

# KMS Parent Responsibilities

KMS deeply appreciates all the families who enroll their children at our school, and we are committed to doing everything we can to help our students learn and grow.

At the same time, it's important to remember that our staff can't do this alone. We need parents to be actively involved in their children's education – in ways that are appropriate to their children's age and development. We seek to partner with parents to help their children grow, and we are looking for parents who will work with us in this process.

Two things are critical here:

- 1) Providing an optimal home environment so students can do their best work in the classroom.
- 2) Learning about Montessori education by participating in KMS parent education activities.

## 1. Providing an Optimal Home Environment

To support our efforts in the classroom and to ensure that children are prepared to do their best work every day, we ask parents to provide an optimal environment for the development of their children. We know that if parents do this, we can truly help their children reach their full potential. To get the most out of their time at school, children of all ages need the following:

- **Adequate sleep**, so they can concentrate successfully throughout the school day. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following:
  - Children 3 to 5 years of age should sleep 10 to 13 hours per 24 hours (including naps) on a regular basis.
  - Children 6 to 12 years of age should sleep 9 to 12 hours per 24 hours on a regular basis.

In addition to these recommendations, the AAP suggests that all screens be turned off 30 minutes before bedtime and that TV, computers and other screens not be allowed in children's bedrooms. For infants and young children, establishing a bedtime routine is important to ensuring children get adequate sleep each night. (<https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Supports-Childhood-Sleep-Guidelines.aspx>)

- **Proper nutrition** from a range and variety of whole foods for optimal brain and body development; sugar should be limited. This is especially important in the morning before school! Children who eat sugary breakfasts are often hyperactive when they get to school, and then they crash and lose focus in the middle of the morning – both of which interfere with concentration and learning.
- **A regular schedule that includes getting to school on time.** Having a regular schedule of meals, bedtime, etc. helps children understand what's happening when and builds their confidence. Getting to school on time is a critical part of this schedule. Children who arrive after 8:00 have already missed part of the school day. They have also missed the vital period at the beginning of the day when students interact socially before they get to work. When children arrive late, they are often upset that none of the other students have time to greet them or interact with them because they are already working. As a result, these children often have trouble starting work themselves and miss even more of the school day.

- **No screens on the way to school.** We have noticed that children who are watching movies or playing games on cell phones or tablets when they arrive at school often have trouble transitioning into the classroom because they are still mentally caught up in the movie or game. This makes it harder for them to start working and reduces the amount of time they have for learning.
- **A “real” environment set up to help them work independently alongside you at home:** plates and cups placed where they can reach, utensils designed for them to use in the kitchen, child-sized garden tools so they can help alongside in the yard, etc.
- **A consistent circle of love, support, and expectations** that includes parents, teachers, and all other caregivers in a child’s life.

## 2. Learning about Montessori Education

We understand that many of our parents know little about Montessori education when their children first enroll at KMS. For that reason, we offer a variety of parent education activities and resources and we encourage parents to take advantage of these throughout their child’s time at KMS.

Continued participation in parent education activities is critical because our classroom procedures can vary from year to year and our expectations for students and the lessons they use change as they get older. As a result, it is vital that parents not assume that because they have been to KMS programs when their children are young that they can stop going as their children get older. Instead, we encourage parents to keep attending these programs – both for their own benefit and so they can understand what’s going on in the classroom and support their children as effectively as possible.

Our parent education activities include the following:

- **Parent Orientation:** Parent Orientation takes place on the Saturday before school starts. It includes a general overview of our beginning of year policies, elections to our Board of Trustees, introductions to what will be going on in each of our classes, and time for parent questions. Because changes in class procedures are discussed here, it is vital for parents of both new and returning students.
- **Montessori for Parents:** The Montessori for Parents program takes place in September, soon after the beginning of school. At this program, the teachers explain some of the main elements of the Montessori curriculum and demonstrate some of the lessons the children are doing in class. These vary every year, so parents will learn new things each time.
- **Introduction to Montessori for Kindergarten-Age Students:** This program is designed for Primary parents who are considering keeping their children at KMS for kindergarten.
- **Introduction to Montessori Elementary:** This program is designed for Primary parents considering keeping their children at KMS for Elementary.
- **Two Parent-Teacher Conferences** (late Fall and late Spring)

**Starting with enrollment for 2018-2019, we will give priority for re-enrollment to families who attend at least four of these events over the course of the year.**

We also ask that parents read the articles in our e-newsletter and in *Tomorrow’s Child*. These are a valuable source of information about classroom procedures and Montessori education.