

Parent-School Partnership Agreement

Expectations for Parents and Bozeman Summit School

Goal To ensure a positive relationship between parents and school in support of every student.

Background The purpose of this agreement is to clarify expectations. What can parents and school expect of each other as we enter into a long-term partnership to aid the development of your children? This document seeks to answer that question by articulating expectations: those that parents can reasonably expect of the school, and in turn, what the school, with its mission of providing a superior Montessori learning environment, will expect of parents.

Q: *What is the school's most basic expectation of parents?*

A: **Make continuing efforts to understand, embrace, and apply the Montessori approach at home and to work in partnership with the school.**

These efforts should begin before admission. The school desires parents who understand and embrace the mission of the school. To that end, we help parents learn about the Montessori approach by providing information and opportunities for parent education as part of the admission process- so that parents can make an informed decision in choosing to enroll their children- and continue to provide more opportunities throughout a family's years at the school.

Once children are enrolled, the school expects parents to attend Parent/Teacher conferences and Parent Education nights. Additionally, we expect parents to familiarize themselves with the philosophy, policies, and procedures contained in the Parent Handbook and other school publications.

Professional staff and parents are expected to work collaboratively to foster the development of the child. Children thrive when both the home and school environments work in harmony, sharing the same educational values and expectations. Children develop a love of learning and become responsible, independent, and capable when parents' values and expectations are consistent with those of the school and are reinforced on a consistent basis at home.

The school expects parents to commit to growth in parenting in a Montessori way. We have defined the real "work" of a parent, in a collaborative partnership with the school, as modeling the attributes for their child and providing opportunities for their child to develop them at home. In other words, parents are expected to become proficient in applying Montessori philosophy at home. This begins with the general principle, "Never

do something for your child that he can do for himself.” Allow your child to engage in all of the simple tasks of everyday life that a child can do for himself at each stage of development. Montessori education may also entail learning a communication style that is different from the way in which you were parented. This is a commitment that takes time and will likely involve change, which typically involves some level of discomfort. However, you are not alone or isolated in your journey of growth as a parent. Bozeman Summit School staff and other Bozeman Summit School families are your support system. We are all members of a Montessori learning community.

Q: *What contribution can I make to create a positive school community?*

A: *Demonstrate respect for all adults and children, the school, and the school’s programs and become involved in the life of the school community.*

Respect is the cornerstone for the Bozeman Summit School community. Respect begins with civility and deepens into trust. Our most fundamental behavioral guidelines for the children are: “respect yourself, respect others, and respect the environment.” We expect the same from adults, parents, and school staff, at all times and in all relationships within the school community. We expect every member of our community, students, parents and staff, to be willing to accept full responsibility for their attitudes, actions, and ultimately for their lives. Support your child by speaking of his/her teachers, classmates, and school in positive terms. Look for ways to make a positive contribution to the life of the school. Get involved in the life of the school community. At Bozeman Summit School, parent involvement is not only strongly encouraged, but is an integral part of everyday life. We are a non-profit and rely on our parents to help plan, run, and attend events and annual fundraisers.

Q: *What are my responsibilities regarding communication and problem solving between home and school?*

A: *Maintain active, direct, and respectful, two-way communication with the school.*

Read communications sent home, including emails and newsletters. Inform the school in a timely fashion of pertinent changes in your child’s life. Parents are responsible for keeping contact information current and informing the school of any significant changes in child’s life. Active communication involves parents sharing observations and concerns about their child with the child’s current teacher. In matters large and small, remember the principle of respect; even when there is a disagreement, disagree respectfully, and follow the school’s problem solving process.

Children prosper most when the adults in their lives work in harmony and resolve conflict through side by side problem solving, rather than face to face confrontation or by involving others who are not part of the problem or the solution. Asking for

information, striving to see other perspectives, and remaining open to possible solutions are critical elements of collaborative problem solving.

Q: What can I expect of the school academically?

A: BSS aspires to fulfill its mission as a Montessori school.

As a Montessori school, we differ from traditional schools. Our first commitment is to the multidimensional development of the child. Bozeman Summit School's curriculum is challenging and you can expect your child to be provided with challenging work that is appropriate for her. We educate the whole child. We guide all children to think for themselves. Cognitive development and a solid academic foundation are important, yet they represent only one dimension of our aspirations for your child. Equally significant is your child's social, emotional, spiritual, and physical development.

Children are given choices and a great deal of freedom-within limits-during the school day. They are allowed to experience, and learn from, the consequences of their choices thereby strengthening their critical thinking skills and promoting self-correction. The choices a child makes and the accompanying responsibilities influence the emerging character of your child. Choosing his own work, or shaping it to a considerable degree, following that work through to completion, while working independently or in cooperation with others, the Montessori child identifies his interests and develops his individual gifts with the goal to strengthen intrinsic motivation and self-direction.

We treat each child with dignity and respect, and expect that she will treat others with the same respect. We treat each child as an individual and strive to develop each child's unique gifts- within the context of the classroom and the school community. With freedom comes responsibility, and each child learns to balance his personal freedom with a clear sense of responsibility to herself, to others, and to the community as a whole.

Q: What can I expect in terms of communication from the school?

A: We strive to maintain open, honest, timely, and respectful communication with you about your child and about information affecting the school community.

Our goal is to ensure strong communication between school and home in support of our students. The following processes are part of the school year to help in this area: New Parent Orientation, Curriculum Information Night, November Parent/Teacher Conferences, January Progress Reports, February Parent/Teacher Conferences, May Progress Reports and weekly E-mail News, In the event of special concerns, your child's teacher will contact you to discuss these concerns by phone, by e-mail, or in person. If you have a concern or question about your child's classroom or progress, please contact the classroom teacher by e-mail or phone. Please allow 24 hours for the

teacher to respond. In addition to conference reporting, classroom teachers will communicate with you via classroom newsletters, e-mail messages, and short reports as needed for individual children. At times, as needed, we will also recommend meetings or conferences with parents or other resources.

School wide communication is accomplished in several ways; the school produces a weekly e-mail newsletter, as well as informational e-mails to the community at times.

Q: *What can I expect of the school environment?*

A: We strive to ensure an environment that is physically and emotionally safe and supportive, as well as aesthetically beautiful.

Dr. Montessori said that the classroom teacher's first responsibility is to prepare the environment. This means that the learning materials should correspond to the developmental characteristics of the child at each level. It is important that those materials be attractive to the child: correct in size, aesthetically pleasing, well maintained, and complete. In a broader sense, the whole school environment must meet these criteria; to appeal to the child and inspire his work.

Our community of children and adults comprise a social environment and culture that impacts the child's experience. We strive to make this environment emotionally supportive and safe for every child. Thus, empowering him with problem solving and social skills and aiding him in the development of emotional intelligence to prepare for a lifetime of working with others in a variety of communities and organizations.

Q: *What can I expect of the school administration?*

A: Integrity with a focus on the needs of the individual child in harmony with the life of the community. And an open door to your questions and concerns.

Administrative staff interfaces with all of the various constituencies of the school. In your interactions with administration, you can expect professional, courteous, and business-like conduct, as well as mutually respectful communication. Michael Schuler and Robyn Miller comprise the Administrative team. They often face decisions requiring a balance of competing priorities. Sometimes those factors are mutually exclusive; sometimes equally well intentioned adults see matters differently. In making decisions, administration will focus on the interest of the individual child in balance with the needs of the school. Please feel free to schedule a meeting with either Michael or Robyn at any time throughout the course of the year.