

# ELEMENTARY



# 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

|                                                                  |                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Yukon Montessori School</b>                                   | <b>General contact:</b>                                  |
| Beringia Classroom                                               | admin@yukonmontessori.com                                |
| 101-100 Keish Street                                             | 867-456-7100                                             |
| <b><i>If your elementary program question is related to:</i></b> | <b><i>Please contact:</i></b>                            |
| Administrative, financial, enrollment, and registration matters  | admin@yukonmontessori.com                                |
| Your child's classroom and experiences                           | Your child's lead guide(s) *                             |
| Overall school operations                                        | Executive Director<br>ed@montessoriborealis.com          |
| YMS's board of directors and society matters                     | President / Officers<br>president@montessoriborealis.com |
| For tuition/fee payments, please e-transfer:                     | treasurer@montessoriborealis.com                         |

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

## 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         | Arrival              |
| <b>8:30 am</b> - 11:30 am | Work period*         |
| 11:30 am - 12:00 pm       | Lunch                |
| 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm        | Outdoor play         |
| 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm         | Work period*         |
| <b>3:15 pm</b>            | End of day dismissal |

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

|                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 3:15 pm - <b>4:30 pm</b> | After School Program |
|--------------------------|----------------------|

**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 work periods, students work purposefully with prepared materials. Work cycles respect individual variations in the learning process and facilitate the development of coordination, concentration, independence, and a sense of order. Lessons, projects, and transitions are incorporated into work periods.*

## Annual Classroom Schedule

Our elementary school year typically starts the day after Labour Day and runs until 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.

## 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

Montessori is a full-time 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 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, and ideally a complete 3-year cycle, in one of YMS's preschool classrooms.

Montessori principles and practical and pedagogical constraints inform offers of enrollment and overall class composition. Admissions may be subject to a trial period, to be determined by the lead guide(s) in consultation with the family. YMS does not offer part-time enrollment options.

At this time in the Yukon, public funding for learning, therapeutic, and other supports for school-aged students (ages 5+) enrolled in alternative educational settings is typically unavailable or limited. Families are responsible for covering any costs associated with supports specific to their enrolled student(s).

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

YMS aims to provide an option for after school programming to enrolled elementary students on school days. Program availability is subject to staffing and other constraints. YMS will provide detailed information to currently 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 their financial commitment.

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 **\$13,840**. This equates to ten monthly installment payments of **\$1,384**, plus annual fees as follows:

|                                                                          |       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Annual Yukon Parents for Montessori Society Membership Dues (per family) | \$25  |
| Annual Registration Fee (per student)                                    | \$25  |
| Annual Activity Fee (per student)                                        | \$200 |
| Annual School Supplies Fee (per student)                                 | \$125 |

Annual fees are typically invoiced at the same time as your enrollment deposit. The remaining tuition balance can be paid in full on or before September 1st, or in 9 equal monthly installments.

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

## Sibling Discount

Please contact [admin@yukonmontessori.com](mailto: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 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: [treasurer@montessoriborealis.com](mailto:treasurer@montessoriborealis.com). Please email [admin@yukonmontessori.com](mailto:admin@yukonmontessori.com) if you wish to pay once in full or in quarterly installments. Non-refundable past due payment fees are 5% of the invoiced amount. **Please note that 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.*

## 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.

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 5<sup>th</sup> that they will be withdrawing their child(ren) effective December 1<sup>st</sup>, their payment(s) for December will still be due. If notice is given on or before November 1<sup>st</sup>, 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 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 helps to provide our students with a concrete sense of independent space for their learning. Parents can arrange for in-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 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 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 and a wet bag (*to stay at school*).



## What Should **Not** be Brought to School

- ✖ Toys and other special items. Books and educational materials are welcome, but please remember to label everything that comes with your child to school.
- ✖ Personal electronic devices including smart phones, smart watches, tablets, and virtual reality devices (unless specific arrangements have been made in advance with lead guides). Clearly labelled e-readers may be brought to school if they are being used for educational purposes only.
- ✖ Weapons or weapon-related items including ammunition (unless specific arrangements have been made in advance with lead guides, e.g. lead guides may request that families send kitchen knives to school for cooking or cultural activities)

## 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.

## 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

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

## 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 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. YMS will attempt to work with families indicating severe/anaphylactic reactions to come up with a plan that supports student health and safety and aligns with Montessori principles. Families are responsible for ensuring that YMS has epinephrine autoinjectors and/or nasal sprays that have not expired.

Unless otherwise notified, students may bring nut products and other foods containing common allergens.

### 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 5-13, or with community supports with specific training in child development. 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.