casa Program was started in 2015 to provide high quality Montessori education to preschool aged children.

### **ABOUT INNOVATION MONTESSORI OCOEE**

Innovation Montessori Ocoee was conceived and approved in 2010, as Montessori of Winter Garden Charter School.

The school was founded by a group of devoted and supportive parents. Innovation Montessori Ocoee is governed by a voluntary school board of parents and community members.

Our charter is granted through Orange County Public Schools

### **VISION AND MISSION**

**Our Vision** is to provide a strong Montessori foundation that enables our students to achieve their full potential, develop curiosity, creativity, imagination, and become responsible citizens of the world.

**Our Mission** is to provide a strong, authentic Montessori education in a public-school setting.

The purpose of the handbook is to provide parents and teachers with a quick alphabetical guide to the most relevant day-to-day information.



The last two pages of this handbook contain The Parent-Student-School Agreement and the School Discipline Policy. These two documents must be uploaded to the registration packet when registering to attend the Casa Program.

If you have any questions, please contact the front office.

### **ADDRESS/TELEPHONE NUMBER/EMAIL ADDRESS**

Please keep us informed of any changes in your address, telephone number, email address or work location. It is important for us to be able to contact you in case of an emergency. Please provide us with an up-to-date e-mail address so you can receive important information included in our weekly newsletter.

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

**Arrival:** Primary Building families will park using the paved parking spots and grassy area behind the stop sign on the way out of the parking lot. Use the nearest sidewalk to walk to the front porch. Please do not carry your child but, in keeping with Montessori philosophy, allow them to walk. Say a cheerful goodbye to your child on the porch, make sure they are holding their bags, and allow them to enter through the front door alone. Staff members will escort them to their classrooms. Parking is limited so after your goodbyes, please leave the parking lot safely and courteously, but quickly.

Primary Main Campus families may park in the grassy area at the far end of the Primary parking lot or are welcome to use the parking area between the two sites. Please use the closest sidewalk to get to the walking path that leads to the Main Campus/Multi-Purpose Room porch. Follow the path to the Multi-Purpose Room porch where you'll find the sign-in table located. There say a cheerful goodbye to your child. One of the staff members at the sign-in table will escort your child/ren to their classroom. Please do not carry your child but, in keeping with Montessori philosophy, allow them to walk. Parking is limited so after your goodbye's, please leave the parking lot safely and courteously, but quickly.

It is a requirement that all Casa parents MUST sign their 3- or 4-year-old child in and out daily.

**Dismissal:** Every family will be given two pick-up placards. If you need more, please email [hilda@innovationmontessori.com](mailto:hilda@innovationmontessori.com) with the request. We will send the placard home with your child by the end of the next school day. Excessive replacement requests may cause a fee to be incurred. Bring your placard with you to dismissal every day. If you forget to bring your placard it will be necessary to wait until the end of dismissal when staff will check your ID.

Please note that arrival and dismissal are not appropriate times for parent/teacher conferences as all staff are involved in ensuring the safety of our students during this particularly busy time of day.

### **Families with Students at Both Main and Primary Campuses:**

If you have students in both the main and primary buildings, all dropping off and picking up takes place through the primary building parking lot. In the morning, Main campus students will walk up the path to their main campus classrooms. Primary siblings will be dropped off at the front door of the building. At



dismissal, main campus siblings will walk to the primary campus playground and wait to be picked up with their primary siblings. Parents will receive two placards, one for their primary student and one for their main campus student. Please note that if it is raining or storming you will need to go through the main campus car line first before dropping off or picking up your primary student and the announcement on this will typically come pretty close to dismissal time.

Until our staff are familiar with you, or if you are dealing with a new staff member, please be prepared to present your identification when you pick up your child in the office. If a student is to be picked up by anyone other than you, or someone on your authorized pick-up list, please send a written authorization in advance, and tell your designee to be prepared to show ID. In case of an emergency, please call the office.

Please note that we cannot accept day-to-day changes in dismissal locations for students. If, on a particular day, your primary student is being picked up by a family with students only on the main campus, the driver will have to use the main campus car line to pick up their children before coming to primary. We do not transport primary students to the main campus for pick up. In the case of changes, please ensure that the person picking up your child is on your authorized pick-up list and has a placard. In case of emergency, please call the office.

#### **Please Be on Time**

When students are tardy, they miss morning meetings and tone setting for the day. Please make every effort to have your child here on time. Students who are habitually late may be removed from the program. When students are late parents MUST walk their child into the front office to sign in.

#### **Early Check Out/Late Drop off**

1. When checking students out early, they must be picked up at least thirty minutes before the start of dismissal. The last thirty minutes before dismissal are very busy and so it is hard to manage early dismissals within that window. Students must be signed out in the front office when picked up early.
2. Tardy students must be walked into the front office, signed in and office staff notified that the student is there.

#### **Late Pick Up**

Any family regularly picking their child up past the pick-up window may be removed from the program. IMO does offer before and after care at an additional cost through the BASE program. Please email [BASE@innovationmontessori.com](mailto:BASE@innovationmontessori.com) for information or check the Innovation Montessori Ocoee website.

## **BULLYING**

Understanding that preschool aged children are learning to regulate emotions and behavior, the Casa Program at IMO seeks to provide a safe and nurturing environment where children are supported in learning kindness and establishing and enforcing boundaries. Bullying is considered as repeated acts (physical or verbal), that are targeted, aggressive, intended to do harm, and which occur within the context of a power imbalance. Teachers are alert for all negative interactions. If you suspect that your



child is being bullied, please do not hesitate to share your concerns with the teacher or Primary Administration.

## **CONDUCT**

Please refer to the Discipline Policy below. The Casa Program at IMO expects good behavior, independence and responsibility from its students. We strive to balance the good of the individual with the good of the community. Children who, despite intervention, are continually disruptive, disrespectful, or discourteous, or do not engage in work, may be removed from the program. This is not seen as a failure on your child's part but rather as a sign of an environmental mismatch.

## **CUSTODY OF STUDENTS**

The school staff is required to release students to either of their natural parents unless we have a copy of a court order that grants custody to only one of the natural parents or to someone else. If you have a court order, please give a copy to the office staff. All students must be signed out by parents, legal guardians, or authorized adults.

## **DCF REPORTS**

Employees of Innovation Montessori are mandatory reporters. This means that we are legally bound to report any reasonable suspicion of child neglect or abuse, including information shared by children, despite our personal feelings about, or relationship with, the family. Once we place a call to DCF it is up to them to decide whether to take the report or not. Please understand that, due to legal requirements and for the well-being of the children in our care, we will always err on the side of caution in these matters.

## **E-MAIL**

Please ensure that you provide your most current email addresses to the school and update any contact information changes in School Mint and ParentSquare, and any other school platforms you interact with.

## **EXTENDED DAY**

BASE (Before and After School Enrichment) is offered to and from 7 am through 6 pm. The cost of BASE is not included in tuition and spaces are limited. Visit the school website for more Information. Our primary classrooms each have a Base Assistant (BA) who stays with the children in BASE from noon through 6 pm.

## **HEAD LICE**

Head lice may be found in any school. Innovation Montessori Ocoee's policy states that any student with head lice may not stay in school. Students with head lice will stay in the office until they are picked up. Nits and lice must be removed at home before returning to school. Before returning to the classroom the student must be checked by the office. Please accompany your child to the office when returning to school. With respect to health privacy and grace and courtesy, we ask that community members refrain from announcing a case of lice for any child other their own. The National Association of School Nurses says, "studies have shown that control measures such as, mass screenings for nits have



not been shown to have a significant effect on the incidence of head lice in a school community, nor have they shown to be cost-effective (Devore et al., 2015; Meinking & Taplin, 2011; CDC, 2013a). Communication between school personnel and parents/caregivers highlighting cases of head lice (e.g., “head lice outbreak letters”) has been shown to increase community anxiety, increase social stigma causing embarrassment of affected infested students, and puts students’ rights to confidentiality at risk (Gordon, 2007; Pontius, 2014”) – <https://www.nasn.org/advocacy/professional-practice-documents/position-statements/ps-head-lice>. IMO has a conservative lice notification policy.

## **HOMEWORK**

IMO primary students do not receive homework. Montessorians believe that children spend all day in the classroom learning and need their afternoons and evenings to pursue their personal interests, interact with their families, help with family chores, and relax. Refrain from academic work at home, which is viewed negatively by your child, as nothing is surer to kill the joy of learning. Daily reading with your child is always a wonderful idea.

## **LUNCH**

The Montessori curriculum includes lessons on grace and courtesy. Please include a napkin, placemat and appropriate silverware with your child’s lunch every day. We are a PEANUT AWARE SCHOOL and ask that you do not send any food containing peanuts. Other types of nuts are permitted. Lunch is eaten in the classroom. When packing lunch for your student we ask that you pack a nutritious meal. A well-rounded, nutritional lunch includes meat, beans, cheese or other protein and fruit, vegetables and whole grains. We ask that you do not send candy, chips or sugary sweet treats. Do not send any items that need to be refrigerated, microwaved or reheated. Students do not have access to a microwave and teachers are not permitted to microwave food for the students. Please send a labeled, reusable water bottle daily.

Lunch ordering options are available on the school website through the IMO NSLP Lunch Program. We do offer free and reduced lunch for families who meet the required income threshold. Please reach out to Ms. Brittany, the lunch director at [Lunch@innovationmontessori.com](mailto:Lunch@innovationmontessori.com) . We do not accept food deliveries for children at school. Any food that is delivered by a restaurant or food delivery service will be refused. Please do not drop fast food off at school for your children. We are not staffed to run food to classrooms, nor is fast food typically within the healthy food requirements of our charter.

## **MANDATORY PICK-UP**

Should the school call you to pick up your child (this may happen in the event of illness, injury or because of inappropriate behavior), you must be at the school within one hour of the call at the latest.

## **MONTESSORI**

Innovation Montessori Ocoee is a public charter Montessori school. Our school’s mission is to provide an authentic Montessori experience for our students. Montessori education was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, Italy’s first female medical doctor. She opened the first Montessori school in Rome in 1907. Montessori is one of the most enduring and widely spread educational methods in the world. There are

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more than 30,000 Montessori schools worldwide, with about 4,000 in the United States. Of that 4,000 only 500 are public, tuition-free schools. Montessori philosophy encompasses more than just academics; it also includes character education, personal responsibility, peace education, care of the environment, and a celebration of diversity. In her lifetime, Maria Montessori was nominated for three Nobel Peace Prizes. Some hallmarks of Montessori education include multi-aged classrooms, a long uninterrupted work cycle and hands on materials (especially through third grade). Montessori elementary curriculum is strongly science based and features the five Great Lessons; The Coming of the Universe, The Coming of Life, The Coming of Man, The Story of Language and The Story of Numbers. We highly recommend that you, as part of a Montessori community, take an active interest in learning about Montessori education. Attending parent education events and tours is a great way to learn more about Montessori.

## **Napping**

All three-year-old students are required to lie down for a daily nap or rest period. Four-year-old students are also required to rest for approximately 30 to 45 minutes. If a child does not fall asleep during that time, they may quietly get up and continue with independent work until dismissal.

**Nap gear requirements** include:

- A fitted crib-sized sheet or a Rollie Pollie
- A small blanket
- An optional small, travel-sized pillow (airplane-sized)

To help us manage limited storage space, we ask that nap kits remain compact. Nap bags will be sent home on the first day of school, and teachers will provide additional guidelines during Parents' Night.

Please note: Stuffed animals are not permitted.

## **PARKING**

During arrival and dismissal please do not occupy a parking space any longer than necessary to allow other families to park. Please use the utmost care when driving on campus. Allowing someone time to back out is a great way to model grace and courtesy for our children. For some special events we will have arranged access to the church next door to the primary building for parking. This will always be announced and published; please do not park there, it is otherwise prohibited. Never walk through the parking lot. Always use the closest sidewalk.

## **PLAYGROUNDS**



Playgrounds are for use by our children during recess and while in our BASE program. It is not appropriate for children to be on the playground without the supervision of IMO staff – this sometimes includes during school events.

## PTO

Casa families are invited to participate in Innovation Montessori Ocoee's Parent Teacher Organization. PTO is a group of dedicated parents working to enrich our students' educational experience. The PTO meetings will be announced via email and posted in the PTO info box in the front office. PTO's website is [www.ptoowls.com](http://www.ptoowls.com) You may purchase school spirit t-shirts and merchandise there.

## SCHOOL UNIFORM

For detailed uniform requirements, please see the Uniform Policy on our website.

We are a uniform school. Cleanliness, good grooming, and neatness are important standards of appearance for everyone. Students not in compliance with the uniform policy will have their parent/guardian contacted to bring the correct clothing.

Our uniform consists of:

- Solid white, navy, light blue, hunter green or "gator" orange polo or button-down shirt.
- Solid beige or navy uniform shorts, pants, skorts or jumpers (fingertip hemline is required).

Uniforms may be purchased anywhere. Uniforms include a collar. Logo shirts are not required but are available to be purchased from Land's End at [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com). Logos can also be added to shirts at Stitches by Leyla in Winter Garden: [www.stitchesbyleyla.com](http://www.stitchesbyleyla.com).

Please send your child in comfortable, soft-soled, closed-toed and closed-heeled shoes suitable for the playground. No light-up shoes, crocs, or sandals allowed. Leggings, tights, socks and accessories must be solid colors (no patterns, logos or characters). Shorts must be worn under skirts and dresses; these may be in solid colors. No dress jewelry is permitted. If real jewelry is worn, please ensure it is safe for the classroom and not a distraction. The school does not accept responsibility for lost or broken jewelry.

Fridays are spirit days when students may wear a school spirit shirt, which may be purchased from PTO, and blue denim bottoms.

**Outerwear:** Jackets and sweaters worn inside the classroom must be in uniform colors.

Please ensure to label all jackets and sweaters. The school is not responsible for lost items and will donate unclaimed items.

## SIBLINGS

Younger children may not accompany volunteers in the classroom. Please read classroom invitations to see if siblings are invited to specific events. When younger siblings are on campus they must be strapped into a stroller or carrier. Please ensure that all children in your company show respect for the school/classroom environment. No matter what age, visitors to the classrooms are not invited to touch materials on shelves.



## **SICKNESS, MEDICATIONS, and ALLERGIES**

When NOT to send your child to school:

- Red rashes, bumps
- Fever, nausea and vomiting
- Red, itchy eyes with discharge
- Swollen glands
- Cramping, diarrhea
- Nits and/or live lice

Actions you should take:

- Keep child home until free of fever (without medication) for 24 hours
- Keep child home for 24 hours after their last vomiting or diarrhea episode.
- Contact the office or fill out an absence form on the school website.

Illness or Injury during school hours

- All health emergencies will be reported to the office to call 911
- Parents will be notified
- No student will be released to anyone except parents or designated representatives unless release to emergency medical personnel is necessary
- Please keep your emergency contacts and medical information up to date
- If your child is sick, we will call you to pick them up. It is your responsibility to come to school within a reasonable time frame (no more than one hour).

### **Guidelines on Prescription Medication**

- Notify in writing of all prescription medications being taken by a student
- When possible, all medication shall be administered outside school hours
- If medication must be sent to school, the following legal requirements must be met:
  - For each prescribed medication, the student's parent or guardian must complete an AUTHORIZATION FOR MEDICATION FORM, which is available in the office and personally deliver the medication to the office.
  - All prescribed medication must be received in the ORIGINAL container. The prescription label must show: date, student's name, dosage and time to be administered.
  - If it is necessary for medication to be taken home, the parent or guardian must pick it up after dismissal. Parents or guardians are responsible for transporting medications to and from school.

### **Guidelines for Non-Prescription Medication**

- Any over the counter medication brought to school to administer to students must be un-opened. The over-the-counter medication seal must not be broken. Medicine is considered anything that goes on or in the body that is not food. Parents must bring all medicine to the office and complete AUTHORIZATION FOR MEDICATION FORM
- Students are prohibited from keeping non-prescription medication in their backpacks – this includes cough drops and essential oils.
- Students are prohibited from providing medication to fellow classmates.
- By law, for a staff member to apply sunscreen to a child requires paperwork to be completed by the parent. Children are permitted to carry and apply their own sunscreen.

**Children with Severe Food Allergies Please Fill out the Following Forms:**

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- Authorization for Emergency Care of Children with Severe Allergies
- Acknowledgement of Receipt of Policy for Administering Emergency Treatment
- Release and Hold Harmless Agreement
- Provide updated and current information
- Keep teachers aware of your child's allergies
- It is the parent's responsibility to provide medication, as prescribed by the child's physician
- Current medication must be provided to the school and always be on hand
- When the student is on a field trip, an additional set of medication must be provided to a child's teacher
- NO SHARING OF FOOD OR SNACKS IS PERMITTED AMONG STUDENTS.

## **SNACK**

The Montessori philosophy encourages grace and courtesy, independence, care of self and the environment. One way the teachers teach this skill is through eating snacks at a snack table. Each student will bring their own individual healthy snack. A recommended healthy snack would be a protein, fruit or vegetable (avoid processed foods). Recommended healthy snacks for all celebrations also include proteins, fruits or vegetables.

## **STUDENT PROPERTY**

Please put names on coats, sweaters, jackets, books, school bags, lunch boxes and other items belonging to your child. Remind your child that they are responsible for keeping up with their own personal belongings. If items are lost, please ask your child to locate them, and then check with teachers. We do not have space to maintain Lost and Found. Periodically, unclaimed items are donated to charity. Children are not permitted to bring toys to school.

## **VISITING SCHOOL**

Anyone spending time on campus must first be cleared through ADDitions (OCPS's background screening system). Visitors must register in the front office with an official photo ID and wear a visitor's badge during their time on campus. Arrangements for classroom visits must be made in advance with the teacher; this policy ensures the children receive an uninterrupted work cycle. Parent conferences must be scheduled for times other than student instructional times. Teachers are responsible for the safe arrival and dismissal of students to and from their classrooms. They will not be able to have mini conferences with parents at these times. Please schedule conferences with teachers when they are not directly responsible for the safety of children. We encourage you to make arrangements with your child's teacher to visit the classroom or to set up a conference.

When volunteering in the classroom, please understand that you may become aware of individual students' academic abilities. It is against the mandates of the *Family Educational Rights Protection Act* to share any such details with anyone. It is also inappropriate to directly address, or to discuss with the teacher, the behavior of any child, other than your own.



## VOLUNTEER HOURS

All Innovation Montessori Ocoee (IMO) families are required to contribute 20 volunteer hours per year. Failure to meet this requirement may result in your child losing their re-enrollment at IMO for the next school year. We utilize OCPS's volunteer clearance system, ADDitions. To volunteer on campus or to chaperone field trips you must first be cleared through ADDitions. Apply at <https://ocps.samaritan.com>. It is necessary to complete a new ADDitions application at the beginning of each new school year. You will also log your volunteer hours on our volunteer management platform which we use to audit hours and determine if our families' volunteer hour requirements have been met. All volunteer hours must be completed and logged in prior to May 8th. Please plan accordingly and remember that there may not be 20 hours of volunteer work available if you leave it till the end of the school year. Casa volunteer hours may be bought out at a rate of \$15 per hour. This must be done before May 15<sup>th</sup>. Families with siblings in IMO's K-12 may not buy out hours. We will do our best to create as many volunteer opportunities as possible, as well as a variety of ways in which to volunteer, but please remember that getting your volunteers hours completed and logged is your responsibility. Only adult family members will be credited with service hours. Younger siblings may not accompany parents when volunteering in classrooms. If you have any questions, please contact the Primary Director at [hilda@innovationmontessori.com](mailto:hilda@innovationmontessori.com) or [primaryoffice@innovationmontessori.com](mailto:primaryoffice@innovationmontessori.com).

Volunteering is a great way to get involved in your child's education. Not only does it support your child's school, but it also gives some insight into your child's day, reinforces the importance of school for your child.

### EXAMPLES OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

*Material Making \* Classroom Support (Seasonal Activities) \*Laundering classroom rugs \* PTO Activity Assistance \*Teacher Appreciation Week \* Chaperoning School Field Trips \* Volunteer Coordinator \* Fundraising Events \*Drama Productions Support \* Gardening Team*

## WITHDRAWAL

Please let the office know as soon as possible if you will be moving or withdrawing your child from school. Read the financial agreement for tuition responsibilities as notice terms are stated for which you will be responsible for tuition.

**One Final Note...***We anticipate that you and your child will have a wonderful experience at Casa at IMO, but in case conflicts arise, please note the following protocol which will help you navigate through those times: If the problem has to do with your child's classroom, the students in the class, the teachers or teacher's assistant, please talk with the teacher first and share your concern. We always want to foster open communication. After communicating with the teacher, if you still have concerns, please contact the Principal or Assistant Principals. Our Board President is also available after you have spoken with Administration.*

**On the next pages you will find our Parent/Student School Agreement and Discipline Policy. Please upload them to the registration packet. You will have to upload these forms as part of the registration packet.**



## **Innovation Montessori Ocoee Home-School Agreement**

The parent(s)/guardian(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ have read and agreed to abide by the following:

Casa at Innovation Montessori Ocoee is a community committed to providing a strong Montessori foundation that enables our students to achieve their full potential, develop curiosity, creativity, imagination, and become responsible citizens of the world. Our students flourish when their homes and schools operate harmoniously with each other.

Casa at IMO parents/guardians are dedicated to:

- Making every attempt to learn Montessori principles and using them in the home.
- Attending parent education events at the school.
- Attending all conferences scheduled with any member of the Casa at Innovation Montessori Ocoee staff.
- Engaging in our culture of giving. Share your time, talent, and resources to provide the best education possible for our students. (20 Volunteer hours per family are mandatory).
- Providing transportation to and from school for my/our child.
- Providing uniforms for my/our child and ensuring that my/our child abides by the dress code of the Innovation Montessori Ocoee.
- Supplying a healthy lunch, either from home or purchased through the school's lunch provider.
- Annually reviewing the Parent Handbook and my/our child's classroom's expectations.
- Modeling grace and courtesy when interacting with members of Casa at IMO community and resolving any problems respectfully.
- Communicating respectfully, directly and actively with the school. This includes bringing all problems and concerns directly to the school where they can be resolved, rather than broadcasting them in places where they cannot. Our goal is that our community be a place where we model positive and productive communication for our children.

Casa at IMO is dedicated to:

- Providing a genuine Montessori environment in our public-school setting.
- Nurturing curiosity and initiative so your child develops strong work habits, a clear sense of purpose, and the will to learn and grow.
- Guiding your child's growth and development
- Communicating as partners, working hard to provide open, timely, respectful information and insight into your child and the school community.
- Being professional and courteous, providing mutually respectful communication with all our community members. We are striving to be a model of grace and courtesy that guides Montessori curriculum and culture.

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- Working to balance the individual needs of the child with the needs of the classroom or school community as a whole

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I (we) have read the information contained in the Casa at Innovation Montessori Ocoee handbook, and the above parent-student-school agreement and commit to abiding by the policies and practices outlined therein.

**Custodial Parent/Guardian #1**

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Student: \_\_\_\_\_

**Custodial Parent/Guardian #2 (if applicable)**

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Student: \_\_\_\_\_

*Some of the language of this agreement was taken from Greenspring Montessori School's Parent-School Partnership Agreement. We thank them for their work.*



## **The Casa Program at Innovation Montessori Ocoee**

### **Discipline Policy**

One of the main goals of the Montessori environment is to support the development of self-motivation and self-discipline. The Montessori classroom offers children great freedom, both of movement and of choice, but the concept of “freedom within limits” is key to Montessori philosophy. Each classroom has specific rules and guidelines for expected behavior. These usually include expectations for respectful, kind and safe behavior towards people and things in the environment, as well as the expectation of engagement in meaningful work. While the children have a choice around which materials to work with, not working is not a choice.

The preparation of the environment, and carefully defined and well communicated ground rules, are key to discipline in our classrooms. The children know what is expected of them and are supported in meeting those expectations through modelling and redirection. Redirection is when a teacher prompts a child away from an inappropriate choice by calling their attention to a better choice, by noticing someone close by making an appropriate choice, or by giving a gentle physical (moving in closer, or a giving a gentle touch on the shoulder, for example) or verbal reminder. If redirection fails to result in a good choice the teacher may choose to use a natural consequence (outcomes that happen because of behavior that are not planned or controlled) or logical consequence (consequences that don't happen as a natural result of the behavior, but which are related, respectful, and reasonable). An example of a logical consequence is that if a child is not treating materials with respect, the materials may not be used for the remainder of the day. If a child is acting in a way that is unsafe the teacher may remove the child from the environment (by taking him/her outside of the classroom or to the office). If behavior continues to be disruptive or unsafe parents/guardians will be called and asked to come and remove their child from school expediently. Extreme misbehavior (as determined by administration) may result in suspension or expulsion.

Our approach to discipline is based on empowerment, mutual respect, and trust. Corporal punishment is prohibited. Withholding or using food, rest, or sleep as a punishment is prohibited. Methods of discipline or interactions that frighten, demean, or humiliate a child are prohibited.

We strive to balance the needs of the individual with the needs of the community. Parents will be advised of any repeated problematic behavior, and it is the expectation of Casa at IMO, that parents will be full partners in resolving behavioral issues. The Montessori environment is not the best fit for every child. Chronic behavior problems or a refusal to engage with work, which continues to exist



despite reasonable efforts at resolution (as determined by the school) may be an indication of an unsatisfactory adjustment to the school and may result in withdrawal from the program. Please understand that class size requirements mean that requests to move your child to another classroom will rarely be possible to meet. You absolutely may not request that another child be moved out of your child's class.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I (we) have read the information contained in the Casa at Innovation Montessori Ocoee Discipline Policy and commit to supporting and abiding by the policies and practices outlined therein.

**Custodial Parent/Guardian #1**

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Student: \_\_\_\_\_

**Custodial Parent/Guardian #2 (if applicable)**

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Student: \_\_\_\_\_

**School Representative:**

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Role: \_\_\_\_\_