



Parent Handbook

420 W. Russell Street Saline, MI 48176
734-944-9300

northstarmontessorisaline@gmail.com



2026-2027

7:00 am-5:30 pm

Before and After School Care: 7:00-8:30 am, 3:00-5:30 pm

No School/Child Care Only Days - By Sign Up ONLY: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Programs Available:

Full Day Preschool 8:30 am - 3:00 pm | Half Day Preschool: 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

Infant | Toddler | Primary

Before and After School Care | Summer Camps | Year Round Academics

Revised July 2026

[SCHOOL CALENDAR](#)

The Licensing Notebook is maintained in the school's vestibule and is accessible for inspection during all operating hours.

Welcome from the Program Administrator

Dear Families,

Welcome to Northstar Montessori Preschool!

Thank you for choosing Northstar to be a part of your child's early learning journey. We are honored by the trust you place in us and are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, engaging Montessori environment where every child is encouraged to learn, grow, and develop a lifelong love of learning.

We believe that strong partnerships between families and educators are essential to a child's success. Through open communication, mutual respect, and collaboration, we work together to support each child's intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development.

This Parent Handbook serves as a guide to our programs, policies, and procedures. Please take time to review it and retain it for future reference. If you have any questions, our team is always happy to help!

We look forward to partnering with your family and making this a wonderful year of learning and growth.

Warm regards,

Shawn Norris
Program Administrator
Northstar Montessori Preschool

Document Control

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Organization: Northstar Montessori Preschool

Effective Date: August 31, 2026

Approved By: Program Administrator

Review Schedule: Annually or as required by changes to Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules, federal or state law, or Northstar Montessori Preschool policies.

Version	Effective Date	Description of Changes	Approved By
1.0	August 31, 2026	Initial Parent Handbook	Program Administrator
1.1			
1.2			
1.3			

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Chapter 1 – Welcome to Northstar

1.01 Our Philosophy

Northstar Montessori Preschool follows the educational philosophies of Dr. Maria Montessori, which recognize that children learn best through purposeful work, hands-on experiences, and meaningful exploration within a carefully prepared environment.

We believe children thrive when they are treated with dignity and respect and are given opportunities to make choices, solve problems, and develop independence. Our classrooms encourage curiosity, creativity, responsibility, and collaboration while fostering confidence and a lifelong love of learning.

Our teachers serve as guides, carefully observing each child's interests and developmental readiness to provide individualized lessons and meaningful learning experiences.

1.02 Mission Statement

Northstar Montessori Preschool provides a safe, nurturing, engaging Montessori learning environment where children develop intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically.

Through strong partnerships with families, and a commitment to high-quality early childhood education, we cultivate independence, confidence, curiosity, responsibility, and a lifelong love of learning while preparing children for future academic success and responsible citizenship.

1.03 Educational Goals

Our Montessori Program is designed to:

- Foster independence, confidence, and self-discipline.
- Encourage curiosity, creativity, and a love of learning.
- Promote respect, kindness, empathy, and peaceful conflict resolution.
- Support each child's intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development.
- Encourage collaboration through mixed-age classrooms and peer learning.
- Respect each child's unique learning style, interests, and developmental pace.
- Build strong partnerships between home and school.
- Prepare children with the skills needed for lifelong learning and future success.

1.04 Licensing Information

Northstar Montessori Preschool is licensed by the **State of Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP)** and operates in accordance with the **Michigan Child Care Organizations Act (1973 PA 116, as amended)** and the **Michigan Child Care Center Licensing Rules**.

A licensing notebook is available for public review in the front vestibule during business hours. The notebook contains:

- Licensing inspection reports.

- Special investigation reports, when applicable.
- Corrective action plans, when applicable.
- Licensing approval letters.
- A summary of licensing documents maintained by the center.

Licensing inspection reports and additional licensing information are also available through MiLEAP.

1.05 Resources for Families

The following resources are available to help families better understand Montessori education, child development, and Michigan child care licensing:

- [Northstar Montessori Preschool Website](#)
- [School Calendar](#)
- [Procare Family Portal](#)
- Northstar News, published monthly
- [The Montessori Parent](#)
- [American Montessori Society \(AMS\)](#)
- [Michigan Child Care Licensing](#)
- Child Care Licensing Notebook (located in the school vestibule)

We encourage families to be actively involved in their child's education by reviewing school communications, attending conferences and school events, and maintaining open communication with teachers and administration.

Together, we create a caring, respectful, and engaging learning community where every child can thrive.

Chapter 2 – Enrollment & Tuition

Northstar Montessori Preschool is committed to providing a smooth enrollment process and clear financial policies. The following information outlines enrollment requirements, tuition policies, payment procedures, and schedule changes. These policies help ensure consistency for all families while allowing us to maintain appropriate staffing, classroom ratios, and compliance with the Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules.

2.01 Program Age Requirements

Northstar Montessori Preschool offers the following programs:

Program	Age
Infant	6 weeks – 18 months
Toddler	14 months – 3 years
Preschool	2 years, 9 months – 6 years
Summer Camp	Children who have completed Young 5s through First Grade

Placement is based on each child's age, developmental readiness, classroom availability, and Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules.

2.02 Enrollment Requirements

Before a child may begin attending Northstar Montessori Preschool, families must:

- Complete all required enrollment forms through [Formsite](#).
- Submit required health and immunization documentation or an approved State of Michigan immunization waiver via secure [Dropbox](#).
- Pay the annual registration fee of \$150 and the required enrollment deposit of ¼ monthly tuition.
- Sign the [Tuition Contract](#)
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgment (done through Formsite).
- Submit any additional forms required for medications, allergies, special diets, or other individual needs via secure [Dropbox](#).

Parents are responsible for keeping all enrollment information current, including addresses, telephone numbers, emergency contacts, authorized pick-up persons, and medical information.

2.03 Registration Fee

Northstar Montessori Preschool is a year-round program. A **non-refundable annual registration fee is required for each child**.

For newly enrolling children, the registration fee is prorated based on the month enrollment begins:

- **September–December:** \$150
- **January–April:** \$100
- **May–August:** \$50

The registration fee covers the remainder of the current registration year. A new **\$150 annual registration fee** will be due at the beginning of the next school year.

Annual registration fees are subject to change.

School-Age Summer Camp Registration Fee

Children enrolling in the School-Age Summer Camp program are charged a separate, non-refundable **\$150.00 Summer Camp Enrollment Fee** at the time of Summer Camp enrollment. This fee is specific to the School-Age Summer Camp program and enables your school age child to attend during school breaks with advanced sign up .

2.04 Enrollment Deposit

An enrollment deposit equal to **one week's tuition** is due **at least 30 days before** your child's first day of attendance.

The deposit is refundable when all of the following conditions have been met:

- A minimum of 30 days' written notice of withdrawal is provided.
- All tuition and fees have been paid in full.
- The family account remains in good standing.
- Requested in writing by the family.

2.05 Tuition

Northstar Montessori Preschool operates as a year-round program.

Tuition is based on your child's contracted schedule and reserves your child's classroom placement. Monthly tuition remains the same regardless of absences, vacations, holidays, or temporary school closures.

Children transitioning to a new classroom may have a tuition adjustment beginning with the first full month in their new program.

2.06 Tuition Calculation & Billing

Annual tuition is calculated based on the total number of scheduled operating days and divided into **12 equal monthly payments**.

Monthly statements are emailed near the end of each month and include:

- Next month's tuition.

- Previous month's Before & After Care charges.
- Previous month's No School/Child Care Only Day charges.
- Any additional fees or account adjustments.

Families are encouraged to review their statement promptly and contact the office with any questions before payments are processed.

2.07 Payment Schedule & Late Fees

Tuition payments are due on or before the **1st day of each month**.

Payments received after the **5th** are considered late and will incur a **\$5.00 per day** late fee until the account is brought current.

Accepted forms of payment include:

- ACH (preferred)
- Cash
- Check
- Credit Card (3.5% processing fee)

Debit cards are not accepted.

Returned payments are subject to the following non-refundable processing fees:

- **Returned Check (NSF):** \$32.00 per returned check
- **Declined Credit Card Payment:** \$10.00 per declined transaction

These fees are in addition to any outstanding tuition or other amounts owed.

Families experiencing financial hardship should contact the office before their payment due date to discuss available payment arrangements.

2.08 Tuition Assistance Programs

Northstar Montessori Preschool participates in several tuition assistance programs, including:

- [Michigan Child Development and Care \(CDC\)](#)
- [MI Tri-Share Child Care Program](#) - Employer participation is required.
- [Child Care Network Family Support Program](#)
- [Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood \(MCCYN\)](#)

Families are responsible for any tuition or fees not covered by these programs.

2.09 Schedule Changes

A minimum of **30 days' written notice** is required for:

- Reducing a child's attendance schedule.

- Withdrawing from Northstar Montessori Preschool.

Requests to **increase a child's attendance schedule** may be accommodated immediately if classroom space and staffing permit. Immediate schedule increases are not guaranteed and are subject to administrative approval.

Schedule changes become effective only after approval by the administration and the completion of required enrollment paperwork by the family.

2.10 Extended Schedule Changes

To maintain consistent classroom routines, staffing, and compliance with Michigan Child Care Licensing staff-to-child ratios, Northstar Montessori Preschool is unable to accommodate temporary schedule changes lasting **less than three (3) consecutive weeks**.

Schedule changes are subject to:

- Classroom availability.
- Staffing requirements.
- Michigan Child Care Licensing staff-to-child ratios.
- The operational needs of Northstar Montessori Preschool.

Approval of a temporary schedule change is not guaranteed. If approved, tuition will be adjusted according to the current tuition schedule and will remain in effect until the approved end date or until a new schedule is requested and approved.

Requests should be submitted at least thirty (30) days in advance whenever possible to allow adequate planning and staffing.

2.11 Withdrawal Policy

Parents/guardians must provide **written notice at least 30 calendar days before their child's last day of attendance**.

Written notice may be submitted by:

- **Email** to admissions@northstar MontessoriPreschool.com; or
- **Written letter** delivered to the school office or placed in the secure drop box located in the vestibule.

Tuition remains the family's responsibility during the required 30-day notice period. Failure to provide the required notice may result in tuition charges for the full 30-day notice period, regardless of the child's attendance.

Families who withdraw and later wish to re-enroll their child will be added to the waitlist. Upon reenrollment, families must complete the enrollment process, including submitting all required forms and fees. Placement is based on classroom availability and is not guaranteed.

2.12 Dismissal from the Program

Northstar Montessori Preschool reserves the right to suspend or terminate enrollment when necessary to protect the health, safety, or well-being of children, families, and staff members or when school policies are not followed.

Reasons for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- A child's needs cannot be safely or appropriately met within the program.
- Behavior that presents an ongoing safety concern despite reasonable intervention and collaboration with the family.
- Failure to pay tuition or fees.
- Failure to comply with school policies.
- Repeated late pick-up.
- Failure to submit required licensing documentation.

Whenever possible, Northstar will work collaboratively with families to resolve concerns before dismissal becomes necessary.

We appreciate your partnership and cooperation in helping us provide a safe, respectful, and high-quality learning environment for every child.

Chapter 3 – School Calendar & Closures

Northstar Montessori Preschool follows a year-round schedule designed to provide consistency for children and families while supporting our educational program. This chapter outlines our school calendar, operating hours, holiday schedule, weather-related closures, and emergency closing procedures.

3.01 School Hours

Northstar Montessori Preschool is open Monday through Friday.

School Hours

- **Center Hours:** 7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- **Before Care:** 7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.
- **Full Day Program:** 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- **Half Day Program:** 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- **After Care:** 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

No School/Child Care Only Days

- **Hours:** 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

3.02 School Calendar

Northstar follows the Saline Area Schools academic calendar while operating as a year-round child care program.

Families receive an annual school calendar that includes:

- School start and end dates
- Holiday closures
- Teacher workdays
- No School/Child Care Only Days
- Scheduled school breaks

The current calendar is available on the Northstar website and monthly newsletters.

3.03 No School/Child Care Only Days

Throughout the school year, Northstar schedules **No School/Child Care Only Days**, including teacher professional development days, Winter Break, Spring Break, and other scheduled school closures.

Child care may be available on select No School Days.

- Child care is available **by advance registration only** through the Google Forms linked on the School Calendar and the website calendar.
- Registration must be submitted **at least 14 calendar days** before the requested child care date.
- Child care hours are **8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

- Additional hourly fees apply.
- Reservations canceled after the registration deadline will be charged for the **greater of the hours originally reserved or the hours attended**.
- Availability is subject to staffing and minimum enrollment requirements.

3.04 Holiday Closures

Northstar Montessori Preschool is closed on the following holidays and scheduled breaks:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Break
- Winter Break (see annual calendar)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- One week before the start of the new school year (see annual calendar)
- Scheduled teacher professional development days (see annual calendar)

When a holiday falls on a weekend, Northstar may observe the holiday on the preceding Friday or following Monday.

3.05 Weather Closures

The safety of our children, families, and staff is our highest priority.

Northstar follows **Saline Area Schools** for weather-related closures due to **hazardous road conditions**.

Please Note:

- If Saline Area Schools close because of hazardous road conditions, Northstar will also close.
- If Saline Area Schools close due to **extreme cold temperatures only**, Northstar will remain open, provided the building can operate safely and adequate staffing is available.
- Northstar reserves the right to make independent decisions regarding delayed openings, early dismissals, or closures based on local weather conditions or operational needs.

Closure announcements will be communicated as early as possible through:

- Procare
- Northstar's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages
- Local media, when appropriate (Channel 7 or Detroit-area TV stations)

3.06 Emergency Closures

Occasionally, Northstar may close for the day due to circumstances beyond our control.

Examples include:

- Power outages
- Loss of water service
- Heating or cooling failures
- Plumbing emergencies
- Building safety concerns
- Severe weather
- Public health emergencies
- Other situations affecting the safe operation of the school

If an emergency occurs during the school day, families will be notified immediately through Procare and, when necessary, by telephone.

Parents (or authorized emergency contacts) are expected to pick up their child as soon as possible when the center closes unexpectedly.

Northstar will make every effort to communicate closures promptly; however, emergency situations may require immediate action to protect the health and safety of children and staff.

The safety and well-being of every child will always guide decisions regarding school operations.

Chapter 4 – Daily Operations

Northstar Montessori Preschool provides a structured daily routine that promotes independence, consistency, and a smooth transition between home and school. Our daily procedures are designed to ensure the safety of every child while supporting a positive start and end to each school day.

4.01 Arrival Procedures

Children may arrive during their scheduled program hours.

- **Before Care:** 7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.
- **Arrival:** 8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.

A teacher will greet each child upon arrival and assist with the transition into the classroom. Families are encouraged to say goodbye confidently and briefly, as consistent routines help children feel secure and promote independence.

Children arriving after 9:00 a.m. should notify the Teacher via Procure in advance whenever possible.

4.02 Sign-In & Sign-Out

Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules require that children be signed in and out each day.

Northstar uses the **Procure** system for attendance tracking.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Signing their child in upon arrival.
- Signing their child out at departure.
- Ensuring all authorized pick-up individuals know and use their own Procure PIN.

QR codes are available throughout the building, and an iPad kiosk is located in the front vestibule for family convenience.

Failure to sign a child out may result in additional child care charges.

4.03 Attendance & Absences

Regular attendance helps children establish consistent routines and fully benefit from the Montessori Program.

If your child will be absent or arriving late, please notify the school through Procure as early as possible.

If your child is absent due to illness, we appreciate knowing their symptoms or diagnosis so we can notify other families of potential exposures while maintaining confidentiality.

We appreciate families informing the school office regarding any scheduled time away—including vacations or personal appointments—through email (northstarmontessorisalinel@gmail.com) or the Procure office chat as early as possible to assist with our daily program planning.

4.04 Pick-Up

- **Half Day Program Pick-Up:** 12:30 pm
- **Full Day Program Pick-Up:** 3:00 pm
- **After Care:** 3:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Children will only be released to individuals listed as authorized pick-ups on the child's **Child Information Card**. This information is populated from the family's Formsite enrollment submission and maintained by Northstar Administration.

To make changes to authorized pick-up individuals, parents/guardians must update their Formsite enrollment information and email the office at **northstarmontessorisaline@gmail.com** to notify Administration that changes have been submitted. Changes will not take effect until they have been processed by Administration.

When an unfamiliar person arrives for pick-up, staff will request a valid photo ID before releasing the child.

Northstar will not release a child to anyone who:

- Is not listed as an authorized pick-up person.
- Cannot provide proper identification.
- Appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Presents a safety concern.

If necessary, staff will contact the parent/guardian or an emergency contact listed in the child's file.

4.05 Late Pick-Up

Late pick-up fees are as follows:

- **Regular School Days:** \$2.00 per minute after 5:30 p.m.
- **No School/Child Care Only Days:** \$5.00 per minute after 5:00 p.m.

If you anticipate being late, please notify the school as soon as possible. While we understand emergencies occur, repeated late pick-ups may result in additional action, including possible dismissal from the program.

4.06 Drop-In Care, Extended Care & Extra Days

Additional child care outside of a child's contracted schedule may be available based on classroom enrollment and staffing.

This includes:

- Additional attendance days.
- Emergency drop-in care.

Whenever possible, families should request additional care at least **2–3 business days** in advance.

Additional hourly fees apply according to the current tuition schedule.

4.07 Before & After Care

Before and After Care provides a safe, supervised environment where children may participate in quiet activities, outdoor play, practical life experiences, and age-appropriate learning opportunities.

Children attending Before or After Care continue to be supervised by qualified Northstar staff and remain subject to all school policies and procedures.

4.08 Parent Communication

Northstar Montessori Preschool uses **Procare** as the primary method of communication with families.

Through Procare, families can:

- Receive classroom updates and announcements.
- View photos of their child.
- Communicate with teachers and administration.
- Report absences.
- Receive accident, illness, and emergency notifications.
- View billing information and account statements.

Communication in the Primary classrooms is less detailed than in the Toddler classrooms, reflecting the children's increasing independence and self-sufficiency. Primary families can expect updates on their child's overall day, learning experiences, and any important information or concerns, rather than detailed reports of daily routines.

While teachers strive to respond promptly, classroom responsibilities always take priority. Messages received outside of business hours will generally be answered during the next business day.

Open communication between families and staff is essential to supporting each child's success. We encourage parents to reach out whenever questions or concerns arise.

Chapter 5 – Montessori Programs

At Northstar Montessori Preschool, we believe children learn best in a thoughtfully prepared environment that encourages independence, curiosity, and purposeful exploration. Our Montessori classrooms are designed to support the whole child by fostering intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development.

5.01 The Whole Child

The Montessori approach recognizes that learning extends beyond academics. Our program is designed to nurture every aspect of a child's development by encouraging:

- Independence and self-confidence
- Respect for self, others, and the environment
- Problem-solving and critical thinking
- Creativity and curiosity
- Social and emotional growth
- Physical coordination and motor development
- Responsibility and practical life skills

Teachers serve as guides, carefully observing each child and presenting lessons that match their individual interests and developmental readiness.

5.02 The Prepared Environment

Montessori classrooms are intentionally designed to encourage exploration, concentration, and independence.

Each classroom provides:

- Child-sized furniture and materials
- Carefully organized learning areas
- Hands-on Montessori materials
- Opportunities for independent and collaborative learning
- Freedom of movement
- A calm, orderly, and respectful atmosphere

Children are encouraged to choose meaningful work, care for their environment, and develop responsibility for themselves and their classroom community.

5.03 Infant Program

Our Infant Program provides a warm, responsive environment that respects each infant's daily routines and developmental needs.

Teachers work closely with families to follow each infant's schedule for:

- Feeding
- Sleeping

- Diapering
- Play
- Individual care

The classroom emphasizes:

- Responsive caregiving
- Freedom of movement
- Language development
- Sensory exploration
- Secure attachments
- Early independence

Infants eat and sleep on demand according to their individual needs rather than a group schedule.

5.04 Toddler Program

Our Toddler Program encourages children to develop confidence, independence, communication, and self-help skills through hands-on learning experiences.

Daily activities include:

- Practical Life
- Language
- Sensorial exploration
- Art and music
- Gross and fine motor development
- Outdoor play
- Grace and Courtesy lessons
- Toilet Learning

Children participate in a consistent daily routine that balances independent work, small-group lessons, meals, rest, and outdoor exploration.

Teachers encourage children to make choices, solve problems, and care for themselves and their environment.

5.05 Primary Program

The Primary classroom provides an uninterrupted Montessori work cycle where children learn through self-directed exploration and individualized instruction.

Learning areas include:

- Practical Life
- Sensorial
- Language
- Mathematics
- Science
- Geography

- Cultural Studies
- Art
- Music

Teachers present lessons individually or in small groups while allowing children extended periods to concentrate, practice, and master new skills.

Mixed-age classrooms promote leadership, collaboration, and peer learning.

5.06 Daily Routine

A consistent daily schedule provides children with security while allowing flexibility to meet individual developmental needs.

Each day includes opportunities for:

- Independent Montessori work
- Individual and small-group lessons
- Outdoor play
- Gross motor development
- Meals and snacks
- Rest or quiet time
- Practical life experiences
- Social interaction
- Music, movement, and creative expression

Although Northstar strives to maintain consistent daily routines, **infants and young toddlers (up to 18 months of age) are cared for according to their individual needs.** Feeding and sleeping schedules are based on each child's cues and established routine, allowing them to eat and sleep on demand while receiving responsive, individualized care. Sample schedules for [Toddler Classrooms](#), and [Primary Classrooms](#).

5.07 Outdoor Learning

Outdoor play is an essential part of the Montessori experience and is scheduled daily, weather permitting.

Outdoor activities promote:

- Large motor development
- Balance and coordination
- Exploration of nature
- Social interaction
- Problem-solving
- Healthy physical activity

Children should come to school dressed appropriately for the weather. Families are encouraged to send labeled outdoor clothing suitable for seasonal conditions, including coats, boots, hats, mittens, rain gear, and sunscreen as appropriate.

5.08 Rest Time

Rest is an important part of healthy child development.

Northstar follows the Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules regarding infant sleep and children's rest periods.

- Infants follow their individual sleep schedules and are always placed on their backs to sleep in accordance with safe sleep practices.
- Children attending five or more continuous hours are provided a daily rest period.
- Children who do not sleep will be offered quiet activities after an appropriate period of rest.
- Each child is provided an individually assigned cot or crib that is cleaned and sanitized according to licensing requirements.

Northstar strives to create a calm and comfortable environment that allows every child the opportunity to rest and recharge for the remainder of the day.

Chapter 6 – Health, Safety & Nutrition

The health, safety, and well-being of every child are Northstar Montessori Preschool's highest priorities. We maintain a clean, safe, and healthy environment by following the Michigan Child Care Organizations Act, the Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules, and guidance from the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP), the Washtenaw County Health Department, and other applicable public health authorities.

6.01 Health Requirements

Before a child may attend Northstar Montessori Preschool, all required health and enrollment documentation must be completed and kept current.

This includes, as applicable:

- Child Information Card - populated through [Formsite](#), printed & maintained by Northstar
- [Health Appraisal](#) - submitted via secure [Dropbox](#)
- Immunization Record - submitted via secure [Dropbox](#) or approved State of Michigan Immunization Waiver (accessed through MCIR)
- Allergy Action Plan - submitted via secure [Dropbox](#) - if applicable
- [Medication Authorization Forms](#) and all required Medicine - if applicable. Delivered to the office.

Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the school immediately of any changes to their child's health, medical conditions, allergies, medications, emergency contacts, authorized pick-up individuals, physician information, or any other information contained in the child's enrollment records. Families must promptly update their enrollment information and provide any required documentation to ensure the child's records remain accurate and current.

6.02 Illness & Exclusion

To help protect the health of all children and staff, children who are ill should remain home.

Parents will be contacted to pick up their child if they develop symptoms that prevent them from comfortably participating in daily activities or pose a risk of spreading illness to others.

Parents should notify the school through Procure if their child will be absent due to illness and include any confirmed diagnosis when appropriate.

Please refer to **Appendix D – Illness Exclusion Guidelines** for additional information regarding exclusion and return-to-school recommendations.

6.03 Accidents, Injuries & Emergencies

If a child is injured or becomes ill while at school:

- First aid will be provided by trained staff.
- Parents/guardians will be notified through Procure or by telephone, depending on the severity of the incident.
- An Incident Report will be completed when required.
- Emergency medical services (911) will be contacted immediately when necessary.

If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, emergency contacts listed on the child's enrollment records will be contacted.

6.04 Medication Administration

Whenever possible, parents/guardians should administer medication at home. When medication must be given during school hours, Northstar Montessori Preschool will administer medication in accordance with the Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules.

The following requirements apply:

- A completed [Medication Permission and Instructions Form](#) is required before any medication may be administered.
- Medication must be checked in through the school office before it may be administered.
- All medications must be in its original container and clearly labeled with the child's name.
- Prescription medications must be in the original pharmacy-labeled container.
- Over-the-counter medications must be administered according to the manufacturer's directions unless accompanied by written instructions from a licensed health care provider.
- If the medication label does not include dosing instructions for children under two years of age, a written order from a licensed health care provider is required.
- Any dosage or instructions that differ from the manufacturer's label or prescription label require written authorization from a licensed health care provider.

Medication authorization forms are valid for **up to two (2) weeks**, unless otherwise permitted by licensing requirements.

Annual authorization may be provided for topical non-prescription medications, including diaper cream, sunscreen, insect repellent, lip balm, and first aid ointments, as part of the annual enrollment process.

Children with allergies, asthma, seizures, diabetes, or other medical conditions requiring emergency medication must have a current medical action plan on file, along with all required medications. Children prescribed an epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen®) must provide **two** unexpired auto-injectors to the school.

Northstar maintains a record of all medications administered. Parents will be notified when emergency medication is administered, and emergency medical services will be contacted whenever required.

Please refer to **Appendix C – Medication & Medical Forms** for additional information.

6.05 Diapering & Toilet Learning

Northstar Montessori Preschool follows the **Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules** for diapering, toileting, hygiene, and sanitation to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all children.

Diapers & Wipes

Parents are responsible for providing:

- Diapers (please label the package with your child's name)
- Wipes
- Diaper cream, if needed (with written authorization)

Unless otherwise labeled, wipes may be used communally. If your child requires a specific brand due to sensitive skin or allergies, please clearly label the package with your child's name.

Families will be notified through **Procure** when diaper or wipe supplies are running low.

Diapering Procedures

Staff follow strict sanitary procedures during every diaper change, including:

- Changing children only in designated diapering areas.
- Never leaving a child unattended on the changing surface.
- Cleaning and disinfecting the diapering surface after each use.
- Washing hands before and after each diaper change.
- Documenting diaper changes for infants and toddlers.

Cloth Diapers

Families using cloth diapers must provide diapers with a waterproof outer cover.

Soiled cloth diapers will be placed in a wet bag provided by the family and sent home daily. Northstar does not rinse cloth diapers.

Toilet Learning

Northstar partners with families to support toilet learning in a positive, developmentally appropriate manner. Children are encouraged through consistency, patience, and encouragement—never pressure or punishment.

Families are asked to provide:

- Several changes of clothing.
- Extra underwear, if applicable.
- Any additional toileting supplies their child may need.

Potty chairs and toileting equipment are cleaned and sanitized after each use in accordance with Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules.

6.06 Meals & Nutrition

Northstar Montessori Preschool promotes healthy eating habits and safe food practices while complying with the Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules. ☀️ Resource: [Food Service & Nutrition](#)

As Northstar Montessori Preschool requires that families supply all meals, snacks, formula, breast milk, and beverages, parents are asked to formally accept this policy through the **Formsite** enrollment process. This agreement ensures that each family recognizes their responsibility to provide for their child's nutritional needs throughout the school day.

Meals & Snacks

- Parents are responsible for providing all meals, snacks, formula, breast milk, milk, and beverages.
- Infants and young toddlers (under 18 months) are fed on demand according to their individual schedules.

- Children 18 months of age and older enjoy meals and snacks together during scheduled mealtimes.
- No child will be denied a meal or snack if a parent forgets to send food. When necessary, Northstar will provide an appropriate substitute in accordance with Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules.
- Filtered drinking water is available throughout the day in every classroom.

Food Guidelines

Northstar Montessori Preschool is a **peanut and tree nut-free facility**.

Please do not send:

- Peanuts or tree nuts
- Foods containing peanuts or tree nuts
- Gum
- Candy or candy bars
- Snack cakes (such as Little Debbie® products)
- Soda, sports drinks, Kool-Aid®, or other sugary beverages

We encourage families to send:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Nutritious, protein-rich meals
- Whole grains and healthy snacks
- Water or milk as beverages

Families will be notified if additional food restrictions are necessary due to classroom allergies.

Food Safety & Storage

To help keep food safe:

- Lunchboxes must be labeled with your child's full name and date.
- Perishable foods must be packed in an insulated lunchbox with an ice pack.
- Heating of food is not available. Hot foods should be sent in a thermos.
- Formula, breast milk, bottles, and beverages must be clearly labeled with the child's full name, contents, and the current date.
- Bottles are warmed using approved bottle warmers. Microwave ovens are never used.

Food Preparation Activities

Food preparation is an important part of the Montessori curriculum. Children regularly participate in age-appropriate food preparation activities that encourage independence, practical life skills, healthy eating habits, and cultural exploration.

Teachers will provide families with advance notice of classroom food preparation activities and any requested food contributions.

Please notify your child's teacher of any food allergies or dietary restrictions that may affect participation.

For additional information regarding Michigan Child Care Licensing food service requirements, please refer to the resources available in **Appendix G – Licensing Information & Resources**.

6.08 Food Allergies & Special Dietary Needs

Northstar accommodates documented food allergies, medical diets, religious practices, and cultural dietary preferences whenever possible.

Parents must notify the school of any dietary restrictions before their child's first day of attendance and provide any required documentation.

Families will be informed of classroom food restrictions that affect all children.

6.09 Infant Feeding

Northstar Montessori Preschool warmly welcomes and supports breastfeeding families. If you would like to nurse your infant while at our center, we encourage you to coordinate with both the Infant Lead Teacher and the Program Administrator. Our team is dedicated to providing a respectful, private environment and will make every effort to support your family's breastfeeding journey within our school community.

All bottles must:

- Be prepared at home.
- Be labeled with the child's name, date, and contents.
- Be stored and warmed according to Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules.

For infant safety:

- Bottles are never propped.
- Bottles are never warmed in a microwave.
- Infants are held during feedings unless developmentally able to hold their own bottle.
- Breast milk, formula, or milk remaining after a feeding is discarded.
- Perishable foods must be packed in an insulated lunchbox with an ice pack.

6.10 Safe Sleep

Northstar follows all Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules regarding infant safe sleep practices.

Infants:

- Sleep in an approved crib or cot (after 1 year)
- Are always placed on their backs to sleep unless otherwise directed in writing by a licensed health care provider.
- Sleep without blankets, pillows, toys, or other loose bedding.
- Are closely supervised while sleeping.

☀ Resource: [Infant Safe Sleep for Parents.](#)

6.11 Emergency Preparedness

Northstar maintains comprehensive emergency procedures for situations including:

- Fire
- Tornado
- Shelter-in-Place
- Lockdown
- Evacuation
- Medical Emergencies
- Utility Failures
- Parent/Child Reunification
- Active Shooter/Intruder

Emergency procedures are reviewed regularly with staff and practiced with children as required by the Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules.

Additional information is available in **Appendix H – Emergency Preparedness**.

Chapter 7 – Behavior Guidance

Northstar Montessori Preschool is committed to creating a safe, respectful, and nurturing learning environment where every child is valued and supported. Our approach to behavior guidance is based on the Montessori philosophy and focuses on teaching children the skills they need to become confident, responsible, and respectful members of their community.

Northstar follows the **Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules** regarding child guidance and discipline. Children are always treated with dignity and respect. Discipline is never used to shame, frighten, or punish a child.

☀ Resource: [Child Discipline from State of Michigan Licensing](#)

☀ Resource: [Guidance Strategies and Conflict Resolution in Primary Classrooms](#)

7.01 Behavior Philosophy

At Northstar, behavior is viewed as an opportunity for learning. We recognize that young children are developing social, emotional, and self-regulation skills and require patient guidance, consistent expectations, and positive role models.

Our goals are to help children:

- Develop self-control and self-confidence.
- Build positive relationships with others.
- Learn empathy and respect.
- Solve problems peacefully.
- Accept responsibility for their actions.
- Develop independence and good decision-making skills.

Teachers model kindness, patience, and respectful communication throughout the school day.

7.02 Positive Guidance Strategies

Teachers use developmentally appropriate guidance techniques that encourage children to learn from their experiences while maintaining a positive classroom environment.

Common guidance strategies include:

Redirection

Children are gently redirected to a more appropriate activity or behavior when needed.

Positive Reinforcement

Teachers recognize and encourage positive choices, cooperation, kindness, and responsible behavior.

Natural & Logical Consequences

Children learn the relationship between their actions and their outcomes through consequences that are safe, respectful, and directly related to the behavior.

Problem Solving

Children are encouraged to identify problems, express their feelings appropriately, and work together to develop solutions.

Participating in the Solution

When appropriate, children are encouraged to help resolve or repair the results of their actions, such as helping clean up a spill or checking on a friend who was hurt.

Calm-Down Space

Children may be offered a quiet area to regain self-control before returning to classroom activities. This is a supportive strategy—not a punishment.

7.03 Prohibited Forms of Discipline

In accordance with the **Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules (R 400.8140)**, Northstar Montessori Preschool prohibits all forms of inappropriate discipline.

Children will **never** be subjected to:

- Corporal punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or rough handling.
- Humiliation, ridicule, shaming, or verbal abuse.
- Threats, intimidation, or frightening language.
- Profanity or derogatory remarks.
- Deprivation of food, water, rest, or restroom use.
- Isolation without supervision.
- Confinement in a locked room, closet, box, or similar space.
- Physical restraint except when necessary to prevent immediate injury to the child or others and only as permitted by licensing rules.

7.04 Time Away from the Group

When a child's behavior presents a safety concern or significantly disrupts the learning environment, the child may be briefly separated from the group to regain self-control.

Time away from the group:

- Is never used as punishment.
- Is appropriate for the child's age and developmental level.
- Occurs within sight and sound supervision of a staff member.
- Lasts only as long as necessary for the child to regain self-control.
- Is followed by supportive guidance and problem-solving before the child rejoins classroom activities.

7.05 Biting Policy

Biting is a common developmental behavior, particularly among infants and toddlers who are still learning communication and self-regulation skills. ☀️ Resource: [Why do Toddlers Bite by Amy Brimberry](#)

When biting occurs:

- The injured child receives immediate care and comfort.
- The child who bit is redirected and guided appropriately.
- Both families are notified.
- An Incident Report is completed.
- Staff observe patterns and work with families to develop strategies that reduce future incidents.

To protect the privacy of all children, Northstar will not disclose the identity of another child involved in an incident.

7.06 Partnering with Families

Northstar believes that consistent communication between home and school is essential to supporting children's social and emotional development.

When behavioral concerns arise, teachers and administrators will:

- Communicate with parents in a timely manner.
- Share observations and discuss possible contributing factors.
- Develop consistent guidance strategies between home and school.
- Monitor progress and adjust strategies as needed.

If ongoing concerns significantly impact a child's safety, learning, or ability to participate successfully in the program, Northstar may recommend additional resources or develop an individualized support plan in partnership with the family.

Our shared goal is to help every child develop the confidence, self-control, and social skills needed for lifelong success.

Chapter 8 – School Policies

The following policies help ensure a safe, respectful, and well-organized learning environment for all children, families, and staff. We appreciate your cooperation in supporting these expectations and helping us maintain a positive school community.

8.01 Private Babysitting

Northstar Montessori Preschool recognizes that families may choose to hire a staff member for babysitting or other child care services outside of the preschool's operating hours. These arrangements are private agreements between the family and the employee and are not affiliated with, arranged by, supervised by, or endorsed by Northstar Montessori Preschool.

Staff members providing private babysitting services are acting as private individuals and not as representatives of Northstar Montessori Preschool. These arrangements are not part of the preschool's licensed child care program, and Northstar assumes no responsibility or liability for services, transportation, injuries, accidents, damages, or disputes that may arise.

Parents choosing to hire a Northstar employee for private babysitting must sign the [Private Babysitting Waiver and Acknowledgment](#) before services begin.

Non-Solicitation of Employees

Northstar Montessori Preschool invests significant time and resources in recruiting, training, and developing qualified educators. Families agree not to knowingly solicit or encourage Northstar employees to terminate their employment with the preschool for the purpose of providing private child care, nanny services, or other employment that would interfere with the employee's position at Northstar. Nothing in this policy prohibits lawful private babysitting arrangements outside of the preschool's operating hours.

8.02 Items from Home

To promote a focused learning environment and reduce the risk of lost or damaged belongings, children should leave personal toys, electronics, money, and other valuables at home unless requested by their teacher for a classroom activity.

Northstar Montessori Preschool is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items.

Small comfort items may be brought for rest time.

8.03 Clothing & Personal Belongings

Children should arrive each day dressed comfortably for active play and outdoor learning.

Parents are asked to provide:

- Weather-appropriate clothing.
- Closed-toe shoes suitable for outdoor play.
- A complete change of labeled clothing.
- Diapers, wipes, and other personal care items, when applicable.

Please label all clothing, shoes, lunchboxes, water bottles, blankets, and other personal belongings with your child's name.

8.04 Teething Jewelry & Unsafe Accessories

For the safety of all children and in accordance with Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules, children may not wear:

- Amber teething necklaces.
- Teething bracelets or necklaces.
- Beaded necklaces or bracelets.
- Pacifier clips with beads or long cords.
- Any accessory that presents a choking or strangulation hazard.

These items will be removed and returned to the parent at pick-up.

8.05 School Security & Visitors

The safety of our children is our highest priority.

To maintain a secure environment:

- Exterior doors remain locked during operating hours.
- All visitors must enter through the main entrance.
- Visitors must check in with the office before entering the school.
- Parents and guardians are welcome to visit; however, all visitor procedures must be followed.

Children will only be released to individuals authorized on the child's enrollment records. Staff may request photo identification at any time before releasing a child.

8.06 Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Northstar Montessori Preschool maintains an [Integrated Pest Management \(IPM\) Program](#) in accordance with Michigan law.

The program emphasizes prevention, sanitation, monitoring, and the least hazardous methods of pest control.

Parents may review the school's IPM Plan and pesticide application records upon request. Advance notification will be provided before pesticide applications when required by law.

8.07 Volunteers

Northstar welcomes family participation and encourages parents and guardians to become involved in their child's educational experience.

If you are interested in volunteering during the school year, State Licensing Regulations require the following documents to be submitted annually:

- [A Duty to Report Form](#).
- Copy of Driver's License – verified at the school for ID purposes.

- Background Checks – conducted through the [Michigan Sex Offender Registry](#) and/or the [National Sex Offender Public Website](#) by school Administration.

All Volunteers are required to:

- Check in upon arrival.
- Follow all school policies and procedures.
- Comply with applicable Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules.
- Remain under the supervision of Northstar staff at all times.

Volunteers are never counted in staff-to-child ratios and may not be left alone with children.

8.08 Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting

The safety and well-being of children are fundamental responsibilities of Northstar Montessori Preschool.

Under Michigan law, all Northstar employees are **mandated reporters** and are required to report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

If a report is made, the school will cooperate fully with any investigation as required by law while maintaining confidentiality to the extent permitted.

8.09 Non-Discrimination

Northstar Montessori Preschool is committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming, and respectful environment for all children and families.

Enrollment, services, and participation in school activities are provided without discrimination based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal or Michigan law.

8.10 Parent Handbook Updates

Northstar Montessori Preschool reserves the right to revise or update this Parent Handbook as necessary to reflect changes in laws, licensing requirements, or school policies.

Families will be notified of significant policy changes through Procure or other official school communications. The most current version of the Parent Handbook will be maintained by the school and made available to all enrolled families.

Chapter 9 – Family Partnerships

At Northstar Montessori Preschool, we believe that children are most successful when families and educators work together. We value open communication, mutual respect, and shared responsibility in creating a positive learning environment where every child can thrive.

We encourage families to become active participants in their child's education and to partner with us in supporting each child's growth and development.

9.01 Communication

Open and respectful communication is essential to building strong relationships between home and school.

Northstar communicates with families through:

- Procure Family Engagement
- Email
- Telephone
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Monthly newsletters
- Classroom communications
- The Northstar website and social media

Parents are encouraged to communicate any questions, concerns, or changes that may affect their child's well-being or school experience.

9.02 Parent-Teacher Conferences

Formal parent-teacher conferences are offered once a each year to discuss each child's growth, development, and progress.

Additional conferences may be scheduled at any time upon the request of a parent, teacher, or Program Administrator.

Conferences provide an opportunity to:

- Review developmental progress.
- Discuss classroom observations.
- Establish shared goals.
- Address questions or concerns.
- Strengthen the partnership between home and school.

9.03 Family Participation

Families are encouraged to participate in the Northstar community whenever possible.

Opportunities may include:

- Classroom volunteering (when applicable)

- School events and celebrations
- Fundraising activities
- Family engagement nights
- Guest readers or presenters
- Special classroom projects

All volunteers must comply with Northstar policies and applicable Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules.

9.04 Supporting Montessori at Home

Children benefit most when Montessori principles are supported both at school and at home.

Families can support their child's learning by:

- Encouraging independence and self-help skills.
- Providing opportunities for practical life activities.
- Establishing consistent daily routines.
- Reading with their child every day.
- Limiting screen time.
- Encouraging problem-solving and responsibility.
- Respecting the child's natural pace of learning.

Small, consistent experiences at home help reinforce the skills children develop in the classroom.

9.05 Parent Responsibilities

Parents and guardians play an important role in maintaining a safe, healthy, and successful school environment.

Families are expected to:

- Read and follow the policies outlined in this Parent Handbook.
- Keep all enrollment information current through [Formsite](#).
- Notify the school via email to admissions@northstarmontessoripreschool.com promptly of changes in Formsiteto contact information, emergency contacts, or authorized pick-up persons.
- Keep children home when they are ill in accordance with Northstar's illness policy.
- Provide required meals, snacks, diapers, medications, and other personal supplies.
- Pay tuition and fees by the established due dates.
- Treat children, families, and staff with kindness, courtesy, and respect.
- Support school policies and licensing requirements.
- Communicate concerns directly with teachers or administration so they may be addressed promptly and collaboratively.

9.06 Questions, Concerns & Conflict Resolution

Northstar Montessori Preschool is committed to maintaining open, honest, and respectful communication with families.

If you have a question or concern, we encourage you to follow these steps:

1. Speak directly with your child's teacher.
2. If additional assistance is needed, contact the Program Administrator.
3. If the concern remains unresolved, a meeting may be scheduled to develop a mutually agreeable solution.

Our goal is to resolve concerns professionally, respectfully, and in the best interest of every child.

9.07 Thank You

Thank you for choosing Northstar Montessori Preschool.

We are honored to be a part of your child's early learning journey and appreciate the trust you place in us each day. Together, we create a safe, nurturing, and engaging Montessori community where children develop confidence, independence, respect, and a lifelong love of learning.

We look forward to partnering with your family and celebrating your child's growth and accomplishments for years to come.

Appendices

The following forms and resources are incorporated by reference into this Parent Handbook. Some forms are required for all enrolled families, while others apply only when necessary based on a child's individual needs or participation in specific programs.

Appendix A – Required Enrollment Forms

The following forms must be completed **before your child's first day** of attendance:

- [Formsite](#) - the Child Information card is populated from this information along with all emergency information
- Immunization Record or State of Michigan Immunization Waiver - uploaded to [Dropbox](#)
- [Tuition Contract](#)
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgment - acknowledged on Formsite

A completed [Child Health Appraisal](#) must be uploaded to the [Dropbox](#) within **30 days** of your child's first day of attendance, in accordance with state licensing requirements.

Additional forms may be required based on your child's individual needs.

Appendix B – Parent-Provided Food Agreement

In accordance with the Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules, Northstar Montessori Preschool requires parents to provide all meals, snacks, formula, breast milk, milk, and beverages for their child. Acknowledgement is done on Formsite.

Appendix C – Medication & Medical Forms

The following forms are required before medication may be administered or specialized medical care may be provided at school:

- [Medication Authorization](#) for prescriptions and over the counter medicine
- Allergy Action Plan - if applicable - submitted via [Dropbox](#) and signed by a physician

Appendix D – Illness Exclusion Guidelines

Northstar follows recommendations from MiLEAP, the Washtenaw County Health Department, and the Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules when determining whether a child should remain home due to illness.

Parents/guardians are responsible for reviewing and following the [Illness Policy](#) to help protect the health and safety of all children and staff.

Appendix E – Private Babysitting Waiver & Acknowledgment

Families choosing to hire a Northstar Montessori Preschool employee for private babysitting services must complete the [Private Babysitting Waiver and Acknowledgment](#) before services begin.

Private babysitting arrangements are solely between the family and the employee and are not affiliated with or supervised by Northstar Montessori Preschool.

Appendix F – Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Northstar maintains an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program in accordance with Michigan law.

Parents may review the [IPM Plan](#) and related records upon request.

Appendix G – Licensing Information

The following information is available for parent review within the Licensing Notebook

- Licensing Inspection Reports
- Corrective Action Plans (when applicable)
- Licensing Complaint Information

The Licensing Notebook is located in the vestibule and is available during business hours. Licensing Rules can be found here: [Michigan Child Care Center Licensing Rules](#).

Appendix H – Emergency Preparedness

Northstar maintains written emergency plans for:

- Fire
- Tornado
- Shelter-in-Place
- Lockdown
- Evacuation
- Medical Emergencies
- Utility Failures
- Active Shooter/Intruder
- Parent/Child Reunification

[Emergency procedures](#) are reviewed with staff and practiced with children as required by the Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules.

Parent Handbook Acknowledgment

As part of the enrollment process, parents/guardians are required to electronically acknowledge receipt and acceptance of the **Northstar Montessori Preschool Parent Handbook** through Formsite.

By completing the electronic acknowledgment, parents/guardians confirm that they have received, reviewed, and understand the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in this handbook and agree to comply with them throughout their child's enrollment.

The electronic acknowledgment will be maintained as part of the child's permanent enrollment record.