

ELEMENTARY



FAMILY HANDBOOK

2025-2026

YUKON MONTESSORI SCHOOL

WELCOME

If you are a family enrolling your child(ren) at Yukon Montessori School (YMS) for the first time, welcome to our growing community of learners. If your family is already part of our community, we are excited to have your children continue to grow and learn with us.

We are a non-profit school dedicated to providing education and programs grounded in Montessori philosophy for children ages 18 months to 13 years. In partnership with families, highly trained and dedicated educators create environments that nurture each child's holistic learning and development, empowering them to reach their full potential.

As a collective of children, educators, and families, we strive to bring our vision of *inspiring students to become self-reliant and compassionate citizens who are equipped to make positive change in their world* to life. On any given school day, families stepping through the doors of YMS will discover a dynamic and inspired learning centre with children of all ages learning and growing alongside their rich relationships with other students, educators, and the materials in the prepared learning environments.

The Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) Montessori approach assists children in developing to their full potential, encouraging learning driven by creativity and curiosity. We foster independence in education and beyond as students emerge into their futures as contributing citizens in their communities and the world.

We believe children are capable and confident partners in their own learning. We seek to understand, value, and include the uniqueness of each child. We meet each child where they are at in nurturing prepared environments that promote their learning and their social and emotional development. We believe children, educators, and families are partners in our education and learning community and build relationships with each other as empathic and compassionate learners. We engage with and learn from the unique skills, knowledges, and cultures each individual brings to our school.

YMS has grown from one small casa classroom to a school with over 75 learners. This growth is the result of the passion of our educators and the commitment of our families to the education of their children. We will continue to grow and adapt in response to interest in Montessori education. As a community, we look forward to the possibilities and the learning that will emerge in the upcoming school year.

This handbook contains information about our programming and other practical matters related to the operation of our school. Please take time to review the information and our guiding policies.

CONTACTING US

The school can be contacted at any time by emailing admin@yukonmontessori.com, and during school hours by calling 867-456-7100 (please leave us a message if we are attending to other matters). Our educators will provide classroom contact information to enrolled families before their start date. Our Board of Directors can be contacted by emailing president@montessoriborealis.com.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

Our elementary program is grounded in the belief that children learn best through movement and work with their hands, and our educators provide cognitive, social, and emotional support to help students reach their full potential.

Our elementary curriculum challenges students academically and helps them grow their sense of self. Our students engage as contributing members of a respectful community. They learn to question, to think critically, and to take responsibility for their own learning – skills that will support them in later education and in life.

Our educators assess our students' needs as they enter a new plane of development characterized by:

- A transition from concrete to abstract thinking;
- A growing interest in socialization;
- Thinking and memory that is enhanced by creativity and imagination; and
- An interest in fairness, social justice, and compassion.

Ideally, students begin the elementary program in Grade 1 (at age 6-7) and remain with us until the end of their Grade 7 year (age 12-13).

Daily Classroom Schedule

Our elementary programming runs from Monday to Friday, 8:10 am to 3:15 pm (excepting closures).

8:10 am - 8:25 am	Drop off
8:30 am - 11:50 am	Morning work cycle*
12:00 pm - 12:30 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm - 1:15 pm	Outdoor play
1:15 pm - 3:00 pm	Afternoon work cycle*
3:15 pm	Dismissal

Students must be picked up by 3:15 pm unless they are enrolled in the After-School Program

3:15 pm - 5:00 pm	After-School Program – Pick up <u>before</u> 5:00 pm
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**During work cycles, students work purposefully with specially designed materials. Work cycles respect individual variations in the learning process and facilitate the development of coordination, concentration, independence, and a sense of order. Directed group instruction is incorporated into work cycles.*

Annual Classroom Schedule

Our elementary school year starts the day after Labour Day and runs until mid-June. We are closed for:

- All Canadian statutory and Yukon holidays
- Two weeks of Winter Break, according to the Whitehorse school calendar
- Two weeks of March Break, according to the Whitehorse school calendar
- Professional development days (may vary from the Whitehorse school calendar)

- Emergency closures as required
- Transition days as required
- Summer break

YMS will distribute a detailed school calendar to families before the start of each school year. Please note that financial reimbursement is not provided for any closures.

Montessori Curriculum

We strive to expose our students to learning situations that include the major areas of the Montessori curriculum – practical life, math, language(s), cultural studies, science, and social studies. We follow BC's academic curriculum. Our educators enrich this curriculum with art, music, outdoor experiences, and whole school community activities.

APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT

Families can inquire about application and enrollment at any time during the year.

Montessori is a continuum program with materials and lessons building from what the child experienced in previous school years. Self-management and self-direction continue to be nurtured in the toddler, preschool, and elementary learning environments. It is for these reasons that children entering our elementary program ideally have previous Montessori experience.

Registration in the upcoming school year is offered to current elementary students prior to new students. Registration preference is then given to incoming Grade 1 students who have completed their kindergarten year in one of YMS's preschool classrooms. Montessori principles inform offers of enrollment and overall class composition. New admissions may be subject to a trial period, to be determined by the lead guide in consultation with the family.

YMS will contact families by email when a space is available. YMS will confirm your child's enrollment after receiving a required non-refundable, non-transferable enrollment deposit and completed registration package.

YMS reserves the right to pause applications, refuse applications, and/or to cap waitlists at any time.

After-School Program

The elementary school day ends promptly at 3:15 pm. YMS aims to provide activity-based after-school programming to current elementary students from 3:15 pm - 5:00 pm on school days. The availability of this programming is subject to staffing and other constraints. YMS will provide detailed information to enrolled families as it becomes available.

TUITION FEES, ANNUAL FEES, AND RELATED FINANCIAL POLICIES

Enrolled elementary students are expected to attend regularly and through to the end of the school year and families should fully understand the financial obligation.

A non-refundable, non-transferable deposit is due at the time of enrollment and is your child's monthly payment installment for June. Your enrollment deposit represents a commitment to a space in the program for your child for the full school year; it cannot be refunded or transferred to another month or to another child.

Tuition for the September to June school year is \$13,500. This equates to ten monthly installment payments of \$1,350, plus annual fees as follows:

Annual Society Fee (per family)	\$25
Annual Registration Fee (per student)	\$25
Annual Activity Fee (per student)	\$200

Annual fees are invoiced at the same time as your enrollment deposit. The remaining tuition balance (\$12,150) can be paid in full on or before September 1st, or in 9 equal monthly installments of \$1,350.

Please note that financial reimbursement is not provided for absences or closures.

Sibling Discount

Please contact admin@yukonmontessori.com for further information for one family enrolling two or more siblings in the elementary program. The sibling discount does not apply to any fees other than elementary tuition (i.e., society fees, registration fees, activity fees, and toddler and preschool tuition are not eligible).

Invoicing and Payments

Families paying through monthly installments, which is the default payment option, will be invoiced 14 days before the first day of each month. Payments are due by the first day of each month, September to May, and can be paid via e-transfer to: admin@yukonmontessori.com. Please email our treasurer if you wish to pay once in full or in quarterly installments. **Please note that payments are non-refundable and non-transferable.**

There is a non-refundable fee of \$40 per past due payment. This fee is payable immediately.

YMS reserves the right to cancel a child's enrollment when an invoiced payment is past due by over 14 calendar days.

Withdrawal Policy

We understand that unforeseen circumstances can lead to changes and occasionally a family will need to withdraw from YMS. Providing YMS with timely notice of withdrawal allows educators to prepare for impacts on the child(ren), the class, and the YMS community.

We require written notice of withdrawal on or before the first day of the month prior to the month that the child(ren) will no longer be attending YMS. **If notice is given after the first day of the month prior, the payment due on the first day of the month that the child(ren) will no longer be attending will be owed.**

For example, if a family provides late notice on November 5th that they will be withdrawing their child(ren) effective December 1st, their payment(s) for December will still be due. If notice is given on or before November 1st, then the December payment(s) will not be due.

This Withdrawal Policy applies to after-school program payments whether a family is withdrawing from the school or only from an after-school program.

Withdrawing families forfeit their non-refundable, non-transferrable enrollment deposit(s). Deposit(s) cannot be transferred from June to a child's final month of attendance or used to cover a payment due as a result of providing late notice of withdrawal.

YMS reserves the right to end an enrollment at any time if circumstances suggest that ongoing attendance is not in the child's or the program's best interests. YMS will make reasonable attempts to communicate and problem-solve in every circumstance.

PROGRAM-RELATED PRACTICES

Arrival and Departure

Please adhere to arriving between **8:10 - 8:25 am** and departing at **3:15 pm**. If your child is enrolled in an after-school program, then departure is **before 5:00 pm**.

We ask that parents refrain from coming into our classrooms. This gives our students an independent space for learning. Parents can arrange for classroom observations and will be invited into their child's classroom for YMS community events throughout the year. See our policy on *Family Engagement* for more details.

Your child can only be picked up by contacts listed in their registration forms. Please contact the school office or your child's lead guide when alternate pickup situations arise and as contacts require updating.

Attendance

Please contact your child's lead guide if your child will not be attending school. If your child is not attending due to a communicable illness, please inform us immediately.

If you are planning an extended absence longer than four consecutive school weeks, please inform YMS as early as possible. It is expected that families commit to their child(ren) attending regularly for the full school year. The elementary curriculum is rigorous, and prolonged absences can create challenges for the student(s) as well as for our educators. Prolonged absences and fluctuations in enrollment also impact our operations as a small non-profit school.

Please note that financial reimbursement is not provided for absences.

Student Progress

Parent-Educator Conferences

Our educators schedule annual conferences to connect with parents and discuss student progress. Date and time options are provided ahead of time, and meetings are typically scheduled for 20 minutes. If

you feel you require more time, please discuss with your child's lead guide. Parents are also welcome to request meetings at any time during the school year.

Written Progress Reports

Our educators distribute two written reports per year, typically in November and June.

What to Bring to School

Please support your child in independently tracking their gear by **clearly labelling all items coming to school with your child's/family's name**. YMS is not responsible for any lost items.

Lunches and Snacks

Please ensure that your child has:

- ✓ A labelled, dishwasher-friendly water bottle at school;
- ✓ A nutritious lunch each day, preferably in reusable packaging;
- ✓ Nutritious snacks;
- ✗ Please refrain from sending processed or sugary items.
- ✓ Unless YMS has informed families in writing that certain food items are not permitted, students can bring nut products and other foods containing common allergens.

Clothing

Please send your child to school in comfortable, easy to manage clothing. Each student needs:

- ✓ Labelled, non-marking indoor shoes (*to stay at school*);
- ✓ Well-labelled, seasonally appropriate outdoor clothing layers and gear (*we will be outside every day, so please be prepared for ever-changing weather conditions*);
- ✓ If appropriate, a labelled bag with one change of clothes (*to stay at school*).

Toys from Home

- ✗ We ask parents to please explain to their children that their toys are to stay in their vehicle or at home. Books and other educational materials are welcome – please remember to label them.

Field Trips

Off-site activities extend our curriculum and expand opportunities for experiential learning and physical activity. Throughout the school year, students participate in well-planned and supported off-site activities. Families will not typically be notified about smaller excursions unless there are logistical or packing considerations. Families will be notified ahead of time for more significant excursions such as

trips outside city limits and full-day excursions. Modes of transportation include walking, public bus, and carpooling with parent volunteer drivers who meet specific insurance requirements.

Birthdays

You are welcome to send a small treat for sharing with the class if you wish (allergen-friendly when applicable).

VALUES, GUIDING PRINCIPLES, AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

We believe that the foundation of learning is through trusting, nurturing and reciprocal relationships between all members of the school community. Families are always welcome to contact the school with any questions, concerns, or updates regarding their child or their child's experiences.

Please see our policies on *Social and Emotional Guidance* and *Family Engagement* for detailed information on guiding principles, family partnership, and collaboration.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

YMS follows the current guidelines and policies for Yukon licensed child care centres and school age programs, enhanced with increased frequency of cleaning and sanitizing and thoughtful practices.

Illness Policy

YMS's illness policy is in the best interests of the school community. When sick children come into the school, they almost always infect others, which causes avoidable difficulties for other families and can even lead to classroom or school closures when staff and their families become ill.

Sick Students

If your child is sick, please do not bring them into the school. We offer enriched and active programs, and unwell children will find it difficult to join in.

- ✖ If your child has a severe cough or runny nose that is in the contagious phase or impacts their ability to participate in the program, please keep them home. We understand that lingering coughs and clear running noses can persist after the contagious phase of illness and children may return during this phase if they have enough energy to participate in the program.
- ✖ If your child has a fever or chills, please keep them home until the fever has been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (e.g., Tylenol, Advil, Motrin, etc.).
- ✖ If your child has been experiencing vomiting, diarrhea, or other symptoms of gastrointestinal illness, **please keep them home until your entire household has been completely free of symptoms for a minimum of 48 hours.**
- ✖ If your child has a contagious or spreadable condition (e.g., lice, scabies, worms, viral/bacterial infections such as flu, hand-foot-and-mouth disease, impetigo, strep throat, pink eye, etc.), please keep them home until the condition has been medically cleared as no longer contagious

or spreading (a medical note is not required).

- ✖ If your child is experiencing loss of taste or smell or shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, please keep them home.
- ✓ Please inform us immediately if your child has contracted a communicable illness.

This list covers some of the more commonly experienced school-year illnesses but is certainly not exhaustive. We will keep families up to date about any health issues impacting our school. Please also keep us up to date about any health concerns you have regarding your child(ren).

If your child feels or becomes unwell during the school day, we will contact you for immediate pickup. If we cannot reach you, we will contact your emergency contact.

Staff Illnesses and Emergencies

YMS is a small non-profit school. We make reasonable efforts to schedule qualified substitute educators, but it is not always possible to guarantee substitute staffing when our core educators are not available. When emergency closures become necessary, YMS will make every attempt to contact families in advance. Keeping sick children at home until they are no longer contagious will help limit closures and their impacts on the school community.

Allergies

Please include all of your child's allergy information in your registration package. If a child's allergy information changes, please notify YMS. We will keep families up to date about any severe allergies impacting classrooms.

Prescription Medication

If your child needs to take prescription medication during school hours, a medical consent form must be completed by a parent or guardian. The medication must be handed directly to one of your child's educators in its original packaging with the prescription label adhered to the container and clearly identified with your child's name. Educators will administer the dosage indicated on the prescription label. The first dose must be administered at home to ensure that there is no allergic reaction.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, injury, or illness, YMS will not hesitate to seek proper care for a child. **Please keep emergency contact information up to date.** If there are any changes during the school year, please inform YMS immediately. In the case of an emergency, the child's parents will be informed as soon as possible. If we cannot reach the parents, we will contact the next emergency contact on file.

In the case of an evacuation, YMS will take students to the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre (1171 Front Street). Families will be contacted to pick up their child(ren) at this location if necessary.

Cold Weather Policy

We spend time outdoors each day, so please ensure your child is prepared for cold weather conditions by packing warm layers and well-labelled gear – an insulated coat and snowpants or a snowsuit, winter

boots, warm socks, warm headwear, waterproof mittens, and a buff or neck warmer. Lead guides will use their discretion about heading out in extreme weather conditions.

Helmets

Activity-appropriate helmets are required for activities where helmets could prevent injuries. Lead guides will let families know when students should bring their helmets to school.

Confidentiality and Duty to Report

YMS respects the privacy of our families. We recognize the importance of providing respectful and supportive services to families and strive to ensure that communications are kept in confidence and handled with sensitivity. However, if we have reason to believe that a child is at risk of harm, we are required by law to immediately report the information.