櫻花幼稚園
Sakura Montessori International School



PARENT HANDBOOK

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I. OPEN LETTER

Sakura Montessori International School would like to extend our greetings to students, parents and your families.

As parents, we all want to bring the best for our children. We seek and acquire every source of knowledge that can be beneficial to our children's physical and intellectual development even before they are born.

We give our unconditional love and fullest attention to our children and experience the whole range of emotions watching them grow up each day. We are concerned about choosing a reliable institution to enroll our children in when they are ready to start preschool.

To that end, the school wishes to accommodate the children's learning experiences in a safe educational environment which fully equips them with the necessary skills and knowledge for their all-round development.

The Sakura Montessori International School System is driven to create a friendly and cheerful preschool environment that properly applies the Montessori method in combination with the essence of Japanese early childhood educational method and Vietnamese standard curriculum. Thanks to this, students will have the chance to develop their thinking and virtues at a maximum through engaging activities aiming at stimulating their creativity.

Following the motto "Unconditional love and behaviors within limits", Sakura Montessori prides itself on being a trustworthy preschool system for parents and inspiring students to pursue their dreams and gain early enthusiasm for learning and exploring.

This handbook is designed to assist parents in grasping the educational philosophy, regulations, and policies of the Sakura Montessori International School System with the aim of fostering the relationship between parents, the school and its teachers during their children's attendance at Sakura Montessori. Parents please kindly peruse and follow the regulations and policies stated herein. Should you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We are always pleased to welcome you to the Sakura Montessori International School System so that together we watch the amazing development of our children at Sakura Montessori.

Sakura Montessori International School

II. ABOUT THE SAKURA MONTESSORI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

1. History of establishment and development

The first Sakura Montessori International School was established in August 2011, laying the foundation for the development of the Montessori method in Vietnam.

As a member of the International Association of Progressive Montessori (IAPM) and the American Montessori Society (AMS), Sakura Montessori International School applies the standard Montessori method to its pedagogical approaches.

At present, Sakura Montessori International Schools are based in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh, Quang Ninh, Hai Phong, Thai Binh, etc.

With the aim of offering Vietnamese students the chance to have learning experiences in a modern education environment and supporting their comprehensive development during their first 6 years, the Sakura Montessori International School System has developed the following academic programs:

1. International Program – English
2. International Program – Japanese
3. Bilingual Plus Program
4. Bilingual Program
5. Standard Program

2. Vision and mission

2.1. Vision

Sakura Montessori International School is the leading preschool system in adopting the Montessori method in Vietnam. We pledge to offer an education dedicated to peace, nurturing spirit and respecting each student's natural pace of development. Accordingly, students are facilitated to reach their fullest potential, foster their pursuit of lifelong learning to possess independent thinking and a cooperative spirit, and become responsible citizens in the modern society.

2.2. Mission

The Sakura Montessori International School System is committed to the mission of delivering a well-prepared environment with inviting hands-on materials that stimulates each student's autodidactic abilities, independent thinking and creativity. We give prominence to the relationship between students, parents and the school in establishing an environment abounded with love and self-discipline in which students respect themselves and others.

3. Core values

Embracing an insightful educational philosophy, the Sakura Montessori International School System hopes to instill in its generations of students the following core values:

3.1 Independence: Students develop their independence and autodidactic abilities.

3.2 Confidence: Students are independent, proactive in thinking, and confident in showing their personalities and abilities.

3.3 Self-discipline: Adhering to the motto "Unconditional love and behaviors within limits", students develop their own self-discipline.

3.4 Respect: Students respect themselves, the environment, and others.

3.5 Collaboration: Students develop their teamwork skills, learning how to work together and collaborate with others to achieve collective success.

3.6 Love: Students learn how to foster relationships, affection and mutual trust.

III. CURRICULA OF THE SAKURA MONTESSORI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

1. Montessori education

Montessori education is a method predicated upon the studies and experience of the Italian physician and educator Maria Montessori (1870–1952). Montessori education is centered on the 6 following learning areas:

- ***Practical life*** aims at facilitating students' independence through offering them hands-on experiences such as wiping the table, cutting a cake, etc. Students can form and develop essential skills of self-care, environmental protection as well as manners, courtesy, etc.
- ***Sensorial work***: Students utilize all senses (sight, touch, hearing, taste, and smell) to explore the surrounding world and identify, compare, and classify different objects. Thanks to this, students have a more comprehensive perception of objects and phenomena. They become more sensitive, autonomous, and responsive to the changes in the surrounding world.
- ***Mathematics****:* Mathematical lessons in Montessori education instruct students how to reason and apply mathematics. They have the chance to learn basic concepts of mathematics. Accordingly, students approach mathematics in a natural way, which develops their logical and orderly reasoning.
- ***Language****:* Specifically designed lessons will enhance the linguistic ability of students in the 4 skills of Listening, Speaking, Writing and Reading. This will build the foundation for developing proficient linguistic ability, which ultimately prepare students for the coming grades.
- ***Culture****:* Students have the chance to discover the world through lessons of Science, History, and Geography. For this reason, the knowledge lingers in their memory longer and their curiosity is stimulated for exploring new things.
- ***Art****:* Art in Montessori education plays a supporting role in building up the creative mind and aesthetic sense in preschoolers, reinforcing their observational powers, and encouraging them to show their personalities.

2. English Language Arts Program (ELA)

Sakura Montessori has been collaborating with the Mount Vernon School – a U.S. top 10 most innovative school – in designing the ELA Program for young learners. Based upon the U.S. Common Core Standards, the Program aims at promoting students' all-round

development in language, phonics, vocabulary, structures, and enabling their achievement of age-based learning goals.

The initial building blocks of theme-based phonics and vocabulary expose students of 0 – 3 years old to the English language and allow them to steadily move from using basic English to acquiring more linguistic skills upon reaching the age of 3 – 6. Particularly, the reading skill is highlighted as students are guided through the whole process from learning single words and blending words, to constructing sentences.

Incorporating extensive learning resources and being delivered by the native English-speaking teachers, the Program offers students the chances to practice and enhance their second language learning ability through various activities such as puppet shows, show and tell, mock interviews (one-on one conversations between teachers and students), and crafts. Thanks to that, students will be more engaged and confident in English-using activities and experiences.

3. Culture - Physical Education – Art

- ***Physical Education Program***

The Physical Education Program designed by the Education Research and Pedagogy Council of the Sakura Montessori International School System allows students to harness their physical strength and motor skills, as well as improve their flexibility and concentrationn.

+ The Program intended for the 0-3 age group aims at enhancing students' dexterity, forming the habits of health protection, improving initial movement qualities (body balance, movements of arms, hands and fingers, coordination of hands, feet and eyes, etc.) and concentration as well as memorization.

+ The Program intended for the 3-6 age group aims at boosting students' physical strength through gross motor activities appropriate to their age, ultimately imparting a love for sports onto them, raising the awareness of physical well-being maintenance, shaping self-discipline, and promoting intelligence.

- ***Aqua-Tots Swimming Program (applicable to the Campuses offering the Program)***

The Program is delivered by Aqua-Tots Swim School – a leading American swim course provider, an active member of the United States Swim School Association (USSA), and a strategic partner for Sakura Montessori.

The Program offers safe swim classes for children following an eight-level road map, ultimately serving to equip them with essential survival skills and various swimming types in order for them to avoid drowning incidents or to deal with unexpected events while into deep pools or suffering water swallow.

At Sakura Montessori, the Aqua-Tots Swimming Program is intended for the 3-6 age group. At the commencement of the academic year, Sakura Montessori works in collaboration with Aqua-Tots Swim School on planning the curriculum appropriate to each student and setting out the timetables. Aqua-Tots Swim School will email parents regarding the completed registration as well as reminding them of class schedules on a

weekly basis so that they have a good grasp of the information and prepare swimwear for their children.

- ***Echo Music Program***

  The Program is anchored on the Montessori-based music education insights of Frank Leto – a Montessori teacher and a music composer – in combination with the three influential methods of Kodaly, Dalcroze and Orff-Schulwerk.

  The Program exposes students to the concepts of sound and timbre, pitch and duration, which are accompanied by various engaging musical activities such as using pitched/unpitched instruments, body percussion, getting to experience visual music and the piano, and learning about the typical music of Vietnam and other countries. These are ultimately expected to awake students' musical sensitivity and infuse the love for music in them.

- ***Vietnamese Program***

  The Program facilitates students to develop their verbal language and learn decent manners in everyday conversations. The love for native tongue is imbued with students through lessons on rhymes and inflection in poems, folk songs, stories, etc.

IV. CHILD CARE AT THE SAKURA MONTESSORI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

1. Medical/Health care

In addition to fully providing student health information before their enrollment, parents should promptly inform the school of any emerging health issue of their child for the school's timely attention and support during their attendance at school. If the health problem affects the child's academic performance at school, parents should take their child to a medical facility for a health check-up. If the doctor confirms the child's qualified health condition for academic activities, parents ask for a Confirmation Note and submit it to the school. If the doctor confirms the child's unqualified health condition for academic activities, parents should contact the Customer Service Department for completing the deferment/withdrawal procedure. Parents take full responsibility if providing late, inadequate, or inaccurate information of their child's health record to the school.

1.1. Medication authorization

For students' safety, the school kindly requests parents to cooperate and comply with the regulations on sending medication and giving instructions on how to administer medication as follows:

- The school will only accept the medication sent with a doctor's prescription (parents sign the prescription to confirm their responsibility and the medication quality) and a fully completed "**Medication Authorization Form**" (template). The prescription must bear the name and signature of the doctor. Parents are requested to provide adequate information on the medication's side effects which their child used to suffer from while being administered the medication. For tablets/powder/granules, they must be intact in their

original packaging. The school will not accept unfinished, traditional Asian or home-made medicines.

- Apart from medication requiring a doctor's prescription, the school will also accept saline nose drops, digestive enzymes supplements and syrup.
- The school will not accept dietary supplements or tonics without a doctor's recommendation.
- For all types of medications: Parents must provide detailed storage instructions in the *"**Medication Authorization Form**"* (whether stored at normal temperature or in the fridge, etc.). The packaging of finished medication/remaining tablets or unfinished packets will be sent back to parents. For liquid medication, a spoon and a measuring cup (unit: ml) must be included. The medication must be well preserved in a box or a container with labels specifying the expiry date (being not expired is a must) and manufacturing origin.
- Parents of the student who commutes by school bus can have the Medication Authorization Form and the medication sent to the child's class teacher through the bus monitor. The school will not accept medication authorization via KidsOnline software.

1.2. Hygiene

- In the interests of hygiene and disease contagion control within school, students are mandated to clean their hands properly with hand wash before and after having meals, after playing or using the toilet. Teachers are also required to strictly comply with the school's regulations on hand washing.
- The school conducts its daily hygienic practices as follows:
  + Teachers: Clean and arrange the teaching materials before 08:00 and after 17:00.
  + Janitors:
    - Clean classrooms before 07:30;
    - Mop classroom floors after students' mealtime;
    - Clean up campus areas as assigned in the duty roster;
    - Clean up the entire school and all classrooms with Chloramine B at the end of the day.
- The clean-up is to be conducted 2-3 times per day and the whole school is to be cleaned with Chloramine B at the end of each week in the case of an epidemic.

1.3. Daily health monitoring

- Upon everyday arrival, each student is to be thoroughly observed for timely identification of any abnormal symptoms.
- If a student is unwell while at school, his/her parents will be promptly notified and requested to pick the child up within **1 hour**. The unwell student will be isolated in the medical room under the supervision of the teacher and the medical staff until his/her parents arrive. Parents should arrange time to pick their child up upon receiving the school's notification.

- In urgent cases, the school will give first aid and take the student to the hospital/clinic and immediately inform his/her parents of the problem. All treatment expenses will be incurred by the parents.

1.4. Periodic health check-up

- Periodic health check-up for students is conducted twice a school year by doctors from healthcare facilities which are legitimately granted the operation licenses to provide medical examination and treatment services. The results reports are sent to parents within 02 weeks after the check-up. The school will not carry out any compensated health check-up for students who were absent from the scheduled check-up regardless of the reason.
- The school measures students' height and weight once every month. The results will be forwarded to parents via KidsOnline software on the 10th of every month.

1.5. Contagious diseases

❖ Students who suffer from the following symptoms or diseases must be treated and monitored at home until fully recovered:

- Persistent cough or influenza
- Vomiting or diarrhea.
- Body temperature of above 37.5 degrees Celsius.
- Parasites such as lice.
- Highly contagious skin diseases.
- Chicken pox;
- Measles – Rubella;
- Hand – foot – mouth disease;
- Infectious types of influenza virus such as A/H5N1, A/H1N1, etc.
- Mumps;
- Rotavirus disease;
- Conjunctivitis/Pinkeye;
- Pertussis (whooping cough);
- Hepatitis;
- Impetigo/Scabies;
- Other contagious diseases as regulated by the law.

Note: For other contagious diseases, the school will have detailed guidelines for each case as stipulated by the Law;

1.6. Environment standard for outdoor activities

The school always keeps abreast of the **air quality index** via the website http://www.aqicn.org and via reliable media as well as monitors the **heat index** during summer to adjust its outdoor learning and playing activities for the health safety of students.

2. Diet and nutrition

2.1. Menus

- Menus are formulated in accordance with the nutrition standards stipulated by the law and the consultation of the school nutrition specialists.

- The varied selection of menus ensures a balanced nutrient ratio and ample calories for a day depending on each age group.
- Additionally, the menus also incorporate fresh milk for the sufficient nutritional quality.

2.2. Food origin

- The school rigorously selects and controls the origin of food sources based on the following quality criteria:
  + Transparent supplier profiles.
  + Valid certificates/credentials corresponding to each commodity.

  The processes of food delivery – receipt, preservation, preparing and cooking at the school kitchen are in strict conformity with the existing procedure under the school's close supervision.
- The school uses organic/VietGap/natural clean food sources from reliable suppliers stringently in line with the standardized food safety and hygiene.
- To offer healthy diets for students, the school does not use MSG (Monosodium Glutamate) or broth mix and abstains from providing fried or greasy food, genetically modified food, or processed food such as sausages, hams, etc.
- The list will be updated via KidsOnline software for parents' reference in the case of changes at the beginning of each school year.

2.3. School nutrition specialists

- The diet and nutrition for students are designed by the nutrition specialists of the Sakura Montessori International School System with years of research and consultation on school nutrition. Through survey and evaluation of students' needs, diets, tastes, food quantity, nutrient balance corresponding to age groups, genders, preference, regions, health, etc., the Sakura Montessori International School System has established a benchmark for nutritional quality and a bank of dishes together with a set of daily menus applied in all campuses.
- The school regularly organizes nutrition workshops. At those workshops, the nutrition specialists will answer all questions and offer parents advice on proper nutrition for students.

2.4. Notes for parents

- During the first days at school, students may be unaccustomed to the food and schedule, so losing weight and eating less will be inevitable. Class teachers will encourage students so that they will gradually get acquainted with the food and table manners at school. It will be of great help if parents could stimulate and feed their child solid foods such as boiled vegetables, fruit, small fish pieces etc. and supplement with milk or prepare his/her favorite food at home for dinner to ensure adequate energy during the first few weeks when the child eats less at school.
- **Students suffering from food allergies**: To ensure health and nutritional safety for students, parents are expected to discuss with the school in detail about the foods that their

child is allergic to with the doctor's confirmation and prepare food to bring to school on a daily basis. The school will assume no responsibility if parents provide late, inadequate, inaccurate information about their child's allergies and/or refuse to bring replacement food to school for the child, which may consequently lead to the child suffering from an allergy due to consuming inappropriate food. Parents are fully responsible for the foods and any items to preserve them sent to school for their child. In this case, the school will suspend the child's meals at school and refund the meal fees.

- The school does not receive extra food or snacks except for powdered milk or fresh milk to feed the child at 16:00 before dismissal. In the case of extra food required by the doctor's recommendation, parents should send the food and submit the ***Request Form for Sending Food to Schoo*** bearing full signature of either parent.
- If 01 student exhibiting the symptoms of digestive disorder for which parents demand food sample be tested, the school is willing to cooperate and all relevant fees are incurred by the parents.

V. SAFETY – SECURITY AT SCHOOL

1. Control of school entry – exit

The purpose of controlling school entry – exit is to secure the safety of students, teachers and school staff as well as protect school assets and facilities. The school kindly requests parents to cooperate as follows:

- Parents must wear parent cards for every pickup/drop-off of their child and while moving around the school campus.
- Any parent who forgets to bring or has lost the parent card should follow the instructions of the Security Department for registering and being issued with a guest card before entering the school.
- Those who lost their parent cards or wish to change the pick-up person should promptly contact the Customer Service Department to deactivate the old cards and to be issued with the new ones.

  Note: The school issues 02 free cards at the time of enrolment. For the request of new/extra card(s), the fee charged is 100,000VND/magnetic card or 25,000VND/paper card. 05 cards per student are provided, at the very most.
- Upon entry into the school, parents are expected to wear presentable attire and have proper language and behavior while in communication with the Management, Principal Advisory Board, school staff, other parents and students. The school has the right to refuse to welcome those who violate the code of conduct set out by the school (refer to ***Appendix 01 – What the school expects from parents***).

2. Receipt and delivery of personal items sent to students by parents

- The school's Security Department will not deliver any goods, items, etc. sent by parents or customers to anyone in the school.

- Parents who wish to give personal items to their child should bring them to the child's classroom and directly hand them over to the class teacher.

3. Regulations on arrival and dismissal times

- School hours start at 08:00 and end at 16:00, Monday to Friday.
- The school receives students from 07:00, Monday to Friday.
- In the afternoon dismissal: Students who commute by school bus depart from school at 16:00; those who are picked up by their parents will be dismissed at 16:00. Parents should notify the school of any early pickup.
- Starting from 17:00, parents will pick their child up from after-school supervision class.
- Please refer to ***Appendix 02 – Regulations on arrival and dismissal.***

4. Accidents and injuries

- With parents' consent, school teachers and staff members are allowed to give first aid and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) to the child. In the case of one child's injury or other incident, the school will immediately inform his/her parents by calling the number(s) provided by them. Parents will be held fully responsible for any emerging problems caused by the school's failure to reach them. (Parents don't pick up the phone; parents changed their phone numbers without giving the school advance notice)
- In that case, the school will urgently call 115 and seek for a medical provider to have the student treated as soon as possible. The school claims full responsibility for the accidents or injuries occurring to any students due to its negligence.
- Parents agree that aggressions or conflicts that lead to fighting (scratching, biting, pinching, etc.) and causing injuries among students during school activities are inevitable. The school will take every precaution to control these cases as best as we can to ensure the safety of students.

5. Temporary school closure due to unforeseen reasons

Based upon the state agency's decisions regarding temporary school closure due to extreme weather, natural disasters, epidemics, etc., the school will make its decision on temporary closure for students' safety; particularly students will stay home and parents will be notified of that. The school will not conduct make-up classes for the days off unless otherwise stipulated in other regulations of the state agency.

6. Fire drills

The school installs fire protection devices on every floor/in all classrooms in accordance with the fire safety and prevention regulations, and holds annual fire drills and basic training sessions on fire fighting and prevention for teachers, school staff and students.

VI. SCHOOL REGULATIONS

1. Dress code

Students are to wear clothes/uniforms as required below:

No.	Item	Regulation	Time
1.	Uniforms	- Summer/Winter uniforms as regulated	Monday and Friday
2.	Swimwear	- Swimwear (two-piece swimsuit is recommended for convenient use of toilet). - Bath towel, float. - Swim goggles, swimming cap. - Swim diapers (for students who cannot control their needs to pee/poo).	In line with curriculum
3.	Extracurricular activities/events	- Uniforms/costumes in line with the themes/requirements of the activities/ events. - Sports shoes/Sandals. - Uniform hat (if requested). - Water bottle (if requested).	In line with curriculum

Notes:

- Parents should put simple shoes or sandals on their child which he/she can put on/take off by himself/herself.
- No high heels, flats, sandals or flip-flops are allowed in PE classes.
- Those not preparing the requested clothing and items will not be allowed to participate in PE or swimming classes (if any).
- Laundry bags must be sent to school daily.
- Students must not bring jewelry, money or valuable items such as gold, diamond, gems, etc. to school. For safety reasons, the school suggests parents not let their child wear earrings, rings, bracelets, anklets, or badges to school.
- Clothes and other items of the child must be labelled with his/her name.
- The school is not liable for loss or damage to any student's personal items or belongings if his/her parents fail to label/write their child's name on them or let their child bring valuables to school.

2. Regulations on leave of absence

2.1. Time of notification

- The semi-boarding service fees will be refunded if parents request for their child's absence prior to **12:00 PM of the previous day** and notify the school of the child's absence reason as well as his/her specific symptoms if he/she is unwell.
- Parents should inform the school of their child's expected absence duration in advance if possible for the school's ease of monitoring.
- If the student returns to school before the absence/deferment period ends, parents should modify the Request for Absence or notify the school via KidsOnline software 1 day in advance. If parents inform the school before 08:30 of their child's returning date, they

should prepare breakfast or have the child eat breakfast at home; the school will offer lunch and afternoon snack for the child and do not refund that day's breakfast fee.

2.2. Form of notification

- Parents send the request for absence to the school via KidsOnline software.
- The school will refuse any requests for absence which are made by phoning, messaging, or speaking, etc. to teachers or the Customer Service Department/Enrolment Department of the school.

3. Code of conduct for students

Behaviors which are not allowed at the Sakura Montessori International School System include:

- Provoking, fighting or showing other aggressive behaviors.
- Insulting, bullying, or using foul language.
- Not complying with school rules and regulations during class hours or break time.
- When a student has a negative attitude, depending on the level of severity, a teacher will talk to him/her in private and may promptly inform his/her parent to pick the child up. The school will discuss with parents for remedial actions if their child constantly has bad behavior that is likely to cause danger to himself/herself or his/her peers.

4. Regulations on bus service

- The Sakura Montessori International School System only provides bus service for students over 24 months old.
- Parents register the bus service by filling in the ***Enrolment Document*** before their child starts his/her enrollment or by contacting the Customer Service Department upon demand for bus service during the child's attendance at school.
- Please refer to the ***Regulations on bus service*** for more information.

5. Regulations for graduating students

- Graduating students will end their school attendance on June 30th. Any graduating student's request for extending school attendance to a few months in the new school year shall not be granted

VII. PARENTS – SCHOOL CONNECTION

1. Cooperation between parents and school

1.1. Mental preparation for students before enrolment

- Starting preschool marks a first turning point in each student's life. Any child might get anxious and afraid while in new surroundings. This is because the child has to stay away from his/her parents and is exposed to a totally new environment which has a difference in space and schedule. Hence, parents should psych the child up beforehand to boost his/her confidence.
- Before school visit, parents should talk with their child about his/her upcoming schooling. The child will be mentally prepared if he/she knows what awaits him/her.

- During the school visit, parents should give their child ample time to gradually get accustomed to the school, the classrooms and the teachers. This will make a good impression about schooling on the child.
- After the visit, parents should also take time to talk to the child about the school, the classrooms, the toys, friends and teachers to instill a familiar feeling in the child. The child will perceive the trust that parents put in the new environment and find schooling not scary but a great place to experience.
- In addition, parents should shape their child's habits at home similar to those at school so that the child can quickly adapt to the preschool environment. Let the child choose a backpack or an item that he/she likes and prepare school supplies together for the first school day.
- The manners of communication and interaction between parents and teachers also gives the child the sense of trust between his/her family members and class teachers, henceforth forming the initial trust with his/her teachers.

1.2. How to greet and say goodbye to teachers

- In the evening of the day before his/her first school day, parents should instruct their child on how to greet and say goodbye. The next morning, parents should show their tenderness and encouragement by smiling and saying: "**What a wonderful day!**" or "**You are now grown up enough to go to school!**". Parents also need to spend time preparing breakfast and dressing their child in comfy clothes. Let him/her dress on his/her own and help him/her put on shoes if necessary. Also let him/her bring his/her favorite items to school. Let the child walk into the school carrying his/her belongings by himself/herself.
- Parents say "**Hello teacher**" to the teacher, and "**Goodbye**" to the child. Firmly but gently say goodbye but also let the child know that parents will surely pick him/her up after school, and then allow the teacher to take the child into the classroom. Remember to smile at the child when saying goodbye. At that moment, the teacher will soothe the child and help him/her gradually integrate into the new environment. Most students will soon be thrilled to join classroom activities in just the first few minutes if they find the activities interesting. If a student keeps crying a lot after his/her parents have left, the school will phone and advise the parents.
- Upon the pick-up of their child, parents should express their delight when seeing him/her. Do not carry the child but bend down and say: "**Hello my dear!**", and let him/her walk to the vehicle on his/her own.
- Gladly ask or comfort the child if he/she gets emotional when seeing parents. Greet the teacher loudly by calling her name, for example: "**Good afternoon Ms. A!**". The teacher in turn greets the parents the same way. Gradually, the child will form the habit of greeting upon arrival and dismissal.

1.3. How to encourage students during their first days at school

- Rather than asking the child: "**What did you learn in school today?"** or **"What did you do in school today?**" parents should hold the child's hand and together stroll around the school compound and talk about the place where he/she is studying.
- On the days following, parents should avoid asking questions similar to those above because the child might not like to "give a report" after a long day at school. Encourage him/her to willingly share with parents about what he/she liked or experienced by taking him/her around the school areas or asking "**Did you have fun today**?"
- Regularly mention the names of class teachers and some close fellow students so that the child can memorize their names and tell stories about them at home.
- Promptly discuss with the teacher about any atypical things or your concerns or needs for the teacher's support in a joint effort to make the best learning environment to the child.

1.4. Birthday

- Birthday is a special day for every student. Every birthday party celebrated at the school strengthens the child's bond with his/her teachers and fellow students. Birthday party at the school is organized once a month for all students born in the same month. The school will send invitation letters to parents whose children have birthdays in that month. Parents are encouraged to participate in the party at the school with their children.
- Any parents who wish to celebrate the birthday party for their child on his/her exact birthday should contact the class teacher at least 01 week in advance and send the ***Request Form***. Class teachers will organize a birthday party in the classroom following the Montessori method. In this case, parents prepare pictures of their child's growth milestones through the years. The foods sent to school must not be expired and should be healthy. Soft drinks, ice cream, lollipops, jelly, and cold drinks are not recommended. The school is a place where students have happy memories with their peers on their birthdays celebrated in the Montessori way. Therefore, parents should not bring entertainment activities to school such as magic shows, circus shows, clowns twisting balloons, etc., or decorate the party with any types of balloons, or use loudspeakers, noisy music etc.

1.5. "Show and Tell"

- "Show & Tell" is a learning activity taking place during the circle time. It allows students to harness their communication, expression and presentation skills, and improve their confidence in front of an audience.
- Depending on each week's theme, teachers choose an appropriate topic for the Show & Tell activity. Teachers will send parents a notification regarding the activity's content in advance so that parents and their child can gear up for it. Parents should prepare school supplies for their child following the teachers' instructions and rehearse with the child at home so that he/she will get ready for the activity.

1.6. Monthly learning project

Towards offering better learning experiences and promoting an extensively interactive environment for students, the school conducts monthly learning project sessions based on the themes of Science, Art, Culinary or Japanese Culture subjects. In age-mixed settings,

students have the chance to interact, explore, experience, and foster their collaboration and teamwork skills. They learn from one another and acquire knowledge unconsciously through the first-hand experiences or "learning by doing".

1.7. Archive of students' work and products

- Throughout the school attendance, students will be engaged in various activities and eventually will have their own works and products. Those may be drawings or works of math, language, etc.
- Some works and products are sent back to parents every Friday while others will be archived in the student's yearly portfolio. These works and products will be labelled with dates. Teachers will return the portfolios to parents in the parent-teacher conference at the end of school year so that parents can keep and appreciate their child's works and products during their time at the school.

1.8. Lost and found

Clothes and items which are found without names written on will be put in a **"Basket of Lost and Found"** at the lobby. Every Friday, parents should check **the "Basket of Lost and Found"** to find the child's belongings. After one month, all items left are collected and given away to charity.

2. Means of communication

2.1. Academic calendar

- The academic calendar will be sent to parents at the beginning of each school year. The new school year commences from July and ends in June of the following year. Holiday days, Tet Holiday, winter/Christmas break, summer break, events, and field trips are scheduled in the academic calendar.
- The school will schedule a complete one-week break without conducting make-up classes if:
  + Holiday days/winter and summer breaks and the weekend is 01 day apart.
  + There is 1 business day between the days off.
- Students have a one-week winter break and a one-week summer break.
- Foreign teachers have a two-week winter break and a two-week summer break.
- Vietnamese teachers have a one-week winter break.
- ***Notes***: For the Campus based in Ho Chi Minh, the winter break is replaced by the Christmas break with the same duration.

2.2. Parent orientation

At the beginning of each school year, the school will hold an orientation meeting for parents without the participation of students. Teachers will discuss with parents about the changes in the coming school year and answer parents' questions.

Additionally, the school sets up 01 **"Coffee with the Principal"** session every month with the aim of providing parents with the helpful knowledge and hands-on experience of parenting. The workshops will take place as a series of events on specific themes and

content pertinent to the issues concerning or troubling parents in order to effectively assist them on their parenting journey.

2.3. Parent – teacher conference

Parent – teacher conference is organized twice a year at the end of each semester. The parent – teacher conference is conducted between 01 parent and 01 teacher at a time and lasts for a fixed length of time. Invitation letters will be sent to parents 02 weeks prior to the conference.

2.4. Classroom access and observation

Parents can register to observe one of their child's lessons with the maximum duration of 30 minutes per subject. Please note that some students may easily be distracted from their learning by their parents' presence in the classroom. Therefore, parents are kindly requested to follow the school's guides for visitors.

Please avoid discussing too much with the teachers about the child before or after class or in front of the child. During this time, the teachers have to pay close attention to all students in the classroom. Parents can make an appointment if they wish to discuss in private with the teachers.

2.5. Means of school – parents communication

The school employs the following means of communication with parents:

❖ **KidsOnline software:**

KidsOnline is the official means of communication between the school and parents.

Each student's parents have a maximum of 02 accounts to sign into KidsOnline software for connecting, interacting and exchanging information with the teachers/school:

+ Updates regarding the school and class.

+ Online messages.

+ Online request for absence.

+ Updates on health status of students

+ Updates on curriculum, menus, daily activities of students at school.

+ Survey and evaluation of teaching-learning quality.

Parents are expected to learn and keep abreast of the latest information on the school's policies, regulations, instructions, etc. by accessing KidsOnline software. The school is not responsible for notifying parents before uploading information via the software. The school is well aware of how attentive parents are towards their children and how committed they are to their continued support of and cooperation with the school in children education. To this end, parents are already cognizant of the useful source via KidsOnline software and have read and understood all content posted on the software.

<u>Note:</u> Regulations on the time frame of the school's responses to parents via KidsOnline software:

NO.	Content	Age group	Time
1	Parents receive the confirmation of attendance check.	- 0-3 years old - 3-6 years old	- 08:30 every day: For students arriving at school before 08:30. - Before 14:00: For students arriving at school after 08:30.
2	Parents receive the confirmation of the request for absence and messages (if any).	- 0-3 years old - 3-6 years old	- Before 08:30: For the absence requests and messages sent before 08:30. - Before 14:00: For the absence requests and messages sent from 08:30 to 13:00. - Before 17:30: For messages sent after 13:00.
3	Parents receive updates on their child's daily eating, sleeping, personal hygiene together with messages/ comments (if any)	0-3 years old	Before 17:30 every day.
	Parents receive updates on any atypical behavior of their child or unexpected problems occurring.	3-6 years old	Before 17:30 on the day when an unexpected problem occurs.
4	Parents receive weekly comments.	- 0-3 years old - 3-6 years old	Before 17:30 on Friday afternoons

❖ **Fanpage:**

The school's Facebook page serves not only as a site to share photos and videos of school activities and interchange parenting experience but also as a means through which the school sends announcements regarding events, emerging problems and notes when necessary.

Hanoi	https://www.facebook.com/SakuraMontessori.edu.vn/
Ho Chi Minh City	https://www.facebook.com/SakuraMontessori.HCM/
Haiphong	https://www.facebook.com/SakuraMontessori.HaiPhong
Ha Long	https://www.facebook.com/SakuraMontessori.HaLong
Thai Binh	https://www.facebook.com/Sakuramontessori.ThaiBinh

❖ **Website: https://sakuramontessori.edu.vn**

The website of the Sakura Montessori International School System is an official site where parents can find general information pertaining to the system/campus, facilities and amenities, faculty, curriculum, etc.

2.6. Community channel for parents

With the mission of providing a generation of students with the fullest opportunity for their physical, intellectual, and psychological development and inspiring and accompanying parents on their parenting journey, the Sakura Montessori International School System has established a Parenting Community with the purpose of sharing parenting knowledge not only for the parents of its students but also for all parents. The school regularly holds training sessions on parenting delivered by renowned domestic and foreign experts in order to help parents properly apply the Montessori method, Positive Discipline, information obtained at workshops on nutrition and physical, etc. to raising their child.

2.7. Change of information/service

❖ **Change of contact information:**

Parents should promptly inform the school's Customer Service Department of any changes in home address, email address, phone number(s) or emergency contact number.

Because a lot of school notifications and information are sent to parents via email and KidsOnline software, providing us with your up-to-date email address and phone number is of utmost importance.

❖ **Change of school service:**

Parents who wish to change school services such as bus service, school meal service, or purchase extra uniforms, deactivate/register parent cards, etc., should contact the Customer Service Department for instructions.

2.8. Discussion with teachers and guidance for them on how to address parents' questions

2.8.1. Discussion with teachers

- The school encourages the interchange of information between parents, teachers and the principal regarding some issues, especially positive changes of students. Short discussion can take place in person but if the conversation might take longer, parents can contact the Customer Service Department to book an appointment.
- During class hours, teachers are not allowed to use mobile phones. Therefore, parents who need to discuss about their child should call the school's number (appropriate calling times should be from 11:00 to 12:00 and from 16:00 to 17:00 daily). Either the Customer Service Department will confirm the information with the class teacher to update the parents on the child or the school will set up a time for the teacher to contact the parents as soon as possible.
- Parents should respect teachers' privacy by not reaching them outside working hours (except for emergencies) to discuss the information pertaining to the child.

2.8.2. Guidance for teachers on how to address parents' questions

- For issues which cannot be solved through parent-teacher meetings or for questions concerning the school's operations, parents can book an appointment to discuss in person with the school management through the Customer Service Department.
- Upon receipt of concerns, complaints, suggestions, etc. from parents, the Customer Service Department will promptly direct them to the related departments and the school

management. The departments then will hold a meeting to review and discuss the issues and will respond to parents within 48 hours after receipt of parents' opinions.

CONCLUSION

Providing students with the opportunity to develop their physique, emotion, knowledge, and skills is our privilege and mission. We make an unflagging effort to bring the best learning environment to our students. We, the Board of Management and teachers of the Sakura Montessori International School System, hope that all of us can closely cooperate for the benefit of the children. It is thanks to your trust and collaboration that we have the chance to take care of our lovely students.

The Parent Handbook, specifically drafted for parents of the system, is the property of the Sakura Montessori International School System. Any disclosure, copying, or distribution of the content herein without the school's consent is strictly prohibited.

The school reserves the right to modify, amend, or suspend the validity of any regulations or instructions mentioned herein for the purpose of facilitating the school's operational activities. The school will notify parents of any change.

Upon your receipt of this Handbook, including all notifications of modified content herein (if any) and no questions regarding thereof posed by parents, the school acknowledges that parents have read, understood and committed to fully following and implementing the parts specifying your duties herein.

Sakura Montessori International School

Appendix 01.
WHAT THE SCHOOL EXPECTS FROM PARENTS

1. Purpose

- Build a positive relationship between parents, the school and its teachers.
- Have parents to cooperate with the school in childcare and education.
- Ensure the health, safety, and comprehensive development of students.

2. What the school expects from parents

2.1. Attentive to teachers

The school pays constant heed to its teachers in order to motivate and improve their morale and work ethic for their excellent performance achieved. It is thanks to the fair benefits and compensation policies as well as the incentives specifically intended for each personnel that our school staff and teachers are completely devoted to their work. Therefore, parents who wish to express their appreciation to the teachers on special occasions and ceremonies should purely give them lovely flowers in the name of the Parents' Association. Other than that, the teachers are not allowed to receive any other types of gifts from parents. The school kindly requests parents to be in deference to and compliance with this rule.

2.2. Code of conduct

a) The school's principle is ***Unconditional love and behaviors within limits***. For this to happen, our teachers and staff treat all students equally with love, dedication and respect.

b) The school requests parents to have proper behavior both inside or outside the school premises. Behaviors of parents which may affect the school's reputation, prestige, or assets are strictly prohibited, including but not limited to:

- Interfering or threatening to interfere with the school's order and security or any of the school's normal operations or activities taking place in or out of the school premises.
- Destroying the school's properties.
- Attitudes/actions disrupting solidarity, causing troubles, rebelling against the school in any form.
- Attitudes/actions which are vulgar, insulting, libelous, slanderous, offensive, threatening, defamatory intended to cause scandal or public stir aimed at the school or any students/parents/teachers, school staff in any form.
- Use of violence against other people on the school premises, including corporal punishment of their own child.
- Smoking, taking illegal drugs, or consuming alcohol while on the school premises.
- Carrying arms, banned substances, dangerous tools or animals to the school premises.
- Uploading images/videos of any student (not their own child) in any form without the consent of that student's parents.
- Breach of the school's regulations on the security and confidentiality of information.
- Breach of other regulations of the law or of the school.

2.3. What happens if someone ignores or violates the code?

Depending on the matter and severity of the violation, the school shall have the right to decide which behavior is not in accordance with the code and shall take measures suitable to the situation, including:

- Request the parents to stop their unacceptable behavior;
- Request the parents to immediately leave the school premises;
- Hold a meeting with the parents to talk over the issue. Depending on how the meeting takes place, the school will decide on the remedial measures. The school has the right to stop providing childcare and education as well as other services for the parents.

In the cases where the unacceptable behavior is considered to be a criminal matter, the school will report this to the competent authorities for timely action.

Appendix 02.
REGULATIONS ON ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

1. Regulations on parking vehicles

- Parents are kindly requested to park their vehicles as per the school's instructions.
- **From 07:00 to 08:00 daily**: The assigned school staff members will pick up students at the lobby/school gate so that parents can depart quickly. Parking at the lobby/school gate must take no longer than 05 minutes.
- **After 08:00 daily**: Parents are kindly requested to park their vehicles at school lobby/gate as instructed by the school staff members and then take the child to or pick the child up at the classroom.
- **Operating vehicles on the school's campus is not allowed**.

2. Regulations on pickups and drop-offs

- Parents must wear parent cards for pickups/drop-offs of their child at all times.
- Present your card to the teacher for examination and then sign the child in/out on the ***Student Arrival – Dismissal Logbook***.
- The school will not permit the person who wears someone else's card to take the child.
- Parents who wish to temporarily authorize a different pick-up person for less than 10 working days must notify the school at least 48 hours prior to the day of the change (prior to 15:00 in urgent case) by either sending the Customer Service Department an email attached with a picture/copy of the temporarily authorized person's identification card/citizen card and his/her phone number or filling out the ***Pick-up Authorization Form***.
  + The authorized pick-up person must abide by the regulations stated in What the School Expects from Parents.
  + Upon entry of campus, the authorized pick-up person presents his/her identity paper (original) at the Security desk and follow the instructions of the Security Department and teachers.
- Parents who wish to change the pick-up person for more than 10 working days should fill out and send the ***Registration Form for the Reissue/Extra Issue of Parent Card*** to the Customer Service Department at least 05 working days prior to the day of the change for the issuance of extra parent card as stipulated.

3. Some other notes

- To be proactive in the drop-off/pickup and ensure the child's health, parents should prepare some items such as umbrellas, hats, raincoats to protect the child from the sun or rain.
- **Breakfast is served from 08:00 to 08:30. After 08:30, no breakfast is served.**
- Upon arrival at school, parents should not leave the child alone outside the school gate or let him/her walk all by himself/herself into school or use the elevator/stairs on his/her own to the classroom. The school is not responsible for any problems occurring to the child if

his/her parents allow him/her to use the elevator/stairs alone or the parents do not hand the child over to the school staff member and the teacher before leaving.

- School is open from 07:00 to 18:00. After 18:00, the school premises will be cleaned and disinfected. Therefore, parents are expected to pick your child up and leave school before 18:00.

Appendix 03.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I. CURRICULUM

1. Question: How does a Montessori lesson proceed?

Answer:

A standard Montessori lesson includes 3 phases:

- Circle time 1: Warm-up, walking along the line, demonstrating theme-based lessons.
- Individual activities: Students are given the freedom to choose activities that are suitable for their needs and preference (instructed lessons) and follow teachers' guidance based on the weekly progress plan.
- Circle time 2: Moving to music/songs, reciting poems, telling stories, etc.
- The 0-3 age group only has 01 circle time (after the individual activities).

2. Question: What standard do Montessori teachers have? How can students of different ages learn the same content?

Answer:

- In our Montessori classroom, all teachers are required to complete Montessori training courses to grasp the Montessori philosophy of education and the lessons contents. Therefore, teachers have thoroughly obtained knowledge and understanding about the methods and process of planning and delivering lessons for each student.
- As facilitators, supervisors and mentors, the teachers help students develop their thinking and improve their independence and self-confidence. Normally, students will learn with their teachers for three consecutive school years. This amplifies the close and lasting bond between the teachers and their students, simultaneously allows them to know each student's learning style and stimulate a strong sense of community among students.
- The curriculum is developed in alignment with each individual's ability to comprehend. Design of lessons should be flexibly anchored to the individual level of each student.

3. Question: What coursebooks are in use on the English syllabus? How well qualified is the faculty? Is it mix-aged or same-aged class?

Answer:

- The ELA Program developed by the Education Research and Pedagogy Council of the Sakura Montessori International School System in collaboration with the Mount Vernon School – a U.S. top 10 most innovative school – incorporates various learning resources (Learn with Ollie, Crickets, Letters and Sounds, Reading A-Z, etc.). The Program, therefore, aims to promote the students' passion for and confidence in using English through activities and experiences in an international setting.
- English sessions are exclusively delivered by native English-speaking teachers who acquired such international certification as TESOL or TEFL (TESOL – Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and TEFL – Teaching English as a Foreign Language).
- In an English session, students of different ages are grouped by 0 – 3 years old, 3 – 4.5 years old, and 4.5 – 6 years old.

4. **Question: How often do students have outdoor activities?**
   Answer: Students are allowed to do outdoor activities for a minimum of 30 minutes per day (morning exercises, gardening, physical exercises etc.). The school always tries to facilitate outdoor activities for students as much as possible if the weather conditions are favorable.

II. TEACHING STAFF

1. **Question: What are the disciplinary actions imposed on students at Sakura Montessori International School?**
   Answer:

- The school imposes no disciplinary actions on its students. Instead, we use the time-out method to separate students and talk in private to each child to calm him/her down. During the time-out period, teachers respect and do not disturb the students.
- The time-out duration depends on the student's age. After that, teachers will talk to the child to help him/her understand the problem and invite him/her to be back to the activities with the fellow students.

2. **Question: Can parents choose class for their child?**
   Answer:
   Montessori method is an approach that aims at mixed age groups. Therefore, the school will arrange classes for students to balance age and gender among classes. All of the school's classes are similar in size, facilities, quality, etc. so it is the school that will decide the class organization.

III. CHILDCARE

1. **Question: How is the diet and nutrition for students in the 0-3 age group and 3-6 age group different?**
   Answer:

- 3 meals are served per day including breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack.
- The meals consist of yogurt/cheese/fresh milk/fruit, juices, smoothies, etc.
- For the 0-3 age group, menus are inclusive of congee or rice according to the parents' choice.

2. **Question: How different are the diary updates written for students in the 0-3 age group and 3-6 age group?**
   Answer:

- Diary updates for the 0-3 age group will be in more detail than for the 3-6 age group. Teachers will update students' eating, sleeping and toilet use (pee, poo, sleep duration, etc.) on a daily basis via the student management software (KidsOnline software). Comments on Fridays will also include students' developmental fields and social skills for the parents' ease of tracking their child's progress.

- For 3-6 age group, teachers will not update students' eating or toileting in detail but focus more on their learning activities including developmental fields and social skills for the parents' ease of tracking their child's progress.

3. Question: Why is the school not equipped with online cameras?

Answer:

- The school does not install an online camera system because the Montessori method applied at the school respects each individual and their differences. Therefore, all information about students will not be shared with other people.
- Parents are expected to put their trust in us and our teachers by the virtue of our dedicated management team as well as professional and rigorous procedure for teacher recruiting and childcare training. It is advised that parents psych their child up for the better adaptability to the new environment by taking him/her to the school to get to know the classroom as well as to meet teachers and new friends at least 1 hour/day for one week before official enrolment.
- You can call the school either between 11:00 to 12:00 or after 16:00 to have our Customer Service Department connect you with teachers or you can book an appointment to discuss in detail with teachers about your child after 17:00.

4. Should siblings or cousins attend the same class? Why or why not?

Answer:

The school does not encourage siblings or cousins to attend the same class as one of our core values emphasizes the child's independence – he/she will learn how to deal with personal issues on his/her own. Having other siblings or cousins in the same class will somewhat hinder the child forming that value.