



Riverside Montessori  
Learning Centre  
Family Handbook

*"Montessori for Everyone"*

Riverside Montessori Learning  
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Owner/Senior Director:

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### **Mission Statement**

Riverside Montessori Learning Centre (RMLC) is dedicated to providing an inspiring learning environment based on the Montessori and New Brunswick framework philosophies. It is our vision to guide our children to become responsible contributors in society with respect and maturity.

### **License to Operate**

RMLC operates in full compliance with New Brunswick Regulation under the Family Services Act and Child Day Care Facilities Operators Standards, which govern how child day care facilities are managed and regulated.

RMLC is a Designated Centre that participates in subsidy programs through the province of New Brunswick.

We are licensed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood as a quality, open concept, integrated childcare Centre, providing up to 40 spaces for children three (3) to six (6) years of age. Please inquire via email or phone, as space is limited.

### **Inclusion Policy**

Our Centre strives to accommodate every student. Prior to enrollment, we collaborate with the parents/guardians of the student(s) and teachers to determine what resources are required to ensure the student can reach his/her/their full potential. When a parent/guardian comes to RMLC for their initial tour, we discuss our daily routine, our Mission Statement, the Montessori method, and our expectations for families and employees of the Centre. At that time, we determine the appropriate resources required for the student. Prior to official enrollment, we ensure that all the necessary resources are available and in

place to create a smooth transition and learning experience. It is important to note that RMLC is an open concept learning space and may present challenges for some students. Enrollment decisions are determined based on the collective comfort of all parties, but always approached with an open mind, an open discussion based on needs, and a commitment to access appropriate resources.

## **The Montessori Method, Our Programming, the Importance of Play**

Maria Montessori had many famous quotes with regards to education. One of the most memorable is: “play is the work of the child.” By this she meant that work and play are interchangeable for children. Children love to help adults with everyday tasks, including sweeping, cooking, folding laundry, etc. They also desire to be independent, to have the ability to get dressed with ease, pour themselves a drink, or clean up a simple spill without relying on an adult. We foster these skills in our program. This is why you will find students assisting with classroom tasks such as folding clean cloths, lining up the outdoor footwear, and sweeping/ wiping up spills (to name a few).

RMLC follows the Anglophone New Brunswick Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Child Care, which can be accessed via the following link: <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/ECHDPE/ELCC-Curriculum.asp>. These guidelines and principles encourage an open environment for our children to grow intellectually, socially, and embrace their sense of community. The classroom curriculum is planned by the educator(s) and varied throughout the month with special attention to each child’s progression and growth.

Our program includes five (5) main sections of the classroom: Practical Life, Sensorial, Math, Language Arts, Culture/Science (as well as Botany and Zoology). In **Practical Life**, children are taught and encouraged to perform tasks found in the real world and at home. Examples include sweeping, pouring water, folding, transferring small items from one container to another, wiping up a spill, tying laces, etc. These skills help strengthen hand-eye coordination and

concentration, which are precursors to reading and writing. **Sensorial** activities focus on the use of all the senses. Children work with specific materials designed to target fine and gross motor skills, visual discrimination, olfactory refinement, tactile distinction, etc. All sections in the Montessori classroom use a variety of tools and materials to ensure that the child is both stimulated and challenged. Once a child has mastered a skill, there are ample opportunities to expand on that knowledge base and explore the concept(s) further. When it comes to their activities, students use imagination and experimentation in all that they do. For example, when working with blocks such as the Pink Tower or Brown Stair, students can practice the method shown by their teacher but can also begin to experiment with trial-and-error. What happens if the smallest block is placed beneath the largest? What do the blocks look like horizontally versus vertically? These are important questions to ask and are created by a sense of wonder. We want to foster that natural curiosity in every aspect of their daily experiences at school.

At RMLC, we also prioritize outdoor play. We subscribe to the phrase “there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing.” We spend a considerable amount of time outside: first thing in the morning at drop-off, before lunch, and after school before pick-up. We recognize that our climate is predisposed to extreme weather. We will bring the children inside when we feel the weather is too extreme for outdoor play. We will often take the children out, even if it is for a few minutes, to give them the chance to breathe fresh air and to practice independent dress (outdoor winter gear). We are firm believers that outdoor time is critical for students’ healthy development and *encourage messy play*. We ask that you remain cognizant of the forecast of the day and ensure your child has adequate outdoor clothing. All pieces of clothing (including spare) must be labeled with your child’s name or initials. Please address any concerns you have about these guidelines with the teachers/Director right away so that we can discuss a possible solution.

## **Admission**

Admission to RMLC is open to anyone. Upon expressing interest in our program and prior to acceptance, parents/guardians are asked to come in and tour the facility. On the tour, we walk through the school and discuss the materials, talk

about our schedule and policies, and discuss any questions/concerns. This is an opportunity for the Director and teachers to get to know the parents/guardians and vice versa. If both parties agree that this is the best space for the child, parents/guardians will fill out a series of paperwork and provide the initial deposit. Priority is given to siblings of the children who have already attended or are currently attending RMLC.

## **Attendance**

It is important for your child to attend regularly to fulfill your child's need for consistency and order. This also enables your child to participate fully in class lessons and other learning experiences. Parents must contact the school when a child is absent.

## **Parental Commitment**

For most of the year, we begin our day outside. After entering the school, we begin our day with student-led lessons. This allows children the chance to engage in activities of their choice and have adequate time to fully explore ideas related to their tasks. Children who are late are deprived of this time and routine. In addition, when children enter the classroom after 9 am, it is disruptive to students and teachers who might be engaged in lessons. Please enter the classroom quietly.

RMLC is a full year program and does not pause programming in the summer months (with the exception of a one (1) week closure in August). Please ensure prior to enrollment that you consider your summer plans and commitment to RMLC. Parents and families are welcome and encouraged to take as much vacation/family time as they wish; however, to maintain a spot in the program, payments must continue in a timely manner and at the agreed upon price based on full-time or part-time enrollment. Reductions in payments for time away from school for vacations/travel are not offered.

## **Registration Fees and Payment**

A one (1) time, non-refundable registration fee of \$100.00 is required at the time of acceptance into RMLC. A monthly tuition payment is due on the 1st of every month. Full time and part time tuition fees are \$16 and \$7 per day respectively, multiplied by the total number of monthly operational days. For example, a month may have 21 operational days, and the fee would be calculated as such (16x21 or 7x21). Operational days change month to month, so please be mindful when tallying your tuition for the month. Monthly payments are required. We accept e-transfers only, and payment must be deposited on or before the 1st of every month. If circumstances require that payment must be made by cheque, this will be pre-approved by the Senior Director, Holly Goodwin. Please note that any declined cheques will be charged a \$50.00 bank fee. The parent/guardian who signs the family contract is responsible for payment fees. A late fee of \$10 per day may be applied to any late tuition payments. There is a five-day grace period before the late charge is applied. Should an alternate arrangement need to be made, please be sure to contact the Senior Director prior to the tuition deadline. If tuition payments are repeatedly late or missed, RMLC reserves the right to terminate care.

## **Hours of Operation**

RMLC operates five (5) days a week (Monday to Friday) from 7:45am to 5:15pm.

## **Late Pick-Up**

RMLC's hours are indicated above. Parents/guardians are responsible for organizing their schedule to respect our staff's hours of work. Please call or email the school if there are emergency cases and we will be happy to assist in any way. Please note that there is a \$10 late fee for every 10 minutes beyond the regular closure time that will apply and is to be paid directly to the teacher that has stayed behind. Kindly remember that the educators have families and appointments outside of work hours and routinely late pick-ups prevent them from meeting those needs.

## **Statutory Holidays**

RMLC is closed on the following days/holidays: New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, New Brunswick Day, Labor Day, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, Christmas Eve Day through to the New Year, as well as one week attached to the August long weekend in the summer.

Please note that RMLC has two (2) full days and two (2) half days for professional development and will be announced during the calendar year.

### **Facility Closures - Storm Days and Loss of Power**

RMLC may close in the event of inclement weather and is required to close for prolonged power outages (over one hour)/frozen pipes. In the event of inclement weather, the decision to close the school for a full or partial day is made by the Operator and/or Director. If the school is closed for the full day, an announcement will be made on the local radio stations and on our Facebook page by 6:30 am. Should we experience a power outage that lasts longer than one (1) hour, we will inform all parents, who will need to arrange for their child(ren)'s pick up within one (1) hour. Please have all emails and phone numbers up to date in the child's file.

### **Daily Schedule (subject to change based on season)**

|                    |                                                                     |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7:45 - 9:00 am     | Drop-off (typically outdoor play)                                   |
| 9:00 - 11:00 am    | Morning Montessori lessons<br>(including snack)                     |
| 11:00 - 11:15 am   | Morning circle                                                      |
| 11:15 am - 12:15pm | Outdoor play and pick up for morning students                       |
| 12:15 - 12:45 pm   | Lunch                                                               |
| 12:45 - 2:30 pm    | Drop off for afternoon students and<br>afternoon Montessori lessons |
| 2:30 - 2:45 pm     | Afternoon circle                                                    |

2:45 - 5:15 pm

Outdoor play until pick-up

## **Probationary Period**

All students will have an eight (8) week probationary period in the facility. In special and rare circumstances, situations may arise where the child is not adjusting well to our learning environment. If this should happen, the Director/educators will work in conjunction with the parents/guardians to reach a peaceful resolution. Should this not resolve the issue(s), the Director/educators may determine that the child would be better suited to another environment and maintain the right to terminate the contract between the child, the child's family and the school. Two (2) week notice will be given to the parents/guardians. After the eight (8) week probationary period, RMLC continues to reserve the right to terminate care if certain behaviours or situations arise that cannot be resolved through collaboration and intervention with the families. If we feel that your child might benefit from additional support or assessment, the Director will reach out in conjunction with their primary educator to discuss any concerns or observations. This will begin with an in-person discussion and could include a letter outlining next steps/recommendations.

## **Withdrawal Policy**

During the tour, we discuss with you the commitment level to our program before your child(ren) is enrolled. Should something occur where the parents/guardians wish to remove their child(ren) from the full program, we request a one (1) full calendar month notice in writing (email) prior to withdrawal. Without a one (1) full month notice, parents/guardians will be charged a full month fee.

## **Parent/Guardian(s) Concerns and/or Complaints and Behaviour Expectations**

If a parent/guardian has a concern or complaint, they are encouraged to address the matter with an educator. If the parent/guardian is not comfortable with working directly with an educator, they are encouraged to contact the Director and together with the educator devise an appropriate solution or strategy.

Parents/guardians agree to follow the rules and regulations of the school, as do the students. Adults in the community must serve as role models for the children. It is crucial that while on school property, any adults (including staff) always conduct themselves in a professional and rational manner. This includes respectful communication between families and staff, whether that is in person, on the phone or via email. Disrespectful language or communication of any kind that is interpreted as threatening or hostile may result in the termination of care at the discretion of the school without notice. Likewise, any behaviour deemed disrespectful and/or aggressive to the staff, students, environment of the school may lead to the dismissal of the family, or for the Director to implement measures deemed necessary. Confrontational and abusive behaviour (verbal, physical, sexual, etc.) on the part of parents and guardians can result in immediate termination of care without notice. A Respectful Communication form is inserted at the back of this handbook and signature is required as part of your child's file before enrollment is finalized.

## **Discipline**

At RMLC, we strongly believe that 'time-outs' in the traditional sense are not usually effective. Our first instinct is to redirect the child to a more appropriate activity or material of interest. Our secondary strategy is to provide the child with more responsibility, offering them an opportunity to channel their leadership skills in a way that better serves the learning environment. If the child still does not respond to these techniques, a 'time-away' may be used. This is not used as a punishment but rather a chance for the child to cool off or reflect on what has just transpired. This does not necessarily mean a time away in isolation. An educator may sit with the child to assist in any way. We believe in HUGS!

## **Student Files**

Parents/guardians must notify the administration if there are any changes in address, telephone numbers or e-mail addresses. This information must always stay up to date in the child's file. For example, when you receive an updated Medicare card, please provide the school with the updated expiry date (and the change in number if applicable).

## **Health Policy**

To prevent the spread of illness and germs, children must wash their hands immediately upon arrival at RMLC. For the wellbeing of the other children, children who are ill should not attend school. If the educator or Director considers a child too ill to participate in regular classroom activities or in the event the child develops an illness at the school, the child will be removed from the classroom and the parents/guardians will be notified, giving them one (1) hour to arrange for pick-up. Likewise, if a child has an injury that prevents them from fully participating in the program safely, they may be asked to remain at home until fully healed or until the child can navigate the classroom and outdoor time with proper supports in place (for example, crutches). Payment does not cease in these cases, as it is required to hold the child's spot. A doctor's note might also be requested to ensure the child has been assessed and cleared by a medical professional.

### ***Is my child well enough for school?***

It is our community responsibility to err on the side of caution when evaluating whether a child is well enough for school.

*A child may not return to school until:*

- **the child is fever free, without medication, (temperature below 100. 2 F in the ear) for 24 hours (*directive of the Department of Public Health*)**
- **the child has been free from diarrhea and vomiting for at least 48 hours without medication (*directive of the Department of Public Health*)**
- the child is well enough to participate fully in the school program and play outside.

- the child's itchy, red and runny eyes from conjunctivitis have been under treatment for at least 24 hours.
- the child has been shampooed with medicated shampoo and the nits removed completely in the case of lice.
- the child has begun treatment for impetigo for at least 24 hours
- the child is free of any communicable disease or infection.
- the child is free of a productive cough with thick mucus from the mouth and/or nose (e.g. mucus will turn watery rather than thick).

These are some of the more common illnesses we see in the children at RMLC. If your child is ill with something not listed above, please speak with the Director to determine when your child may return to school.

### ***What if my child gets sick at school?***

When children are not feeling well, lethargic or have a fever and they are not able to participate fully in our program, the teacher will call the parents/guardians to take the child home. The parents/guardians have one (1) hour to pick up the child. The child will rest apart from the other children until someone arrives to pick them up. When educators cannot reach parents/guardians, they will call the Emergency Contact Numbers listed in the child's records. If necessary, professional help will be called. In an emergency, transportation will be provided by an ambulance service (call 911).

### ***Plan for managing infectious disease***

Children will be excluded from school if they exhibit any of the following symptoms: *fever, abnormal behaviour (lethargy), vomiting, diarrhea, productive cough with thick mucus from mouth and nose, skin or direct contact infection or any contagious condition.*

Children should be symptom-free, fever-free or on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school. Special precautions are necessary to prevent the spread of infectious disease. Children exhibiting any of the above symptoms during the school day will be separated from the group and rest apart from other children until parents/guardians or emergency contact person arrives. Parents/guardians must notify the school if their child has a contagious condition.

Parents/guardians will be informed of contagious conditions in the school community by a posting on the bulletin board and an email will be sent to families.

### ***Allergies***

The Director will review all child files and note any allergies. All allergies are posted on the window beside the entrance of the school and in the kitchen, on the refrigerator. The educators are responsible for familiarizing themselves with children's allergies. Educators will observe children during snack and lunch times, as well as during activity times using related materials for any signs of an allergic reaction. Should a child have a serious allergy that requires a specific medication such as an Epi-pen, it will be stored above the refrigerator in the kitchen, labelled, and easily accessible in the event of the onset of a reaction. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that the educators receive the appropriate medications including instructions for administering.

### ***Immunizations***

The child's health history and record of immunization must be completed by the parent/guardian and updated as changes occur. If the parents/guardian have chosen not to immunize their child, a waiver signed by the parents/guardians must be on file.

### ***Lice***

Upon discovery of head lice on a child's head, RMLC administration will remove the child from class and contact the parents/guardians for immediate pick-up. The parents/guardians will implement the proper treatment (through a pharmacist or doctor). The child can return to RMLC when a thorough head-check by a member of staff has been conducted and no nits and lice are present.

### ***Procedures for Identifying Suspected Abuse or Neglect***

To ensure the wellbeing of the children in our care, the staff has a continuing duty under provincial law to report possible incidents of neglect or abuse, including physical, sexual, or psychological abuse. In accordance with the guidelines set out by the Province of New Brunswick Child Victims Abuse/Neglect Protocols, we do not have discretion in this area but must make referrals whenever we have reasonable cause to believe that a child might have been harmed by anyone. To determine reasonable cause, the educators will consult with the Director and the Director will make the report to authorities within 24 hours.

The Director and educators are responsible for documenting and reporting suspected child abuse. The educators will keep careful documented observations for any child noting signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. The observations will include description of injury, date and time, how it was received if known, and any statement given by parents/guardians or child regarding the injury and

treatment given. RMLC staff shall cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect. If a RMLC staff member is accused of abuse or neglect of a child in the school, the staff member will be removed from direct contact with the children until an investigation has been completed by RMLC and the Department of Social Development. In the event an accusation of abuse or neglect is made against a staff member, the Department of Social Development will be notified within 24 hours.

RMLC staff reserve the right to withhold a child should they suspect that the parent/guardian picking them up is driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Should this occur, the parent/guardian will be asked to contact someone suitable to pick up their child. If there is no one else available, or the individual refuses to follow through with this protocol, the authorities may be contacted.

### ***Non-Smoking Policy***

We promote a smoke-free environment. Under the New Brunswick Smoke Free Act, smoking is prohibited in any workplace. RMLC does not permit smoking within 100 feet of the building and playground. Please BUTT OUT before entering the premises.

## **Additional Information**

### **Clothes and “Show-and-Tell” Items**

All clothing must be labeled. A full change of clothes must be included in the child’s backpack in a labeled Ziploc bag for easy access. Please provide a pair of indoor footwear for indoor use and always dress your child according to the weather.

We ask the parents/guardians to not send toys to school unless the educator(s) indicates that a special show-and-tell day will follow. However, if there is a special stuffy or blanket that the child uses for relaxation purposes while they adjust to our program, we encourage it.

### **Snacks, Lunch and Beverages**

At RMLC, we teach the children about health and nutrition and encourage healthy eating every day. The parents/guardians are responsible for all their children’s snacks, lunches and beverages. Kindly include a labelled water bottle for your child to keep at the school. RMLC staff will wash and sanitize their water bottle at the end of each day.

**\*\*Hard candy will not be distributed to children as it is a choking hazard.**

### **Birthdays**

We celebrate birthdays at school. If desired, a parent/guardian is permitted to send in a treat for the occasion that follows the guidelines for safe snacks. Snacks *must* be purchased from an approved food source (grocery store, bakery, etc.) with ingredient labels and not made at the home. Birthday party invitations can be emailed directly to the school along with a guest list and will be distributed via email. **Please do not distribute invitations, gifts, or goodie bags at school.**

**Riverside Montessori Learning Centre's Registration Agreement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have met with the Director of Riverside Montessori Learning Centre (RMLC), and I have been given a tour through the building.

\_\_\_\_\_(initials)

I have read a copy of the RMLC Family Handbook and have discussed any questions with the Director. At this time, I wish to enroll my child \_\_\_\_\_, at RMLC.

\_\_\_\_\_(initials)

I agree to pay a \$100.00 registration fee immediately and agree to fill out the necessary forms required before my child will start, including providing immunization records or an exemption form if applicable.

\_\_\_\_\_(initials)

I will drop my child off at the Centre no earlier than 7:45 am and pick them up before 5:15pm

\_\_\_\_\_(initials)

I agree to pay \$ \_\_\_\_\_(\$7 PT/\$16 FT) per day, providing an automatic e-transfer into RMLC's account on the 1st of each month for the number of operational days.

\_\_\_\_\_(initials)

I understand that the preschool closes at 5:15pm, and I agree to be charged a late arrival fee of \$10.00 for every 10 minutes that I am late.

\_\_\_\_\_(initials)

I agree that if my child is sick, I will keep them at home and notify the preschool on that day before 9:00am for the morning program and before 1:00pm for the afternoon program that they will be absent. I also agree that if my child becomes ill at preschool, I will arrive within the hour to pick them up.

\_\_\_\_\_(initials)

Any food allergies should be reported to the Director before registration. If for any reason a child requires a certain diet, or food restrictions, it will be the responsibility of the parent.

\_\_\_\_\_(initials)

The Centre operates on tuition payments, paid by the families of children enrolled in our program. Absences and vacations are nondeductible. Payments must be paid monthly. Scheduled payments are provided when your child starts school.

\_\_\_\_\_(initials)

Past due payments, exceeding seven days, will place the child's space in jeopardy. After five days, ten dollars per day will be added to your bill, and the child will not be permitted to attend preschool after 14 days until the outstanding fee is paid in full.

\_\_\_\_\_(initials)

***\*\*Please fill in and initial the last two (2) pages along with the date and signature below, and include with your child's enrolment paperwork\*\****

***DATE:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***SIGNATURE:*** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Riverside Montessori Learning Centre's Respectful Communication Agreement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and acknowledge the respectful parent conduct expectations laid out in this handbook.

I acknowledge that disrespectful behaviour and communication (whether in-person, via email or over the phone) interpreted as hostile or threatening toward

staff will not be tolerated and could result in termination of care without notice by RMLC.

\_\_\_\_\_(initials)

I commit to always conducting myself in a respectful and professional manner while on school property and in my communication (whether in-person, via email or over the phone).

\_\_\_\_\_(initials)

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

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