

Welcome Northwest Upper Elementary Parents!

This 2021 - 2022 school year will be strongly guided by Dr. Montessori's philosophy of scientific experimentation, as she developed our education system through years of experiments. Continuing education during a pandemic will certainly continue these experiments. We will be learning to "go with the flow" and how to adapt to new situations. We are so lucky to have a vibrant community with whom to experience the wonders of learning. We feel so grateful for the privilege and responsibility of being with your children each day and guiding them as they develop into the amazing human beings they are meant to be.

ONGOING COMMUNICATION

Although I have covered some of what this year has to offer below, this list is not exhaustive, so please feel free to contact me should you have any questions at jamie@traversechildrenshouse.org. I will do my best to respond to your inquiries within 24 hours. Should you need to contact your child or us during the school day, please call the **front desk (231) 929-9325** for assistance as we will be engaged with the children during these hours.

Clear and open communication among parents, children, and teachers is vital for the success of our community. I will do my best to correspond regularly with you about your children's progress and invite you to talk with me should any concerns arise. In an effort to develop independence and accountability, we may ask your child to communicate information directly to you either by phone or in person. To support this approach, I will follow up with an email or call to you to ensure that the necessary communication has taken place.

Classroom Highlights are another way for me to share special moments from our days in the classroom with you all at home. New Classroom Highlights will be emailed to you and posted on our Teacher Page every other week.

SAFETY & WELLBEING

Your children's safety is of utmost importance to us. Although upper elementary children are some of the oldest in the school and are granted many more freedoms than the younger children, our main concern is to always keep them safe, physically and emotionally. In this regard, please let us know either in person or in writing if someone other than you will be picking them up. Also, please make sure one of us (**Jamie or JJ**) acknowledges you if you need to pick them up during the school day so that we are aware they are leaving with you.

WORK

School is your children's work. We expect them to come on time and be well rested and prepared. Our **work cycle begins at 8:20**. Students are able to enter the elementary door, sign in, and head outside starting at 8:00am without charging for early care. This is a great way for them to wake up and start moving at the beginning of the day.

Please take this start time (8:20am) into consideration when planning your days. Because their work is important, we ask that you make your best effort to schedule appointments before or after school. Finally, because so much of your children's work is collaborative and group lessons are the norm, advance notice of vacations or other time away from school is greatly appreciated and allows us to plan accordingly.

With the possible exception of the 6th years' UN work, we do not anticipate sending homework home with your children. They have sufficient time to complete their responsibilities during the workday. However, we do expect them to continue learning and engaging in "**work at home.**" It is essential for their development to productively contribute to your family's daily activities, whether they walk the dog, care for a sibling, help prepare dinner, or wash the dishes. Last, but certainly not least, we ask that you set aside ample time for **reading every night**. I have also given you an appendix of "Montessori Homework Ideas for the Upper Elementary" by John Snyder.

COVID Protocols in the Classroom

Children will wash hands and use sanitizer frequently. We will wear masks when working (inside and outside), and take them off for recess and outdoor gym. Children will be encouraged to work outside as much as possible (**please help them plan their attire**). We will eat outdoors and be spaced at least 6 feet apart. If we must eat inside due to weather, we will also space ourselves at least 6 feet apart. We will have more cleaning protocols in the room.

Potential for Online Learning

If we need to close the classroom we will pivot to online learning using Google Classroom and Zoom. Please make sure your student has access to a device that is capable with both applications. Let us know if you need a device to borrow should we be required to engage in online learning. Please make sure that your child has a google account in our classroom.

SPANISH, ART, MUSIC, DELLA TERRA, KITCHEN CLASSROOM, READING

Our children have an opportunity to enrich their learning experiences through their work with **Señora Melissa** for Spanish, **Alison Hoffman** for Art, **Angela Lickiss Aleo** for Music, **DiAnn Service** for Della Terra, **Brenda Lijewski** for Kitchen Classroom, and **DiAnn Service** for Reading. Your children will have several opportunities to spend portions of their work cycles in Kitchen Classroom and Della Terra throughout the school year. Formal instruction in PE, Spanish, Music and Art will take place on a weekly basis.

Weekly Schedule:

Northwest Upper Elementary Schedule 2021-2022

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:20-11:00 Work Cycle				
11:00 Clean Up and Read Aloud				
11:25-11:55 P.E.				
12:00-12:30 Lunch				
12:20-1:15 Recess				
1:15-1:45 Silent Reading				
1:15-2:45 Art and Music	1:45-2:25 Work Cycle	1:45-2:55 Work Cycle	1:45-2:25 Work Cycle	1:45-2:55 Work Cycle
	2:25-2:40 Job Time		2:25-2:40 Job Time	
2:45-3:15 Jobs & Silent Reading	2:40-3:10 Español	2:55-3:15 Job Time	2:40-3:10 Español	2:55-3:15 Job Time

THEATRE

Every spring we spend time learning the fun of theatre and preparing for a performance. At this time we are unsure of the format, however we will let you know of our plans once we make them.

GOING OUT AND CLASS EXCURSIONS

One of the many aspects that make a Montessori education unique is the opportunity for your children to pursue their interests and deepen their understanding of a topic outside of the classroom. We typically plan to emphasize this important component of their learning and, therefore, welcome your participation as a driver or a resource (e.g., hosting a student visitor at work, sharing a hobby, presenting a specialty to the class, or giving an interview).

SIXTH YEAR BUSINESS AND MMUN

Our sixth group of delegates will participate in the Montessori Model United Nations this year. To fund a portion of this adventure, we will guide them in the establishment of a small business early on in the year.

Participating in the MMUN is an emotional and intellectual commitment, so we will have regular meetings to support your children in their exploration of real world issues and the development of solutions for the same. It is possible that we may need to have before school and/or after school meetings. We welcome *all parent support* whether your child is a 6th year student or not.

HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

As your children enter their next stage of development, our goal is to prepare them as much as possible. Part of this preparation includes a safe and comfortable gathering to discuss how their bodies are changing as they approach puberty. In the spring, our students will meet with Carrie Ullery-Smith. She will candidly acknowledge physical changes that will occur, discuss practical aspects of dealing with these changes, and address peer and societal pressures that relate to this phase of life.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Education

As an entire school we will be engaging in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion education. As a staff we read Tiffany Jewell's book, "This Book is Anti-Racist" and I highly encourage you to read it as a family at home. We also had an Anti-Bias training with Britt Hawthorne in 2020. I attended the 2019 Montessori for Social Justice Conference as well.

We will be using Jewell's book as a guide for discussions and lessons alongside many other resources. Some vocabulary will include: identity, race, racism, ally, oppression, dominant culture, ethnicity, bias, anti-racism, institutions, privilege, discrimination, stereotypes, anti-bias, society, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+. The back of Jewell's book includes a wonderful glossary of definitions.

Important Dates:

Class Picnic: Thursday, September 16th at 5pm in the large pavilion by the kickball field in Silver Lake Park. 1785 N East Silver Lake Rd, Traverse City, MI 49685

Inland Seas Outings: Friday, September 17th, please see email for more details.