



**The Child Unique
Montessori School**

**Montessori Elementary
Intermediate School of
Alameda**

**Parent
Handbook**

2025-2026



Vision and Mission Statement

At The Child Unique Montessori School and Montessori Elementary Intermediate School of Alameda we work from a place of intention to help children become the change-makers of tomorrow: dedicated, resilient and joyful.

Our mission is to create a warm, supportive environment that fosters creativity, curiosity, self-confidence and independence within a diverse community. We empower students to become compassionate models of peace and advocates for social justice.

Equity (Cultural, Educational, Health, Religious, Socioeconomic) Equality Gender Justice Safety Social Justice State Law

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Parent's Rights form

The Parent's Rights form gives parents the right to enter the building at any time. Please note that during this Covid-19 period, state licensing allows schools to request limited access, but retains parent right to enter if they insist. During this challenging health period we hold concerns about anyone other than regular vaccinated staff entering the classroom.

Readmission After Illness

Children may return to school, following an illness, when:

- They have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication
- They have passed the first 24 hours of a cold
- When a contagious disease has concluded, with no symptoms (e.g.: blisters dry and scabbed)
- When medication for certain diseases has been taken for required minimum • When medication has been taken for the designated number of days, AND symptoms are gone
- They have been symptom-free for 10 days for confirmed/suspected Covid 19, and have a clearance note from their doctor

SPECIAL NOTE: If a child has two or more Covid-like symptoms, they must have a negative Covid test prior to returning to school.

Configuration of Classrooms and Disinfection

Children will be divided into cohorts of approximately 10 to 12 students with one teacher. These cohorts will be cohesive with no physical interaction with other cohorts. Cohorts at the Pacific and Encinal campuses will exist in separate classrooms. At the Taylor campus classrooms will be divided in half by bookshelves to accommodate two cohorts. All student materials will be disinfected after each use.

Field Trips/Transportation Arrangements/Supplemental Services The Child Unique has short walking field trips to the neighborhood park, library or nearby businesses. Distance field trips are periodically scheduled with parent permission and the assistance of licensed, insured parent drivers. Children two years and older will be required to wear a mask. All required safety protocols will be followed during fieldtrips.

Visiting and Other Rights of The Parent

The Parent's Rights form gives parents the right to enter the building at any time. Please note that during this Covid-19 period, state licensing allows schools to limit parent access.

Winter and Spring Break

During the 2021-2022 school year, The Child Unique will be closed Winter Break and two days for Spring Break. There will be no child care available.

Music at TCU/MEISA

Our music program at TCU/MEISA will be adjusted this year. Any large classroom music classes will be taught outdoors while masked, as singing is a higher transmission activity. Students will also experience hearing and playing instrumental music and dance of all types.

Temporary Covid Fee \$100 Or Donation

This temporary fee is to offset the additional supplies and equipment during this Covid year. It can be replaced with donation of disinfecting wipes.

Drop Off / Pick Up

For the 2021-2022 school year, we have established the following arrival/departure protocol:

Required Daily Home Assessment

Prior to departing for school parents must:

take child's temperature

do visual assessment

check for contagious symptoms including fever, vomiting, diarrhea, headache

If anyone living in the child's household has an elevated temperature or any Covid-19 related symptoms, the child must stay home and the school must be contacted.

Staggered Arrival / Departure Schedule

Families will be assigned a time slot to drop off / pick up their child. We will do our best to accommodate family needs and requests around drop off and pick up times.

Car Arrivals

When dropping off, the parent should stay in the car and wait for a greeter to come to them. The parent will sign the sign-in sheet with their own pen in their car, and the greeter will help the child out of the car and to their classroom.

Bike/Walking Arrivals

Parents who walk or bike to school, should wear mask; maintain six (6) foot distance.

Arrival/Departure and GLYMPSE

TCU is streamlining the child drop-off / pick-up process with an app called **Glympse**.

Using **Glympse** is optional for parents, although we hope it will help us all create smooth arrivals and departures. Your feedback will be very helpful.

What is **Glympse**?

Glympse is an app that allows for temporary real time location sharing. It will enable parents to share their location/arrival time with the teachers so that staff can:

- 1) be ready to receive your child from you
- 2) be ready to deliver your child to you

Here are the details, which differ depending on the time you are dropping off and picking up your child.

Early morning Drop-offs between 7:00am-8:00am

- Parents are requested to use **Glympse** to notify teacher that their student will be arriving shortly
- Parent should walk their child to their child's exterior classroom door. Please do not go inside.
- Teacher will receive child at the door. (see list of door assignments below)

Morning Valet Drop-off 8:00am-9:00am

- **Using Glympse is not necessary during this time period.** • Greeter will be waiting outside to receive children.
- Parents are requested to remain in their car during the sign-in process.

We request that you avoid dropping off your child between 9:00am 9:15am as much is going on in the classroom during this time, with everyone settling into the morning.

Late morning Drop-offs 9:15am - on

- Parents are requested to use Glympse to notify teacher that their student will be arriving shortly.
- Parent should walk their child to their child's exterior classroom door. Please do not go inside.

- Teacher will receive child at the door. (see list of door assignments below)

Morning Pick-up 11:30am for AM students

- Parents are requested to use Glympse to notify teacher that their student will be arriving shortly for pick-up.
- Teacher will prepare your child to leave.
 - Parent should walk to their child's exterior classroom door. Please do not go inside.
- Teacher will bring your child to the door to meet you. (see list of door assignments below)

Afternoon Valet Pick-up 2:30pm-3:00pm

- Parents are requested to use Glympse to notify teacher that they will be arriving shortly for pick-up
- Teacher will prepare your child to leave and walk your child to your car.
- Parent will get out of their car to help their child in and to buckle car seat, etc.

Late Afternoon Pick-up 3:00pm-6:00pm

- Parents are requested to use Glympse to notify teacher that their student will be arriving shortly for pick-up.
- Teacher will prepare your child to leave.
 - Parent should walk to their child's exterior classroom door. Please do not go inside.
- Teacher will bring your child to the door to meet you. (see list of door assignments below)

INSTRUCTIONS for setting up the GLYMPSE app:

Click on the following link for the instructions on how to setup and use Glympse: <https://tinyurl.com/tcuglympse>

For any questions that you may have regarding the instructions, contact Pola Ebrahimi at pola510@gmail.com

PACIFIC CAMPUS: WALK-UP DROP-OFF LOCATIONS before 8:00am and after 9:15am

- Toddler 1 enter through gate, wait in courtyard
- Preprimary cohort 1 go to main front door, wait on porch
- Preprimary cohort 2 enter through gate, wait in courtyard

ENCINAL CAMPUS: WALK-UP DROP-OFF LOCATIONS before 8:00am and after 9:15am

- Primary 1 enter the right (west) side gate, wait at the side classroom door
- Cultural Room Cohort wait at the front door
- Primary 2 enter through the main (left) side gate, wait at rear classroom door

TAYLOR CAMPUS: WALK-UP DROP-OFF LOCATIONS before 8:00am and after 9:15am

- Toddler 2 enter the Hall wait at classroom door
- Primary 3 and 4 wait at classroom door
- LE MEISA wait at classroom door
- UE MEISA (balcony classroom) wait at Hall door to watch child reach stair way door.

INCREASED HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

Daily student health check will include temperature taking and visual assessment

If your child has elevated temperature or symptoms, they will not be admitted.

If your child or anyone who lives with your child has elevated temperature or any Covid-19 related symptoms, please keep your child home and inform The Child Unique.

SHARING DAYS

Sharing Days will **not** occur during this school year. Children may share a story or share information about an item that is at home. They may also create a video that is sent to the school, in which they discuss and show their sharing item. The video may be shown in class.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Lunch boxes will be permitted if/until a hot lunch program begins in the school.

Personal items, sometimes carried around by children, should be left at home. **This includes bottles, blankets, pacifiers, dolls, toys or electronics of any sort.** No personal items may be brought to school.

Additionally, with the exception of MEISA students, **no other personal items will be allowed during this school year, including backpacks and sharing items.**

We request that children bring croc-like/jelly sandals as indoor slippers that can be easily disinfected. Please take **croc-like/jelly sandals** home periodically to be washed, and to check for proper sizing.

ILLNESS

According to State law, teachers must receive children at the door who are in a proper state of health for school. Therefore, children should not attend school under the following conditions:

- within the first 36 hours of a cold - this is when a cold is most contagious
- when a child has a fever or a contagious disease (strep, conjunctivitis, etc.)
- within the first 24 hours following a fever - as fever often precedes a problem
- when lack of sleep prevents a child from functioning in school • if a child exhibits symptoms of a contagious illness, including flu-like or respiratory symptoms

Children who become ill during the day will be sent home. **Parents who cannot arrive within 20 minutes, must have a designated person to pick up their child.** A child who is ill should be in a restful place receiving individual attention.

HEALTH RISK ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT

The collective effort of Bay Area communities to stay at home and follow health department guidelines has limited the spread of COVID-19. However, community transmission of COVID-19 continues, including transmission by individuals who are infected and contagious, but have no symptoms and are unaware that they have COVID-19. To date, it is assumed that infected persons are contagious 48 hours before developing symptoms and many are contagious without ever developing symptoms. The health department and the Governor have issued permission for childcare/preschool and summer camps to resume. However, this decision does not mean that attending childcare, camp or preschool is free of risk. Enrolling a child could increase the risk of the child becoming infected with COVID-19. While the majority of children that become infected do well, there is still much more to learn about coronavirus and secondary syndrome in children.

For this reason, The Child Unique/Montessori Elementary Intermediate School of Alameda has created a protocol that goes beyond the current guidelines and restrictions, and expects staff and parents to abide by that protocol. Parents,

whose children are enrolled at TCU/MEISA, recognize that the school holds strict standards connected to mitigating the spread of COVID-19. These include mandatory mask wear for all adults and children two years and older while on campus, regular health checks and temperature taking upon arrival and during the day, continual handwashing, distancing between children, no food sharing, individual snack and projects and no personal items brought to school.

Parents agree to do a health check of their child, including taking their temperature before the child leaves for school. *Signing in a child in any form indicates that this wellness check has occurred at home, and the child was free of any contagious symptoms, including those identified as possible child indicators of Covid-19.*

Parents agree that they will not bring their child to school if they or someone they live with has an elevated temperature or if they exhibit any of the signs of COVID 19: fever, cough, headache, sore throat, chills, fast breathing, muscle pains. Parents agree to inform the school if anyone associated with the family has become infected or exposed, including siblings in other schools.

Each parent or guardian must determine if they are willing to take the risk of enrolling their child in childcare/school, including whether they need to take additional precautions to protect the health of their child and others in the household, such as members who are adults 60 years or older, or anyone who has an underlying medical condition. Parents and guardians may want to discuss these risks and their concerns with their pediatrician or other health care provider.

IF SOMEONE TESTS POSITIVE

Our protocol addressing a Covid-19 positive test result within our school community can be found on our website under ***Covid-19 Reopening Protocol***

We need and appreciate your continued support of PPE in monetary or in-kind donations until we get past this health challenge.



What is Montessori Education?

“...education is not something which the teacher does, but...it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words, but in the virtue of experiences in which the child acts on his environment. The teacher’s task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in special environment made for the child.” - Maria Montessori

“I don’t know how to explain it... It’s a lot easier, because the teacher takes a lot of time just for one student, instead of teaching the same thing to thirty students. There’s a lot more steps . . . you work your way up.” - Chandra Krinsky, alumni

“Montessori education is a method of teaching children in an environment that’s easier for kids to learn than in most public schools. [At The Child Unique,] it’s easier in smaller classes, because teachers can pay more attention to you. It’s not just textbooks. It’s more concrete and hands-on stuff - you work with materials and actual things.”
- Jonathan Acker, alumni

“It’s an approach to education which creates a very rich environment that attracts the child to discover for themselves the joy of learning. It’s a sequential presentation of academic materials, which take a child to mastery. Montessori presents an educational style which approaches the multiple intelligences and varied learning styles of children.”
- Ayn Hsu, former Child Unique parent

Social Justice Key Used in this Handbook

You will notice throughout this handbook, the use of a key to identify aspects of Social Justice in action at The Child Unique/Montessori Elementary Intermediate School of Alameda (TCU/MEISA). By adding this key, we are increasing and focusing our awareness on the need to be consciously choosing to act in manners consistent with our intention to further social justice in our school, our community and our world. Social Justice doesn't happen by accident, we have to be intentional, vigilant and alert.

KEY:

Equity = The situation in which all people or groups are given support and access to the correct number and types of resources according to their need which can include:

cultural equity

educational equity

health equity

religious equity

socioeconomic equity

Equality = The act of providing the same measure of treatment, support, material goods to all regardless of personal situation

Fairness = Impartial treatment without favoritism

Gender Justice = Treating everyone fairly regardless of gender identity

Personal Safety = Seeing the issue of personal and public safety from a social justice perspective, not merely a legal lens. Children have a right to be protected and have an adult hold that for them until they can do that for themselves.

Social Justice = An ever evolving, broad term of actions and many views which include the intention to create genuine fairness, respect, dignity, equality and equity among all people

State Law = Legally required to comply

The History of The Child Unique Montessori School

The Child Unique Montessori School was founded on July 3, 1983. The school was first located in a small house at 1516 Bay Street in Alameda, and was licensed for 12 preschool students. The house was leased, and a parent exchanged childcare for the building of furniture and electrical work.

Parents, such as the Standke-Braun and Accord families, assisted with materials and furniture to extend the school through kindergarten. In June of 1985, the building which housed preschool went on the market. With the help of Denise Rosko, five other TCU parents and the Economic Development Corporation of Alameda, the Victorian house at 2226 Encinal Avenue, was purchased and renovated. The house was lifted, moved and a school created on the new first floor.

In the same year, the owners of a house at 2212 Pacific Avenue offered their home to rent. School began at the Pacific and Encinal sites in September 1986, paving the way for an additional 60 families to join The Child Unique.

Two years later, The Child Unique outgrew its space, and parents assisted with the renovation of the upstairs unit, previously rented. Richard Sherman, a Child Unique parent who has since passed away, left his mark of love through the texturing of the walls of the upstairs unit.

With that renovation, The Child Unique began an elementary program. In 1991, the first official seventh grade class graduated. In 1999, to meet changing economic and demographic trends, The Child Unique returned to its toddler – Kindergarten status. After 12 years, the school faculty sought ways to support equity in educational opportunities on the West end of the island, and in 2012, The Child Unique expanded by adding a third campus at 1400 6th Street on the grounds of a former elementary school (St. Barnabas), and reopened the elementary school program, adopting the name created by the founding students: MESA (Montessori Elementary School of Alameda). In 2019, MESA expanded the name to MEISA (Montessori Elementary Intermediate School of Alameda) to include its middle school students. The Child Unique has also grown in its community involvement. We are members of the West End and Park St. Business Associations, and are represented by our Principal with the Alameda Collaborative for children, youth and their families. We are successive winners of Best of the Bay for Best preschool. Our Principal, Dr Cindy Acker, is a seven-time award winner in the areas of social justice, education and advocacy.

The Child Unique Philosophy

A Welcoming and Inclusive School

The Child Unique/MEISA welcomes diversity inclusive of all races, religions, ethnicities, gender status, sexual orientation, abilities and socio-economic status into the community as teachers, parents, students and family members. We strive to support bias-awareness and anti-bullying on our campuses and in our community. We believe that openness and inclusivity is what is required to move our society in the direction of social justice and equity and have adopted this as our social justice mandate. Reflective of one area of our social justice position, TCU/MEISA has chosen to be a member of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation's Welcoming Schools program. HRC Welcoming Schools take concrete steps to demonstrate their commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusiveness through policies and practices such as inclusive language that reflects diverse family structures, non-discrimination employment policies, anti-harassment policies, and in-service training and LGBTQ inclusive curriculum. At TCU/MEISA, this view is also manifested in our hiring and enrollment processes, curriculum materials and honoring of differing families and their structures through the use of gender sensitive language and respectful engagement.

Cultural Inclusivity (Cultural Equity) Our commitment to inclusivity isn't limited to gender or sexual orientation. We seek to be a welcoming, safe space for families of varied religious and personal beliefs, varied socioeconomic backgrounds, family compositions and ethnic variations and compositions. What that does mean, however, is that any family that enrolls their child at The Child Unique/Montessori Elementary Intermediate School of Alameda does so with the knowledge and appreciation that our practice of honor in diversity is our way of life. It permeates our teaching, policies and interaction with others. It is our expectation that parents or prospective employees whose belief system is incongruous with those values of respect, honor and inclusion will find that our school is not appropriate for them.

Family Composition (Equality) We recognize that parent and family have fluid and evolving meanings over time. We value all forms of family, including grandparent headed households and families of choice. The word 'parent' is used throughout this document. We recognize the broadness of the term parent to be inclusive of biological parents, adoptive parents, step-parents, foster parents, parents of choice and legal guardians.

The Child Unique Philosophy (continued)

Use of Gender-Neutral Pronouns (Gender Justice) You will notice throughout this handbook, the use of gender-neutral pronouns such as they/their rather than the binary terms he/she and his/her. The Child Unique/MEISA is taking steps to update the language we use, in order to recognize the gender spectrum and to be a more inclusive community.

Our teachers and staff are asked to avoid gender defining pronouns in their classrooms and to shift to gender-neutral options. We invite our staff to share their own preferred pronoun, if they choose. As gender is evolving and often fluid, we hold open all pronoun options for children, and we will recognize and honor the pronouns children choose. As students enter our elementary school, we begin discussions of topics like pronoun use, choice, and respect.

Inclusion (Social Justice) As advocates of the child and family, we recognize the importance of supporting the changing definition of family. The Child Unique/MEISA is home to families of all compositions: single-parent households, same-gender households, biracial households, and traditional nuclear households are just some of the many different families that we welcome into our community. We are proud of the diversity of our school, which manifests itself in a complement of ethnicities, family compositions, ages, sexual orientations and personal beliefs.

Our policies regarding curriculum and holidays are designed to reflect a spirit of inclusion, and something Montessori called *Education for Peace*. It is our hope to build communities of children who will practice peace, understanding and tolerance, which will break down barriers of injustice in the world.

Curriculum/Practice Reflecting Cultural Recontextualization (Cultural Equity)

When The Child Unique opened its doors in 1983, it reflected a philosophy that showed respect for the differing views and compositions of families and values. At the time, the term anti-bias curriculum was not yet coined; this view occurred before its time. The idea behind an anti-bias curriculum is a setting which endeavors to keep from making any dominant culture ideology overarching in teaching and learning.

The curriculum is one that respects the individual rights, freedoms and conscientious decisions of others regarding matters of religion, sexual preference, politics and family structure.



The Child Unique Philosophy (continued)

Overtime, we have realized that all individuals possess biases as a matter of human nature. When biases are introduced to children in an educational setting, it can mar a child's ability to see a balanced view of the things learned at school vs. practiced at home. Our responsibility as educators is to check our biases and ensure that our practices and curriculum open avenues for children to use their critical thinking skills and empathy to see the views of others and to understand and honor differences.

Cultural recontextualization (coined by Dr Cindy Acker) involves holding a new, evolving cultural lens which incorporates and honors people in all of their differences, identities and compositions.

Historical Accuracy in Curriculum (Cultural Equity) There has been some confusion over the definition of Critical Race Theory, and its inclusion in schools. Critical Race Theory, taught at the college level, is a lens through which individuals can analyze the racism in our society. A historical framework which sheds a light on the inequalities in society. It posits that race is an underpinning factor in societal injustices. This college level theory provides a lens for adults who seek to understand reasons and solutions to inequity in communities. In this confusion, what can be lost is the importance of historical accuracy. At TCU/MEISA, we owe our students nothing less than the truth. Here, they will learn about the history of Peoples of all Colors including, and especially, People of Color whose lives and contributions have been omitted from the fabric of the world's documented history. Our geography and history re-frames the dominant culture education that has been so prevalent in schools. It is a new and accurate lens giving credit to the unacknowledged contributions that have shaped our world.

Emphasis in Cultural Subjects and the Arts (Cultural Equity) Apart from our commitment to provide an authentic Montessori environment, The Child Unique/MEISA enhances its curriculum to encompass what Montessori described as the full development of the child. We do this with an emphasis in cultural subjects, the arts and community involvement.

The cultural curriculum is one that is ongoing throughout the school year, in which we focus on a different continent each month, highlighting specific countries. When we feel that there is an especially pressing topic that should be addressed, we add it to our cultural curriculum as well.

The Child Unique Philosophy (continued)

Within each classroom we include various artifacts specific to the cultures that we are studying: culturally related artwork and projects; music; photographs of people from the relevant culture; and recipes for food, which we use in a cultural feast at the completion of each unit. We also invite individuals from each culture to make a presentation on their country, usually involving music or dance. Our complete cultural curriculum covers the language, music, art, and fundamental needs of people for each country studied.

Languages

Our faculty is comprised of many teachers who are bilingual or multilingual. Most classes have a second language spoken regularly. At TCU/MEISA incorporating other languages into the daily activities of the students is an act of normalizing the fact that many languages are spoken in this country and to allow children the opportunity to build early multi-language skills. This embracing of language immersion brings an appreciation and understanding of other cultures to our TCU/MEISA community. Second language teaching classes incorporate a second language into the daily lessons and classroom conversation.

We have the following immersion/semi-immersion or second language teaching programs:

- * Spanish immersion (Primary 3 classroom)
- * Arabic language taught (Elementary-Middle school)
- * Mandarin language taught (Lower elementary classroom)
- * Mandarin language taught (Primary 1 and 2 classrooms)
- * Japanese language taught (Cultural Primary classroom)
- * Dutch language taught (Primary 4 classroom)
- * Thai language taught (Toddler 1 classroom)
- * Tagalog language taught (Toddler 2 classroom)



The Child Unique Philosophy (continued)

Music

At TCU/MEISA, students experience music through daily circle time, special music education and at the elementary/middle school level - music theory.

New music concepts are introduced beginning with what is easiest for the child and progressing to the more difficult. Children are first introduced to musical concepts through experiences such as listening, singing, or movement. Concepts are constantly reviewed and reinforced through games, movement, songs, and exercises. The children participate in winter and spring school concerts.

Community Involvement

The curriculum includes opportunities for the children to learn how they can give to their community by serving others. In the fall and winter, all classes participate in giving by having a food and toy drive. Children either donate or assist to count, collect or deliver items for families in need.

Students also support the community in doing things like beach clean up, recycling, cleaning up around their neighborhood, performances in the community, reading to others or speaking out about topics of importance.

A Spiritual Connection to the World from Within (Social Justice) Montessori believed that as important as physical development is to life and the body, psychic development is to the mind and spirit of a child. Some define spirituality as 'the peace one feels with oneself and the outside world.'

Apart from one's religious connection, the spirituality of a child involves his or her heart and inner spirit. Appreciation for living things and understanding one's feelings and those of others, are concepts that can only be experienced through emotional nourishment, patience and unconditional love. In keeping with this philosophy of Montessori, The Child Unique/MEISA will strive to maintain a spiritual understanding of oneself and others. This is manifested in our appreciation for what we have, both tangibly and intangibly; care and concern for others; love, appreciation, courtesy, honor and respect for ourselves and those around us.



The Child Unique Philosophy (continued)

How the Spiritual Emphasis Manifests Itself in the Classroom

- Tone of the environment. A Montessori classroom, while busy, is also generally a calm and orderly atmosphere.
- Slowing down of classroom life. Taking time to watch chicks being born, watch the journey of an ant, to hear the differing sounds of tiny bells, or to enjoy the repetition of a pouring exercise; meditative thoughts about those we love; carrying things one at a time; quiet exercises; gardening; working on a rug.
- Development of care for living and non-living things. Cleaning the leaves of plants; mending a torn book; stopping when someone is hurt; returning materials and furniture as one found them; beauty in the environment.
- Gentleness of the teacher. Quiet music; eye contact; speaking from the child's level; patience.
- Respect for the earth. An attention to enjoying less, using more of what is available, and preserving, growing and harvesting.

Organizational Structure

The **Principal/Head of School** governs the operations of the school, oversees academia and staff and student development.

There are three **Site Directors or a designated Lead Teacher**, one at the Encinal campus, one at the Pacific campus and one at the Taylor campus. They have general oversight of daily operations, meet with the campus staff, as needed, and provide input regarding staff, program, and budget issues.

The **Office Managers** interface with parent committees, handle daily school operations and communication.

The **Bookkeeper** handles accounts payable and receivable (billing). Monthly, quarterly and annual closing of books is outsourced to an accounting firm. Payroll is outsourced as well.

The **Parent Advisory Council** offers input on legal and special matters, and oversees the work of parent committees.

The **Committee Chairs** delegate, monitor and support parents within their committee assignment. Chairs receive a \$50 stipend for each successful month.

The **Head Teacher** is the main vehicle for communication to the parents, and is responsible for decision-making regarding classroom curriculum and design, parent conferences, academic evaluations, proper classroom discipline, Montessori materials, field trips, and the classroom allotment budget.

The **Assistant Teacher** implements decisions regarding circle planning, proper classroom discipline, aesthetic touches for the classroom, changeover of books for the classroom library, and choice of daily snack and stories

Elements of Montessori Education (Educational Equity)

Montessori education is a philosophy of human development and a fundamental basis for directing such development. The elements of Montessori education include:

A Prepared Environment

- one in which a student can develop abilities and strengthen areas of challenge
- strengths are matched via the curriculum and community opportunities
- areas of improvement are identified and given individual focus
- one which promotes individual success
- materials designed for individual lessons
- an individualized curriculum, meeting students in their academic 'place'
- self-correcting materials, including self-correcting ungraded assignments
- continual refinement of skills, through repetition and gradual intensity in which classes are interdependent
- preschoolers may share information with older ones
- older students share presentations or read to younger ones



Self-Development of the Child

- peer instruction to challenge and develop leadership skills
- academic success teams form during the year for special projects
- practical life education prepares students for life, from pouring exercises to repair, laundry and practical skills
- individual education and development plan is created for each student

Elements of Montessori Education (continued)

Concrete Educational Materials

- non-frustrating, self-correcting living educational materials are a trademark of a Montessori environment
 - such concrete learning is not replaced by massive textbooks and dittoes
 - materials are multi-leveled, to allow for repetition and challenge
- concrete education also includes community involvement and assistance



Five Areas of Montessori Education

During Montessori work periods there are engaging activities that are divided into five main areas that build on each other.

- **Practical Life** activities help the child learn to function in his or her own environment, and are preliminary to more advanced learning.
- **Sensorial** activities are designed to isolate and sharpen each of the five senses; seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling, and builds a foundation for speech, writing, and math.
- **Language** activities introduce the child to letter sounds first and then they continue to learn letter names and shapes. They then progress naturally to reading skills.
- **Mathematics** concepts are presented through extensive use of concrete materials, this allows children to understand mathematical concepts abstractly before introducing the concrete form of mathematics.
- **Cultural** activities including geography, history, botany, biology, music and grammar are introduced through the use of concrete materials.

Elements of Montessori Education (continued)

The Montessori Teacher

- the 'teacher' is a facilitator, who directs the child toward self-learning □ the teacher is the link between the student and the learning environment □ the teacher directs the activity and the motivation of the student toward the accomplishment of his or her goals
- the teacher seeks not to make every child a genius, but to enable every student to develop their own capabilities to their fullest potential.

Expectations for TCU/MEISA Teachers (Educational Equity)

Academic Requirements State of California (preschool)

The state of California requires preschool teachers to have a minimum of 12 units of early childhood education in the areas of child development, child family and community and curriculum.

American Montessori Society (preschool/elementary)

For Montessori certification, Montessori teachers are required to have successfully completed 1-2 years of educational training and one year of student teaching (internship) in a Montessori classroom. Teachers who have completed their bachelor's degree, will, upon completion of their training and internship, receive a Montessori teaching credential. For AMS accreditation, toddler teachers must be an intern or certificated toddler teacher. Elementary teachers must be an intern or credentialed elementary/middle school teacher.

The educational training includes the preparation of more than 600 exercises, covering mathematics, language arts, sensorial development, practical living skills and cultural subjects (geography, history, science and the arts). The exercises, extensions of, and rationale for such exercises are prepared in manual form; each teacher is graded on each manual.

Incorporated within each manual are extensions for each exercise, which should provide the teacher with information to challenge a child gifted in a certain area, or strengthen a child challenged within the same area.

Teachers are tested in their presentation of the material, with an oral examination regarding information contained in the manuals. They are then certified through a Montessori teacher training program, most of which are accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Commission for Teacher Education (MACTE). TCU/MEISA seeks to hire teachers who are MACTE trained teachers.

Academic Requirements

The Child Unique/MEISA seeks to have all staff with a minimum of a bachelor's degree as a requirement from all teachers and assistants of TCU/MEISA. The Principal sets the standard in lifelong learning with a Montessori certificate, two bachelors degrees, two masters degrees and a doctorate in educational leadership.

Our commitment to education is reflected in a scholarship program for teachers to complete either their Montessori certification or a Bachelor's degree. Additionally, teachers at TCU/MEISA carry a specialty in some areas. Such specialty may involve a degree or experience in a certain subject, or a sensitivity or

understanding of some field of child development or education.

Expectations for TCU/MEISA Teachers (continued)

Continuing Education

Requirements for the state of California necessitate that all teachers add to their education by taking coursework TCU/MEISA staff has always been encouraged to keep their education alive, staying abreast of the newest information in education. Each year, TCU/MEISA closes for one day to allow the staff to attend a Montessori conference. Teachers are also expected to visit other schools to gather information, and to observe classes.

Additionally, TCU/MEISA is enrolled in the First 5 California/Quality Counts California initiative. Quality Counts California is a vehicle for ongoing training and assessment. TCU/MEISA teachers and leadership staff participate in monthly trainings, assessment and feedback to maintain and improve best practices.

Participation in Quality Counts Program requires teachers to leave their classroom for training one day every month during the school year. Regular substitutes will be used on these days in class.



The Students

At TCU/MEISA, we expect our teachers to come to know their students -- academically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally. We feel that smaller class sizes enable us to accomplish this.

All potential students are individually assessed. Following enrollment, the teacher continually assesses and monitors their progress. They prepare materials or exercises that match either the child's areas of strengths or areas of improvements.

The Parents

Teachers view parents as an invaluable connection to the child, and should seek their input periodically. Teachers are expected to maintain regular communication with parents, keeping them informed of their child's progress and any concerns.

Health and Safety

While the State of California only requires each school to have one individual trained in First Aid and CPR, **all** TCU/MEISA staff are required to be trained in First Aid, CPR and infectious disease procedures.

Equity (Cultural, Educational, Health, Religious, Socioeconomic) Equality Gender Justice Safety Social Justice State Law 30

Expectations for TCU/MEISA Teachers (continued)

School Events

Teachers are expected to attend and support major school events. Teachers and students assist the community in age-appropriate special projects.

Paperwork

TCU/MEISA teachers are responsible for a comprehensive amount of record keeping. Weekly and monthly lesson plans are prepared and reviewed. Daily notations are made regarding student progress. Injuries are logged and explained. Evaluations are prepared quarterly. Time is set aside during the school year, when school is closed, to allow time for classroom preparation.

School-wide Communication

TCU/MEISA staff strives to meet regularly. Weekly trainings and staff meetings are vehicles for sharing school information, discussing concerns, Montessori presentations, staff acknowledgment and educational workshops. Teachers spend additional hours during the week working in their classrooms, making materials, and preparing written information.

The Celebration of Holidays (Religious Equity / Cultural Equity)

The decision to celebrate a holiday or how to do so is a personal one. TCU/MEISA *does not*, in respect for the personal views of others, present holidays as days that should be celebrated. While holidays may be discussed, they are not celebrated.

Students, who wish to share information regarding holiday celebrations in their home or culture, are free to do so, as it represents personal expression, not bias. Our educational position regarding holidays merely means that the teacher maintains their role as an educator, presenting information to the children to examine and absorb. A teacher may choose to explain the origin of that holiday as a part of the classroom curriculum, provided the information has been well researched and is factual and all-inclusive.

The teacher, however, would respect the personal rights of the child and the family by not presenting information in any manner that would be an infringement on a family's beliefs. Additionally, the teacher would not in any way reveal their own bias or personal belief to the child regarding personal or sensitive issues, but would promote an overall belief system based on understanding, respect and sensitivity for the cultural diversity and belief system of all.

Birthdays

While TCU/MEISA does not celebrate holidays, including birthdays, we feel that celebration is important to the full development of a person. Students at TCU/MEISA enjoy seasonal and cultural opportunities as a basis for celebration.

At TCU/MEISA we honor the child and celebrate life through a special Montessori celebration. We request that parents bring a photo for each year of a child's life (from birth to the present). If you so choose you may also contribute as follows:

Birthday Snack

Parents may bring a simple snack to share with the class. Snacks should be nutritious, such as muffins, cheese, or fruit. Junk food such as candy, cupcakes, soda, and chips should be avoided. To respect vegetarians, meat-based Jello/Gelatin is not permitted. (See "food provisions" section).

Peanuts and any nut related foods are not allowed on the school premises.

(Cultural Equity / Health Equity)

The Celebration of Holidays (continued)

Book in Honor of the Child

We encourage you to allow your child to give to others on this special day by donating a hardcover cultural book to the school, in honor of their birthday. A book plate noting your child's birth year will be placed in each book.

Birthday Party Invitations/Gifts

For a variety of reasons, parents may need or choose to limit the number of students who attend a personal festivity for their child, outside of school. It is important that the feelings of all children at school are not injured in any way, as a result of such understandable and necessary decisions. Gifts should remain family matters, and should not come to school.

Parents are provided with class lists with emails at the beginning of the school year. These may be kept and used for invitation purposes.

Teacher Appreciation Week (Equality) National Teacher Appreciation Week is a weeklong celebration in recognition of teachers and the contributions they make to education. It is held during the first full week of May of every year. The Tuesday of that week is National Teachers' Day.

At TCU/MEISA, we request that this week-long celebration be honored as a celebration of the teaching profession inclusive of all staff and teachers who make TCU/MEISA the wonderful community that it is.

Families bring in flowers, cards and other thoughtful gifts of their means and choice. Bags will be available in the office with staff names, to allow parents to place them in the bags, which will be delivered to teachers on Friday of that week.

Monetary Donations: In keeping with TCU/MEISA's social mandate of inclusivity and equality, the Parent Council requests that all donation be provided through their designated vehicle (Go-Fund-Me, etc.). All monies are collected anonymously, and divided equally among all staff. There is no limit on the amount you may want to contribute. We find that this lens of equality in expressing appreciation goes a long way to maintaining high staff morale and sense of self.

Gift Cards: Since it is difficult to provide them equally, gift cards are strongly discouraged.

Use of a Student's Image (Personal Safety)

With current technology, social media has become a commonly used form of communication in our society. We therefore address technology and social media in the policies of TCU/MEISA.

Throughout the year, TCU/MEISA will take photos and videos during special events and when students are engaged in inside/outside activities. These photos/videos are used for the purpose of education and promotion of the school.

Receipt of your authorization is required prior to using any image/video of your child on the school website, e-Newsletter, promotional materials, or outside publications. We will honor your written request. Personal information such as name, address, and telephone number will not be published.

Parents who do not wish their child to be photographed at events should keep in mind that others may take friendly photos/videos of performances/events. TCU/MEISA cannot control or be held responsible for the actions of others. Additionally, we ask parents who take photos/videos to keep the safety of children in mind (e.g.: including names of children with photos).

(See Appendix: Use of Child's Image Authorization)

Before School Begins

Enrollment Determination

Students are received on a first come, first served basis. Parents interested in enrolling in the school should first observe the classroom, to assess their comfort level with the program and the environment.

Upon a successful tour and observation, parents should fill out an enrollment or waiting list application, depending on space availability. Parent and student will be invited back to school for a pre-enrollment visit. After meeting with the teacher, the parent will be contacted to discuss the student's behavior and compatibility with the environment. Following a successful visit and letter of confirmation, parents must provide the school with immunization information, medical assessment, and completed informational and emergency forms.



Spring Enrollment Process

Our enrollment procedure is as follows: Applications for the next school year are made available during the month of January. The registration period begins on the first Monday in February for current parents. The enrollment period for parents who were previously waitlisted will begin on the second Monday in February. After the second Monday enrollment date, enrollment is open to the general public. *The enrollment procedure is first come, first serve - parents who enroll earliest will receive the first available spaces.* Siblings of enrolled students are processed at the same time.

Standard enrollment requests are processed first, on a space available basis. Special schedule requests are processed second, determined by whether there is another family in the school with a request which offsets it. All other applications are placed on a waiting list.

Parents who enroll following the enrollment period are placed as space is available, or placed on a waiting list. Waitlist priority will be given to current Child Unique parents. *The waiting list does not guarantee a space.* Acceptance letters will be mailed out thereafter.

Upon Enrollment

In the late spring, parents will receive a packet of enrollment forms. Parents will need to complete all forms prior to the start of school. Enrollment is not complete until school administration receives and reviews your forms. You must provide the school with full information on pick-up persons, the name and address of a doctor and dentist in case of emergency and full information regarding your child's medical needs and the parent's emergency wishes. It is imperative that we have updated information, in case we need to contact you. Please provide any changes in writing or by email as soon as they occur.

Separation and Transition Parent Plan

Upon enrollment, parents should work with the school to achieve a successful separation from their child. Parents should plan to remain on the school grounds until their child feels safe enough for them to leave, unless other arrangements were discussed with the Administrator or teacher.

(See Appendix: Transition and Separation Parent Plan)

Behavior/Discipline Policy

All families are enrolled with the understanding that no environment is perfect for every child or parent. After the initial assessment, the first four weeks of school is a time when the teacher and/or the Administrator will monitor any child who is having a difficulty, to determine whether this school environment is best suited for them. Should a concern arise regarding the appropriateness of a child's placement, the parents will be contacted for a meeting. Behaviors directed toward students or teachers that cause concern include any type of physical violence or verbal disrespect (name calling, rudeness). Accordingly, TCU/MEISA does not permit violent toys, violent play or actions, and super hero fantasy. We frown on character clothing in general, and encourage consistent patterns of peace.

As in the case of children from toddlers through school age, we recognize that some behaviors are age related, and need positive example, redirection and consistent modeling. Our behavioral plan includes positive redirection, education, modeling, parent and staff meetings, analysis of changes needed in the environment, outside consultation (at parent's cost).

Discipline does not include corporal punishment. Our school will be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse or other actions of a punitive nature including, but not limited to: interference with the function of daily living including eating, sleeping or toileting; or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning or any form of discipline or punishment that violates a

child's rights as specified in CA code of regulations section 101223. (see Appendix: Admission Agreement and Probation/Withdrawal)

Equity (Cultural, Educational, Health, Religious, Socioeconomic) Equality Gender Justice Safety Social Justice State Law 36

Upon Enrollment (continued)

Requesting Letter of Recommendation & Academic Records Parents who wish to have a letter of recommendation and/or academic records sent to a prospective school must submit the form(s) to the school office, and not directly to the teacher. Office administration will ensure that teachers complete the required information. The office will provide copies to the parents before it is sent to the prospective school. A child's school account must be up-to-date before records are released.

The Toddler Program and Sample Daily Schedule

The Toddler Program (age 18 to 36 months)

We have two toddler program options. At the Pacific campus we have one classroom specifically for 18 month - 24 month toddlers and a second classroom for 24 months and up. The Taylor campus toddler program begins at 2 years old. Our Montessori toddler program has been developed to encourage the child to fully explore their own curiosity. Activities are positioned around the room, each with a particular theme, skill, or subject of value to toddler development. Imaginative play activities and the learning materials appeal to the curiosity of the child. Outdoor play and daily walks are an important part of the day, as are reading and quiet play. The teachers provide respect, tenderness, and warmth that allow the children to blossom. There is space for physical activity and exploring.

Please refer to section above titled Elements of a Montessori Education for specifics of our educational program.

Sample Toddler Schedule:

Morning

7:30 - 9:00 Daycare time / Children arriving

9:00 - 9:25 Montessori Work time

9:25 - 9:30 Clean up

9:30 - 9:45 Circle time: songs and stories

9:45 -10:00 Morning Snack

10:00 -10:45 Montessori Work time (During this time, all children are invited into the bathroom to have a diaper change and/or use the toilet)

10:45 -10:50 Clean up

10:50 -11:35 Outside / Walk / Gross Motor Activities

11:35 -11:45 Wash hands / Circle time

Afternoon

11:45 -12:20 Lunch (As children finish lunch, they are invited into the bathroom to have a diaper change and/or use the toilet)

12:20 - 2:00 Rest time (Awake children may quietly look at books at 1:45 pm; sleeping children are allowed to rest until they wake up, unless a parent requests otherwise)

2:00 - 2:30 Quiet Activities (Children are invited into the bathroom to have a diaper change and/or use the toilet)

2:30 - 2:45 Afternoon Snack

2:45 - 3:00 Clean up / Continue Bathroom time

The Toddler Program and Sample Daily Schedule (continued)

3:00 - 5:30 Daycare time / Children departing (At 3:30 pm, children play outside when weather permits) (At 4:45 pm, all remaining children are invited to have a diaper change and/or use the toilet)

5:30 - 6:00 Stories and Free Artwork

Pickup times

11:30 (Morning schedule – Pacific & Taylor Campus only)

2:30 (School day schedule)

5:00 (Afternoon schedule)

6:00 (Full time schedule)

Snacks

Snacks are provided in the morning and afternoon. Children are encouraged to finish uneaten lunch items before eating afternoon snack. Snack menus are posted in the school kitchen.

Primary Program and Sample Daily Schedule

The Encinal and Taylor campuses generally have similar primary class schedules. Below is a sample of a typical schedule. Class schedules reflect the needs of the students, the school curriculum, parent participation and extracurricular activities. If you would like to know the class schedule more specific to your child's classroom, please speak to the site director.

Please refer to section above titled Elements of a Montessori Education for specifics of our educational program. The elementary and middle school schedule and curriculum is available in a separate document.

Sample Primary Schedule:

Morning

7:00 - 8:30 Daycare (free choice)

8:30 - 10:00 Class time

10:00 - 11:00 Snack & Morning activities (dancing, singing, story time) 11:00 -

12:00 Yard & lunch time

Afternoon

12:00 - 2:00 Rest & quiet time

2:00 - 3:00 Snack & yard time

3:00 - 5:00 Afternoon work time (gardening, art, sports) 5:00 -

6:00 Daycare (free choice)

Pickup times

11:30 (Morning schedule – Pacific & Taylor Campus only)

2:30 (School day schedule)

5:00 (Afternoon schedule)

6:00 (Full time schedule)

Snacks

Snacks are provided in the morning and afternoon. Children are encouraged to finish uneaten lunch items before eating afternoon snack. Snack menus are posted in the school kitchen.

Arrival and Departure (Personal Safety)

Driveway, Parking, and Arrival

TCU/MEISA schools are located within residential areas. This means that the schools operate with a use permit, which gives neighbors the right to give input to the city, if their rights as residents are being violated.

We are required to monitor the neighborhood courtesy of our parents and staff when arriving and departing from school. It is important that:

- cars never park in or block the driveway of neighbors
- cars are never double parked
- entrances and exits are made safely
- young children are not left unattended in cars
- personal arguments do not occur outside of the school
- individuals do not gather in clusters in front of a neighbor's home □ when arriving or departing with a child, parents maintain responsibility for the child's behavior and safety, which includes holding the child's hand during the walk from the building to the car



Safety Procedure Rules for Arrival:

- Parents should park, pulling up as far as possible in the driveway or parking lot. If you fear you will be late while waiting for others to leave, you should find street parking, rather than in the driveway. NEVER park across the sidewalk --this creates an unsafe environment for pedestrians.
- Please be present with your young child while in the driveway or parking lot. Do not allow a child to leave ahead of you. If you wish to chat with another parent, please use:
 - Encinal: library or courtyard
 - Pacific: deck or courtyard
 - Taylor: teacher's lounge or outside *green* area (tree area)
- Look for walkers and bicyclists in the driveway and parking lot. Children who travel to school on bicycles must wear helmets.
- Exit the driveway, parking lot or curb slowly, as others may be entering the driveway unexpectedly.

Arrival and Departure (continued)



Valet Service (8:25-8:45)

The Encinal Campus *may* offer morning valet service during the school year. A staff member is available to sign your child in and accompany them inside. Valet service is only available on the driveway side nearest the entrance door.

The Taylor Avenue Campus *may* offer morning valet service and possible afternoon valet service during the school year. Two staff members will be available to sign your child in and accompany them inside. Children must exit on the side nearest the teacher.

Designating a Person to Pick Up Your Child

All persons authorized to pick up your child from TCU/MEISA must be listed by name on your Daily Release form. “All Child Unique Parents” is not an acceptable designation for your child, as the ambiguity of who should depart with whom, can be unclear for the staff.

Requesting identification is for the protection of your child. Even if you know the teacher, please be forgiving if the teacher forgets your face and requests identification. Make others aware that they may be asked also.

The Child Unique/MEISA Staff as Transporters

TCU/MEISA does not currently have a program for student transportation. **We strongly discourage parents from using staff members to transport their child to and from school.** When a staff member transports a child on their personal time they are not considered an employee and therefore, the school is not liable. It is the parent’s responsibility to ensure that the staff member has appropriate auto insurance and is listed on the Daily Release form.

Arrival and Departure (continued)

Change in Transportation Authorization:

- If you wish your child to be dismissed to an adult other than one who was previously authorized in writing, you must provide the office with a written, dated, signed note. In the event of an unforeseen emergency, the office will accept a telephone call with a complete description of the driver. This **MUST** be followed up by a note on the following day of school.
- We prefer that such notes are delivered directly to the office or given to the teacher at arrival time. Should the note accompany the undesignated driver, parents should call ahead for verification.
- Apart from unforeseen emergencies, a change in designated driver should be handled clearly and before dismissal time.

"But they are my friend!"

TCU/MEISA will uphold a strict policy regarding dismissal to unauthorized persons. Please do not assume that undesignated friends may remove another child from the school without a note.

Should a friend be needed from time to time for pick up, designate them on your authorization form. Should you be asked to pick up another child, ask that parent to write a note, or check that your name is listed as a designated driver.

Friendship is not a substitute for written authorization.

"But they are my child's teacher!"

A child will not be dismissed to a teacher unless they are listed on their child's Daily Release form. Please do not assume because the person is a Child Unique employee they are authorized to remove your child from the school without written authorization.

Arrival Health Screening (State Law) The state of California requires that TCU/MEISA staff create and implement a daily process, which will:

- quickly examine the health readiness of each arriving student
- refuse to admit any child with contagious symptoms
- ensure that parents sign each child in and out
- ensure that parents provide their legal signature
- ensure that only designated individuals pick children up from school

Teachers are trained to carry out an entrance health screening within seconds, during morning greeting. If a teacher determines that a child is too ill to remain at school, ***the teacher will refuse admittance and request that the child return home. Please be aware that this is a state requirement, to minimize unnecessary spread of infection at school.***

Arrival and Departure (continued)

Signing In/Out (State Law) The State of California requires that all preschool children are signed in at arrival, and signed out upon departure. The combination of sign-in logs and attendance books are used in the event of fire or earthquake. Please be sure to sign your child in and out each day. You must use your legal signature or our Touchless Attendance system. Please be sure to communicate this policy to anyone who will be taking your child to/from school.

The Sign-in/out sheet is a legal document. Children are not allowed to write their name or their parent's name. They are not allowed to scribble on it.



Encinal Security

The Encinal campus has a security key code for safety purposes. The code is not to be shared with unauthorized individuals. We discourage children from having knowledge of the access code as it can possibly be shared with outsiders.

Parents entering and exiting through the front door should be careful to close the door carefully and not to allow unaccompanied children to exit.

Pacific Security

Parents campus has a security key code for safety purposes. The code is not to be shared with unauthorized individuals. We discourage children from having knowledge of the access code as it can possibly be shared with outsiders. Parents who enter through the front door should keep the screen and front door closed after entering and should not allow unaccompanied children to exit. Please always be sure to exit with your child in hand, and do not double park in the street.

Taylor Security

The Taylor Ave campus gate will be closed each morning after valet service has ended. Please come around to the front entrance of the school, and walk your child to class. If you exit by driving out of the parking lot, please be sure to close the gate behind you.

Absences and Re-Admission (State Law) (See also Covid Section)

Please remember that for the health of all children, and for the continued health and happiness of your child, **NEVER** send your child to school when they are contagious or ill, listless or has had a fever within 24 hours.

If your child is unable to function at home, but has no clear diagnosis of illness, it is always best to keep your child home. **Children should come to school ready to work - physically and emotionally.** Children who appear ill or symptomatic may be refused at the door.

Student Medical Conditions

We encourage parents to be clear with the school regarding any health issues which may affect your child. For the best possible consistent awareness and intervention, provide clear information in written form to be read by the Administrator, Site Directors and teachers.

To protect family confidentiality, and the school, please be clear in writing, regarding with whom we may share medical information regarding your child.

Keep the school abreast of any changes in your child's medical condition, including allergies.

If your child is able to attend school, but is having a bad day due to a medical problem, please let us know at the beginning of your child's day.

Basic Notification

Should your child become unable to attend school due to illness or personal reasons, please inform us no later than 30 minutes into class time.



Absences and Re-Admission (continued)

Notification Regarding Contagious Symptomatology

It is imperative that we know as soon as possible if your child develops symptoms that are indications of, or may lead to the spread of infection. Please keep your child home, and contact us, should your child develop any of the following:

- ☐ fever
- ☐ symptoms of an obvious contagious disease ('pink eye', head lice, etc)
- ☐ extreme listlessness
- ☐ open lesions, which cannot be covered (serious burn, etc)
- ☐ yellow or green mucous from the nose (non-allergy related)
- ☐ common cold symptoms (during the first 36 hours of a cold)

Elements of Contagious Disease Notification (State Law) Should your child become ill due to a contagious disease, we will need the following information:

- ☐ nature of the illness
- ☐ when your child was exposed (if you know)
- ☐ the first sign of symptoms (beginning of fever, etc)
- ☐ when any appropriate medication began

Re-Admission

Children may return to school, following an illness, when:

- ☐ they have been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine
- ☐ they have passed the first 36 hours of a cold
- ☐ when a contagious disease has subsided, with no symptoms, i.e., Chicken pox (blisters dry and scabbed)
- ☐ when medication for certain diseases has been in a child's system for 24 hours, i.e., Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- ☐ when medication has been taken for a number of days, AND symptoms are gone, i.e. strep throat, other antibiotic-treated types of illness, or head lice (no nits on hair shaft)

(See Appendix: Health Policy)



Health Policy (State Law)

Medication

TCU/MEISA will dispense medication on site. However, the state of California and/or school policy, require the following procedure:

- All medications must be in their ORIGINAL container
- Parents must give medication directly to the Teacher or Site Director
- Please provide NO MORE than one day's dosage in the original container
 - Parent must fill out a Medication Dispense form daily to have medication administered, unless it involves an ongoing prescription.

Prescription Medication (State Law) Prescription medications should have a medication schedule and possible side effects, on the original container. If not, a physician's note should accompany the medication, detailing such information. THIS INCLUDES EPI-PENS. EPI-PENS MUST BE IN THE ORIGINAL BOX.

Parents must sign information daily to have medication administered, unless it involves an ongoing prescription. Teachers must log the administration of any medication, detailing the date and time given.

Parents who wish confidentiality maintained regarding the type of medication their child receives must discuss this matter with the Administrator.

Non-Prescription Medication (Personal Safety) We do not administer non-prescription medication unless it is accompanied by a signed doctor's note. This includes diaper rash cream, cough syrup, ibuprofen, or allergy medication. The note may be a one-time authorization of non-prescription medication for the school year, covering such illnesses as colds or basic recurrent problems. All non-prescription medication must arrive with the directions for administration. Parent must fill out a Medication Dispense form daily to have medication administered. Additionally, we should see the following information:

- diagnosis for the medication
- medication schedule
- possible effects to look for

Health Policy (continued)

Medical and Dental Emergencies

In the case of a medical or dental emergency, parents will be contacted using current information on the Daily Release and then the Emergency Release form.

For medical emergencies, the staff will call 911. If a child needs to be taken to the hospital before a parent can arrive, they will be transported by staff vehicle (minor injury) or ambulance to the hospital first. Paramedics determine the hospital based on the severity/illness of the child. If a parent requests a specific hospital, staff will inform paramedics however, they may determine that the child can only be transferred after first being taken to the nearest hospital and assessed first. Medical Restriction/Authorization form, medical waiver, and any medical instructions will accompany the child, so that parental restrictions can be noted and adhered to by medical/hospital personnel.

For dental emergencies, the dentist will be contacted, and in case of immediate emergency, the child will be transported by a staff member with first aid training via the instructions of the dentist, unless parent information directs otherwise.

Medical/Dental Information (State Law) Upon enrollment, parents must provide a physician's statement, which must contain current information at all times.

Special medical requests or information regarding a child's special needs should be indicated on the Medical Authorization Form, which will be provided to medical or emergency personnel.

If there is a change in medical insurance information, it must also be updated with the office.

Sunscreen Policy (State Law)

TCU/MEISA strives to use UVB/UVA sunscreen products with an SPF of at least 30, and has one of the top ten ratings with the Environmental Working Group's annual sunscreen guide (www.ewg.org/sunscreen). Sunscreen is applied when children will be exposed to the sun, primarily between the months of April through September and between the daily times of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunscreen may be applied to exposed skin, including but not limited to the face, tops of ears, nose, and bare shoulders, arms, and legs. Children who must wear a different type of sunscreen should bring their sunscreen, labeled to school. Parents must indicate on the sunscreen form, either that the staff can administer the school purchased sunscreen, that the parent wishes no sunscreen to be administered, or that they have provided a labeled bottle of sunscreen to be administered when needed.

Immunizations (State Law)

Due to two laws which enforce immunizations in schools and preschools, stricter guidelines covering exemptions and waivers have been instituted.

Current Law: Private or public child care centers, preschools, elementary schools and secondary schools cannot admit children unless they are immunized against 10 diseases: diphtheria, Haemophilus influenzae type b (bacterial meningitis), measles, mumps, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, rubella, tetanus, hepatitis B and chicken pox.

New Extended/Additional Immunization Requirement (effective July, 2019)

For Preschoolers/Toddlers (effective according to SB 277)

- Chickenpox vaccine is required at age 15 months and older, rather than at age 18 months and older.

For Transitional Kindergarteners/4 years old (effective July 1st, 2019, for 2019-20 school year admission according to SB 276)

- 2 (rather than 1) doses of chickenpox (varicella) vaccine is required ▪

2 MMR doses and 3 Hepatitis B vaccine doses are required

Event Time Limit

As children age into requirements, parents have 30 days to submit updated records showing the child has met the requirements. For example, when an already admitted child who is up-to-date on shots turns 18 months old, the parents have 30 days from the day the child turns 18 months old to submit records that the child has received the 4th dose of DTaP and 3rd dose of Hep B.

Exemptions: Under a law enacted by SB 277, beginning January 1, 2016 personal beliefs exemptions ceased to be an option for the vaccines that are currently required for entry into child care or school in California. Personal beliefs exemptions already on file remain valid until the child reaches the next immunization checkpoint at either transitional kindergarten/kindergarten or 7th grade.

Under SB 276, beginning July 1, 2019, a parent or guardian must submit a signed, written statement from a physician (MD or DO) licensed in California which states:

- The specific nature of the physical condition or medical circumstance of

the child for which a licensed physician does not recommend immunization.

Immunizations (continued)

- Each specific required vaccine that is being exempted.
- Whether the medical exemption is permanent or temporary.

Accepted Medical Exemptions:

- Medical exemptions for new admissions must be signed only by a California-licensed MD/DO.
- The exemption must include the specific reason for the exemption. * (see note below)
- Each temporary medical exemption may be issued for no more than 12 months.

California Dept. of Public Health (CDPH) has posted resources to support implementation of the new regulations at www.shotsforschool.org

See Immunization Requirements form from the California Health Department attached in Appendix.

For further questions call your local Health Department.

Diapering

The Child Unique uses only commercially available disposable diapers unless a child has a medical reason that does not remit their use. If a medical reason exists, a note detailing the reason must be provided and parents must provide the diapers.

The Pacific and Taylor Campus maintain a diaper changing log, located near the changing station of the main bathroom. The log is used to reflect times when a child was changed and by whom. The diaper log is available to parents daily.

Diaper fees are billed each month. Diaper charges cease after the first full month in which your child has become toilet trained.

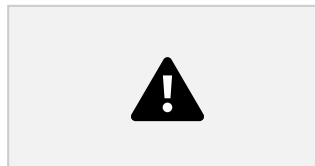
(see appendix: Admissions Agreement and Basic Policy)

Personal Belongings (Health Equity)

Personal items, sometimes carried around by children, should be left at home. This includes bottles, blankets, pacifiers, dolls, toys or electronics of any sort.

Please discuss this with your child in advance, assuring your child that toys, etc, are for home use. Let your child know that other special materials and work are at school for their enjoyment. We will not be responsible for lost toys or other personal items listed above.

All personal belongings such as clothing, shoes, nap bedding, lunchbox, should be **labeled**, including backpacks. Please check for any lost items at the end of your child's week at school. Unclaimed lost and found items will be donated at the end of each month to a chosen charity.



Sharing Day / Requested Items

There will be NO sharing days during the pandemic. Teachers will not request items from home. No personal items should be brought to school. Occasionally, a teacher will request items for cultural study or other classroom interest. The teacher will provide information about these items, when needed. Please send them **labeled** in a zip-loc bag, and take them home at the end of the day.

Food Provisions (State Law)

Morning and Afternoon Snacks

TCU/MEISA provides snack during the morning and afternoon. Overall, TCU/MEISA seeks to provide healthful snacks representing three different food groups. A snack menu is posted for parents. Food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with USDA guidelines. Peanuts and any nut related foods are not allowed on the School premises.

Should parents desire to donate snacks, please limit it to:

- ☐ Fresh or dried fruit or baked breads
- ☐ Whole grain crackers, breads, rice cakes, etc.
- ☐ Cheese or yogurt

Lunchtime

Currently, children bring their own prepared lunches and drink. A microwave is available at each campus to warm food. All perishable items should be labeled and stored in the refrigerator. Lunch containers and food containers should be labeled.

After table setting, students will be asked to remove their lunch and place their food items on a plate. We encourage protein and fruit first. Teachers will sit with the children, encouraging and modeling table manners.

Parents should provide nutritious lunches (free of non-nutritional food and drinks with high fructose and empty calories). We recommend parents follow USDA Food Guidelines when preparing their lunch (www.mypyramid.gov). Candy, cookies, soda and junk foods items are not allowed at school. Flavored water is acceptable. Unacceptable lunch items will be left in the lunchbox to go home. We encourage parents to consider and discuss nutritious lunches with their child.

Food sharing is not allowed for hygiene reasons and food allergies. Peanuts and any nut related foods are not allowed on the School premises.

(Cultural Equity / Health Equity)

There is a snack menu on the school premises. This menu indicates the snacks that will be provided. The snack menu takes into account allergies or food restrictions. Please let us know if any corrections are needed. Generally, children are asked to finish what is left of their lunch as afternoon snack before offering them a school snack in the afternoon.

Food Provisions (continued)

SNACK MISSION at TCU/MEISA

TCU/MEISA aims to educate and provide students with primarily Whole Food Plant Based nutrient dense snacks to nourish the mind, body, and soul. Food preferences and physical activity habits are established early in life. Building a diet with fruits, vegetables, healthful grains, and legumes from a young age will help children prefer those foods throughout their lives. These foods are rich in antioxidants, phytochemical, and fiber, which help protect against disease and promote healthful body weight.

Basic Core Concepts:

- Serve food as close to the way it came out of the ground as possible. • Elevate this way of eating to be at least on equal footing as any other foods offered at school functions.
- Produce is purchased using Dirty Dozen and Clean 15 Guidelines from Environmental Working Group (EWG.org) to avoid pesticides
- Limit refined sugars, refined grains, added salt, animal proteins, saturated fat, and highly processed/low nutrient density foods, GMOs, and Dirty Dozen produce items.
 - Avoid trans fats, class 1 carcinogens (processed meat), artificial flavorings, colorings, and sweeteners, corn syrup, and high fructose corn syrup, and vinegars made from wine (honoring Halal).

Try. Then Try Again Approach

Even if students don't love legumes, for example, there's still hope. Studies show that children who keep trying just a single bite of a healthy food they dislike (think: those Brussels sprouts) will eventually lose that aversion. Such training works the same way with adults. After sampling something half a dozen times, one may start to think that the food is not so weird or awful. Soon they may actually enjoy the flavor, which provides an opportunity to grow one's food interests. **In the afternoon we invite the children to return to their lunch boxes as a first option, and then offer an afternoon snack if needed.**

Field Trips (State Law)

Field trips are planned for educational and/or cultural value, and as a means to achieve specific objectives. Field trips will be scheduled in advance; however, should an opportunity arise, short notice may be provided for special or unexpected opportunities.

School permission forms **must** be on file at school for each student prior to the class' departure on a field trip.

Many of our field trips are within walking distance from the school. However, post pandemic field trips with older children may be driving trips necessitating parent drivers to volunteer. Parents driving to and from field trip locations must have a current, valid California driver's license, be 21 years of age or older, have automobile insurance with minimum liability limits of \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per accident and \$50,000 property damage, and a seat belt to accommodate each student. A copy of your insurance policy is required.

The updated law, California Vehicle Code Section 27360, requires car seats and booster seats when transporting children as follows:

- Children under 2 years of age shall ride in a rear-facing car seat unless the child weighs 40 or more pounds OR is 40 or more inches tall. The child shall be secured in a manner that complies with the height and weight limits specified by the manufacturer of the car seat.
- Children under the age of 8 must be secured in a car seat or booster seat in the back seat.
- Children who are 8 years of age OR have reached 4'9" in height may be secured by a booster seat, but at a minimum must be secured by a safety belt.

The parent's role in the field trip activities is one of assisting in supervision and driving. Drivers should adhere to scheduled itinerary, making no special stops with their group.

Emergency and Disaster Protocols (State Law)

Written emergency and disaster plans are posted in each classroom and throughout the school. Each classroom has a first aid kit.

We have monthly drills, alternating between fire and earthquake drills. TCU/MEISA holds bi-annual disaster drills to assess the ability of staff to handle serious emergency situations and to prepare children for one.

In case of earthquake, fire or other emergencies, your child will be kept with adults on the school grounds until you arrive. If authorities advise us to move children be moved to other locations, signs will be posted on or near the premises to locate us. If communication becomes blocked, we will try to note our information with the Alameda Red Cross, Alameda Police Department, Alameda Fire Department and KTVU Channel 2.

Alameda Police Dept. (510) 337-8340 Emergency 911 Alameda Red Cross (510) 595-4400 (Oakland) KTVU Channel 2 (510) 834-1212

If authorities advise us to move children to other locations, Pacific and Encinal students will use Alameda High School, which is the nearest disaster shelter to the Pacific and Encinal campuses. In the event of evacuation, children from those campuses will be taken there.

Alameda High School
2221 Encinal Avenue
Between Walnut and Oak Street

Both buildings which house the two schools meet and exceed structural requirements.

On the west end, Father Selhorst Hall, the location for our auditorium at the Taylor campus, happens to be the Red Cross designated emergency shelter. In the event of evacuation, children will walk to the auditorium.

The Child Unique / Montessori Elementary School of Alameda
1400 6th Street @ Taylor
(See appendix: *Emergency, Disaster and Mass Casualty Plan*)

Communication: Addressing Questions /

Concerns Flow of Communication

- **Student development/School operation/Special Confidential Matters/Scholarships:** Questions regarding these particular areas should be directed to the ***Principal***
- **General classroom issues:** general classroom concerns or questions should be directed to the ***Lead Teacher or Site Director***
- **Curriculum/Class schedule:** ***Lead Teacher or Site Director***
- **Snack Issues:** Health Committee Chair
- **Administrative issues:** Absences, calendar, school events, children's files, meeting requests, observations, and similar issues should be directed to the ***Office Manager***
- **Finance/Billing issues:** These issues should be discussed with the ***bookkeeper***
- **Parent committees/parent hours:** Questions regarding these particular areas should be directed to the ***Office***

Contact Information for each of the persons above will be provided.

How is my child doing?

Questions or concerns regarding your child's class time should be directed to the Lead Teacher. If you wish to receive a call from or conference with the teacher, please call the office. The teacher will follow up to speak with you or schedule a conference.

Conferences

Parent - Teacher conferences occur in the fall and spring following Parent Observation Week. School is closed for most conference days; daycare may or may not be available. Check your annual calendar for specifics.

Parents, teachers, or a school administrator may request a conference at any time.

Communication: Addressing Questions/ Concerns (continued)

Grievances

In the case of a concern, follow the flow of communication. In the case that you bring a concern to the appropriate person and the problem is not rectified, take it to the next highest level (e.g., speaking to a teacher first, then a site director, then the Principal). If you have followed these steps and still have cause for concern, bring the issue to someone on the Parent Council. It is only after you have followed through the channels of the flow of communication that it is appropriate to bring the issue to the Parent Council. Please respect your relationship with the school by not airing your grievances among parents.

Representatives of the school are responsible for bringing information to the Principal's attention regarding slander of the school or individuals associated with The Child Unique/Montessori Elementary Intermediate School of Alameda. Slander is grounds for dismissal from the school. At TCU/MEISA, we want to build and model healthy relationships for the children, which include treating each other with dignity and respect.

Communication (Paper, Electronic, and In-Person)

Telephone Hours

Telephone hours will generally be from 9am - 5:00pm. You may also leave a message on our voice mail. Teachers will return calls after class. In the event of an emergency and you cannot reach someone at one campus, please call the other campuses: Pacific campus at (510) 521-1030, Encinal campus at (510) 521-9227 and Taylor campus at (510) 521-0595.

Cellphones in School

Please take phones outside of the building for personal use, and refrain from using your cellphone during a school event or arrival/departure time.

Tuition Box

At each campus, there is a tuition box. This box can be used to place checks (although tuition should primarily be automatic debit) and paperwork.

School Roster

In an effort to foster community within our school, TCU/MEISA distributes a school roster to all enrolled families. This list may be used to contact parents to organize committee work events, to plan after school play dates or other family-oriented celebrations and events.

If you do not wish to have some or all of your contact information on the roster, please indicate such on the Authorization to Share Information form. If you have requested that your personal information is not shared, it will not show up on the parent roster or committee list.

The school roster **may not** be used to solicit business, donations or votes; or to share gossip or one's personal, political or religious views. Violation of this policy is grounds for dismissal. Parents, who feel that someone is in violation of the use of the school roster, should bring the matter to the attention of the principal.

Classroom Communication

Transitions like arrival and departure, are times when teachers need to be most observant and vigilant with students. Please help by limiting your conversation during arrival and departure. Each classroom will have notepaper to leave notes for teachers concerning minor issues, or to request a phone call. Teachers will try to check for notes on a daily basis. Parents can also email. (See: Email Communication with Teachers)

Communication (Paper, Electronic, and In-Person) (continued)

Bulletin Board/ Parent Folders

During the pandemic, our bulletin boards will serve as vehicles of inspiration and connection. Additionally, electronic communication will replace parent folders.

Electronic Regular School Communication

Electronic Communication: E-Mail

We try to limit email communications to the Weekly Reminder, special notices, and the newsletter. Periodically, we will send reminders. Please help us to minimize emails by providing prompt responses when requested.

Email Communication with Teachers

In our effort to become a 'green school', all administrators and Lead teachers have email addresses for your convenience. Lead teachers may be contacted using the following format: firstname.lastname@thechildunique.org

Committees

Out of respect for busy schedules, Committee Chairs may use an electronic method of communicating with parents to indicate and select tasks, etc. If you do not hear from your Committee Chair by September, please let the office know.

Weekly Email

Unless you have requested otherwise, all parents will receive a weekly email detailing school events coming up the following week and a monthly or bi-monthly e-newsletter, detailing goings on in the classroom to keep you informed.

During the second week of school, please check your 'spam' to see if the newsletter is there. If it is, click 'NOT SPAM' and it should return the newsletter from that time on, into your inbox. If you are not receiving the e newsletters, please call to check your email address with us. If you'd prefer not to receive the school information electronically, please let the office know.

School E-newsletter

The school e-newsletter is published monthly. Parents, who wish to provide committee information, or other school/parent tidbits, should submit their newsletter to the school email at office@thechildunique.org and put "e-newsletter submission" in the subject line. If your submission is time sensitive, please provide two (2) weeks lead time for approval.

Parent Commitment

Volunteer Hours

No school is able to function effectively on tuition alone. It is also clear that when parents are more connected to their child's educational environment, the child benefits from the clear partnership support. While some parents are able to provide outstanding support to the school, we wish all parents to assist the school in some way, so that we do not overburden a minority.

Therefore, parents are required to provide support for the school, by volunteering a minimum number of hours each year, per child. Parents may fulfill this requirement themselves, or via other family members or friends. The requirement is not based on length of day but on the number of days a child attends school. The schedule requirement is as follows:

2 days/week = 15 hours per child

3 days/week = 18 hours per child

5 days/week = 20 hours per child

Please note that school spirit should precede volunteer hours. This is not meant to be a chore. It is meant to be an important part of the life of your child's school. Volunteer hours tell your child that you value their world and wish to contribute to its/their well-being.

How to Complete Volunteer Hours

Volunteer hours get accumulated serving on committees, at Community Building Days, field trips (1-2 hrs. per trip), fundraisers and special school events. Friends and family members may also assist in completing volunteer hours.

In addition to volunteer hours, parents are expected to purchase two tickets to the school fundraising event. Parents may sell their tickets to others if they wish in lieu of being billed for them. Parents may also donate certain **requested** items (value of \$25 or greater) in lieu of parent hours. \$25 equals 1 parent hour.

More than anything, consider how you can help. It is our hope that you will be a happy, giving part of our community. If at any point, contributing your hours becomes difficult, contact us.

It's not about the hours; it's about the children.

Parent Commitment (continued)

Committees

- **Construction Committee:** will maintain and improve the indoor and outdoor environment of The Child Unique/MEISA
- **Cultural Committee:** prepares ideas for cultural topics, encourages donated items from parents, handles inventory of cultural unit boxes, assists with cultural classroom decoration and tear down of items, finds and/or helps with cooking of culturally connected foods
- **Fundraising Committee:** coordinates and carries out events and/or activities that will generate funds for the school
- **Garden Committee:** helps to maintain and beautify the outside environs of TCU/MEISA, by carrying out individual and group garden school year projects at both sites
- **Hospitality Committee:** provides a welcome atmosphere for the TCU/MEISA Parents, encouraging a sense of community spirit
- **Library Committee:** hosts a book fair, maintains the student libraries including organization of books
- **Painting Committee** maintains the interior and exterior of both sites (excluding the exterior of the Pacific building).
- **Parent Council** reviews budgets, oversees committees, discusses legal or PR issues, administration and oversees fundraising revenue.
- **Room Parent Committee** provides teachers with the assistance they need to ensure the completion of classroom projects and curriculum.
- **Sustainability Committee** assists with “greening” our schools and making them environmentally safe and healthy.
- **Technology Committee** provides computer assistance, maintains the school’s website, assists with networking, and assists with keeping the school current and efficient with technological advances.
- **Unique Collective** runs errands, hangs pictures, repairs broken items,

sewing projects, assists teachers in making and laminating classroom materials, and other various tasks around TCU/MEISA

Equity (Cultural, Educational, Health, Religious, Socioeconomic) Equality Gender Justice Safety Social Justice State Law 63

Parent Commitment (continued)

Committee Work Day (also called Community Building Day) Committee Work Day (CWD) is a volunteer workday onsite at one or all three campuses. It generally occurs on a Saturday and is indicated on the school calendar or announced via the e-newsletter.

CWD is used to do minor repairs on school buildings, classroom furniture, or playground equipment, and group projects such as gardening, organizing earthquake kits or working in the library.

Parents may record volunteer hours for work spent at CWD, and may count the hours of other family members who come to assist. Usually, child care is available via volunteers, and parents bring snack to share at lunchtime.

Reporting Volunteer Hours

Volunteer hours are tracked by completing a Volunteer Hours Tracking form. This form is available in the office or can be downloaded from our website, www.thechildunique.org. You can turn in volunteer hours at any time, by emailing them to the office, placing them in the tuition box, or dropping them to the Office Manager. In late winter, the office will send a note with a tally of the number of hours received in our office to date.

Volunteer hours do not have to be signed off. We will have a sign-in sheet on Community Work Days to help you note your volunteer service.

Reimbursements

Sometimes parents incur expenses when volunteering (made a purchase, etc.) Reimbursement sheets are available in the office or on the website at www.thechildunique.org.

Reimbursements should *not* be attached to Volunteer Hours slips, or it will be perceived as a request to substitute the amount for volunteer hours. **All reimbursement forms must have the receipt attached.**

Fundraising

School Fundraising

There is a direct link between school success and parent participation.

Fundraising is a regular part of the life of most schools, as it plays a key role in balancing a school's budget and providing program enrichment. We ask that:

- **Of the volunteer hours parents done, we ask that five of those hours are spent participating in one of our annual fundraising events.**
- **In addition to volunteer hours; parents are expected to purchase two entrance tickets to the school fundraising event. Parents may sell their tickets to others if they wish in lieu of being billed.**

Allocation of proceeds from all fundraising events will be determined by TCU/MEISA Parent Council, with input from staff.

School Fundraising Events

Book Fair: The Book Fair offers a wide array of books at special prices. The school receives a percentage of the sales. Parents can also choose to purchase and donate books to the school.

Event

TCU/MEISA generally holds one event per year (e.g. International Food Festival or Alameda Community Award) which involves music and food. This event is open to the community. Donated items from the community and parents may be auctioned during fundraisers or special school events.

How you can assist

Assistance for either event is provided in various ways:

- Donation of items for auction or sale
- Purchasing and selling tickets to friends, business contacts, family
- Purchasing things or bidding on auction items
- Donations of food items, or paper goods, etc.
- Donation of time to assist or entertain
- Setting up, cleaning, transporting or picking up items

Community Giving (Socioeconomic Equity)

TCU/MEISA seeks ways to help others who are disadvantaged. We do so through voluntary parent drives for needy families. This may be done through one or two programs, such as:

Food Drive:

The Volunteer Centers, The Red Cross and other groups encourage others to participate in a non-perishable food drive. Bins are provided at school. Families are encouraged to bring in canned items for donation. Donations go directly to needy families or food centers primarily in Alameda.

Toy Drive:

The Alameda Collaborative for Children, Youth and Their Families encourages others to participate in bins. Bins are provided at school and families are encouraged to donate new toys for children of all ages. Donations go directly to needy families primarily in Alameda.

Parent Observations/Special Observation Weeks

General Observations are available **Tuesday - Thursday only** and should not occur during naptime.

Observations are closed to the public five times during the year.

They are:

- the month of September
- the last three weeks of December
- enrollment week
- Spring Break
- Parent Observation Week

In-class observations are limited to a maximum of one vaccinated parent daily, and should be arranged in the office. This observation is to provide parents with an in-depth look at their child's operation in class. Parents, who observe should not engage in play and conversations with children in the classroom.

General Observation Guidelines

- Avoid excessive talking
- Please observe without other siblings, if possible
- If an infant accompanies you, please leave if crying occurs
- Save questions until later. Leave a note, or request a call via the office. □ If your child has great difficulty interacting in class in your presence, we may ask you to observe from a distance, to ease in over a period of time, or to not participate in 'in-class' events until it becomes comfortable.

Observation Cameras

All parents are encouraged to observe their child via the classroom cameras. The cameras go offline periodically; please let us know if a camera is down.

Parent Observation Week

Parent Observation Week is set aside to encourage parents to observe their child in class, prior to a conference. We encourage ALL parents to observe (parents of children with separation difficulty should consider waiting a while to observe).

Parents wishing to observe, should sign up in the office or on the bulletin board. During Parent Observation Week, observations are only available for parents of The Child Unique/MEISA from Monday-Thursday. We encourage parents to fill out the observation form at the conclusion of their visit.

Assessments

TCU/MEISA has an ongoing assessment/screening process for enrolled children, which involves parents:

Screenings

Parent information form: Provides us with initial understanding of your child and their personality and needs.

The Ages & Stages Questionnaire® (ASQ) is a questionnaire designed to help parents/teachers to check their child's development. Early diagnosis and treatment of developmental delays can help give a child the best opportunity to reach their full potential. Each questionnaire contains simple questions for parents to answer about activities their child is (or is not) able to do.

The Ages & Stages Questionnaire®: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE) is a first level screening tool that is designed to identify children who may be at risk for social or emotional difficulties. It does not attempt to diagnose serious social or emotional disorders; it is a first step aid in identifying young children who may benefit from more in-depth evaluation and/or preventive interventions designed to improve their social or emotional competence.

Observation

Teacher observation: teachers maintain observation sheets, noting materials children have been working on any changes in behavior. These are maintained over the course of the school year and are referred to during teacher – parent conferences.

Behavioral Assessment form is used when behavior is of regular concern to the parent or teacher, and provides possible indicators which affect a child's behavioral change over the course of a day. When behavioral assessment forms are maintained, parents are notified and the information is made available for parents to read and discuss with the teachers.

Additionally, such notations are maintained to serve as the basis for the creation of a solid partnership plan of action between school and family, to decrease behaviors that do not serve the child or their community well.

Assessments (continued)

Assessment and Record Keeping

DRDP: The Desired Results Developmental Profile is completed at the conclusion of a child's two-month probationary period with TCU/MEISA. The DRDP reflects all areas of children development and learning, including cognitive skills, language, social-emotional development, approaches to learning, health and physical development.

PPVT: The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test is an optional assessment, administered during the spring and is reflective of a child's receptive and expressive vocabulary based on the English language ADD INFO .

Montessori Compass: Teachers maintain an online system which tracks the child's academic progress with materials over the course of the school year. This is referred to during parent – teacher conferences, and used for reference in preparing progress reports. This assessment is done via 'Transparent Classroom', with password access for parents. The Montessori Assessment reflects a 3 leveled indicator:

1. Beginning/Needs Attention: student has begun exposure to the skill or concept
2. Working on/Developing: the skill or concept is neither at the beginning stage, nor at a place of mastery, but student is working on this skill
3. Mastery: Child is proficient with the concept or skill

NOTE: All student information is kept confidential. Children's files are available to the parent, school personnel and state representatives.

Communications

Parent - Teacher Conferences: Parent – Teacher conferences are used as a guide for discussion of assessments.

Conference Evaluations: These are created each semester, and reflect written information concerning a child's academic and socio-emotional progress in school, including peer and adult interaction.

Progress reports: These tri-semester evaluations are provided to parents in a numbered format, and indicate both academic progress and socio-emotional development.

School Closure

School will be closed for holidays, certain conferences and in-service days. Please refer to your annual calendar or the school website for specific dates each year. As tuition is based on the days that school is in session, there is no deduction in tuition for these days. Tuition is not paid for school months, but reflects one total for the number of days when school is in session – divided into ten installments. Regardless of the number of days when school is open during the school year, the tuition installment remains that same, as it reflects one annual amount. If school is closed on a day your child attends school, you may not exchange it for another day. We encourage your positive support of teacher training/in-service days, as continued education is for the benefit of your child.

SUMMER CLOSURE: TCU/MEISA will be closed for one week during the month of August. This closure does not affect tuition.

WINTER AND SPRING BREAKS

Winter Break:

During the 2021-2022 school year, The Child Unique will be closed during Winter Break.

Spring Break:

During the 2021-2022 school year, we will close two days for Spring Break (Thursday and Friday). Please update your copy of the Admissions Agreement.

Last Day of School / School Closure:

The last day of school for the 2021-2022 school year is Wednesday, June 8, 2022. Please update your copy of the Admissions Agreement.

School will be closed the following Thursday and Friday for Staff Development.

June and Summer Camps

Each school year ends in mid-June. Tuition is paid in 10 installments throughout the year. June tuition is applied as last month's tuition payment for the following year, and does not constitute payment for the entire month of June.

Full-time parents whose child(ren) are enrolled in the summer program are not responsible for paying the summer camp registration fee; however, all other summer camp costs still apply and will be **billed monthly**.

Tuition

Please refer to the Admission Agreement (at the end of the handbook) for tuition and fee details.

Tuition Deposit

A **non-refundable** payment in the amount of one tuition installment is due on or before June 1st, or upon receipt of a letter of confirmation of your child's enrollment, (whichever occurs first). This amount will apply to the student's final month of enrollment at TCU/MEISA.

Tuition Payments

1. The tuition for the school year (September through June) is based on an annual charge, which is divided into ten installments.
2. Tuition is determined according to the number of open school days.
3. Each installment is of an equal amount, and **is not reduced** for **holidays, illness, absence, vacations, teacher training days**, minimum days or school closure.
4. Monthly tuition installments are due before or by the 1st day of the month.
5. Tuition payments have a five-day grace period and will be charged a \$25.00 late fee at close of day, on the fifth of each month. After the 15th day, an additional \$25.00 charge will be assessed.

Payments must be made in one of two ways:

1. Monthly installment options:
 - a) Pay online via the payment link in the monthly tuition invoice with debit card
 - b) Automatic bill pay set-up
 - c) Monthly payments by check
2. Annual (one time) or semi-annual (twice a year): paid by check, made payable to TCU/MEISA. Annual or semi-annual tuition **may not** be paid via credit card or debit card.

Automatic Payments:

A scheduled of automatic payments through your personal bank should be set-up so that all payments arrive to TCU/MEISA by the first of the month.

Please address any tuition questions to the **bookkeeper or principal**.
(See *Appendix: Admissions Agreement*)

Probation

Probation

The initial two months of school are an adjustment period during which time, a child's placement in school will be assessed by a teacher and/or principal. If teachers have a concern, the principal will follow up with additional assessment.

The principal and teacher will then meet with the parent to discuss the concern to set up a plan of action for the benefit of the child. A timeline for progress, assessment and additional intervention is drawn up and agreed upon. It is possible that additional outside assessment will be requested, at cost to the parent.

If it becomes necessary for the school to request withdrawal of a child from the school, any unused portion of the last month's tuition will be refunded.

If parents decide to withdrawal during the probationary period, the requirement of a 30-day notice is waived. The pro-rated amount of the current tuition paid will be refunded within 30. All fees (registration, materials and building) are **non refundable**.

Withdrawal during the probation period is the only condition under which last month's tuition deposit can be refunded.

Suspension/Expulsion Prevention Plan

Suspension/Expulsion Prevention Plan

When addressing the needs of children with learning and behavior challenges at TCU/MEISA, we will attempt to determine the “best” course of action for these students, the classroom community at-large, the classroom teaching team, and school compliance, retention and harmony. The school will use an action plan in conjunction with S.M.A.R.T. goals to reduce the possibility of suspension and expulsion in school.

S.M.A.R.T. goals are

Specific (they must be concrete)

Measurable (progress must be evident in data)

Attainable (a goal that is within reach of the child’s current capacities) Relevant (appropriate to the child’s developmental stage and level) Timely (progress must be evident within a period lasting no longer than 4-6 weeks).

After discussion with the parent(s) the plan may include the following steps

- 1) Observation by Director or leadership team member
- 2) Classroom team discussion regarding concern, situations or questions raised
- 3) Discussions to define what we know and don’t know (develop list of possible questions for parent(s))
- 4) Engage parent(s) and prepare a 4 to 6 week plan in partnership encompassing both home and school.
- 5) Implement and engage in weekly plan review with team and parent(s)
- 6) Follow up observation
- 7) Engage parent for plan review for adjustments or recommendations

Dismissal and Withdrawal

Grounds for Dismissal

TCU/MEISA makes every effort to maintain a zero expulsion rate, however the school also reserves the right to terminate enrollment, should the behavior of a child or parent cause undue harm to the school community, or if it is determined that the school is unable to meet the student or family needs. Such notice will be discussed with the family and provided in writing.

TCU/MEISA reserves the right to dismiss a family for the following reasons:

- Failure of the family to follow an agreed upon behavioral plan of action
- Falsification of the child's age
- Continual behavioral difficulties, following implementation of behavioral action plan and target deadlines and S.M.A.R.T. goals.
- Serious slanderous or inappropriate parental behavior, after intervention and agreement of correction
- Failure to comply with the Basic Policies or Admissions Agreement of the school
- Failure to pay tuition and fees and/or set up an approved payment plan with the Administrator

Withdrawal/Refund/Modification

Parents choosing to withdraw their child must provide the school with **thirty days' written notification in order to be able to use the last month's tuition deposit.** Any prepaid tuition not covering the final thirty days following proper notification in writing, will be refunded. All fees such as registration, building and materials are non-refundable.

Parents, who withdraw their child after March 1st of the current school year, must pay tuition through the end of the school year. After March 1st of the current school year, the tuition deposit will only apply as the tenth installment. Full tuition will still be due for the 7th (March 1st) and 8th (April 1st) and 9th (May 1st) installments. (*see tuition payment schedule*).

TCU/MEISA reserves the right to modify any of the conditions of this agreement upon 30 days written notice to the parent or guardian. Changes in the rates for those children whose care is funded at government-prescribed rates will be made on the effective date of the government rate change without prior notice.

Undocumented Student Protection Policy

This policy provides protocols for staff in case of immigration enforcement actions at or near **The Child Unique/Montessori Elementary Intermediate School of Alameda**. These protocols are neither intended to interfere with the enforcement of federal immigration laws nor political in nature. The purpose of **TCU/MEISA's** safe-space policy is to keep our services accessible to all families and uphold core constitutional principles of educational equity and access.

Under applicable California and federal law, all children—regardless of documentation—have a right to an education. As such, the **TCU/MEISA** does not collect records relating to the citizenship of its students. This means that TCU/MEISA will have no information to provide to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents if such materials were requested.

Additionally, the city of Alameda affirmed its status as a Sanctuary City with a resolution on Jan. 20, 2017 and The Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) Board of Education passed a resolution to declare itself a “safe haven,” guaranteeing that it will aim to protect the identities of undocumented students, as well as their families.

As a school **TCU/MEISA** is a “**sensitive location**” where immigration enforcement actions should not generally take place. References to **TCU/MEISA** properties as used in this policy include its three campuses; Taylor Campus located at 6th St., Alameda, CA; Pacific Campus located at 2212 Pacific Ave., Alameda, CA; Encinal Campus located at 2226 Encinal Ave., Alameda, CA. We recognize that having federal immigration agents on our property would discourage parents from bringing their children to **TCU/MEISA** as well as accessing services on behalf of their children. It's our responsibility as early care and education professionals to ensure our program is safe, reliable, and accessible to every family we serve or who seeks our services.

If agents of authority come on to our campus staff must adhere to the following protocol:

- The Head of School or Director are the only persons authorized to speak with an agent or other authority. Please ask agents of authority to wait outside the school until either the Head of School or Director arrives.
- It is our policy that no agents of authority, including ICE, may speak with any student without parent or legal representation authorized by parent present.

Undocumented Student Protection Policy (continued)

- If there is a warrant or court order which requests conversation with a student or staff person it must be reviewed and ensured by our School attorney Littler Mendelson P.C. prior to any conversation with students or staff.
- Student's parents will be contacted and they will be responsible for contacting legal counsel for their child.
- Our policy is that the parent or legal representative MUST be present for any agents of authority to speak with a student, unless the agents have a legal warrant to speak with the student.
- The school mental health support is afforded families, staff or students by Bay area Clinica; Associates or East Bay Agency for Children should this support be needed.

Appendix:

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