



## LEARNING AT HOME HANDBOOK

**Provided in collaboration with Tokyo Montessori School, Whole School Leadership Course Mentors and Montessori Administrators Association**

This handbook is designed to help you as we embark on a time of “learning from home”. Our aim is to create an educational framework that serves the children while also supporting parents as they partner with us in providing activities and attention towards continued growth and learning. It is important to us that the children's activity during this time be enjoyable, thoughtful, challenging and rewarding. Replicating what happens in our classrooms is not something we can achieve with this option, however, Montessori guides and coordinators will be delivering content to continue your child's work and activities at home. These will be age-appropriate, individualized and relevant to your child's learning. You are expected to stay in regular contact with your child's teacher, reviewing work and suggestions, and reaching out whenever needed. We are here to support you. Our goal is to work in collaboration with families to keep alive the culture of learning and provide families with support and activities that match the developmental needs and characteristics of the child.

Attention to work/lessons/learning is important and learning is most effective when it is within a greater context. When we connect subjects and concepts, we establish meaning which fuels motivation in students. Above all, we want children to feel connected to their learning, not simply “complete assignments” while at home. There are clear requirements and expectations for assessment, assignment completion and two-way communication. LMPSA will provide parent support in various ways to help strike the imagination and love of learning that is a natural human tendency. We hope that the activities provided foster a sense of exploration, curiosity and discovery resulting in deeper and more meaningful experiences for children. Your child is developing important habits of work and responsibility much like what is required in the classroom learning culture and the greater world. The school holds high expectations for participation, communication and connection as each learner develops their sense of ownership and engagement in their own learning. It is important to us that we maintain a feeling of connectedness and communication in support of this potential.

This handbook will outline how Leelanau Montessori staff, administration and parents will work together to support the growth and development of your child.

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## FAQ

### **1) What is a typical daily schedule?**

A daily schedule and routine is integral for any child and each age has its own considerations for periods of activity and rest. Maintaining an order to the day brings predictability and security thus leading to conditions for learning. Typical daily schedules include time for home routines and responsibilities, meals, work cycles, rest, reading and outdoor activities. On the website, there are suggested daily schedules per age level according to their developmental needs. Typically, time allotted for Learning at Home ranges from 1.5 hours to 4 hours per day of uninterrupted work depending on the age of the child.

### **2) How much support will my child need throughout the day?**

Our LAH program provides a framework of activities that supports whole child learning developed to promote engagement, interest and a love of learning. There is a level of functional independence that is promoted, however the LAH program requires a fair amount of parent involvement and oversight. Parents of children under 9 will most likely be doing work alongside their child or providing support and nearby supervision.

### **3) How often will we receive a packet of activities/materials?**

The LAH program offers two weeks worth of work. These activities, essential tools and information and lessons will be accessed on our website at [leelanaumontessori.org](http://leelanaumontessori.org) in an easily viewed format for both parent and child. Parents will receive their family member code to access the LAH page in the case that a members only format is adopted.

### **4) Will there be virtual class meetings and classroom connections?**

Community and social cohesion are a human need and something that we cherish in our school. We will maintain a connection and keep this as a focus throughout the year. Using a variety of methods, we will bring the LAH to life using peer collaboration, class meetings on Google and times for singing and sharing. This aspect of the LAH will evolve depending on the child, age, culture of classroom and interests. These are not required overall but may be considered as a method of communication.

### **5) What does the parent-guide communication look like?**

There are weekly office hours provided so that guides and parents may initiate and plan for communication and collaboration. Various methods of communication include personal phone calls, emails, shared strategies and planning for individual needs and progress monitoring.

### **6) What will a lesson and instruction look like?**

Montessori lessons will vary in length and complexity depending on the age of the child. Guides will provide individual, small group or whole group lessons for different circumstances. The lessons are delivered remotely live or pre-recorded. Follow up work will be provided to structure for the child their practice of new skills and for showing mastery. The guides will use real materials, interactive checks for understanding and clear, exact language to focus on the standard or concept that is being taught. Guides

reference high yield remote teaching strategies and attend professional development to continue their growth in this new era.

**7) What is a student conference or check in?**

The guide will have a regularly schedule time periodically to have individual check ins or conferences with your child to help develop their time management skills, ability to prioritize and their growing responsibility for own learning. Additionally, this will be a natural time to reflect on what;s working and what is needed, questions and considerations are made to increase engagement and autonomy. This conference lasts up to 20 minutes each week and may vary in length depending on the needs of the individual child.

**8) How will my child turn in work?**

Work samples and completed assignments will be turned in in various ways. Photos, reflection logs, work journal entries, timestamped online records and

**9) What are examples of activities for a Primary and Elementary child?**

The work of the Primary age child is based on sensory experiences in the environment, activities that support physical independence, movement and creative expression as well language acquisition and a a growing sense of numeracy. Examples include

**10) What are examples of “follow up” work for a school age child?**

For example, in Math/Geometry, completing math equations either given by the guide or created by the child or using the geometric cabinet material to sort geometric shapes into categories based on characteristics

Culture/Science follow up could involve creating a booklet to list and identify specific landforms and where they are found or conducting science experiments

On-going work may include:

- handwriting practice
- independent reading and reading response journal
- typing practice
- math facts
- math review

Big work may include:

- Independent studies
- Projects such as creating a scaled drawing of a dinosaur
- Planning a going out for further understanding and learning in an area of interest
- Writing and performing a skit
- Stewardship and committee focus group

**11) How do I know that my child is learning at their grade level? What does assessment look like?**

The Montessori and LAH curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Priority or key lessons are planned and paced to maintain skills and new learning. The materials and lessons that the guides provide are consistent with age appropriate learning and are carefully considered with additional tools and techniques to maximize

engagement and learning. The two weeks worth of work gives an opportunity for individualizing the pace and instruction and mirrors similar lessons that your child would be receiving while on campus.

Assessment occurs through interaction with the Guide during lessons, interactions and while reviewing work journals during a regular check-in. Your child's guide will contact you if there are concerns about unfinished work or lack of engagement. Benchmark assessments are provided as part of the course work three times annually. These take place on our campus and families/students will know when these are scheduled through communication with the Guide.

## **12) How do I get technology support for issues from forgotten passwords to technical difficulty?**

There is a helpdesk link on our LAH portal on our website that links to a work order request. The staff will respond within 24 hours to the request.

## HOW TO ENROLL

- 1) Complete the Flexible Learning Option Form on the google form link found on our website. You may also request a hard copy from the Office or use the copy shared in your Parent Packet.
- 2) Complete all necessary enrollment paperwork including permission for remote learning, device and internet use policy.
- 3) Attend the Parent Information sessions and sign the form acknowledging that you have read the Learning at Home Handbook.
- 4) The LAH program will be utilized by all LMPSA students if there should be a mandated school closure. This program provides an aligned and accessible learning plan that supports a continuity of learning using [Montessori pedagogical guidelines](#).

## EXPECTATIONS

Each student has an option to enroll in the LAH program as part of the annual enrollment process this year through an opt-in form. This is provided at intervals throughout the year. The first interval is August 31-November 9th. The next interval has not yet been determined specifically at this time. Intervals are periods in which enrolled students can opt in or out of the LAH and on-site options at predictable periods.

Upon enrollment, you can expect the school staff and lead guide to contact you via email with orientation materials, information session invites and to answer questions that you or your child may have. Regular communication will occur weekly and as necessary for enrollment.

The school will: communicate regularly, provide support and activities in an accessible way for all students, provide feedback and conferencing with child, receive feedback and reflections from families and students.

The parent will: monitor communication from school, support your child's learning by providing daily structure and routine and follow the activities provided by the guide, supervise and support work periods in partnership with the guide, attend parent engagement offerings as able.

The student will: access and complete course assignments and activities, attend individual conferences and classroom meetings, present learning and collaborate with the guide and peers.

## ATTENDANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In order to be considered in attendance, the student and teacher must have at least one two-way communication per week. This is accomplished through student conferencing, delivery of lessons, work samples and feedback, community meetings or phone calls. Parent communication is essential and will be promoted with email and phone correspondence. Conferences are offered two times annually per our Parent Handbook while there is opportunity for informal meetings and conversations as well.

LMPSA keeps a record of attendance on Powerschool and Montessori Compass. Our attendance policy stands in place for all enrolled students. Creating a daily routine for Learning at Home is paramount to the program and your students' success. Suggested schedules for the day while learning at home are shared in our resources on the website.

Assignments are due at various intervals. Due dates are established through the use of a work journal and daily routine. Time management and planning are part of our practical life curriculum for the Elementary child. The ability in setting a consistent and responsive pace for completing and engaging in learning activities is a practice that is discussed and directed for each child, according to their needs and age.

A Work Journal is used every day in order to structure a balanced repertoire of work, time management and to set expectations. The Work Journal is a tool that will be used by your child's guide to ensure this responsive and predictable pace for the curriculum activities.

## SETTING THE STAGE

For young children, the learning environment is your home and surroundings. This means finding ways to support independence, engage in meaningful tasks and supplement learning through various activities that may be parent inspired or suggested by your child's guide.

For our older Elementary students, this will mean all of the above, plus establishing a quiet space, expectations and routines for any specific assignments shared by classroom guides. Where age-appropriate you might like to discuss 'Learning from Home' with your child and include them in some decision-making processes:

- Ask them where to set up their space (if applicable)
- Make a schedule together that works for your family (when to take breaks / have time outdoors,etc.)
- Gather ideas for activities and projects
- Organize materials

For older children, it will be important for them to maintain their routine of handing in work and receiving feedback from their teachers. Overall, we can approach this as an opportunity to be creative and collaborative - each guide will support a regular schedule of conferencing and face-to-face online conversation.

One note regarding sharing or presenting work:

It is a regular occurrence in an Elementary classroom for children to present their work or projects to one another. This is something you can replicate at home and something that the school will offer periodically as possible.

Planning a presentation or sharing time at the end of a project is very exciting for young children and gives our older students an opportunity to use their voice. It is an essential part of the learning process as it requires synthesis of learning to describe, explain and express yourself clearly. It feels celebratory as well!

## PRACTICAL LIFE ACTIVITIES

Practical life activities are easily translated to home settings. These activities assist students in developing purposeful life skills for their continued growth and development. This includes refining fine motor and movement skills and practicing coordination, planning and problem-solving. Practical life activities: foster order and sequence; develop concentration; foster physical independence; foster the development of fine motor control; and provide opportunities for planning and carrying out tasks.

The Practical Life area also provides children with opportunities to contribute to family life. Inherent in these activities is the development of key executive functions.

Examples of practical life might include:

- setting the table;
- watering plants;
- tidying and organizing rooms;
- planning an outing;
- taking care of pets;
- preparing a snack/meal;
- helping with shopping lists/budgeting;
- raking leaves or sweeping a porch

Practical life is engaging for children at all stages of development and tasks are designed

according to their level of coordination and independence. You can organize a “job chart” or list of family projects as a way to help guide your child’s interests. Planning and gathering resources to complete the tasks is purposeful work. There are monthly practical life activity lists provided as part of our Learning at Home program.

## ALLOWING TIME FOR UNINTERRUPTED WORK

Establishing a routine that works for your family is an essential first step to creating a successful learning environment at home. Children are very familiar with this framework from school. In a Montessori classroom, children are given large blocks of time in order to explore their work deeply. Parents will continue to receive regular communications from your child’s guides throughout the closure. We encourage parents to follow the school suggestions and guidance when completing work at home. The more children are involved in developing and detailing their activities, the more they can achieve. Each age level has a suggested schedule that has been developed by the school. LMPSA encourages you to maintain this schedule while learning from home.

## CONNECTION AND COMMUNICATION

LMPSA continuum of connection is provided through:

1. Easily accessed Learning at Home activities on our website: [leelanaumontessori.org](http://leelanaumontessori.org)
2. Student check-ins with guides’ weekly through scheduled conferences, phone calls or remote conversations, lessons and follow-up feedback or emails.
3. Family Engagement and Information sessions offered remotely each month. The dates and links are shared [here](#). These include Zoom Town Hall and other casual, candid connections.
4. Posted activities including curricular suggestions (math, language, sensorial, science, the arts), outdoor suggestions and suggestions on how to enable greater independence at home.
5. A dedicated Google Classroom Page for all elementary students. This is accessed through the student email login that is shared with individual students and families at the start of the school year. Click [here](#) for directions. The responsible **TECHNOLOGY RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY** is available [here](#).

6. To support the human tendency for orientation, activity and communication, Leelanau Montessori is formally adopting the concept of the **WORK JOURNAL**. This framework will look different between ages but provide a record of your child's activity while Learning at Home. The work journal is a tool for accountability as well as a platform for goal setting. As you or your child keep a log, you can begin to have a brief chat with your child about their day and their work choices. It is a great mental exercise to help them reflect and plan for the next day.
7. Specific opportunities for parents to contact teachers with questions.

### GRACE AND COURTESY FOR ONLINE INTERACTIONS

As we embark into new territory, we all thrive knowing the clear expectations when interacting online. Please read the following guidelines.

1. Read and discuss the [Technology Use Policy](#) with your child if they will be independently using the school platforms for communication.
2. We require that a parent/guardian be present for children ages 9 and younger.
3. Orientations may be offered to classroom parents to ensure technical issues are resolved prior to the whole class meeting and to familiarize the adults of the platform and its features.
4. Primary children must join any online meeting with the parent. The parent is in control of the device and is able to mute the microphone or turn the video off as needed.
5. If your child does not have a photo release on record at the school, we ask that you keep the video feature off.
6. Please come dressed.

During meetings:

1. Participants mute the microphone when not speaking.
2. If you have a question, use the chat feature or unmute microphone.
3. Recording the sessions is strictly prohibited by anyone other than school staff.
4. Be mindful of where you want a video call to take place and what you want all to see. Talk with your child about where these calls/meetings will take place and the courtesy expected.

### PRIMARY PARENT INFORMATION

Primary children may be expected to enjoy family life with developmentally appropriate contributions.

Parents are invited to:

- Remain mindful about your child's stress or worries during this time of change
- Monitor communication about your child from and with your child's guide
- Initiate communication with teachers about questions, ideas, concerns, feedback
- Support your child's independence in daily life activities
- Be mindful of and allow children to continue periods of concentration
- Establish daily routines and expectations
- Limit screen time
- Provide opportunities for daily physical activity

Primary Guides will:

- Initiate individual communications based on student needs
- Provide two weeks worth of work and two-way communication weekly.
- Give guidance in setting up a daily routine
- Provide both general and individualised suggestions for activities aligned to Montessori elements of choice, active learning, adaptability and skills for independence.
- Be prompt in replying to your emails if you need additional guidance and support

Program Specific Needs and Characteristics:

Children aged 3 - 6 thrive in environments that promote repetition, routine and the mastery of purposeful movement.

Allow your child to choose activities and give the opportunity for periods of time without distractions.

The key to a successful learning environment is order, access to tactile resources, space to explore and meaningful activity. For the 3-6 year old child, 'work' and 'play' should be interchangeable - a natural, fun and exciting part of life.

## LOWER ELEMENTARY PARENT INFORMATION

Lower Elementary (6 - 9 years) children are expected to:

- Plan and organise work with guidance from adults
- Follow teachers' guidelines and work with a high regard for academic expectations
- Work with integrity on assigned tasks - do your best!
- Complete work goals and assignments

Parents are invited to:

- Guide your child to set up a prepared environment at home

- Establish a consistent routine and work schedule together with guides
- Follow along with the teachers' suggested activities to maintain skills and concepts
- Meet and review your child's assignments
- Provide opportunities for your child to share/present work to you
- Reach out to the school in times of need

Lower Elementary Guides and School leadership will:

- Prepare a variety of appropriate tasks and activities for children to complete at home in order to maintain and move their learning forward using Montessori Pedagogy
- Communicate in a consistent fashion with parents, replying to emails promptly
- Offer Parent Education and Enrichment resources
- Share a regular "Greeting" via email or weekly video chat
- Offer feedback to students, review work journals during weekly student conferences
- Collaborate to provide activities and suggestions for Art, Music and PE

Program Specific Needs and Characteristics:

- Respect the stage of development - many Lower Elementary students are at a "concrete level" and require the Montessori materials to complete certain tasks. Teachers will guide your child to optimize engagement and learning using concrete, everyday tools and tactics but also provide activities that focus on concepts rather than materials.
- Develop ideas that allow the opportunity for Lower Elementary students to build from their interests. Examples may include projects, journals, creative writing, geometry constructions, Practical Life at home.
- Encourage socialization. Lower Elementary students are extremely social; they will need to feel connected to their friends.

## UPPER ELEMENTARY PARENT INFORMATION

Upper Elementary (9 - 12 years) children are expected to:

- Plan and organise work as independently as possible
- Follow teachers' guidelines and expectations
- Be own advocate when assistance or further clarification is required
- Communicate directly with teachers
- Turn completed work in on time and attend to assignments.

Parents are invited to:

- Guide your child to set up a prepared environment at home
- Establish a routine and work schedule
- Follow along with the teachers' suggested activities to maintain skills and concepts
- Meet and review your child's assignments; provide opportunities at home for work presentations

Upper Elementary Teachers will:

- Prepare a variety of appropriate tasks and activities for children to complete at home in order to maintain and move their learning forward using Montessori pedagogy
- Communicate in a consistent fashion with parents, replying to emails promptly
- Maintain high expectations and keep clear records of progress.
- Share a regular “Greeting” via email or video chat
- Offer feedback to students and review work journals and hold student conferences
- Collaborate to provide activities and suggestions for Art, Music and PE

Program Specific Needs and Characteristics

- Respect the stage of development - some students may still be at a “concrete level” and require the Montessori materials to complete certain tasks. Teachers will guide your child to optimize engagement and learning using concrete, everyday tools and tactics but also provide activities that focus on concepts rather than materials.
- Develop ideas that allow the opportunity for Upper Elementary students to build from their interests. Examples may include projects, journals, creative writing, geometry constructions, Practical Life at home
- Support the need for Upper Elementary students’ group work - working with a friend (if possible) may be very well received.
- Encourage socialisation. Upper Elementary students are extremely social; they will need to feel connected to their friends.

## RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

### LANGUAGE AND MATH

[Storylineonline](#)

[Maren Schmidt Five Games for Preschoolers](#)

[Scholastic Learning at Home](#)- scroll down and choose age group resource

[Montessori math shelf program and app](#)

[Association Montessori Internationale free Primary materials](#)

[cosmic book shelf](#)

### MONTESSORI RESOURCES

Association Montessori Internationale <https://amiusa.org/news/covid-19-resources/>

Great Montessori Resource

<https://www.themontessorinotebook.com/lots-of-montessori-inspiration/>

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

Yale Center on Emotional Intelligence

<https://www.rulerapproach.org/coronavirus-covid-19-resources-webinars/>

## FOR PARENTS

Link to FREE AMAZON BOOK called Montessori Parents Coronavirus Survival Guide:)

<https://www.trilliummontessori.org/survival-guide/>

[Trillium Montessori Parent Response Resource Page](#)

## CORONAVIRUS

[Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[Benzie-Leelanau District Health School Toolkit](#)

[Michigan Department of Education](#)

[How to talk to your child about Coronavirus with their age in mind](#)

[Sesame Street talks with children about Covid -19](#)

## LEELANAU MONTESSORI LEARNING AT HOME FACEBOOK PAGE

### **Description**

This group was created as a way to allow Leelanau Montessori families to share ideas and resources that are working at home as we all try to adjust during this time. We hope it will be a positive platform where we can all support one another!

### **What to Post?**

- Pictures of your child engaged in his/her work.
- Quality links, videos, and documents that have helped support learning from home for your family. If posting documents, please post them in PDF format.
- Teachers will also be posting resources they find helpful.
- Posts should be family friendly.
- Please also keep posts relevant to home learning. This is not a platform for personal or entertainment use, nor will it be used to sell goods or services.

### **Posting Etiquette**

Every member is held to the same standard that your children are at school when using technology. We expect all users to be kind, encouraging, and supportive when posting or commenting!

### **Violations**

Any violations to the standards outlined above or any inappropriate interactions using the Leelanau Montessori - Learning at Home group page will be addressed immediately. You will be given one warning. The next offence will result in removal from the group page.

Please report any information that is inappropriate or uncomfortable to the group admins.

### **Find our page on Facebook!**

Facebook Group Name: Leelanau Montessori - Learning from Home

Link to the Group Page: refer to your enrollment letter you will receive once you have enrolled in the LAH program