

AURORA AND BOREALIS PRESCHOOL



FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026-2027

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 3 years 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

Yukon Montessori School	General contact:
Aurora and Borealis Classrooms	admin@montessoriborealis.com
101-100 Keish Street	867-456-7100
<i>If your preschool program question is related to:</i>	<i>Please contact:</i>
Administrative, financial, enrollment, and registration matters	admin@montessoriborealis.com
Your child's classroom and experiences	Your child's lead guide(s) *
Overall school operations	Executive Director ed@montessoriborealis.com
YMS's board of directors and society matters	President / Officers president@montessoriborealis.com

**YMS educators will provide classroom contact information to enrolled families before their child's start date.*

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Our preschool learning activities support children in choosing meaningful and challenging work at their own levels of interest, ability, and pace. In our two preschool classrooms, Aurora and Borealis, educators collaborate to create prepared environments crafted to the unique interests, abilities, and learning styles of students.

Ideally, students begin the preschool program at 3 years of age and complete a three-year cycle by remaining in the program until the end of their kindergarten year or age 5-6. Completing their kindergarten year allows for a comprehensive consolidation of the skills and knowledge acquired during the earlier years.

Daily Classroom Schedule

Our preschool programming runs from Monday to Friday, **8:00 am to 3:30 pm** (excepting closures).

8:00 am - 8:25 am	Arrival and welcome at the classroom door
8:30 am - 11:30 am	Work period*
11:30 am - 12:15 pm	Lunch
12:15 pm - 1:15 pm	Outdoor play
1:15 pm - 3:15 pm	Work period* (quiet/nap time as appropriate)
3:30 pm	End of day dismissal

Students must be picked up by 3:30 pm unless they are enrolled in the After School Program

3:30 pm - 4:30 pm	After School Program
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YMS closes at 4:30 pm. After School students must be picked up in time to leave the building with their pickup person and belongings by 4:30 pm.

The fee for late pick ups and early drop offs is \$30 per 15 minutes – that's \$120 an hour, so please be on time!

**During preschool work periods, students work with specially designed, hands-on materials that invite exploration and engage the senses in the process of learning. Work periods respect individual variations in the learning process and facilitate the development of coordination, concentration, independence, and a sense of order. Snack time, circle time, and transition time are incorporated into work periods.*

Annual Classroom Schedule

The start and end of our preschool year typically mirror the Whitehorse school calendar (late August to mid-June). YMS is closed for:

- All Canadian statutory and Yukon holidays
- Approximately two weeks of Winter Break, according to the Whitehorse school calendar
- Approximately 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*

Additionally, there is no after school programming on:

- The Friday before Winter Break
- The Friday before March Break
- The Friday of the Art Show (typically in June)

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

**YMS aims to offer optional summer programming on weekdays from mid-June to mid-August for current preschool students, ages 3-6, with no programming on transition days or holidays.*

Montessori Curriculum

We strive to expose our students to learning situations that include the major areas of the Montessori casa curriculum – practical life exercises, sensorial materials, language(s), mathematics, and cultural extensions. Our educators enrich this curriculum with art, music, outdoor experiences, and whole school community activities.

APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT

Preschool Program

Families can apply for enrollment at any time during the year. YMS offers full-time enrollment only. There is a non-refundable application fee.

Please note that, due to regulatory requirements, we are unable to accommodate children who are not fully toileting independently. We understand that accidents happen and are happy to help children change as needed.

Registration in the upcoming school year is offered to current YMS students prior to new students.

Montessori principles regarding classroom balance inform and guide offers of enrollment. A family's commitment to attending for the full school year is also a consideration as this impacts our operations as a small non-profit school. More detailed information is provided in our *Waitlist Policy*.

YMS will contact families by email when a space in one of our two preschool classrooms is available. Please note that classroom placements are assigned during enrollment, and that YMS does not move students between the Aurora and Borealis classrooms based on family requests. 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

YMS aims to provide an option for after school programming to enrolled preschool students on school days (excepting closures). Spaces are limited, and enrollment is full time only. Families can request after school program enrollment when submitting their application for preschool enrollment. YMS maintains a waitlist and contacts families by email when a space is available.

Summer Program

YMS aims to provide an option for summer programming on weekdays from mid-June to mid-August (with no programming on transition days or holidays). Spaces are limited, and enrollment is offered on a week-by-week basis.

Summer programming focuses on play, outdoor adventures, and field trips that foster curiosity, exploration, and connection. Our two preschool classrooms typically shift into a one-classroom community, and staffing can be a mix of both familiar and new educators.

The summer program is separate from school year programming. Program hours may differ (e.g., 8:30 am - 4:30 pm), and weekly camp and administration fees differ. Details are provided to current families prior to registration opening in February/March.

Summer registration is offered to current preschool students, and then to students joining preschool classrooms in the fall, and then to siblings of current preschool students. All students must be ages 3-6 during the weeks they are enrolled.

TUITION FEES AND RELATED FINANCIAL POLICIES

Universal Child Care Funding

The Early Learning and Child Care Funding Program helps make universal child care more affordable for families, thanks to support from the Government of Canada and Government of Yukon. The program reduces monthly family fees by \$700. This means that \$700 of a child's monthly tuition installment is paid to YMS on your behalf. More details about this program are available at: yukon.ca/universal-child-care

Your child's receipt of full funding is based on regular, full-time attendance. Families are responsible for paying the remaining balance, including any amount of funding not provided by the program due to extended voluntary absences or infrequent attendance. If you are planning a vacation or absence longer than four consecutive school weeks, please inform YMS as early as possible. Financial reimbursement is not provided for absences.

Program Tuition, Enrollment Deposit, and Annual Fees

Tuition for the school year is \$11,027.28, of which **\$4,027.28** is payable by the family. This equates to a total of ten monthly installment payments of **\$402.73** plus annual fees.

Tuition for the school year with after school program enrollment is \$12,853.26, of which **\$5,853.26** is payable by the family. This equates to a total of ten monthly installment payments of **\$585.33** plus annual fees.

A non-refundable, non-transferable deposit is due at the time of enrollment and includes 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. Non-refundable annual fees are invoiced at the same time as your enrollment deposit as follows:

Tuition installment (June payment)	\$402.73
After School Program installment (June payment)*	\$182.60
Annual Registration Fee (per student)	\$25
Annual Whitehorse Montessori Society Membership Dues (per family)*	\$25

**invoiced when applicable*

The remaining tuition balance can be paid in full on or before September 1st, or in 9 equal monthly installments, September-May. Financial reimbursement is not provided for absences or closures.

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 are paid by pre-authorized debit through brightwheel. It is possible to pay by credit card through brightwheel, but please note that families are responsible for covering a 2.97% credit card processing fee.

Please email admin@montessoriborealis.com if you wish to pay by cheque or bank draft, or if you prefer to pay once in full or in quarterly installments.

There is a non-refundable fee of \$30 per past due payment. This fee is payable immediately.

Please note that all payments are non-refundable and non-transferable.

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

Child Care Subsidy

Families looking for more help to afford child care fees can apply for a child care subsidy from the Government of Yukon. Subsidy eligibility and amounts are based on family size, income, and home community. More information, including contact information, is available at: yukon.ca/child-care-subsidy

Qualifying families must ensure that YMS is immediately provided with a copy of the approval letter and are responsible for the full amount of their child's tuition fees until the letter is received and tuition can be recalculated. After receiving your approval letter, YMS will recalculate your child's tuition fees based on the number of months and amount indicated in the letter. You will be notified and invoiced or credited accordingly. You are required to complete and sign a [Child Care User Subsidy Eligibility Form](#) each month and provide it to YMS. YMS will submit the signed form on your behalf. Failure to provide completed forms may result in families being invoiced for full tuition amounts. Printed forms are available at the school office.

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. It also allows the school to offer upcoming vacancies to waitlisted children.

YMS requires written notice of withdrawal on or before the first day of the month prior to the month that the child will no longer be attending. 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 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

Starting School

Typically, new students transition into the program by attending for two partial days before returning students rejoin the program. Lead guides will provide families with specific timings and details in August.

Arrival and Departure

Please support your child and their educators by adhering to the drop off and pick up times detailed in the Daily Classroom Schedule for your child's classroom.

We ask that parents and their drop off/pick up helpers refrain from coming into our classrooms on regular school days. This gives our students a space that is all their own for learning, helps them grow their confidence in independent routines, and helps our educators build connections by assisting with transitions. Parents can arrange for in-classroom observations with their child's lead guide 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.

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

What to Bring to School

Please help support your child's educators by **clearly labelling all items coming to school with your child's/family's name**. This will also help your child in learning to track their gear independently. 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, labelled and packed with an ice pack, preferably in reusable packaging; and
- ✗ 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.

We are regulated to ask that lunches contain foods from all food groups as set out in Canada's food guide (for example, fruits and vegetables, protein foods, and whole grains). Our preschool classrooms provide two snacks (mid-morning and mid-afternoon) that include foods from at least two food groups. Snacks are collaboratively prepared by our students and staff.

Clothing

Ideally, your child's preschool clothing is comfortable, washable, and easy to manage independently (for toileting, etc.). Each child needs:

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

Toys from Home

- ✕ We ask parents to support their children in keeping their toys at home or in their vehicle. Books and other educational materials are welcome, but 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.

Class Contact Lists

At the start of the school year, lead guides will distribute a link to a class contact list. Families can choose to share their contact information for the purposes of coordinating playdates and birthday parties.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special and our preschool classrooms celebrate children's birthdays as a community. Lead guides will connect with families ahead of time with more details.

We welcome the in-class distribution of birthday party invitations if the whole class is invited. We understand that families may prefer smaller gatherings. If your child is inviting a smaller group of friends, we ask that you make these arrangements away from the school using the shared class contact list as needed. This helps to prevent sad feelings.

Fundraising

As a small non-profit school, YMS relies heavily on the contributions of our community to supplement tuition revenue to support the delivery of inspiring early learning and elementary education. Fundraising efforts directly benefit YMS students, families, and educators through enhancing our educational programs and resources, supporting professional growth opportunities for our dedicated team, and fostering community engagement. Family support, whether through engagement in events, volunteering, or direct contributions, is essential in ensuring that YMS can sustainably fulfill our vision of inspiring students to make positive changes in our world.

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, and updates regarding their child and 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.**

- ✖ If your child has a severe cough or runny nose that is in the contagious phase, or that impacts their ability to participate in the program, please keep them home.
- ✖ If your child has a fever or chills, please keep them home until the fever has been gone for at least 48 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.

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. Children presenting with fevers or other indicators of contagious illness at school will be sent home and may be required to remain out of school for a minimum of two full school days.

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

Yukon Montessori School is a scent-free environment.

Please include all of your child's allergy information in their registration package. If a child's allergy information changes, please notify YMS. Families indicating severe allergies are responsible for ensuring that YMS has epinephrine autoinjectors and/or nasal sprays that have not expired. 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 event of an evacuation, YMS educators will guide students along a safe route to a safe assembly area. The Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre (1171 Front Street) is YMS's target muster point. When possible, a message will be posted on the school door alerting families and emergency personnel to the evacuation route and assembly area. Communication with families, including pick up information, will happen as soon as possible.

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 that can cover the ears, a covering that protects the face from cold and wind, waterproof mittens, and buffs or neck warmers. 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 (labelled, please).

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.

A Community of Care

YMS respects the dignity and confidentiality of all children, and the safety and well-being of every YMS student is our highest priority. We understand that families will sometimes have questions about interactions between their child and other children in our programs, and we'd like to gently remind all families that it is often most helpful to remain curious and to avoid viewing or labelling interactions between children through adult lenses. In situations of potential concern, we invite families to connect with our educators who are trained to understand healthy child development, including social and physical behaviours among children ages 3-6, or with community supports with specific training in child development such as the Child Development Centre. We ask that families respect that YMS will never share personal information about other children, and hope that families will endeavour to do the same.