



# Kids Montessori Academy

## Family Handbook Operational Policies & Procedures

**Welcome to the KMA Family!**

### **PROPRIETARY NOTICE**

**The material in this handbook is proprietary to Kids Montessori Academy. Any unauthorized use is strictly prohibited. Any person, copying, duplicating, or otherwise using any portion of this materials without the written permission of Kids Montessori Academy will be subject to prosecution to the fullest extent of the law.**

This Family Handbook is not intended to create a contract. Kids Montessori Academy reserves the right to change at any time any of the policies described or privileges granted.

## **Mission Statement**

Kids Montessori Academy (KMA) exists to provide a safe, developmentally appropriate environment for preschool and school-aged children. We aim to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people, who will help to create a better and more peaceful world, through intercultural understanding and respect. Our goal is to create an environment where young children develop a strong sense of self and belonging and to support a child's desire to be a lifelong learner.

## **Policy Statement**

The operational policies and procedures contained in this handbook are effective as of January 2018. Should any of these operational policies and/or procedures be updated, revised, or otherwise, parents will be notified.

## **Curriculum**

KMA uses a Montessori curriculum that promotes child led activities that are age/readiness appropriate. Our academic curriculum includes language arts, reading, mathematics, social studies, science, art and music. Exposing your child to all these areas of learning will 'plant the seeds' and provide a solid foundation for your child's lifelong learning journey.

## **Positive Discipline Strategies**

A Montessori approach to discipline consists of a delicate balance between freedom and discipline. Like any part of Montessori education, it requires mutual respect for the child. Furthermore, KMA believes successful discipline is contingent upon preparation of the environment and carefully defined ground rules; fostering exploration and expression of his or her inner and out experiences, self-respect, respect for others, kindness, problem solving, naturalistic training and effective communication.

KMA believes with the proper support and guidance, self-discipline and self-control of oneself emerges, therefore rarely having to employ disciplinary action. At KMA the children are free to choose their work as long as they are respectful of both others and the classroom environment. Typically, re-direction is all that is necessary. However, if needed, a child will be asked to sit for "thinking time" (one minute per the age of the child) or the child can sit and observe another child working for a short time before being invited to join when ready. Should the child continue to display difficulties with the redirection, alternative-learning opportunities will be presented.

When a child oversteps these boundaries and redirection does not work, a serious discussion of the situation occurs between the teacher and the student. At this time, age-appropriate consequences directly relating to the situation are explored.

Our KMA teachers support conflict-resolution between the children; fostering positive interactions and effective communication with one another that allows the children to work together and solve their own problems. Our KMA teachers use firm, direct communication that is loving with the children to convey their expectation to maintain a safe learning environment.

If a child is endangering his or her safety or the safety of another person, an adult will intervene immediately and remove the child from the situation.

Such behaviors include but are not limited to; not listening and following direction, OR verbal or physical aggressive behavior towards another child or staff member (i.e. hitting, kicking, biting, foul language, bullying spitting); OR mistreating equipment/furniture (i.e. throwing, purposely breaking or being destructive with equipment and furniture).

Once the child/children are safe, the teacher can assess the situation and choose appropriate discipline measures. If the child's body is out of control and he or she is unable to respond to redirection, discussion, or consequences the teacher may choose to have the child sit quietly in a calm part of the classroom to regain self-control. When the child is able to return to work calmly he or she may do so, with permission from the teacher. This "time out" should never last more than a few minutes for a preschool child. Our approach to discipline is based on empowerment, mutual respect, and trust.

However, if a child has ongoing issues with his or her behavior, parents will be notified and asked for their cooperation to work with the school to correct/improve behavioral issues. If a child's behavior continues to cause disruption in the classroom that makes it difficult for the caregiver to meet the needs of the child and the other children in the classroom, the KMA Site Director would find this as a valid means of dismissal of the child from KMA without notice. Furthermore, if a child's behavior of any kind creates a situation that jeopardizes their own safety or the safety of another child or staff member this is a reason that a child would be discharged from KMA without notice.

## **Corporal punishment is never used**

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 also prohibited. A KMA teacher or KMA staff member may only administer discipline in the school setting. When any of our children at KMA finds it difficult to meet the school's expectation of positive conduct, every effort will be made to collaboratively bring the child, family, and staff together to achieve a solution.

## **Licensing Information**

KMA is a licensed facility in the state of Texas by the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), Licensing Division to operate as a Child-Care Center. KMA adheres to their regulations and meets or exceeds the Texas state Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers. Our center undergoes regular inspections and monitoring by state licensing inspectors, city health inspectors and fire inspectors. These inspections generally focus on health and safety guidelines, facility and playground maintenance, teacher qualifications, nutrition, record-keeping and specified child: staff ratios.

Parents may review these standards, as well as the inspection reports, at any time with the KMA Site Director. Additionally, parents will also be provided with key licensing contact information, such as telephone numbers, addresses and applicable websites.

## **Hours of Operation**

KMA hours of operating are from 6:30am to 6:30pm, Monday to Friday. We operate year round (January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>) and are closed for holidays. Families will be provided with notifications of any closures due to holidays.

Please note: Regardless of school closures, tuition fees remain the same.

KMA will observe the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- July 4<sup>th</sup> (if the day falls on a Saturday we will close on Friday and if it falls on a Sunday we will close on Monday).
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving (Thursday)
- Day after Thanksgiving (Friday)
- Christmas, we will close for two consecutive work days (one day will be December 25<sup>th</sup>, the date of the second day will be notified in advance)

KMA will have early dismissal at 1:00 P.M. on the following days:

- Day before Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- New Year's Eve

**Arrival & Departure**

AS YOU ENTER THE DRIVEWAY, PLEASE SLOW DOWN TO 5 MPH & DISCONTINUE USE OF CELL PHONES. PLEASE REFRAIN FROM USING YOUR CELL PHONE IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING.

**Access Code**

Our doors will remain locked at all times. A keypad entry system is used to access our front entrance. Once registration and enrollment is complete, parents and/or guardians will be issued a unique entry code to use upon entering KMA. You will be able to enter the building using the keypad located to the right of the main entry doors from 6:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. using the parent code.

To ensure the safety of our children, families and staff members Please DO NOT share this code to any other undesignated person. Anyone other than the parents, guardians and staff may enter by ringing the doorbell.

**Authorized Person to Pick-Up**

KMA will not release your child to any person other than the designated person stated on your Enrollment Form. Upon pick up, the authorized individual will be required to show a valid form of photo identification (i.e. State driver's license, State Identification Card, Passport). KMA will make a copy of the identification for the child's records. Once the individual's identity is confirmed, a KMA Front Desk Staff Member will go retrieve the child and escort him/her to the authorized person.

**Unauthorized Person to Pick-Up**

In the event of an emergency, an unauthorized person needs to pick up your child(s); you must make prior arrangements in writing, with the KMA Site Director.

KMA WILL NOT release a child to any person who is unable to verify and show proof of their identity (i.e. State driver's license, State Identification Card, Passport).

**Early Pickup**

If you plan to pick up your child early (i.e. doctor or dentist appointment or other commitment) please sign him/her out at the front desk. If your child returns to school the same day, please sign him/her back in and accompany him/her to class, making sure the teacher is aware of the students return to the classroom.

**Daily Arrival and Departure**

Please park in the parking area and accompany your child inside the building. Walk your child to the designated classroom and be sure our staff is aware of your child's arrival. Allow your child to put belongings and lunch box in the appropriate places. The same routine should be implemented when picking up your child(s). Parents it is your responsibility and is required by KMA to sign in and sign out of the center at the front desk.

**Late Pick Up and Departures**

Children need consistency and predictability in their lives. Arriving at school on time each day can meet that need. Children who arrive late are at a disadvantage for integrating into the morning's activities. Children arriving after 8:30 a.m. will be considered late and must be signed in at the front desk and will be escorted to class by a KMA Staff Member.

STUDENTS ARRIVING LATE ARE DISRUPTIVE TO ALL CLASSROOMS.

It is equally important to pick your child(s) up on time as it reinforces consistency and predictability –he or she is excited to see you! If you have an emergency and cannot reach the school on time, please 1) arrange for one of your authorized persons to pick up your child(s) or 2) call KMA and notify a Front Desk Staff Member immediately if your emergency contact(s) are unavailable.

If you are late, you will be responsible for late pick-up charges. \$1 per minute late is to be paid in cash only. Time will be determined by KMA clock.

If your child is not picked up by school's closing time of 6:30pm, and you have not notified KMA, the following protocol will be followed:

- KMA will attempt to call you and/or spouse.
- KMA will attempt to contact your designated authorized persons.
- If KMA is unable to reach you or any of your authorized persons within thirty (30) minutes after the closing time, the Site Director (or designated person in charge) will decide whether and when DFPS should be contacted.
- If the authorities at DFPS are contacted, they will be given the emergency contact information listed on your Enrollment Form.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL THE SITE DIRECTOR OR ANY KMA STAFF EMPLOYEE TAKE YOUR CHILD HOME.

**Weather Procedures**

If harsh weather conditions permit closure, early dismissal, or late arrival, KMA will communicate with our families via e-mail, social media (Facebook and Twitter) and if available, the local news station. For extended closures due to

exceptional circumstances or severe weather, KMA will follow the Fort Bend School District schedule. KMA will not require make-up days due to the exceptional circumstances or severe weather conditions.

**Please note:** Regardless of school closures, tuition fees will not be exempt or prorated because of severe weather closing or if a state of emergency has been declared.

#### **Public School Closures**

If your child attends a school within the Fort Bend School District and it closes for a holiday break, harsh weather conditions, or any other reason, you will be required to pay an additional fee of \$35 per day for your child(s) to stay with us for the entire day. If your child is picked up on early dismissal days an additional fee of \$25 per day is applied.

#### **Vacations**

Each year, from August 1<sup>st</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup>, children that are enrolled at KMA on a full-time basis, will be eligible for a total of ten (10) vacation days, in which the families are required to give KMA a two week advanced notice. Vacations are to be used in 1 week intervals. During this time, your regular tuition rate will be reduced by 50%, to hold your child's place at KMA. For children that enroll part way through an entitlement year, vacation days will be prorated per whole month of enrollment.

Please note: No refund or credit will be given for any unused vacation days.

#### **Enrollment Policies**

##### **Non-Discrimination Enrollment Policy**

KMA offers educational services to all interested families within our local communities. Our enrollment policies are based on non-discriminatory policies and laws. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation or any other factor prohibited by law. Children are admitted to KMA as openings are/become available, based on the order of their enrollment application and receipt of the designated registration fee.

##### **Confidentiality and Children's Records**

All information collected and contained in your child's records is privileged and confidential. Upon request, parents or guardians may have access to their child's records. Please contact the KMA Director if your child's records need any additions or updates. (Please note updates to your child's records might include: changes of contact information (i.e. address, telephone number), allergies (i.e. food, allergens etc.) and/or names of persons authorized to pick up your child. Per Texas State licensing regulations a copy of your child's records will be kept for a minimum of 3 months.

In the event you require a copy of your child's file, an administrative fee may be applied.

##### **Children with Special Needs**

KMA strives to make reasonable accommodations for children with special needs. Please refer to the KMA Site Director for specific inquiries regarding accommodations and note that KMA though we are ADA compliant, we do not guarantee we will be an appropriate fit for your child.

##### **Required Enrollment Forms**

All forms provided to you upon acceptance at KMA MUST be completed before your child(s) may attend. To enroll, (or re-enroll) your child, you must complete and sign the Enrollment Form, as well as other forms/information that include, but are not limited to, the following:

KMA and DFPS required Enrollment Information Form, which includes basic information about you and your child(s), which will be given to you upon payment of the registration fee. All families should maintain current information in writing via e-mail or giving updated information to the KMA director (the school e-mail address can be found on both the website and the Center Specific Sheet).

KMA Child Care Agreement, which includes the name of the parent or guardian and specific dates and fees pertaining to your child's care and enrollment.

KMA Discipline and Guidance Policy provides an overview of an individualized disciplinary approach with each child and prohibits the use of any form of negative discipline that is compliant with Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapters L, Discipline and Guidance.

Authorized Release Information (included in your Enrollment Form) includes the names, address and telephone number(s) of all persons that you authorize to pick up your child from the center. KMA will only release your child to an authorized person, which is designated by you, in writing. For the safety of your child, we will require that a photo ID be presented EACH TIME the authorized person picks up your child;

Tuition Agreement must be completed and signed. PLEASE NOTE: KMA reserves the right to change or modify fees and/or policies with a two-week notice. Moreover, KMA reserves the right to deny services due to aggressive and/or unsafe behaviors exhibited by a child, parent/guardian. On rare occasion, this denial of services may be put into effective immediately if the behavior is deemed unsafe for children, other parents, staff or school property. Information referencing payments, charges and separation procedures can be found in the Tuition Agreement.

Applicable Health Forms must be completed prior to admittance. These forms include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Copies of your child's current immunization records or a signed affidavit stating the reasons immunizations have not been given.
- Vision and Hearing Screening must be completed by the age of 4 (Please refer to "Vision and Hearing Screening" below for additional information.)
- Ongoing Medication Form, for children that require daily medication.
- Allergy Alert Form, for children with allergies.
- Physician's Recommendations and Health Statement, which is often times combined with the immunization forms. PLEASE NOTE: A Physician's Statement stating that your child is physically able to participate in a group care setting such as KMA provides must be signed. We accept children in compliance with the Disabilities Act (ADA). If your child has special needs, please provide a copy of his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP), or similar document, for inclusion so we may provide the very best care for your child;

- Infant Feeding Schedules, if applicable, must be completed and updated as needed or every thirty days – whichever comes first. (Please see “Nutrition” in the Health and Safety section for additional information on infant feeding.);
- Transportation Agreement, for children participating in our “Schoolers” transportation service;
- KMA Policy and Procedure Acknowledgment Form, which is included at the end of this handbook; and
- Holiday Sheet, which provides information about holiday closures at KMA.

#### **Video Monitoring**

Internet video monitoring is also available to our parents. The livestream not only provides the parents with a sense of comfort knowing their child is in caring hands, but also provides an exclusive opportunity to observe their child’s daily routine. Security of our children is of utmost concern; therefore, the KMA site director prohibits any use of these videos—including image duplication, printing or reproduction – without prior consent.

#### **Re-enrollment**

To re-enroll your child, new enrollment information must be submitted along with the applicable registration fee, given an opening is available.

#### **Withdrawal Policy**

If you wish to withdraw your child(s) from KMA, you are required to provide a one-week notice by completing the *KMA Withdrawal form*, available from the front desk. If proper notification is not received, you will be responsible for the payment, whether your child(s) attends KMA or not.

#### **Meals and Snacks**

At KMA, meals and snacks are an enjoyable, social experience and also a time for children to become more consciousness of healthy eating habits. We will use meal times to support our emphasis on building a sense of community and respect for each other and our bodies. Moreover, meal times will also allow us the opportunity to explore nutrition, food preparation, composting, recycling and conservation.

KMA will provide breakfast (for full-time students) morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack for each child. The cost for this service is included in your tuition fees.

If you wish to send lunch please remember that we do not have a refrigerator to store the lunch, therefore please ensure that it is packed correctly with an ice block in an insulated bag.

#### **Dietary Restrictions and Food Allergies**

At KMA we strive to provide a safe environment for all our children, including those who have life threatening food allergies. For students with dietary restrictions or food allergies we must have a doctor’s note as well as any instructions needed.

If a child has a food allergy we will notify the whole class and ask that all children refrain from bringing those items into the classroom for mealtime(s).

We are a NUT-FREE school.

#### **Lunchboxes**

If you wish to send lunch please remember that we do not have a refrigerator to store the lunch, therefore please ensure that it is packed appropriately with an ice block in an insulated bag. Please remember spoons or forks if your child needs them.

#### **Snacks**

If you want to send a snack from home please send only one healthy snack per snack time.

Please do not send: non-baked chips, pudding, cake, cookies, pop tarts, chocolate, candy, fruit roll-ups, sodas, any juices that are not 100% fruit juice.

#### **Health, Illness & Exclusion**

KMA is committed to ensuring an environment that is safe for our children, families and staff members. Our facility is conducive of adhering to safe health practices.

Here at KMA, your child’s health is of utmost importance and we take all precautionary and preventative measures to keep our center safe of all communicable diseases. If a child at our center is diagnosed with a reportable condition, parents/guardians will be notified.

#### **Signs and Symptoms**

- Please do not bring your child to KMA if he or she displays any of the following symptoms or conditions:
- Any reportable condition that has been diagnosed by your child’s physician and has been determined to be contagious. KMA requires a doctor’s note upon receipt that releases the child to return to the center.
- Any fever higher than 100.0.°
- Discolored nasal discharge
- Excessive, hacking cough
- Earache/pain accompanied or followed by fever
- Sore throat with swollen glands or tonsils, white spots in throat, or painful throat when swallowing
- Unusual/undermined spots and/or rashes
- Stomachache accompanied with loss of appetite, vomiting, abdominal cramping/pain, and/or diarrhea
- Severe itching of body or scalp
- Head lice and/or eggs
- Redness or discharge from one or both eyes

**Illness Exclusion Policy**

EXCLUDE IF:	READMIT IF:
1. Temp of 100.0° F oral, 101°F rectal, or 99° F auxiliary	1. Free of fever for 24 hours
2. Temp of 100.0° F oral, 101°F rectal, or 99° F auxiliary plus one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe cold with yellow-green nasal discharge</li> <li>• Cough</li> <li>• Sore throat</li> <li>• Sneezing</li> <li>• Swollen glands</li> <li>• Skin rash</li> </ul>	2. Free of fever for 24 hours and note from clinic or physician stating child is not communicable
3. Conjunctivitis (pink eye) bacterial and/or viral	3. All discharge has ceased and note from clinic or physician stating child is not communicable
4. Head and body lice	4. After treatment and free of lice and nits
5. Ringworm of body	5. After treatment and lesions are covered
6. Ringworm of head	6. After treatment, lesions are covered, and note from clinic or physician stating child is not communicable
7. Skin lesions, impetigo, and scabies	7. Skin sores are healed or note from clinic or physician stating child is not communicable
8. Vomiting	8. Free of upset stomach and vomiting for 24 hours
9. Diarrhea (two or more loose watery stools per day)	9. Diarrhea free for 24 hours
10. Fainting or seizures or general signs of a communicable disease to which the child has been exposed	10. Free of symptoms or note from clinic or physician stating child is not communicable

**Illness and Exclusion Criteria**

KMA will not admit an ill child if:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in child-care center activities including outdoor play;
- The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health safety and supervision of the other children in care;
- The child has one of the following (unless the parent provides medical documentation from a health care professional, subsequent to a medical evaluation by said health care professional, that states the child can be included in child-care center activities):
- Underarm temperature of above 100 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness;
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill.
- A health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.

If a child becomes ill while in care, KMA will contact the parent to pick up the child. Children who are ill will be cared for apart from the other children, we will give the child appropriate attention and supervision until the parent picks up the child. We would ask that if your child is ill that they are collected within an hour of receiving notification from KMA.

Critical illness or injury that requires immediate attention of a physician KMA will:

- Contact emergency medical services (EMS) or take the child to the nearest emergency room;
- Give the child first aid treatment or CPR when needed;
- Contact the physician identified in the child’s records unless otherwise directed by EMS; and
- Contact the child’s parents.

**Procedure for Dispensing Medication**

Medications shall be administered to a child only as follows:

- The parent must fill out an “Authorization For Dispensing Medication” form located at the Front Desk.
- Parents must leave the medication with a KMA staff member.
- KMA will administer the dosage as indicated on the dispensing form and will then note that dosage on the dispensing log. Parents will be responsible for medication via injection with the exception of the use of an epinephrine injection due to an emergency allergic reaction.
- Prescription medication shall be in the original container labeled with the child’s name, date, directions and physician’s name.
- KMA staff WILL NOT administer non-prescription, or “over the counter” medication.

- Topical medications/lotions such as sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper ointments, or teething gels, may not require a physician approval, however KMA requires parents to complete a permission for additional applications of sunscreen. (For additional information please read sections below.)
- Medication shall not be administered after any stated expiration date.
- Medication shall be returned to parents when no longer needed.
- Medication shall be kept separate from food. Children are not allowed to carry medicine with them in their lunch bags. This includes vitamins, aspirin, cough drops, candies or other non-prescription drugs. The teacher will remove medicine and contact the parent.
- KMA staff will use water to wash out a wound and if needed, will use a topical ointment for a wound before applying a Band-Aid.

Please note that children are NOT to carry medicine with them or keep in their backpack, as they could overmedicate themselves or another child could accidentally consume them.

#### **Periodic or Reoccurring Medical Conditions**

If the child has a periodic or reoccurring medical condition the parent must provide KMA staff with a written copy of the health-care professional's recommendations or orders that permits KMA to administer medication when symptoms occur for up to a six-month period. If KMA administers medication, the parent will be notified and the details will be logged in the child's records. KMA is required to maintain this written information in the child's records for at least three months after the health-care professional has indicated that the specialized medical assistance is no longer needed. Additionally, KMA will still follow the procedures 1-9 mentioned under "Procedure for Dispensing Medication."

#### **Sunscreen**

Please apply sunscreen to your child BEFORE school arrival. If your child is particularly sensitive to the sun or requires an additional application, please be sure that KMA has a permission. The parent is responsible for providing KMA with sunscreen, which will be labeled with the child's name and securely kept out of reach from the children. It is not feasible to individually apply sunscreen to each student before outdoor play. We have sunshades on our play areas.

#### **Insect Repellent**

If your child is prone to severe reactions due to bites, please be sure that KMA has a permission to administer insect repellent. The parent is responsible for providing KMA with insect repellent, which will be labeled with the child's name and securely kept out of reach from the children. KMA will still follow the procedures 1-9 mentioned under "Procedure for Dispensing Medication," however a separate log will be kept for Insect Repellent.

KMA suggests our parents choose a repellent with no more than 10% to 30% concentration of DEET (look for N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide on the label). Typically, a repellent with DEET should not be applied more than once a day, and is not recommended for babies younger than 2 months old.

DEET can be used on exposed skin, as well as clothing, socks, and shoes, but should not be used on the face, under clothing, on cuts or irritated skin, or on the hands of young children.

#### **Diaper Ointments**

If your child at KMA is prone to diaper rashes, please be sure that KMA has a permission form on file to administer diaper ointment. The parent is responsible for providing KMA with diaper ointment, which will be labeled with the child's name and securely kept out of reach from the children. KMA will still follow the procedures 1-9 mentioned under "Procedure for Dispensing Medication," however a separate log will be kept for Diaper Ointment.

#### **Teething Gel**

If your child is KMA is teething, please be sure that KMA has a permission to administer teething gel. The parent is responsible for providing KMA with teething gel, which will be labeled with the child's name and securely kept out of reach from the children. KMA will still follow the procedures 1-9 mentioned under "Procedure for Dispensing Medication".

#### **General Student Health and Safety Policies**

All children enrolled at KMA must submit a written statement signed by a health care provider verifying the child is able to participate in child day care, currently appears to be free from contagious or communicable disease, and is receiving health care, including appropriate health examinations in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics schedule of such care and examinations. Such documentation must state that the child has received age appropriate immunizations in accordance with the Texas State Public Health Law. Any child who is not immunized may be admitted if the parent furnishes KMA with a written supporting statement. All children must remain current with their immunizations and it is the parent's responsibility to update and provide KMA with the documentation at the school annually.

#### **Animals**

At KMA we believe caring for an animal can be a mutually beneficial experience for the child, animal and caregivers as it promotes awareness across multiple learning domains; fostering a sense of care and shared responsibility that touches upon effective communication and helpfulness.

Our classroom pets may include animals such as: fish, hermit crabs, guinea pigs, hamsters and bunnies. If the children do come into contact with the pets, the caregivers will ensure the children practice good hygiene and hand washing.

A list on animals can be found on the board in the lobby.

#### **Appropriate Clothing/Shoe Attire**

At KMA we encourage our children to explore their environments, both indoor and outdoors. To ensure the safety of your children, please send your child(s) in shoes that are closed-toe, with a closed-heel and rubber-soled. Please send your child in clothing that is comfortable yet both durable and washable. The children will sometimes work with materials in the classroom that may result in their clothing becoming soiled or wet. They appreciate the option of changing into their own clean clothes. Please send an extra set of clothing, clearly labeled with your child's name, which will be kept in his or her cubby. Since self-sufficiency is encouraged, parents are asked to consider the ease with which their child is able to dress him or herself. Children in the Transition, Pre-Primary, and Primary class are required to wear the school uniform of a red polo and khaki bottoms.

Every child MUST wear some type of shoe at all times in case there is an emergency or fire drill and we must exit the classroom quickly.

### **Biting**

Biting is a common behavior displayed amongst many young children, often times serving as a form of communication to compensate for his or her lack of language skills to get his or her needs known and met. At KMA, we take precautionary measures to minimize biting behaviors and will provide the child, families and staff members with the appropriate support. Please note, KMA adheres to strict confidentiality policies to ensure the safety of our children and will not disclose the name of children or families that may be transitioning through this developmental stage.

### **Breastfeeding**

KMA will provide nursing mothers who wish to breastfeed their new baby with a comfortable seat in our center. Please notify the KMA Site Director if you would like to provide breast milk for your child while he or she is in our care.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

KMA allows outside providers to offer children's activities on the premises, these include but are not limited to gymnastics, soccer, foreign languages and dance.

It is the decision of the parents to enroll their child in any activities that are offered. All payment for such activities are made directly to the service provider.

### **Damages**

Any damages to KMA property caused by children are to be reimbursed by parent or legal guardian.

### **Field Trips**

KMA may offer field trips to children aged four (4) years and older; transported on a fully licensed, inspected, and insured school van.

Parents and guardians will receive prior notification of the scheduled field trip and will be required to give written consent via permission form for the child to participate in any field trip. Moreover, parents and guardians will be notified of any additional charges associated with the field trip in advance.

If a parent or guardian does not give consent for their child to attend a field trip, the child will remain at KMA and be placed with another class for the duration of the field trip.

### **Hand Washing**

Caregivers must wash their hands, and ensure children wash their hands with soap and running water at the beginning of each day, when they are dirty, after toileting or assisting children with toileting, after changing a diaper, before and after food handling or eating, after handling of pets and other animals, after contact with bodily secretion or fluid, and after coming in from the outdoors.

Safety precautions relating to blood must be observed as follows:

Disposable gloves must be worn whenever there is a possibility for contact with blood, including but not limited to touching blood or blood contaminated fluids, treating cuts that bleed, and wiping surfaces with stained blood.

In an emergency, a child's well-being must take priority. A bleeding child must not be denied care because gloves are unavailable.

Disposable gloves must be discarded after each use.

If blood is touched accidentally, the exposed skin must be thoroughly washed with soap and running water

Clothing contaminated with blood must be placed in a securely tied plastic bag and returned to the parent at the end of the day.

Surfaces that have been contaminated with blood must be cleaned and disinfected with a germicidal solution.

### **Health Assessment**

Periodically, KMA staff may participate in a visual and/or physical assessment of your child to identify any signs or symptoms related to any type illness or injury. (Please refer to the Illness Exclusion Box.)

### **Immunizations**

Immunization requirements as follows:

1. KMA is required to hold on record a copy each child's immunization record from birth. The records and immunizations must be up to date in accordance with the applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) in 25 TAC 97, subchapter B.
2. Exemptions for immunization requirements must meet the criteria specified by the DSHS.
3. All immunizations required for the child's age, unless exemptions apply must be completed by the date of admission to KMA (date of admission varies due to individual admission date).
4. Parents must provide us with their child's immunization records by the date of admission (date of admission varies due to individual admission date).

### **Toileting**

Toileting facilities will be kept clean at all times and stacked with toilet paper, soap, and towels accessible to staff and children.

If a child is not yet potty trained parents must supply an adequate supply of disposable diapers and wipes. Diapers will be disposed of in a tightly covered trashcan and kept out of reach of children. Soiled cloth diapers will be placed and sealed in a plastic bag and sent home with the child at the end of the day. The changing pad will be wiped with a disinfecting solution after each use.

If your child at KMA is prone to diaper rashes, please refer to section pertaining to Diaper Ointment.

### **Transportation**

For children pre-kindergarten thru year 5, KMA provides transportation to and from designated schools in a fully licensed, inspected and insured van, as authorized by the parent.

KMA will provide booster seats for children to comply with the Texas Transportation Code. If a parent prefers they may provide the safety seat system for use in transporting their child, provided the equipment is appropriate and can be properly secured in the vehicle.

### **Vision and Hearing Requirements**

The state of Texas requires that all children above the age of four years old must have a vision and hearing screening conducted annually.

Children enrolled at KMA, who are 4 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>, MUST have a vision and hearing screening done within 120 days of admission.

KMA requires a copy of the statement from your child's primary care physician indicating that he/she has been tested, which must be provided for your child's records. It is the parent's responsibility to provide KMA with a copy of the vision and hearing screening results.

### **Water Play and Activities**

To keep cool during the hot summer months, KMA offers outdoor water play and activities (i.e. water tables, splash play with water toys). Parents will be notified and be required to sign a permission form for their child(s) to participate in any water activities that involve swimming and/or a lifeguard. It is your responsibility to provide sunscreen for your child. (Please see section for Sunscreen.)

### **KMA Staff Members**

All employees of KMA will submit a statement from a healthcare provider as required by the DSHS Daycare Licensing regulations. This information will be kept on file and updated regularly. Additionally, all KMA care First Aid/CPR certified, and have cleared a FBI background check in compliance with DFPS Minimum Standards. Staff members are employed at KMA based on their ability to teach and perform the duties of childcare within a supervised environment. KMA caregivers are both certified and/or trained Montessori teachers with experience in early childhood development. KMA staff members participate in annual trainings in early childhood care and education to stay current with practices.

KMA staff members are not licensed to provide medical care. KMA staff members are not to provide invasive medical treatments, determine or diagnose medical conditions, or administer injections, with the exception for the prescribed EpiPen for the treatment of an emergency allergic reaction.

PLEASE NOTE: KMA will not be held responsible for any incident involving an employee outside of his or her contracted work hours at the facility. This includes and is not limited to caregiving services outside of KMA facility.

Keeping Children Safe

### **Alcohol and Other Drug Free Zone**

KMA is an alcohol and drug free facility. If there is reasonable suspicion that a child may be in danger due to a parent or guardian being under the influence, appropriate authorities will be notified.

### **Child Advocacy**

Children and/or parents who have or are currently being subjected to abuse or neglect may contact the appropriate authorities (such as child protective services, local law enforcement) to seek assistance and/or intervene. Please refer to the KMA Site Director if you need additional information related to abuse or reporting.

### **Education and Training**

All KMA staff members participate in an annual training on prevention, recognition and reporting on various types of child abuse situations.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

KMA has an emergency preparedness plan for human and natural events. In case of an emergency it is the caregiver's responsibility to move the children to a designated area or an alternate shelter known to all caregivers. Our evacuation procedure is utilizing a safe available door to exit the building and to walk with the children to: Juan Seguin Elementary, Grand Mission Blvd, Richmond TX 77407.

For children who are less than 24 months of age, who have limited mobility or who otherwise, may need assistance in an emergency, such as children who have cognitive, visual or hearing impairments will be assisted by staff members in addition to their class teacher i.e. cook, cleaner and administrative staff.

A diagram showing the evacuation/relocation routes is filed at the Center and is available for the DFPS and parents to review at any time.

The director is responsible for implementing the emergency preparedness plan. In the director's absence should an emergency situation occur a caregiver designated by the director will be in charge of emergency evacuation and relocation.

In the event of severe weather conditions, caregivers and children will move to the mid-way point in the central corridor of the school.

Once the children are safe and accounted for the caregivers will begin contacting the parents of the children in care and local authorities.

KMA will conduct fire drills once a month. KMA will also check all smoke/carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers to ensure they are functioning correctly once a month. In addition, KMA will also conduct a drill for severe weather, once every three months. KMA will document all safety/evacuation/relocation drills, which is available for parents and DFPS to review at any time.

### **Gang-Free Zones**

KMA is a gang free zone. The purpose of gang-free zones is similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, which is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties. A gang-free zone prohibits gang-related activity and defines the gang-free zone within 1,000 feet of KMA as a violation of this law and is subject to increased penalty under the state law of Texas. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

### **Mandated Reporting**

Texas Law mandates all teachers and employees at KMA to report any suspicion of a child's physical and/or mental health and personal welfare has been or may be compromised due to child abuse and/or neglect must be reported within 48 hours to the Child Protective Services division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400 or any local or state law enforcement agency. Failure to do so can result in legal liability.

**Smoke Free**

KMA is a smoke free facility. Smoking, which includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers are not allowed in KMA childcare operations.

**Weapons**

KMA does not prohibit any type of firearm or other type of weapon to be carried on the facility premises and/or any event affiliated with KMA. If required by law, an exception may be made for sworn law officers. Please see the KMA Site Director if you need additional information.

**Changes in Policy**

Should KMA have any changes in policy, parents will be notified in writing and will be required to sign for their acceptance and understanding of the policy changes.

**Change in Pricing**

KMA reserves the right to change pricing and will notify parents 2 weeks prior of change going into effect.

**Parent Referral Program**

If you know of a family in need of childcare, get in touch with our KMA Director for more information.

