



# PINES MONTESSORI SCHOOL

## FUNDAMENTAL VALUES AND BELIEFS

### OUR VISION

Pines Montessori School will be an exemplary Montessori School enriched with methods, materials, and facilities relevant to a contemporary understanding of the needs of the child.

Our broadest vision is of a world that lives in peace; a world community based on interdependence and respect for all life and all people. Our vision for our school is a Montessori school community of supportive parents, dedicated teachers and staff, and joyful learners.

### OUR MISSION

Pines Montessori School prepares children for life through learning experiences based on authentic Montessori principles and practices.

Our mission is:

1. To inspire a passion for excellence.
2. To nurture the curiosity, creativity, and imagination born within us all.
3. To give our children a vision of the universe
4. And to awaken the human spirit in every child.

Our program rests on four pillars:

1. The cultivation within our students a passion for excellence in everything they do, both in and outside of school.
2. The development of a strongly held set of universal values, which include honesty, integrity, responsibility, empathy, compassion, kindness, peacefulness, warmth, respect of self and others, a sense of concern for others, and a love of community.
3. The development of a global perspective and sense of international understanding.
4. And a lifelong commitment to give something back through service to others who are in need.



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## 1. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

### 1.1. The Fundamental Nature of our school:

1.1.1. The Montessori approach to learning is the educational framework of our educational program.

1.1.2. Pines Montessori School is a diverse and multicultural school.

1.1.3. Pines Montessori School is designed to prepare students for lifelong learning.

1.1.4. Our school teaches children to be at home in the world of nature.

1.1.5. Pines Montessori School is a family-friendly school.

1.1.6. We are committed to character and values.

1.1.7. We are committed to diversity.

1.1.8. Pines Montessori School is a close-knit community of students, educators, parents, and friends.

### 1.2. The Montessori approach to learning is the framework of our educational program.

1.2.1. We use the Montessori approach, supplemented with compatible curriculum and programmatic elements of additional approaches and materials from the non-Montessori educational community, to provide opportunities for enrichment beyond the basic curriculum.

#### 1.2.2. The Nature of the Child and the Learning Process:

1.2.2.1. We affirm that education begins at birth and continues throughout life. While our emphasis is on our children, we are a center of support for all individuals to continue learning and developing toward becoming whole, balanced, and healthy individuals.

1.2.2.2. We believe that intelligence is not rare among human beings, nor is it fixed at birth.

1.2.2.3. We believe that the vast majority of people have the intelligence and natural ability required to learn everything they need to lead full, happy, and productive lives.

1.2.2.4. We believe that wisdom can be cultivated.



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1.2.2.5. We believe that true wisdom is the ability to listen to your heart and know how best to put your intelligence to work. In order to achieve this goal, self-esteem, human dignity, and emotional well being, as well as the ability to communicate and cooperate effectively with others, must be valued at least as highly as academic and material success.

1.2.3. We approach learning by seeking to understand all students' unique nature and guide them individually and at their own pace, through the range of learning skills so they fully realize their potential.

1.2.4. We celebrate the natural diversity of human beings, be it in learning style, interests, or definition of what makes a happy and successful life.

1.2.5. We affirm the ideal of the renaissance person. Our ultimate goal is to produce renaissance men and women who have not only learned how to learn, but also have an innate love of learning, a wide range of interests, and an openness to new ideas and possibilities.

1.2.6. We nurture self-esteem. We affirm that self-esteem is the crucial ingredient for the full expression of a person's potential. We strive to base every interaction between community members on this principle, from how we foster self-discipline to respecting personal learning styles and stages of development. This is the very fabric of our community and our educational methods.

1.2.7. We consciously encourage students not to be afraid of taking risks, nor of failure. Life experiences are to be viewed as opportunities to learn, whether it be from successes or failures. These experiences are seen as non-threatening feedback on their progress and personal growth.

1.2.8. We nurture intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical growth: The development of a whole, healthy being requires the nurturing of our many dimensions, including the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical growth.

1.2.8.1. Intellectual: The intellect is an important tool in the shaping of our world. Through the development of our thinking abilities, we refine our emotional responses, we clarify our picture of the universe, and we develop the discipline to maintain vibrant health.

1.2.8.2. Emotional: Our emotions are complex and powerful and it is very important that we learn to feel them fully and without fear, identify them correctly (in ourselves and others), respect them, and accept them. It is equally important, however, that we learn to harness their power and not let them control our lives unchecked.



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1.2.8.3. Physical: We seek to help our students discover, understand and adopt the lifestyle habits most appropriate and beneficial for our bodies and minds. Among these are fresh air, pure water, exercise, sunlight, and proper diet.

1.2.8.4. Spiritual: While we feel it is each person's task to develop his or her own understanding of the nature of the universe and the individual's place in it, we proceed on the premise that our world is a beautiful, positive, loving place, a setting that provides the potential for each person to lead a full, free, joyful, and healthy life. While we do not teach religion, nor advocate any particular belief system, we encourage students to explore questions raised by religious teachers and develop the spiritual side of their lives (the ability to find peace within and hear the small, still inner voice that we all possess).

1.2.9. Developmental Approach to Education: Our educational approach is centered around the stages of human development.

1.2.9.1. Developmental stages: Our faculty is actively involved in a continuous study of human development. This study includes keeping abreast of current theories on development, regular student observation, and a constant evaluation of the curriculum to ensure that it is appropriate for the developmental stages of our students.

1.2.9.2. Individualization: We strive for individualized pacing and adaptation of the classroom program (when possible) to meet varied styles of learning.

1.2.9.3. Flexibility: Our educational program is designed for flexibility in its methodology and use of resources.

1.2.9.4. Academic expectations in an individualized approach: In designing this individualized program, we follow an established curricular framework that includes the school's expectations for basic academic achievement at each level of the school.

1.2.10. Active learning: We promote active rather than passive learning by:

1.2.10.1. Encouraging spontaneous activity in education by encouraging students to pursue studies in all areas of their personal interests;

1.2.10.2. Using hands-on, "experiential" learning whenever possible; and

1.2.10.3. Bringing the student to a sense of accomplishment, closure and recognition of having reached a pre-established goal for learning.



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1.2.11. The Passage to Abstraction: To facilitate this process, we consistently work from a very concrete level of experience to the abstract. To aid students in learning, we begin by giving them the "big picture", and work from this toward an increasing level of detail. This concept has created a spiraling curriculum in which skills and concepts are presented and reintroduced at increasing levels of complexity and abstraction over the years.

1.2.12. External structure: As necessary, we provide students with sufficient external structure and support in a committed effort to ensure that their developmental needs are met. We do this in a manner that reflects our expectations and philosophy.

1.2.12.1. We interpret the general principle of Montessori education, "follow the child" to refer to the importance of allowing students to pursue areas of spontaneous interest whenever possible. However, if a child needs more direction at certain times or is not internally motivated in a given area, we feel it is our responsibility to acknowledge the personal preference and to still require that the necessary work be completed.

1.2.13. Freedom within order: We strive for a balance between freedom, order, and responsibility.

1.2.14. We acknowledge that children learn in different ways and at different paces. Diverse Learning Styles: We seek to provide an open environment to share our values in a truly diverse community. Our goal is to consider each child as a unique human being and to be as flexible as possible in addressing his or her learning style and needs as an individual learner.

1.2.14.1. We seek to provide an environment open to students with diverse learning styles. Our primary focus will always be with the best interests of those students who will thrive in our Montessori environment. In every case, we assess whether our school is able to meet a student's needs while keeping the integrity of the classroom. If this is not possible, we will recommend an appropriate alternative.

1.2.15. We nurture curiosity, creativity, and imagination:

1.2.15.1. As educators we consciously work to encourage students to think creatively in their writing, problem solving, and research.

1.2.15.2. As is appropriate for each age group, we encourage our students to become aware of the issues of our day. With careful consideration, we ask that they take a responsible stand for themselves and to explore ways of making a positive personal contribution to society.

1.2.15.3. We are constantly modeling and encouraging communication between all members of our community through active listening, empathy and conflict resolution.



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1.3. We are a multi-cultural school;

1.3.1. We embrace and teach a global perspective as a philosophy for building a diverse community grounded in knowledge that leads to understanding, respect, and acceptance of all peoples.

1.3.2. We deliberately seek to gather together a truly diverse multi-cultural and international community of students, faculty, and staff. We celebrate diversity in our community and acknowledge the unique contributions of all individuals, who enrich and inspire our personal growth.

1.3.3. We deliberately teach and encourage anti-bias at every age level in an age-appropriate way.

1.3.4. We seek to develop a global perspective and international understanding, weaving international education through our curriculum at every age level:

1.3.4.1. through the study of modern and ancient language.

1.3.4.2. through the study of physical, cultural, and economic geography.

1.3.4.3. through correspondence with Montessori schools around the world.

1.3.4.4. through encouraging families to share their cultural traditions, travel experiences, and traditional festivals.

1.3.4.5. by utilizing our international families as a tremendous teaching resource.

1.3.5.6. through an on-going experiential program of international cultural education.

1.4. Pines Montessori School prepares students for life long learning.

1.4.1. We want our students to be well trained in the basic academic disciplines, to fulfill their creative potential, and to gain satisfaction in their physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development.

1.4.2. Academic standards: In all cases we set our expectations high, not asking individuals to do more than that of which they are capable, but consistently stressing at all levels the importance of careful work and pride in accomplishment. The reward is not in a quantity of work achieved but the satisfaction of work done well for its own sake. We carefully build a supportive environment for the unhurried mind to move steadily toward the pursuit of excellence.



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1.4.3. Competition: We believe that it is neither necessary nor appropriate to inspire unrestrained academic pressure and scholastic competition among students. We cultivate the ability to accept success with grace, and failure or loss with dignity, and resolve to build on the experience. We ensure the right to choose whether or not to participate in competitive activities, and we stress the principles of good sportsmanship.

1.4.4. Success: We design our educational program to maximize each student's academic and personal success. We strive to encourage students to build on their strengths and personal learning styles and learn from their mistakes.

1.4.4.1. Academic success: We encourage skills that support independent and successful learning, critical thinking, cooperative projects, reflective reading, problem solving; library research, use of technology, techniques for effective study, test-taking strategies, and techniques for focusing attention.

1.4.4.2. Personal success: We consider it equally important that our students be successful human beings who can establish healthy relationships and achieve happiness in their personal lives. We teach our students to pay attention to and respect feelings, both their own and those of others. We help them to learn to solve conflicts effectively and fairly, and to express their feelings in a healthy manner. Group dynamics and communication skills are also stressed.

1.4.4.3. We offer a challenging comprehensive curriculum:

1.4.4.3.1. Science: We teach students not only scientific facts, but the process, history, and nature of science. The scientific method is employed by studying the world around us with the goal of arriving at conclusions supported by observable evidence. Students will study science every year. Our curriculum will be consciously integrated, incorporating topics from botany, zoology, physical science, machines and technology, astronomy, geology, ecology, earth science, weather, and the medical sciences.

1.4.4.3.2. Foreign Language: Our students will study a modern foreign language throughout the year.

1.4.4.3.3. Mathematics: Our approach will be Unified Math: integrating topics in arithmetic, geometry, pre-algebra, statistics, logic, algebra, trigonometry, and calculus. Whenever possible, we will help students grasp the underlying concepts of math through the use of concrete apparatuses and through application of mathematics to real world tasks.

1.4.4.3.4. Economics: Our children will live in a world in which economics is a constant basic element of their lives. Our goal is for our students to both understand the principles of economic freedom and to feel comfortable with



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financial and business matters. Whether or not they choose to run their own businesses, we want them to develop an entrepreneurial spirit.

1.4.4.3.5. Geography: We seek to develop a global perspective and international understanding, teaching world geography (physical, cultural, political, and economic) at every level of the school.

1.4.4.3.6. History: We develop a strong historical perspective through the study of prehistory and history, following an anthropological orientation into fundamental needs of humankind and the cultures, lifestyles and technology of the past. We cultivate an appreciation of family and community heritage. History sets the stage for integrated learning at every age level.

1.4.4.3.7. Anthropology and Myth: We teach students the basic elements of anthropology, addressing the question of what makes us human, the nature of culture, and how cultures have attempted to explain or illuminate the great questions of life through story, myth, and cultural archetypes.

1.4.4.3.8. Major World Religions: While we do not teach religion, nor advocate any particular belief system, we believe that our students should be familiar with the traditions and basic beliefs of the world's major religions.

1.4.4.3.9. Civics and Law: We believe that our students should understand how government works at the local, state, and federal levels. Students should embrace the role that a citizen can and should play in shaping consensus, advocating their point of view, and making informed decisions before they vote. They should also understand how the legal system works and have an informed working knowledge of and respect for the law.

1.4.4.3.10. Language Arts and Literature: We teach the fundamental literacy lessons in writing and reading. We introduce students to many different genres of writing styles. Students learn to read and write for pleasure and gain the skills necessary for comprehension. It is at this level that student's are reading and writing to learn.

1.4.4.3.11 Investigation and Research Skills: We teach students to learn mindfully and develop skills in the process of investigation and research using the library, internet, public records, personal interviews, and primary and secondary source materials. Students learn how to organize the information that they compile into increasingly sophisticated reports and presentations. Textbooks play an insignificant role within our educational program.



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1.4.4.3.12. The Visual and Performing Arts: We believe that students should express artistic creativity in a variety of ways through classroom activities initiated by teachers and artists, as a way to foster appreciation for art, music and creative drama.

1.4.4.3.13. Health and Physical Education: We want our students to understand, appreciate, and adopt a healthy lifestyle that includes exercise, proper diet, intelligent choices regarding personal health, and stress reduction.

1.4.4.3.19. Peace Education: Human relations and conflict resolution skills, nonviolence, leadership training and cooperative teamwork skills, and communication skills are all important elements in nurturing our students. Peace Education is a vital element of our curriculum.

1.4.4.3.20. Creative thinking and problem solving skills.

1.4.4.3.21. We strive to be objective, compassionate, yet realistic in considering the needs of each child as a unique individual. If it becomes evident that a child's academic needs are not being met, we counsel the family to seek out another school setting in which the child can experience success.

1.5. Pines Montessori School prepares students for life. Our goal is to inspire a passion for excellence and a lifelong love of learning. Pines Montessori School provides a broad preparation for life, balancing academic excellence with the development of personal and practical life skills.

1.5.1. We teach universal values:

1.5.1.1. Empowerment: We make a concerted effort to empower students at our school. We help them to learn how to make responsible choices for themselves and to recognize they are assuming increasing control over their lives as they mature. We encourage them to discover how to make a difference in the world around them by positive efforts and contributions to others.

1.5.1.2. Our goals for students are for them to be open-minded and compassionate, to gain a sense of themselves and others, and to understand and appreciate the diversity of the human spirit.

1.5.1.3. To facilitate the development of independence and a sense of engagement with the community, we strongly encourage participation in day-to-day classroom management, care of the environment and decision making. We seek to help each student to feel a commitment both to the local and the global community of



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humankind. We want each student to understand that the good of the individual and that of the community are interdependent.

1.5.1.4. We foster in students the love of learning and teach them to value knowledge, creativity, and humor. We instill in them the challenge to become responsible, critical, and caring members of a pluralistic society. They will grow, discover that they have the power and resources to affect change and find that they have the self-esteem and confidence to pursue their goals.

1.5.1.5. We respect the fundamental human needs, rights, and dignity of each person, no matter the age, as a full and independent person who is engaged in the ongoing process of development. During this process, while honoring the right to self-determination, we model and encourage certain values: kindness, honesty, warmth and openness, tolerance, cooperation, good sportsmanship, nonviolence and respect for each person's unique nature.

1.5.1.6. Celebration of Diversity: As educators, parents and citizens of the world with the mutual goal of world peace, we consider it our responsibility to model and encourage acceptance and celebration of cultural, racial, religious beliefs, appearance, socio-economic position, and other differences among people, both to our children and to each other.

#### 1.5.2. Discipline:

1.5.2.1. We encourage every student to accept full responsibility for their behavior, their attitudes, their experiences, and their lives. The enormous reward that comes with accepting this responsibility is the freedom to choose and create the type of person they wish to be, and the life they wish to lead.

1.5.2.2. School should be safe. We endeavor to provide a school environment that will promote and protect the physical and emotional well being of our students and staff.

1.5.2.3. We teach students appropriate, kind, and considerate ways to behave in given situations. We use positive reinforcement to acknowledge students' progress, contributions, and character. If needed, we intervene and respectfully, but firmly, stop the behavior.

1.5.2.4. We will never permit the use of corporal punishment.

1.5.2.5. We encourage and model ways to negotiate in conflict situations so that individuals are heard and that their feelings and needs are respected.



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1.5.2.6. We encourage self- discipline and self-motivation as the reasons for behavior rather than fear or motivation from without.

1.5.2.7. We do not label children, but instead try to recognize the mistaken goals of misbehavior and look to find appropriate ways to encourage the individual toward self discipline.

1.5.2.8. We strive to be objective, compassionate, yet realistic in considering the needs of each child as a unique individual. If it becomes evident that a child's needs are not being met, we counsel the family to seek out another school setting in which the child can experience success.

#### 1.6. Community Service:

1.6.2. We seek to model and teach our students that the freedom and education they receive come with the responsibility to help others, and that service needs to be an accepted part of everyone's life. Opportunities to perform community service locally and globally are provided.

1.7. Practical Life skills: To facilitate and encourage a sense of independence, we deliberately teach a wide range of practical life skills appropriate to each child's level of development. We regard this as a vital element in the design of our entire curriculum. These practical life skills include the following:

1.7.1. Eye-hand coordination and the use of simple tools.

1.7.2. Grace and courtesy: appropriate ways to handle situations kindly.

1.7.3. Practical economics: the value and use of money, including how to earn and manage spending money.

1.7.4. Technology: the safe use of technology, as age appropriate.

1.7.4.1. Computers: As appropriate at each age level, we use the computer as a fundamental tool for learning, not only as an element of contemporary practical life, but also as an aid in the development of logical planning and problem solving.

1.7.5. Transportation: As appropriate at each age level, the safe use of alternate means of transportation other than a parent's car, such as walking, bicycling and public transportation.

1.7.6. Communication: the appropriate use of the technology of personal and mass communication, including writing letters, preparing a newsletter, using the telephone, public speaking, and designing audiovisual presentations.



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1.7.7. Care of Personal Environment: how to clean and set tables, wash dishes, cook, sew, iron, infant and child care and laundry.

1.7.8. Health and Safety: the development of sound habits of safety, nutrition and hygiene.

1.8. The World of Nature: Strengthening our connection with nature and the environment is an integral part of Pines Montessori School.

1.8.1. We seek to instill in our students, parents, and staff not only a reverence for the earth, its waters, and all living things, but also a sense of stewardship for the environment based on a conviction of our individual responsibility for the beauty of the land and the health of our ecosystems.

1.8.2. We believe that being at home in the world of nature is basic to being a whole and healthy human being.

1.8.3. We consciously work to foster in each person a strong sense of belonging to the web of life in the following ways where age appropriate:

1.8.3.1. Programs in outdoor education at every age level in the school, using the natural setting of our campus and the wide variety of natural resources around us as a classroom out of doors.

1.8.3.2. Programs in gardening and small animal care.

1.8.5.3. Programs in camping, canoeing and field ecological studies in natural wilderness settings.

1.8.5.4. We stress recycling and environmentally friendly packaging for lunches and all foods and products used in our community.

1.9. We are committed to being a family-friendly school:

1.9.1. In establishing policies and procedures, we attempt to remain sensitive to the needs and desires of our families.

1.9.2. We will attempt to avoid conflict with the religious traditions and holy days of our families when setting the school calendar. Every effort will be made to create a balanced and respectful approach to establishing policies and procedures.

1.9.3. We will periodically survey our families or hold special community meetings to explore how the school could be more family friendly.



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## 2. FACULTY

- 2.1. We carefully identify the duties and responsibilities of each position in the school.
- 2.2. We carefully identify the skills and knowledge, experience, educational philosophy, core values, and interpersonal skills needed to be successful in each position at our school.
- 2.3. We take great care in our hiring process to find new members of our faculty and staff who bring the right mix of skills, knowledge, experience, values, and personality to succeed at our school.
- 2.4. We will clearly communicate to all members of the faculty and staff our expectations, personnel policies, and benefits and professional development opportunities that may be applicable to their positions.
- 2.5. In evaluating the school's programs and performance of each member of the faculty, we will be as objective and positive as possible, encouraging individual initiative, self-evaluation, and continuous professional growth.
- 2.6. We consciously follow fair and equal employment practices in hiring, assigning, promoting, and compensating both teaching and non-teaching staff members. We endeavor to employ persons solely on the basis of the factors necessary in the performance of the job and the operation of our school without discrimination on the basis of religious affiliation, race, national origin, gender, and any other factor on which discrimination is prohibited by the laws of the jurisdiction within which our school is located.
- 2.7. No official of our school will seek to induce a teacher who is under contract at another school to break that contract. [There is nothing deemed improper if a member of the teaching or administrative staff of one school independently approaches another school about possible employment.]
- 2.8. Our school will not offer employment to a member of the faculty or staff of another school without communicating with the Head of the school at which he or she is presently employed or committed for the upcoming school year to request a frank evaluation of a candidate's qualifications. This information will be considered absolutely confidential.
- 2.9. Our school will take all reasonable and lawful precautions to maintain the confidentiality of records and information concerning teachers and other staff members who are applying for employment at another school, in accordance with the rights of the individual.
- 2.10. Any materials brought to school by a member of our faculty or staff, purchased with his or her own funds, shall remain his or her property.



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2.11. It is mutually understood that any teacher-made educational materials produced by a member of the faculty or staff during the term of this Agreement using school materials and supplies shall be considered the property of the school. However, faculty and staff members may use school materials to make a duplicate set of these materials for his or her own professional library.

2.12. Should a faculty member develop any new curricula, teaching techniques, teaching aids, or any other educational materials during the course of his or her employment with the school, he or she grants to the school a perpetual license to utilize said materials or ideas in its educational programs with both children and teacher training.

2.13. Any teaching aids, materials, or curricula developed by the school, as well as any personal information or mailing lists of the school's students and families, represent the proprietary property of the school. No member of the faculty, staff or community at large will be authorized to sell, transfer, assign, or disseminate said materials to a third person or a competitor of the School without first obtaining the Head of school's written approval.



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### 3. FACILITIES

3.1. We will deliberately seek to create a campus of timeless beauty that communicates to our students that the buildings and grounds are expressions of our love and commitment to their education and success.

3.2. Whatever the size of our enrollment, or the age levels encompassed in our programs, our buildings and grounds will support the implementation of our educational program and institutional mission as ideally as possible.

3.3. Buildings will not be constructed for the sake of having space. Each will be carefully considered in terms of need, ideal space and configuration, and integration into the pattern language developed for our master plan.

3.4. Maintaining a campus large enough to include areas set aside for natural habitat is a priority.

3.5. Whenever possible, the school will keep the buildings and grounds free from toxic substances and environmental irritants, and we will attempt to use pesticides and cleaning products that are non-toxic and which do not induce allergic reactions in students or staff members.

3.6. The school will consciously follow safety procedures designed to protect students and staff:

3.6.1. All power tools, fuels, paint removers, and other hazardous substances will be kept under lock and key

3.6.2. No lawnmowers or other potentially hazardous machinery will be used anywhere in the vicinity where children are present.



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**4. FINANCES**

- 4.1. Our school honors its financial commitments to parents, staff, vendors, and others.
- 4.2. The board will not pass a deficit operating budget. We will operate on a balanced budget.
  - 4.2.1. We are committed to building a contingency/reserve fund.
  - 4.2.2. The budget will include a contingency/reserve line item.
  - 4.2.3. We will endeavor to maintain a balanced operating budget without depending on income from fund raising projects.
- 4.3. Tuition will be set on the basis of what it costs to do the job right and meet the fundamental beliefs and values embodied in this blueprint.
- 4.4. We are committed to making this experience truly inclusive by pursuing funding sources and endowments to offer scholarships and or financial assistance for families who are unable to fund their child's education themselves. We will set aside a portion of our tuition income every year to help support the school's financial aid assistance program.
- 4.5. We will communicate accurate information about the financial state of the school in an annual report to the community and, from time to time, on a more frequent basis.
- 4.6. We will endeavor to operate without depending on income from fund raising projects.
- 4.7. We expect all of our families, as members of our community, to honor their financial obligations to the school in a timely and responsible manner.



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## 5. RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS

5.1. Admissions: Our primary goal in the recruitment and admissions process is to help each family determine whether our school is the perfect match with their values and goals, and the school setting that will work best for their individual child.

5.1.1. When we admit a new student, we enroll the whole family- parents, siblings, extended family – into our school community.

5.1.2. In making admissions decisions, we will weigh many factors, placing the greatest emphasis on whether the parents are deeply committed to sending their children to our school, and whether their values and goals for their children’s education are a close match with those of our school.

5.1.3. In making admissions decisions, we will normally give strong preference to families who we believe are committed to keeping their children in the school at least through the middle school years.

5.1.4. A Montessori student can never be replaced. Our secondary goal in the process of admissions and recruitment is to find families for whom the school will be a perfect match. We are seeking families who share common values and goals with the school, and who, after careful consideration and exploration, have concluded that our school is something that they want very much for their children, for the right reasons.

5.1.5. We want attending Pines Montessori to be a family tradition. Ideally, it will be so much a part of each family’s life that the children of our graduates will attend our school as well.

5.1.6. In the admissions process, we consciously treat parents with respect as partners in exploring whether or not we would be the perfect match for their child. We do not use gimmicks, such as the hint that spaces are filling up fast or discount coupons.

5.1.7. We will not try to convince prospective parents that our school is right for them and for their child. Instead we will tell the truth, help them to grasp the true nature of the school and what it has to offer, and allow them to weigh all the factors out as they consider whether our school is indeed the right match for them and their child.

5.1.8. We will welcome prospective parents with open arms and make it as easy as we can for them to learn what our school is really all about:

5.1.8.1. We will schedule individual tours for families considering our school.

5.1.8.2. We will arrange frequent and convenient times when prospective parents can observe in our classrooms.



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5.1.8.3. We will spend as much time with prospective parents as possible in order to answer their questions, address their concerns, and assist them in determining whether it feels to them as if our school would be a good match for their child.

5.1.8.4. We will consider applications for admission on a case by case open admission basis. We will do our best once an application has been received to arrange for the student's visits and evaluations, gather all of the information needed to evaluate the application, and schedule all meetings and interviews in the timeliest manner possible. We will endeavor to make and communicate all admissions decisions to the families as quickly as possible.

5.2. Non-discrimination: Our school does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, religion, national or ethnic background or origin. We consciously teach children to celebrate the rich cultural diversity of the global community. We regard a mix of backgrounds and abilities as a positive and important element in our community.

5.3. Truth in Advertising: As a member of the International Montessori Council, we pledge to represent our school truthfully and accurately to the general public and internally to our parent community.

5.4. Negative Public Relations: We further pledge ourselves to respect the diversity of the community of Montessori schools. We will not engage in negative public relations nor make any negative statements about another Montessori school or any other school.

5.5. We will promptly consult with parents should it ever become clear that a student is not benefiting from the school's program, or if the school is not the best program to meet his or her needs.

5.6. Our school recognizes each family's right to visit and consider other schools and to hold preliminary discussions regarding admission without feeling compelled to notify the school, which that their children presently attend.

5.7. While we welcome inquiries and interest in our school, we will never knowingly attempt to recruit or enroll an individual student away from his or her current Montessori program who is presently enrolled in or committed to attend another Montessori program.

5.8. Before filing an application for admission, we ask that families advise their children's present schools and authorize in writing the release to us of their children's academic records and student recommendations upon our request.



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**6. BUILDING COMMUNITY**

6.1. We are a close-knit community of students, educators, parents, and friends of the school.

6.2. Community is the invisible web that structures our pluralist beliefs. Culturally, historically and individually, our communities represent the best of our shared experiences. Our School presents an opportunity to expand the web of inclusion in our local community.

6.3. We recognize that a Montessori school is more than a place of learning; it is a community of children and adults that have a significant impact on our student's capacity to learn, grow, create, develop, assimilate values, and relate peacefully and respectfully to other people and to the natural world.

6.4. We treat all students, families, teachers, and staff members, and all people with kindness, warmth, and respect.

6.5. We consciously work to build a constructive partnership between the family and school in support of each child's educational development.

6.6. Within reasonable guidelines established to ensure the integrity of our educational program and the privacy of other student's records, parents are welcome to visit the school to observe their child in class or to review his or her academic progress.

6.7. We believe that every member of our community has a fundamental right to be treated with respect, regardless of age.

6.8. We place a primary emphasis on building relationships with families as early as possible in order to help parents recognize the unique nature of their child. We also work together to enhance parents' ability to incorporate Montessori philosophy into their family life.

6.9. We are an extended family community whose participants are supported at all levels by all others in the community.

6.10. We believe in the principle that those matters which affect individual community members directly impact all others in our community. We consider input from all of our community members in our decision making processes in order to take into account the needs of our total community.

6.11. The Ambassador Parent Program: We understand the special needs of new participants in the community and the necessity of a program to match new families with ones experienced in the community to provide support and information.



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6.12. Support for Community Businesses: We will encourage and facilitate methods for members of our community to access the services of other community members.

6.13. Adult Development Programs (PCO Speaker Series): We encourage the establishment of a program of adult classes and seminars on a variety of topics guided by community interest, in keeping with our commitment to a lifelong process of learning and personal growth.

6.14. Commitment to the values of the school: We expect all adult members of the school community to treat one another and the children in accordance with the core values of the school as embodied in this document. Members of our community , students, parents, teachers and support staff will be committed, contributing members of the community, and will show support for the rules, regulations, values and principles established by the community.

6.15. Class and Community Meetings: We will hold class and community meetings to allow and encourage a free and open exchange of ideas and information.



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## 7. ADMINISTRATION

7.1. Our administration is focused on providing educational leadership more than business administration.

7.2. The primary role of the Head of our school is to articulate the core values and vision, provide academic leadership, take leadership in the admissions and recruitment process, build community and reduce attrition among students and families, recruit and coach faculty members and staff, oversee the financial health of the school and support fundraising, serve as the school's primary spokesperson to the larger community, and lead the process of internal self-evaluation and long-term planning.

7.3. The Head of School will ensure that excellence and consistency with our values and vision permeate the school seamlessly from class to class, from level to level, and from one year to the next.

7.4. The Head of School will support the faculty and attempt to provide similar support and counsel to the school's families in determining what is best for each individual child and what is consistent with the core values of the school.

7.5. When conflicts arise within the school, every attempt will be made to find the best and highest resolution of the issues under dispute that is most consistent with the school's fundamental values.

7.6. The administration of the school will ensure a smooth and timely flow of communication about important dates and information to parents, students, and staff, and Board.

7.7. The administration will follow a collegial model in working with faculty members and staff, inviting their input and participation whenever appropriate in important questions facing the school.



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## 8. GOVERNANCE

8.1. The Board of Trustees shall be comprised of people who share a deep sense of commitment to Pines Montessori School and to Montessori philosophy. In all matters, they consider the overall best interests of the school over their own interests or over the interests of any constituent group within the school community.

8.1.1. The primary responsibility of the Board of Trustees is to establish the institutional identity, mission, and core values and beliefs that define the nature of the school. Periodically, with the involvement of the school community, the nature of the school is re-examined and refined, to reflect current community needs.

8.1.2. The school's mission, institutional identity, and core values and beliefs will be set down in writing in a working community document called the "Blueprint."

8.1.3. Before voting on any motion made before the Board, the Board of Trustees will consult the Blueprint to identify the underlying values and beliefs that would support whatever decision is made on the issue before the Board.

8.1.3.1. The Board will only approve motions that are supported by the core values and beliefs that are consistent with the Blueprint.

8.1.4. If the Blueprint does not address the issue, or if the Board concludes that the Blueprint needs to be amended to more completely address the school's underlying values and beliefs, it will go through the process of amending the Blueprint, with the input of the community as set forth below, before voting on the motion.

8.1.4.1. Before amending the Blueprint, the board will formally request the school community review the proposed amendment and provide feedback.

8.1.5. The minutes of the meetings of the Board will reflect not only the motions passed, but will cite the section of the Blueprint that supports the action.

8.1.6. Except when confidential matters are being considered, Board meetings are open.

8.1.7. Except for confidential issues, the major actions of the Board will be communicated to the school community in a timely fashion. These communications will include the motions passed, including a citation of the section of the Blueprint that supports the action.

8.1.8. Concerned parents or staff members may request the opportunity to address their opinion to the Board.



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**9. FUNDRAISING**

9.1. Every gift given to our school will be a gift of love, generously offered in support of our work.

9.2. We will limit fundraising activities to major programs, such as the Annual Giving Fund, Annual Golf Tournament, and Spring Gala.

9.3. While donations of funds, tangible goods, services, or real property are deeply appreciated, the school cannot accept any gift that would require it to violate the core beliefs outlined in this document.

9.3.1. While individuals wishing to donate funds to the school are welcome to designate the use to which they may be used, it is up to the Board of Trustees to establish policy about who will decide on behalf of the school if they can be accepted in light of the conditions established.

9.3.2. Only the Board of Trustees can accept a gift of real property or tangible goods on behalf of the school that would potentially require the expenditure of funds to repair or maintain.

9.4. The Board of Trustees should be a key element in leading and promoting the school's fundraising efforts.