
DEARBORN HEIGHTS MONTESSORI CENTER

Elementary/Middle School Latchkey Procedures & Policies

Office Telephone: (313) 359-3000

Latchkey Telephone: (313) 359-6942

PROGRAM

Elementary/Middle School latchkey offers an interesting, enriching, before and after school program. Separate environments for lower elementary and upper elementary/Middle School are divided into areas that allow for a wide variety of activities: arts and crafts, board and card games, construction, puzzles, reading, housekeeping, blocks and accessories, listening to music, and more. There are group activities, projects and games, and daily use of the outdoors and/or gymnasium. Students are free to socialize, or to seek a quieter space for artwork or reading. After school, a monitored study hall in a separate room is an option for students who have homework. Our aim is to create a setting that is both enjoyable and beneficial for our students, and for the adults who work with them.

ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL

Students who are enrolled in Montessori elementary and Middle School are automatically admitted to the latchkey program. It is necessary only to let the school know if and when they will be attending. This can be done either by indicating full time or regularly scheduled use on the application for enrollment, or by notifying the office or classroom teachers at the time of use. If full-time users will be withdrawing from the latchkey portion of the program, the office must be notified so a billing adjustment can be made.

NOTIFICATION

The best way to notify the school that a student will be using latchkey is to write a note. These are posted, and the staff can refer to them easily. If a student is following a consistent pattern of use, even if that use is one or two days a week, only a single note is needed until the pattern changes. For occasional or inconsistent use, please send a note each time.

Notes should be SIGNED and DATED. It is helpful to staff and student if APPROXIMATE PICKUP TIME is indicated. A telephone call to the school is also an acceptable means of notification.

“GRACE PERIOD”

Five minutes “grace” is allowed at the end of the school day. After this, students are automatically taken to the latchkey rooms. The time used is billed from the stated pickup time (usually 3:30 p.m.).

SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT

Students are to be signed in upon arrival, either by the parent or staff person bringing him or her. They *must* be signed out when they leave. This is our control over each student's whereabouts, and our basis for billing. Students not signed out will be charged until 6 p.m. on that day. Latchkey sign-in sheets are used only for students utilizing extra hours; attendance is taken in the classrooms for students who attend only for regular school hours.

BUILDING ENTRY AND DEPARTURE

Elementary, middle school, and latchkey students should use the main front doors near the office. Students coming into the building before the beginning of curbside drop-off (about 8:10 a.m.) must be escorted into the building by an adult and signed in. Please do not send students into the building unattended.

Students using latchkey must be called for by a parent or other authorized person. If someone whose name does not appear on the child information card is to pick up your child, be sure to notify staff members in advance, as a student will not be released to someone unknown to the staff. It is expected that students will leave the building immediately after they are signed out.

SNACKS

An afternoon snack, provided by the school, is served to all in attendance. Foods are selected with child appeal and nutrition in mind, and represent at least two major food groups. We emphasize whole or fresh foods and pure juices in planning snacks.

EARLY MORNING FOOD

We recognize that there may be days when there isn't time for a peaceful breakfast at home. Students arriving at school prior to 8 a.m. may bring breakfast food. A table will be provided as a consistent eating space. Please send only finger foods (fruit, raisins, bagel slices, crackers and cheese, etc.). Please do not send snack foods or fast foods.

CLOTHING/OUTDOOR POLICY

Students using latchkey will be going outdoors daily throughout the year. Please be sure that they have weather-appropriate outer clothing. The latchkey program observes the school outdoor policy, which requires everyone to go outside with the group. Exceptions are made for students who provide the school with a doctor's letter outlining medical reasons for restricting outdoor play.

DISCIPLINE

Students are disciplined in a positive manner. We encourage the development of self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation. The staff does not spank or otherwise physically punish students, and relies mostly upon verbal correction or withdrawal of privileges. However, in order to protect the security of the group, the school does reserve the right to exclude a student whose behavior is consistently inappropriate.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Student's personal property (coats, lunch boxes, etc.) should be brought to latchkey in the morning and after school.

Students occasionally choose to bring toys or other articles from home for use before or after school. This is usually an acceptable practice, but the latchkey staff reserves the right to restrict personal items if they feel those items are detrimental to the program in any way.

PAYMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

FLAT RATE latchkey charges are paid directly to the school on a yearly or monthly basis. The rate is specified at the beginning of each school year. A student enrolled in full-time latchkey is entitled to unlimited use of services between the hours of 7 and 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 to 6 p.m. on regular school days, and at other designated times throughout the year (staff in-service, shortened school days, etc.).

HOURLY latchkey charges are billed monthly. Charges are calculated on an as-used basis at the rate shown on the tuition schedule, and are prorated to the quarter hour. The following conditions apply:

1. Latchkey payments should *not* be included with tuition. Please write a separate check payable to DHMC, or put cash in a separate envelope. Indicate on the envelope the time covered, or simply attach the bill. Tuition is paid by mail through the FACTS program, and hourly day care is collected directly by the school; thus the need for separating the payments.
2. Payment is expected in a timely manner. Students whose accounts are not current will be denied use of latchkey services until the account is paid in full.
3. There is a \$1 per minute late pickup charge after 6 p.m. These charges are included on hourly latchkey bills and paid to the school, but go in their entirety to the caregivers who stay late.

COMMUNICATION

Should questions arise, please ask! Latchkey staff, office staff, and administrators are all happy to help you, and should the appropriate person not be available, leave a message and you will be contacted as quickly as possible.