



GEIST
MONTESSORI
ACADEMY

Pre-K Family Handbook
2024-2025

Mission Statement

The mission of Geist Montessori Academy Pre-K is to provide an environment where all can develop to their highest individual potential: academically, emotionally, physically, morally and socially.

Educational Philosophy

Geist Montessori Academy Pre-K is a non-profit corporation which operates a school, providing a Montessori curriculum. The primary purpose of the School is to educate the whole child: academically, socially, intellectually, emotionally and physically. The activities of the school are designed to develop the whole individual and are intended to benefit not only the child, but the family and the community as well. We offer a Montessori education for children ages three to five years.

The Montessori curriculum includes the areas of Practical Life (learning the necessities of life functions), Sensorial (education and refinement of the five senses), Language, Mathematics, Cultural (Biology, Zoology, Environmental Science, History), Music, Art and Physical Education. These take place within an approximate three hour work cycle.

Dr. Maria Montessori was a physician and anthropologist who, through careful study of children, developed the method of teaching eventually known as the Montessori Method. It is highly compatible with today's educational focus on developmentally appropriate practice and cognitive research. Montessori schools concentrate on following the development of the child through various stages. Concentrating on specific capacities in each stage helps the child to develop fully. Dr. Montessori referred to the time frames involved in the child's development of a definitive ability as Sensitive Periods. These are transitory time periods in which the child appears to be working on one specific area of development to the exclusion of others. Tremendous power and interest are concentrated on the development of one's capacity.

A child experiences Sensitive Periods for walking and talking, followed by discovering the order in the environment, attention to precision, interest in minute objects, counting objects, alphabet sounds, language, etc. After the intensity of activity inspired in a Sensitive Period, children do not appear fatigued. Rather, they seem satisfied, calm, and rested. Today's research on the brain shows that a child can change the physiology of the brain through interacting with the environment at specific stages of development.

Geist Montessori Academy Pre-K (GMA) offers children the opportunity to develop in a noncompetitive, peaceful and friendly environment. Different areas of study allow a child to satisfy his need for development in Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics and Cultural Studies. All the various areas of hands-on manipulatives that the child can touch, feel, experience and repeat.

Dr. Montessori believed that it is the hand operating with the brain that creates the child's intellect. She called the hand "the instrument of the intelligence". One of the educational tenets of Montessori education is that we should never give to the brain more than we give to the hand; they compose a "two-fold creative activity".

A majority of the classroom materials have more than one function or purpose. In all the classes, children may start with lessons that simply allow them to feel, see or smell. They continue with the lessons that encourage classifying and categorizing, as well as guiding language and mathematical function. The Montessori materials themselves are

designed to be auto-educational. In essence, the child teaches himself, under the direction of a Montessori director or teacher. Children move through the work from the simple to the complex.

GMA provides both an academic benefit and a societal benefit. The classrooms, which contain a mixed age group of children, create within itself a positive “influence of society” for the children within the classroom. Children are given the freedom to move about and talk with each other when appropriate. The environment purposefully consists of only one set of each group of materials in the classroom. A child must wait until another has finished his work and put the material back in its place before he can take it himself. They then exercise patience and respect for others. All these little things help develop sympathy and understanding, which gradually brings a real harmony that cannot be given artificially. This fosters independent learning in both the primary and elementary levels and leads to cultivation of time management skills and research skills in the elementary.

Another aspect of Dr. Montessori’s insight into human development is the child’s need to survive in this environment. In a Montessori classroom the children do “real” work of gardening, polishing silver, glass, shoes, wood, washing furniture, washing and ironing clothes. They also perfect all necessary skills to dress themselves and learn how to prepare food and serve each other. This “real” work establishes the proof of their ability to survive in their environment. This need for survival is biological and cannot be touched by an adult’s words. Only by “doing” can this foundation be built and reinforced. Thus, you see emerging a secure human being able to assume his place in society as a responsible, productive person.

Educational Approach

Curriculum

The curriculum used at GMA begins with the Montessori curriculum as the framework, and then correlates with the Indiana State Standards and the Core Knowledge Foundation Curriculum. These three documents are referenced and cross referenced in order to prevent repetitions or gaps in instruction. The curriculum begins with a solid foundation in basic knowledge (facts) and then encourages the students to apply this knowledge to new situations, analyze all parts, synthesize this information into something new, and finally evaluate or judge the value of the new situation using past experiences and newly forming criteria. This process provides a solid basis on which to build skills, instruction and understanding. The curriculum offers a coherent plan that builds year by year.

Classroom Size

A Montessori class, especially at the pre-K level, may seem very large at first to many parents. Each pre-K class may serve 25-30 children, spanning three or four age levels, normally more or less evenly divided between boys and girls among the age levels. The classes are taught by a trained Montessori educator working with one or two assistants.

Parents and traditional early childhood educators often begin by questioning our large group sizes and Montessori’s tradition of working with three or four different age groups in the same class. The answer lies in the fundamental difference in our perception of how children can be best helped to learn. Traditionally, parents and educators have

assumed that the classroom teacher is the source of instruction. By this reasoning, the lower the pupil/teacher ratio, the more time an individual child can receive and the better the educational experience.

The facts shown by a number of studies are that, except where ratios fall as low as four to one or when they climb to more than forty students in a room, research has not been able to find that class size in itself is the link with effective teaching. As any parent who has worked with five to ten children will attest, each individual child is a real person with a demanding set of expectations, opinions, interests and needs. In a traditional classroom, whether teachers work with ten children or twenty five, they often spend most of their time talking to the entire class or working with one or two children at a time while the other children listen, daydream or sleep. Teacher time can be a very limited resource.

The most effective teachers succeed not because their classes are smaller, but because they have found teaching strategies that really work. They allow excellent teachers, no matter in what setting they teach, to individualize instruction and facilitate learning for the entire class while they focus their attention on a few children at a time.

Parents and teachers sometimes dream about classes that are essentially one-on-one tutorial situations. But the best teacher of a three year old is often another child who is just a little bit older and has mastered a skill. This process is good for both the tutor and the younger child. In this situation, the teacher is not the primary focus.

The larger group size in the Montessori class puts the focus less on the adult and encourages children to learn from one another. By having enough children in each age group, all students will find others at their developmental level. In this way, the resource of the highly trained Montessori educator is used much more efficiently than teachers in other schools. Also, we have to remember that the Montessori classroom is a carefully prepared environment, filled with fascinating self-correcting educational materials. They allow children to work independently in a way that no school that is heavily dependent on texts and workbooks can.

Montessori classes are organized to encompass a multi-age span, which allows younger students to experience the daily stimulation of older role models, who in turn blossom in the responsibilities of leadership. Students not only learn *with* each other, but *from* each other. Some parents worry that by having younger children in the same class as older ones, one group or the other will be short changed. They fear that the younger children will absorb the teacher's time and attention, or that the importance of covering the kindergarten curriculum for the five year olds will prevent them from giving the three and four year olds the emotional support and stimulation that they need. Both concerns are misguided. Working in one class for two, three or four years allows students to develop a strong sense of community with their classmates and teachers. The age range also allows the especially gifted child the stimulation of intellectual peers, without requiring that he/she skip a grade and feel emotionally out of place.

By consciously bringing children together in a group that is large enough to allow for two-thirds of the children to return every year, the school environment promotes continuity and the development of a very different level of relationship between the children and their peers, as well as between children and their teachers. Classes tend to

be fairly stable communities, with only the oldest third moving on to the next level each year.

Classroom Design

Montessori classrooms provide a prepared environment where children are free to respond to their natural tendency to work. The children's innate passion for learning is encouraged by giving them opportunities to engage in spontaneous, purposeful activities with the guidance of a trained teacher. Within a framework of order, the children learn concentration and joyful self-discipline. They progress at their own pace and rhythm, according to their individual capabilities. This environment allows them the opportunity to become human beings able to function independently and interdependently.

Phonetic Approach to Reading

We use a phonetic approach to reading. Initially, the child is helped to identify sounds. Next, tactile and muscle memory is employed by having the child trace large sandpaper letters to learn the symbol of each consonant and short vowel. In a steady progression, the phonemes of our languages are introduced so the child is able to master each, thus building a solid foundation. This mastery ensures greater attack skills, confidence and a love of reading. Names of the letters are introduced after the child is into long vowel work.

Professional Growth

GMA encourages the professional growth of all staff members. Workshops, conferences and seminars are attended whenever possible. Regular staff meetings include opportunities for ongoing training and sharing of relevant information. School closings may be scheduled for teacher in-services and professional growth workshops in which the entire faculty is involved. The pre-K program follows our GMA school calendar and will be closed on Professional Development days.

Administrative Policies and Procedures

Admissions

GMA welcomes all students regardless of race, religion, national origin or gender. Please see the Non-discriminatory Policy.

Children must be at least three years old *and* fully potty trained - meaning they are able to independently use the toilet - to begin attending GMA. Children who turn five years old prior to August 1 of the current school year are eligible for enrollment in Kindergarten. It is not necessary for a child to have previous Montessori experience in order to enroll at GMA. Our teachers will work with each student to help them adjust to a Montessori learning environment.

Enrollment

All enrollment forms are due prior to a student's first day of school. The required forms include:

- Enrollment forms completed through PowerSchool
- Copy of original birth certificate
- Proof of Immunizations

A non-refundable \$250 deposit is due at the time of enrollment. The first month's tuition must be paid in full prior to a child's first day of school.

Students who enroll after the first day of the month will be charged a prorated tuition for that month.

Immunizations need to be up to date and it is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian to notify the office of any updated vaccinations for their child during the year.

Withdrawal

Families must provide a minimum of two-weeks notice in the event they choose to withdraw their child from GMA. Tuition payments made on a monthly basis will not be refunded. Only a prorated refund of tuition paid semi-annually or annually will be refunded at the time of withdrawal. Enrollment and material fees are non-refundable.

New Student Probation Period

Each child entering GMA will start under a 60 day probationary period. It generally takes six weeks for a child to adjust to the routine of his/her class. During this six week time frame if a student appears to have a behavioral, social or medical problem beyond the normal scope of the classroom, the teacher(s) will consult with each other as a team, in order to assess the situation. The teachers will then observe the child in the classroom. If it is determined that there is a serious problem that needs further intervention, the parent(s)/guardian will be asked to participate in a conference with the teacher(s) and the Executive Director of Geist Montessori Academy to discuss the situation. If the behavior continues, the child will be asked to leave the program.

Tuition and Billing

The tuition may be paid in full, with a 3% discount offered for annual payment made before the child's first day of school, or in monthly installments. If the monthly installment plan is chosen, the annual payment is divided into equal payments. The first of ten equal installments will begin in August and end in May. Monthly tuition is to be paid via our online payment system or via check by the first of the month. A \$35 late fee will be assessed if the payment is not received by the 7th of the month. Should a student's tuition go more than 60 days late, the student may be removed from the program until tuition is brought current.

The 2024-2025 monthly tuition for full day programming is \$995. Half-day tuition is \$685 per month.

Transfer Records

Student records will not be released if the account is not paid in full.

Discipline

Our pre-K program will follow the school behavior and discipline policies outlined in the GMA Family Handbook.

Home/School Communication

Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences will be held once each school year, in the fall during the

regularly scheduled conference time for K-8th grade. Conferences are designed to keep parents up-to-date on their child's activities and progress in the classroom.

All students are released from school early for Parent/Teacher Conferences. Pre-K students will be released at 11:30am, following regular carline procedures.

Newsletters

Bi-weekly classroom newsletters will be sent home via email. Please read them carefully as they contain information on school events, classroom activities, field trips, and general information. *The GMA Gazette* is sent out on the opposite bi-weekly schedule from Geist Montessori Academy administration.

Parent Involvement

Teachers will inform parents of opportunities to volunteer in the classroom as they become available. All volunteers must have a completed and cleared Criminal History Background Check on file with the school office before being permitted to help in the classroom or at school events. Volunteer background checks must be completed each school year as they do not rollover from year to year.

Social Media Policy

Social media has rapidly become a source of information and connection for many in our community. Geist Montessori Academy recognizes the important role that social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter play in the distribution of information. We encourage community members to utilize these sites to stay informed and to connect with other members of our school community.

GMA operates one official school Facebook page and one official school Twitter account, which can be found at www.Facebook.com/GeistMontessoriAcademy. Information posted on this page can be deemed reliable and accurate as it is posted by school leadership. Any other pages or groups using the name Geist Montessori Academy or GMA are not official school sanctioned pages, and the information is not always reliable or accurate. These pages and groups are monitored by members of our school community. Any inflammatory, inaccurate, or derogatory posts or comments on these pages will be reported and addressed by school leadership.

We ask that you respect the privacy and the feelings of others. Under no circumstance should offensive comments be made about students, parents, school personnel, or the school in general. Your posts and comments should help build and support the school community.

These sites are not for letting the school know of:

- Student absences or health related concerns
- Classroom concerns, please contact your child's teacher directly
- Concerns regarding the school in general, car line procedures, policies, etc.

We encourage families and community members to go to the source for the most accurate and up-to-date information about GMA. If you have a question or concern about something school-related, please contact the school to discuss these things.

Inappropriate use of social media can have a detrimental impact on the school and potentially your child's education while not giving the school the opportunity to address concerns. GMA regularly monitors social media sites to protect the school community. Violations of these social media policies and guidelines may include removal of posts, removal from the forum/group, and could warrant a conversation about whether or not our school community is the best fit for your family.

Guidelines

As we all work together to create a school community that fosters kindness, respect, and responsibility for all people, we understand that social media provides individuals with increased opportunities to communicate, collaborate, and create connections with others. The following guidelines are meant to help individuals represent the GMA school community well in the digital world.

Please:

- Use good judgment.
- Always treat others in a respectful, positive and considerate manner.
- Be responsible and ethical.
- Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behavior online that you would follow face-to-face.
- Encourage positive, constructive discussion to use communicative or collaborative technologies.
- Alert your child's classroom teacher or other staff member if you see threatening/bullying, inappropriate, inaccurate, or harmful content (images, messages, posts) online.

Please DON'T:

- Share confidential information:
 - No personally identifiable student information may be posted.
 - Any discussion about a student or student behaviors, that is not your own student, is not appropriate. These discussions can take place with your student's teacher or the school office if there are any questions or concerns.
 - Do not share confidential information about staff or families.
- Post private and personal information
- EVER give out or transmit personal information of students or parents.
- Use social media in a way that could be personally or physically harmful.
- Engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others – staff, students, or the school community.
- Use language online that would be unacceptable in your child's classroom.

If you make a mistake...

- Please be responsible to acknowledge any mistake or misstep made online.
- Apologize to all who may have been impacted by your actions.

Netiquette

Always use the Internet and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner.

Recognize that among the valuable content online there is unverified, incorrect, or inappropriate content.

Users should not post malicious or fictitious comments about any member of the school community or the school itself.

If necessary, please inform school leadership of any issue involving the sharing of confidential information.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Don't be mean. Don't send emails or post comments with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating someone else. Engaging in these behaviors, or any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will result in the posts being taken down and potential removal from the forum. In some cases, cyberbullying can be a crime. Remember that your activities are monitored and retained by others.

Social Media Photo Policy

Posting of pictures/videos of children is not allowed on the official school Facebook page and Twitter feed, except by school leadership with parental consent.

School and Classroom Basics

Arrival and Dismissal Carlines

Please help provide a safe and efficient carline for dropping off children and picking them up. Please arrive at your appointed time.

PreK and Kindergarten students are to be dropped off through the Early Childhood car line between 8:00-8:15 am. PreK and Kindergarten students arriving after 8:15 am should be signed in by a parent through the front office. Older siblings of these students will wait in the hallway along the wall outside of their classrooms until the second car line begins at 8:20. These students should have a book to read in their backpack during this short waiting period.

Due to parking lot restrictions during the afternoon carline, we ask that if you need to pick up early, *please do so by 2:45 pm.* From 2:45-3:35 pm the parking lot entrance is *one way*, you will have to join the carline and wait to leave through the exit with everyone else.

Arrival/Dismissal Procedures

Students should be dropped off each morning at the school entrances 5 & 6 at the designated time. Please have your child ready to exit the car independently when you pull up to the entrance (i.e: shoes and jacket on, lunch and backpack in hand). Students may only exit their vehicle once the appropriate staff member has signaled for them to do so. A staff member will greet them and assist them into the building.

At dismissal, your child will walk to your car when their number is called. Staff will be present to help ensure that all students are safely in their vehicle before the carline continues. Please

refrain from lengthy discussions with teachers or staff, or from giving verbal messages at this time. We make every effort to provide a quick and efficient system of arrival and dismissal, and we appreciate your cooperation and assistance.

Please use extreme caution at all times during the carline. Watch for children being assisted to or from vehicles. Please drive slowly and do not pass another vehicle in line. Please be sure your vehicle is in park when waiting during the carline. *Cell phone use is prohibited during carlines.*

Arrival time for pre-K students is 8:00-8:10 am. Dismissal time is 11:30 am for half day pre-K students and 3:00 pm for full day students. Please be sure to clearly display your carline tag at arrival and dismissal.

Vehicle Idling

The purpose of this policy is to eliminate all unnecessary idling by any vehicle on Geist Montessori Academy (GMA) property. Vehicle exhaust from idling vehicles poses health, environmental, and financial risks to the GMA community. This policy applies to the operation of every vehicle on GMA property.

Drivers of all public and private vehicles are to turn off the engine if the vehicle is to be stopped more than five (5) minutes in locations where vehicle exhaust may be drawn into the building or while on school grounds.

Walking/Biking

Any child traveling to or from school in any way other than riding in a motor vehicle will need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian. They will also need to sign the child in and out at the front desk at the time of arrival or dismissal if outside of the normal arrival/dismissal times.

Transportation Change During the School Day

Occasionally, parents must make unplanned transportation changes during the school day. All telephone calls must be received by 2:00 pm. This is to allow enough time to accurately deliver messages to teachers, as well as time to confirm the change if necessary. Please do not call the school after 2:00 pm to make a transportation change except in the case of extreme emergencies.

Attendance

Daily attendance is expected, except in the case of illness, vacation or special circumstances. A child quickly feels "out of sync" with the other children when they are not present at school on a regular basis. The sense of community which forms between the children is adversely affected when a child is repeatedly absent.

Please notify the teacher or the office of an anticipated prolonged absence. A phone call or note is necessary if your child is sick. Tuition will not be refunded for days when a student is absent.

Our program is either full or half day and is five days per week.

Tardy Policy

Arrival time for pre-K students is 8:00-8:10am. Students arriving to morning classes after 8:10am will be marked tardy. Only those students bringing a note from a doctor, dentist

or orthodontist will be given an excused tardy. If your child arrives after the morning carline you will need to walk your child into the school and sign him/her in at the front desk. *Tardy students may not enter the building without an adult to sign them in.*

Custody

If there has been a divorce or legal separation, a copy of the agreement containing custody information and the signature of the judge must be on file in the School office. Without such documentation, children will be released to either parent.

Before/After Care

Extended School Day Care - The Grove at GMA

Before and after school care is available through our extended care program, *The Grove*. For more information, contact the office at (317) 813-4626 or visit www.gmacademy.org and click on the Parents tab at the top.

The program structure and hours are designed in order to meet the needs of the community. The Grove currently offers programs from 6:30 am until school begins; and upon dismissal until 6:00 pm. The Grove provides care for all weather related school delays and closings, so long as it is reasonable and safe to do so. Care may also be available on Early Release Days.

Registration

Families must register ahead of time in order to utilize The Grove's services. Registration is handled by the coordinator for this program, Ms. Kayla Commons. She can be reached via email at kcommons@gma.k12.in.us.

Fees

Families will be charged a one-time, non-refundable registration fee of \$30 at the time of initial registration for The Grove. Thereafter, fees for services will be paid either weekly or biannually. All fees paid are non-refundable. Questions regarding fees should be directed to the program coordinator.

Absences

Student absences from The Grove should be communicated to the program coordinator. Unfortunately, staffing is determined by the number of students enrolled in the program on a weekly basis. For this reason, refunds for absences will not be offered.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Students should be dropped off and picked up from Door 2. Please follow the instructions provided on the sign posted at Door 2. Students must be dropped off at The Grove *before 8:00 am* in order to avoid conflicts with car line traffic. Anyone arriving after 8:00 am must drop students off through the car line as no one will be admitted to The Grove after this time.

Students must be picked up no later than 6:00 pm from The Grove. Late pick-up will result in a fee of \$1 per minute past 6:00 pm. Repeated lateness for pick-up will result in exclusion from the program.

Exclusion

The Grove is offered as a convenient option for families needing care for students before or

after school day hours. It is a privilege, not a right, to participate in The Grove. Therefore, staff reserves the right to exclude students from participation, whether long or short term, for any reason including, but not limited to repeated behavior concerns, tardiness, etc.

Birthdays

As with many Montessori schools, in our Kindergarten and lower elementary classes we do celebrate birthdays with a "Birthday Rotation". Please check with your child's teacher to see what they have planned for birthday celebrations.

Birthday treats, gifts, goodie bags, etc. are not permitted at GMA. Families may choose to donate a favorite, age-appropriate, school-appropriate book to the classroom in honor of their child's birthday. A special guest will be permitted to visit the classroom on one occasion for a time not to exceed 30 minutes to read the book aloud to the class so long as a cleared background check is on file in the front office. If a family chooses not to or is unable to donate a book to the classroom, the birthday child may choose a book from the classroom collection for the teacher to read aloud for their birthday.

Teachers will communicate to families how to celebrate summer birthdays. Sometimes this is set up as half birthdays or scheduled to be celebrated at the end of the year.

During all non-birthday celebrations, classroom staff will take special dietary needs into consideration. Only store-bought, individually packaged treats will be permitted for classroom celebrations. It is up to the discretion of each teacher, based on the class' dietary and allergy needs, to communicate what is allowable in their classroom environment.

In order to avoid hurt feelings, no invitations for outside birthday parties may be passed out at school, unless the entire class is invited. No groups of children will be sent home with a birthday child and no gifts should be sent to school.

Classroom Etiquette for Parents

Parents are not permitted in the classroom during class time unless invited by the teacher. For the sake of the children, the work time and environment is to be protected. Conversations between the teacher and parents can sometimes be disruptive to a class and should be held either at another location or at another time.

Parents who do come into the classrooms should do so quietly. Please remember the following rules of etiquette:

- Come into the classroom as quietly as possible.
- Be as unobtrusive as possible to help maintain the integrity of the class that is in progress.

Please do not make an attempt to converse with your child's teacher before class starts in the morning. The teacher needs every moment to attend to the environment and the students, so that class will begin smoothly and on time. Each teacher has an established email account with the school. Parents are encouraged to utilize email for non-urgent communications with their student's teacher. Please allow two school days' time for a response from teachers and school staff.

Dress Code and Clothing Suggestions

As a school community, we promote proper dress and personal hygiene. Appropriate

clothing which respects the dignity of the person is required. Students should dress with modesty and neatness. It is the direct responsibility of the parent/guardian to make sure all students are dressed to help maintain a quality educational environment.

Students should come to school dressed in clothes that will not distract from the learning experience. They should be comfortable and allow for easy movement.

Pre-K students spend time polishing, painting, preparing food and creating art projects. Please know your child's clothes may come home dirty from these works. An extra set of clothing should be labeled and sent to school in a large zipper-lock bag, labeled with the child's name. Please note: the bag and all clothing need to be labeled with the child's name.

Learning to dress oneself is a major developmental task for three, four and five year olds. The feeling of independence a child gets from dressing himself helps to build self-esteem. The self confidence spreads to other areas as he tries more new things. Help your child learn to dress himself by supplying clothing that he can be successful at putting on and taking off. Such items that are easier to handle are pull-on pants instead of overalls, elastic waistbands instead of belts, dresses that do not tie, zip or button in the back. Make sure that zippers, buttons and buttonholes are easy to do. Slippers, labeled with the child's name, should be sent to school, if requested by the teacher.

- Clothing must be in good repair, free of rips and tears.
- All pants and shorts are to be worn at the waist.
- Dresses, skirts and shorts must be of appropriate length (fingertip length or longer).
- Shirts with inappropriate pictures, sayings or suggestive messages are not allowed.
- No bare backs or midriffs.
- No visible underwear.
- No flip flops. All shoes must have a back on them.

Field Trips

When possible, field trips are taken by the pre-K classes to supplement the educational program and to familiarize the children and their families with the resources of their immediate community. Students must have a signed permission slip in order to participate in field trips. Parents will be notified by the teacher prior to each trip. All field trips are considered to be educational and are still counted as part of the educational day for the school. Therefore, GMA cannot allow siblings who are not students at GMA to attend these functions. Siblings who are currently attending GMA but are in a separate educational level will not be allowed to attend field trips unless their class is also scheduled for the same field trip. Should a child's parents/guardian decide to not send their child on the field trip, then the child will not attend school that day as all pre-K staff will be needed to chaperone the field trip.

Emergency Preparedness Drills

Regularly scheduled (monthly) fire and storm drills are held in accordance with the guidelines set by the Indiana State Fire Marshal. In the event of an actual fire or storm emergency, no student will be allowed to leave the building with a parent/guardian until the threat has passed. Additionally, we are required to practice lockdown drills with students and staff.

Illness Guidelines

Our pre-K program will adhere to all GMA school policies regarding student illness. Please refer to the GMA Family Handbook for specific information regarding health and safety measures including the administration of medication at school.

Lunch and Snacks

Parents should notify the teacher and office of any food sensitivities or allergies.

Children who stay all day need to bring a sack lunch each day. Please include any plastic silverware needed. There is a limited amount of time available for heating lunches, due to the number of students eating lunch at school. Please pack items that do not require heating.

Guidelines for lunch/snacks:

- Parents should pack nutritionally sound lunches for their children.
- Leftovers will be placed back into either the original container or a baggie to take home to show parents what was not eaten.
- Parents should try to heat food at home and pack in insulated containers whenever possible.
- Difficult to open containers should be opened at home and repackaged into containers the child can open himself, in order to foster independence.
- Candy, soda, and gum are not permitted.

Outdoor Play

Children love to be outdoors and enjoy outdoor activity whenever possible. Your child should come to school dressed according to the outdoor weather conditions. Sharp changes in temperature occur in fall and spring. Temperatures may be cool and the ground may be damp early in the day. In the winter we will not go outside if either temperature or wind chill is below 20 degrees. If you feel your child is too sick to go outside, then your child is too sick to be at school.

Inclement Weather Delays and Closures

In the case of inclement weather, please stay tuned to local TV or radio stations to be aware of a possible two hour delay or school closing. You will need to watch/listen for Geist Montessori Academy. Families will be notified via our mass communication system and information will be posted on the GMA Facebook page. If Geist Montessori Academy has a two hour delay or is closed, the Geist Montessori Academy pre-K will be delayed or closed as well. There will be no half-day pre-K on days that are on a delayed start schedule.

School Property

Students are expected to respect all school property. Parents will be notified if damages are caused by their child. The cost of repairs will be billed to the parents and the child may be suspended.