

Ronald
KnOX

montessori

Family Handbook

2023 – 2024

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RKMS Family Calendar 2023-2024

August	24	Thursday	Parent Orientation 7pm - 8pm at RKMS
	28	Monday	Meet Your Teacher - for students new to the teacher(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time will be assigned to each child ● Attendance of both parents with the child is appreciated
	29	Tuesday	Phase-In: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Toddler - same assigned time as Monday ● Primary - 1 st year & students new to RKMS (8:30 - 10:30) ● Children attend without parents/caregiver
	30	Wednesday	Phase-In: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Toddlers - all children (8:15 - 10:30) ● Primary - 1 st year & students new to RKMS (8:30 - 10:30)
	31	Thursday	Phase-In: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Toddlers - all children (8:15 - 11:30), lunch + full day children (8:15 - 12:30) ● Primary - all children (8:30 - 11:30), lunch + full day children (8:30 - 12:30)
September	1	Friday	Phase-In: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Toddlers - all children (8:15-11:30), lunch + full day children (8:15-12:30) ● Primary - all children (8:30-11:30), + lunch (until 12:30), full day children (until 3:00)
	4	Monday	No School - Labor Day
	5	Tuesday	Start of regular schedules, including early bird and extended care
	6	Wednesday	Start of Parent-Child Class (Meets Wednesdays & Thursdays)
	9	Saturday	Class Picnics
	20	Wednesday	Picture Day: Toddlers & PC Classes
	21	Thursday	Picture Day: Upper East & Upper West Classes
22	Friday	Picture Day: Lower East & Lower West Classes	
October	9	Monday	No School - Indigenous People's Day
	15	Sunday	Pumpkin Run
	TBD		Evening Parent Workshop
	30	Monday	No School - Teacher Institute

November	1	Tuesday	Fire Truck Visit (tentative date)
	4	Saturday	Parent Engagement Day (childcare available)
	6	Monday	No School
	16	Thursday	Thanksgiving Feast & Half Day - 11:30 Dismissal Parent-Teacher conferences (childcare provide during in-person conferences)
	17	Friday	No School - Parent-Teacher Conferences (childcare provide during in-person conferences)
	20-24		No School - Thanksgiving Break
December	9	Saturday	Holiday Sing
	25-29		No School - Winter Break
January	1-5		No School - Winter Break
	8	Monday	School Resumes
	15	Monday	No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February	Tbd		Evening Parent Workshop
	19	Monday	No School - Presidents Day
	20	Tuesday	No School - Teachers Institute
March	21	Thursday	Half Day - 11:30 Dismissal, Parent-Teacher conferences (childcare provide during in-person conferences only)
	22	Friday	No School - Parent-Teacher Conferences (childcare provide during in-person conferences)
	25-29		No School - Spring Break
April	20	Saturday	Watch Me Work
	22	Monday	No School
May	10	Friday	Grandparent's Day
	22	Wednesday	All School Picnic with Art & Drama Showcase (rain date: May 29th)
	27	Monday	No School – Memorial Day
June	6	Thursday	Last Day of School



Welcome from the Head of School

Whoever touches the life of the child touches the most sensitive point of a whole which has roots in the most distant past and climbs toward the infinite future. —Dr. Maria Montessori

Dear Parents,

I would like to warmly welcome our new students and families joining Ronald Knox this year and welcome back all of our returning families as well. We are eager to cultivate a constructive partnership with you as your child builds the foundation for a lifetime love of learning. And we recognize that one of the most important decisions you make as a parent is your choice about your child's education. A Montessori educational approach sees each child as a unique human being in the process of self-formation. It is truly a privilege to be trusted to nurture a child's physical, social, emotional, and academic growth.

The heart of learning at Ronald Knox thrives in its orderly, beautifully prepared classrooms that promote exploration and joy in learning. Each day we live out our mission to "inspire our children to be leaders, innovators and stewards of our world." Students are encouraged to make choices that reflect their interests, learn to master challenges through repetition and solve problems through perseverance and collaboration. The backdrop is one of grace and courtesy, where students feel a sense of belonging and treat themselves and others respectfully. Teachers model the care and compassion that brings a sense of calm and peace to the classroom.

Please note that children new to Ronald Knox or toddlers moving up to the Primary Program will phase in gradually. Returning students will ease into their schedules as well. The Guide to the Classroom provides details on the specific time your child is scheduled to attend. Let's work together to ensure this time of transition goes smoothly. Feel free to reach out to me directly by phone or email if you have questions or concerns.

I look forward to personally connecting with all of you this year. We invite you to observe your child's classroom in the fall and spring. Observation is a powerful tool that will provide insight into how the Montessori philosophy sets the tone for the interpersonal and educational dynamics at play in the classroom.

All of us at Ronald Knox are excited to begin what promises to be a fantastic year!
Sincerely,

Blythe Silva

Head of School



Welcome from the Board President

Dear Ronald Knox Montessori School Families and Community,

Welcome! We are so excited to welcome new families to school this year, and to see our wonderful returning families again. We look forward to a fantastic 2023-2024 school year.

For those of you who are new to the school, I am confident you will find a community here. We are so fortunate to have dedicated, passionate teachers, beautiful Montessori materials in the classroom and a strong tradition of community-building events. Our children learn how to be curious here and are supported in their journey as early learners. It is a truly special place.

2022-2023 was a banner year for the school. We celebrated 60 years of Ronald Knox history with a fantastic gala, organized by dedicated parent volunteers. The Board was thrilled with parent engagement. Families came together to support the school in another successful Drive to Thrive campaign, and gathered in celebrations such as the Holiday Sing and the Pumpkin Run. These traditions serve to bring a strong sense of community to Ronald Knox.

Our family has been part of this Ronald Knox community for four years. We have two graduates of the school, and our youngest, John, will be starting Toddler in the fall. We look forward to many more years at the school, which has shaped our children and been a huge part of our family life over these last four years.

I have been honored to be a part of the school's Board of Directors, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be involved in this school that I care so much about. As a Board of Directors, we oversee the legal, financial, and governance matters of the school. In doing so, we support Blythe as she runs the day-to-day operations of the school. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time with concerns or questions. I welcome feedback from the parent community. Additionally, we're always looking for parents who are interested in giving of their time either to support events or in other capacities, so please let me or other members of the Board know if you are interested in getting more involved.

I look forward to seeing each of you soon!
Sincerely,

Marjorie Filice
President, Ronald Knox Board of Directors

Introduction

Mission Statement

“Inspiring our children to be leaders, innovators, and stewards of our world.”

Ronald Knox Montessori School is committed to following the Montessori philosophy to create a nurturing, stimulating environment that promotes concentration, coordination, a sense of order, independence, grace and courtesy, and the life skills needed for each child to reach their full potential. Parents, faculty, and administrators form a community to foster a lifelong love of learning in our children and to promote respect for themselves, others, and the world around them.

Vision Statement

Ronald Knox Montessori School strives to be a recognized leader in early childhood Montessori education by creating a community that fosters self-confidence, a lifelong love of learning, and respect for our world.

Non-discrimination Policy

Ronald Knox Montessori School aims to treat all individuals with respect. We believe that a diverse community benefits everyone, and we firmly support the principles of human dignity and equitable opportunity.

RKMS does not discriminate against children or families on the basis of color, race, ancestry, or national origin; nor gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, or family structure; nor creed or religion; nor physical or learning differences or disabilities.

Administration

Contact Information

Blythe Silva , <i>Head of School</i> (847) 256-2922, ext 21	blythe_silva@ronaldknox.org
Anita McGing , <i>Admissions Director</i> (847) 256-2922, ext 19	anita_mcging@ronaldknox.org
Cathy Litrofsky , <i>Office Manager</i> (847) 256-2922, ext 10	office_manager@ronaldknox.org

For questions about your child or classroom concerns, please contact your child’s teacher via phone or email.

Philosophy

In the Montessori classroom, there is a distinct atmosphere of cheerful order, bustling energy, and purposeful work. Children explore the classroom environment while learning social graces, gaining confidence, mastering their fine and gross motor abilities, and building their intelligence.

Maria Montessori, M.D. (1870-1952) developed this method of education after she completed her medical training, becoming the first woman in Italy to receive a medical degree. Using the scientific method, she observed children and constructed a pedagogy to develop the whole child physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually.

The Eight Principles of Montessori Education

1. Movement & Thinking

In young children, thinking and moving is the same process. Children need to move freely through their environment and feel comfortable taking risks by exploring materials and ideas.

2. Choice

Even the youngest children have choice and control in Montessori classrooms.

3. Interest

The best learning occurs in areas of interest provided by both the child and the appeal of the materials.

4. Motivation

In both education and business, research shows that extrinsic rewards decrease motivation and learning. Guiding children to develop the resources for self-motivation and intrinsic reward is a focus of the Montessori teacher.

5. Peer Teaching

The ability to acquire and share knowledge with peers empowers students. Demonstrating knowledge of material and concepts with younger peers reinforces mastery.

6. Whole Learning

Learning is always in a context children can understand. Subjects connect to the students as well as the world outside our community or country.

7. Earned Responsibility

Teachers set clear limits but allow freedom within boundaries. Teachers also respond sensitively to children's needs while maintaining high expectations.

8. Prepared Environment

Both the physical layout of the classroom and the use of the materials provide the children with the order in their environment necessary for learning and development.

Adapted from Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius by Angeline Stoll Lillard, Oxford University Press, 2005.

In a Montessori classroom, you will observe:

Mixed Age Groupings –

In the Primary classroom, children learn alongside each other. Older children help teach the younger children, gaining confidence in their knowledge and leadership skills. Younger children look up to the older children as role models, learning social skills through observation and setting academic goals. The varying levels of ability blend easily in the multiage classroom, creating an environment built on cooperation, not competition.

Unobtrusive Teacher –

The teachers in a Montessori classroom are referred to as a guide because they guide the learning of the children. The teachers are not in the center of the classroom, controlling the outcome of the learning; rather, they are on the fringes, giving personalized, individual, or small group lessons according to each child's interest and ability.

Student-directed Learning –

When not in lessons with the Lead Teacher, students choose their own work from the classroom shelves. They may choose a work in the Math, Language, Science, Sensorial, or Practical Life area. The works are devised so that children may use them independently, and repetition of the materials leads to mastery in the given subject.

Problem Solving Skills –

In the Montessori classroom, children work with their hands throughout the day, and there are many opportunities for messes. Children in the classroom solve their own problems by sweeping up a mess or drying spilled water. They also practice social problem-solving skills when a conflict arises with a friend or classmate.

Process Over Product –

The Montessori classroom is process-driven rather than product-oriented. Children learn the skills needed to succeed in life, as opposed to filling out worksheets each day.

Authentic for Every Child –

Since each child is at a different place in their development, children in the Montessori classroom learn at their own pace and in their own style. The teachers observe each child and provide materials and lessons specific to their skill level and interests. Montessori students build confidence and independence, learn self-discipline, and above all, develop a life-long love of learning.

Therefore, the goals at Ronald Knox Montessori School are to:

- ❖ Stimulate the child's innate love of learning.
- ❖ Provide a nurturing, cooperative, and social learning environment.
- ❖ Provide development opportunities for the holistic education of the child.
- ❖ Cultivate respect for self, others, the environment, and all life.

"If schooling were evidence based, I think all schools would look a lot more like Montessori schools."

History

In 1963, a group of parents identified the need for a Montessori program on the North Shore. They founded Ronald Knox Montessori School, which was at the time the third Montessori school in Illinois. The school was named after Ronald Knox, an English author and biblical scholar (1888-1957). Considered ahead of his time, he was regarded as a man of brilliant intellect and religious tolerance. He also possessed a wonderful sense of humor and a sincere interest in the development and education of young children.

When RKMS first opened its doors at Mallinckrodt College in 1963, only ten children were enrolled. By 1967 the enrollment had increased to 80 and the Board of Directors decided to build permanent quarters for the school. The Sisters of Christian Charity generously leased a half-acre of property for the new school; the Children's House was built in the spring of 1967. The school's relationship with the Sisters of Christian Charity is a long and important one, and RKMS owes a great deal to the generosity and kindness shown by the Sisters. Ronald Knox Montessori School has no religious affiliation.

The original Children's House housed only the Primary program. The Parent-Child and Toddler classrooms were conducted in the Sacred Heart Convent, two blocks west of the school building. For many years, RKMS dreamed of housing all programs under one roof, and in 2007 broke ground for a new school building on the same property. In September 2008, the new school opened its doors to welcome students to the Primary, Toddler, and Parent-Child programs. The beautiful building is a testament to the legacy and longevity of RKMS on the North Shore and will continue to greet children for many more decades.

Accreditations & Affiliations

RKMS is accredited and affiliated with the following organizations:

- ❖ [American Montessori Society](#) (AMS) accreditation since 1999
- ❖ [Association of Illinois Montessori Schools](#) (AIMS)
- ❖ [The Alliance for Early Childhood](#) (AEC)
- ❖ [Independent School Management](#) (ISM)
- ❖ [Illinois Coalition of Nonpublic Schools](#) (ICNS)
- ❖ The Toddler Program is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

Additionally, teachers maintain personal memberships in a number of organizations, most notably American Montessori Society. Teachers are also required to stay up to date with yearly professional development hours. All faculty and staff attend CPR/First Aid and Allergy Response Training biannually.

Governance & Board

RKMS is an Illinois not-for-profit corporation governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board is made up of current RKMS parents and/or alumni parents; its role is to ensure that the mission of the school is fulfilled. The Head of School attends all Board meetings as a non-voting member.

Per RKMS Bylaws, Article V, Section 1.

The Board of Directors shall oversee the functions of the following Standing Committees:

- Executive Committee: Comprised of the Officers of the Corporation (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary)
- Finance Committee: Executes the oversight of the school's fiduciary functions, including budget development
- Development Committee: Executes and oversees all major fundraising activities, including; the annual fund, capital campaigns, grants and endowments.
- Community Engagement Committee: Plans and executes the major social events during the year for the parent community, which are designed to build a strong parent community and increase public awareness of the school
- Trustee: Executes the recruitment, orientation, and training of Director-Members and the succession planning of the Officers of the Corporation
- Community Member at Large - Serves the board's strategic needs as determined by the President at any given time. Members-at-large may have various responsibilities and projects – short or long-term.

Educational Programming

Parent-Child Program

Ages: 6 months to 23 months with a parent/caregiver

Wednesday 8:30-9:30 and Thursday 8:30-10:30

The Parent-Child Program strives to cultivate effective parenting skills while providing the children with opportunities to explore activities designed to promote independence, coordination, problem-solving, and language development. The Montessori prepared environment enables the children to see themselves as doers, thus building their self-esteem and enhancing their self-confidence.

Toddler Program

Ages: 2 years old (Children remain in the Toddler Program for the entire school year regardless of age).

Monday through Friday

Half Day 8:15 am – 11:30 am

Half Day + Lunch 8:15 am – 12:30 pm

Full Day 8:15 am – 3:00 pm (children stay for lunch class and have an opportunity to nap)

The Toddler Program is designed to meet the needs of the young child. Children in the Toddler Program gain independence and confidence as they learn how to care for themselves and their environment. The classroom encourages gross and fine motor development, supports language skills, and engages children in social and emotional growth. Children learn pre-math and language skills such as sounds, counting, and sequencing. Along with preliminary academics, toddler children also practice daily life skills such as preparing their own snack, using the toilet and navigating peer relationships outside of family members.

All children staying for lunch and the full day participate in a beautifully designed lunch program. For more details, see the lunch program description.

Toddlers staying full day will rest or nap in the afternoon. The classroom is transformed into a low-lit, quiet space to encourage relaxation. Toddlers work hard throughout the morning and need rest for the brain to reset for the remainder of the day.

Primary Program

Ages: 3 years old through 6 years old

Monday through Friday

Half Day 8:30 am – 11:30 am

Half Day + Lunch 8:30 am – 12:30 pm

Full Day 8:30 am – 3:00 pm

(children stay for lunch class and 3-year-olds have an opportunity to rest)

The Primary Program is the foundation of our 3 to 6-year-old programming. Students in the program stay in the same classroom for all three years, developing a stable and secure relationship with their teachers and peers. Language, Math, Science, and Geography are the academic areas of the classroom that children work in each day. Additionally, children form and shape their social-emotional skills as they practice working in small groups, learn how to problem-solve with their peers, care for their environment, and lend a hand when others need help.

Our classrooms contain an abundance of concrete, manipulative materials maintained in an orderly, clean, and attractive manner. These materials, which reflect reality and nature, enable the child to organize their perceptions of the world. All materials are structured, organized, and presented to enable independent activity. They allow freedom of choice and movement based on each child's interest, limited only by the collective well-being and freedom of others.

In the half day program, the child receives all the benefits outlined above. All children staying for lunch and the full day participate in a beautifully designed lunch program. For more details, see the lunch program description.

In the full day program, children have the opportunity to explore and work in the classroom independently, build friendships through small group activities, and continue to develop into peer teachers, leaders, and empathetic friends. The 1st year children head to the nap room after lunch to rest in a quiet environment. Once their bodies have time to relax or nap, they rejoin their class to start their second work period.

Ronald Knox strongly believes in a three-year commitment to the Primary Program because the third year or the kindergarten year of the program is of the utmost importance. This is the year that completes the cycle of learning and development that began in the first two years. Being one of the oldest in the room, the child experiences a year of tremendous growth in self-confidence and self-esteem. When your child enters the Primary Program, it is with the expectation that they will stay for the completion of the three-year continuum. (The Toddler Program does not count as year one).

Full Day Kindergarten Program

Ages: Children in the 3rd or 4th year of the primary program

Monday through Friday **8:30 am – 3:00 pm**

These children spend the morning portion of the day in their assigned classroom. At 11:30 am, all the kindergarteners from the four Primary classrooms gather together for lunch in Miss Stephanie's classroom. See the lunch program for details. After lunch, the kindergartners spend time outdoors before settling into their afternoon work period.

The Kindergarten Program offers many unique opportunities for these older children. They may expand on their work from their morning class or choose a topic of interest, research it, and reinforce what they learned through various activities and crafts.

The kindergarteners will have several opportunities to take field trips throughout the year, which are culminations of study in a particular area of the curriculum. Weekly, they also take part in specialized classes: Art, Drama, and Spanish, with a final presentation to families at the end of the school year. The school year ends on a grand note with the children choosing and studying a country of choice and presenting their research to their parents. The kindergartners also take part in our annual tradition of Community Service Week. The children will gain first-hand experience in giving back to the community at large.

Full Day Kindergarten is a valuable experience for these children. They connect as a peer group, utilize their Grace & Courtesy skills and continue their growth in independence, self-confidence, and self-esteem. The expectations and responsibilities are greater, but most 3rd year children are

well-prepared for the challenges of this program. These class leaders and role models are given a chance to shine independently as the oldest and most experienced children in the school. This program is a wonderful introduction to the next chapter in their educational journeys.

Lunch Program

Ages: Children enrolled in the Toddler and Primary Half-Day Programs. This program is included for all children in Full-Day Programs. A catered hot lunch is available for an additional fee.

Monday through Friday **11:30 am - 12:30 pm**

The purpose of this program is to provide children with an opportunity to extend the Montessori experience to mealtime. Every child works on their own Grace & Courtesy skills as a community member. Additionally, this program helps raise the children's awareness of good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle.

Setup

The children are responsible for setting their place at a table and unpacking their lunch. Teachers encourage the children to make healthy and balanced food choices.

Community Lunch

Once all the children have prepared their spots and their meals, the children sing the "Community Song" as a way to foster social etiquette and unity:

*Look around and you will see
Community, a family,
We are brothers and sisters too.
Thank you for our lunch and enjoy!*

Clean Up

Depending on developmental ability, children clean the environment to the best of their ability together with the guidance of the teacher. The teacher is modeling expectations, along with Grace and Courtesy lessons throughout this time. As the school year goes on, children begin to develop an awareness of their immediate and community surroundings. After lunch, a storybook is read together.

Early Bird Program

Ages: children enrolled in the Toddler and Primary Program. Space in each program is limited; programs are contingent on enrollment.

Monday through Friday: *Family to specify day(s) of the week care is needed. Days selected must be maintained for the entire school year*

7:45 am until the start of class

This program is designed to accommodate working parents by allowing them to drop off their children before school hours. Early Bird offers a nice opportunity for children from various classes and age ranges to connect, interact and socialize. A systematic routine is followed whether the children are outside or indoors, and they are aligned with routines followed in the classroom.

The children begin their morning on the playground, weather permitting. In inclement weather, the children meet in the Gross Motor Room, where stations are set up with various activities and children can work alone or together.

Extended Care Program

Ages: children enrolled in the Toddler and Primary Program. Space in each program is limited; programs are contingent on enrollment.

Monday through Friday: *Family to specify day(s) of the week care is needed. Days selected must be maintained for the entire school year*

3:00 pm until 3:45 pm

This program is designed to accommodate families by extending the window of time they have to pick up their children after regular school hours. This program concludes promptly at 3:45.

Extended Care offers a nice opportunity for children from various classes to connect, interact and socialize. The children will spend their time on the playground, weather permitting. In inclement weather, the children meet in the Gross Motor Room, where stations are set up with various activities and children can work alone or together. A systematic routine is followed whether the children are outside or indoors, and they are aligned with routines followed in the classroom.

Summer Camp Programs

Space in each program is limited; all programs are contingent on enrollment

Toddler Summer Camp

This camp is for children who will be entering the RKMS Toddler Program in the fall.

5 days a week **8:45 am - 11:45 am, or 8:45 am - 1:00 pm**

The Ronald Knox Toddler Summer Camp is an introduction to the Montessori community for students entering the Toddler Program in the fall. The camp invites toddler students into the classroom setting, enabling them to ease into a drop-off routine and begin to explore for themselves. Young children will join the community to gain independence in a safe, welcoming environment, both inside the beautiful Montessori classroom as well as in the fun outdoor areas.

Transitional Summer Camp

This camp is for children who will be entering their first year of the RKMS Primary Program in the fall.

5 days a week **8:45 am - 11:45 am, or 8:45 am - 1:00 pm**

The camp is designed to introduce children to the Primary classroom environment and community. This program will begin the process of bringing out a child's sense of order, concentration, coordination, and independence through an emphasis on the Practical Life and Sensorial areas of the classroom. The children will be introduced to ground rules, guidelines, and social expectations that will be an integral part of their experience in the Primary program. They will also begin to explore math and language materials. In addition, the children are allowed ample time to play outside. Outdoor time will feature different activities throughout the week, as nature walks in beautiful Mallinckrodt Park next door, riding a bicycle or scooter, or cooling off under the sprinkler.

Primary Summer Camp

This camp is for children who will be entering their second, third, or fourth year of the RKMS Primary Program and for current RKMS graduates.

5 days a week **8:45 am - 1:00 pm**

Each session of Summer Camp will feature an engaging theme, which culminates with a field trip that relates to the theme. Throughout each session, children will explore all areas of the classroom, dive deep into the topic of the session, and have the opportunity to explore their interests in the classroom and build their independence. Time will be spent outside each day playing and building relationships with classmates. Please visit the RKMS website for more details, www.ronaldknox.org.

Developmental Support

Ronald Knox believes in meeting each child where they are emotionally, physically, and developmentally and guiding them through the physical and social environment to the best of our ability to set each child on a path to reach their fullest potential. It is essential for each child to gain independence and have confidence in their own ability, so we scaffold concepts and build upon past lessons. Sometimes extra support outside our staff is needed, so we have teamed up with several specialists to ensure children gain the skills needed for independence.

Speech and Language Services

Speech and language delays are a common developmental problem that affects as many as 20% of preschool children. Because of the way the brain develops, it is easier to learn language and communication skills before the age of 5. Early diagnosis and treatment for developmental delays not only give children the best start possible but also the best chance of developing to their full potential. The sooner a child gets help, the greater the chance for learning and progress. This is why Ronald Knox works with a speech/language pathologist to provide speech and language services year round.

Linda Korbakes, MA, CCC is our resident Certified Speech/Language Pathologist. Linda offers complete speech and language evaluations as well as speech screenings to determine whether further speech assessment is warranted.

Speech screenings are performed per teacher or parent request. The fee for the screening is \$50.00. Please email Anita McGing, Admissions Director, to request a screening for your child.

Occupational Therapy Services

Pediatric occupational therapy helps children gain independence while also strengthening the development of fine motor skills, sensory-motor skills, and visual motor skills that children need to function and socialize. When one area is underdeveloped, it can create challenges for a child to participate to the fullest extent in life's everyday activities, including playing, learning, and socializing. We have developed a relationship with an occupational therapist group to provide support to the child, parents, and teachers year-round.

An Occupational Therapist (OT) from Kick Start Pediatric Therapy Network offers developmental evaluations to determine whether further assessment is warranted.

OTs utilize a comprehensive evaluation process to assess your child in order to identify any areas affecting their functional skills. A combination of observations, questionnaires, parent and teacher interviews, and testing may be used. The therapist will score and interpret the results of the evaluation in a written report. As part of the evaluation process, a parent meeting is scheduled to discuss the findings and recommendations.

Admissions and Finance

Admissions Process Overview

Tour

Prospective parents may contact Anita McGing, Admissions Director (847 256-2922, ext. 19 or anita_mcging@ronaldknox.org) to schedule a tour (parents/guardians only for the initial visit).

Application

Complete the [online application](#) and submit the non-refundable \$125 application fee. An online application does not guarantee acceptance into the school.

Acceptance

An acceptance letter will be emailed upon availability.

Admission and Placement Policies

Since Ronald Knox Montessori School has a rolling admission process, applications for new students are always accepted. Ronald Knox accepts students of any race, sex, color, and national, ethnic, and religious origin. Ronald Knox guarantees the confidentiality of and access to student records in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

The age of entry begins at six months for the Parent-Child Program, two years for the Toddler Program, and three years for the Primary Program. Continuing first and second-year students in a Primary classroom will remain in their current class. Due to constraints of licensing agencies and the public school system, a child's chronological age is the main gauge used in placement.

Ronald Knox is committed to educating each child in accordance with the Montessori Philosophy. It is the philosophy and the history of Maria Montessori that supports close observation and careful guidance for each child in our program. New students are admitted on a 6-week probationary basis that begins on the first day the child attends any program at RKMS, after which the child will either be successfully integrated or it will be determined that Ronald Knox is not the best placement. Under certain circumstances, tuition will be refunded on a prorated basis. Students with diagnosed special needs follow the same 6-week probationary period.

The Montessori classroom is appropriate and beneficial for almost every child. However, Ronald Knox may not be able to provide the educational and supportive services or additional staff that some children may require.

Ronald Knox strongly believes in a three-year commitment to the Primary Program because the third year, or the kindergarten year of the program, is of the utmost importance. This is the year that completes the cycle of learning and development that began in the first two years. Being one of the oldest in the room, the child experiences a year of tremendous growth in self-confidence and self-esteem. When your child enters the Primary Program, it is with the expectation that they will stay for the completion of the three-year continuum. The Toddler Program does not count as year one.

It is important for parents to have a thorough understanding of the program in order to determine whether Ronald Knox will be the best environment for their child. For all of our programs, we use information gained from observations, input from teachers, and Summer Program experiences to gather

information about each child. Occasionally, additional work and reports from specialists will be required to place the child properly.

Decisions include factors that take into account the best interests of your child and of the other children in the classroom environment. Our aim is to create classrooms that are balanced in various aspects: age, gender, learning style, etc. The professionally trained Montessori faculty and the administration make the final determination and placement within our programs.

Special Status Applicants

All qualifying special status applications will be processed in the order they are received.

Special status will be granted in the following order:

- Currently enrolled students who are filtering into another Ronald Knox program (i.e. Toddler to Primary).
- Prospective students with a sibling currently enrolled or a sibling who has graduated from Ronald Knox.
- A Montessori Transfer is given priority to prospective students who attended another Montessori school.
- Legacy Status is granted to a child whose parent attended the entire three years of the Primary Program at Ronald Knox.

The administration of Ronald Knox reserves the right to make the final determination for session program placement. Additionally, many factors are considered in making admissions decisions, including:

- Children who meet social and emotional expectations as determined by the Ronald Knox Faculty and Staff.
- Parents who have a willingness to be informed, involved, and invested in Ronald Knox and the Montessori philosophy.
- Families committed to partnering with teachers, administration and whose values are aligned with Ronald Knox's mission.
- A long-term commitment to Ronald Knox.

New & Returning Students

New Students

An acceptance letter, the tuition/Family Entrance Fee invoice, enrollment contract, and COVID waiver are emailed to new students upon acceptance into a program. The first tuition installment and enrollment contract must be returned by the date determined by Ronald Knox to hold the child's place in the program(s) requested. All parents of students entering the school are required to submit the following prior to the first day of school:

- Current Health form (within 2 years)
- Lead Assessment Questionnaire
- Eye Exam form (for kindergarten age children)
- Dental Exam form (for kindergarten age children)
- Copy of birth certificate
- Records from previous school, if applicable

Returning Students

During the re-enrollment phase that takes place in December, parents will receive an email to indicate their child's program choice for the following school year. There is no financial commitment at this point. If re-registration is completed after the said due date, the student will lose their special status priority and the registration will be processed as a new family in the order received. Ronald Knox will not be able to hold spaces for students whose re-enrollment is completed after the said due date.

The tuition invoice, Family Entrance Fee invoice (if applicable), enrollment contract, and COVID waiver are emailed to returning students in January. The above must be returned to Ronald Knox by the date determined by Ronald Knox to hold the child's place in the program(s) requested for the following school year. Ronald Knox will not be able to hold spaces for students whose first tuition installment and enrollment contract have not been received by said date.

Tuition Payments and Family Entrance Fee

Tuition payment(s) and the \$1,000 Family Entrance Fee* are due in January and in September of the calendar year of enrollment.

- If a child enters mid-year, tuition payment(s) and Family Entrance Fee are due within two weeks of acceptance.
- Classroom placement information is sent in August, along with the school information.

* Each family entering Ronald Knox at the Toddler or Primary level is required to pay a \$1,000 Family Entrance Fee. This is a one-time payment of \$1,000 collected either when a new student enters the Toddler Program for the first time or when a child enters the Primary Program for the first time.

Tuition alone does not cover the cost of educating a student at Ronald Knox. Like all independent schools, Ronald Knox conducts an annual fund program that contributes to the direct funding of our education initiatives. The Ronald Knox Montessori Annual Fund, called The Drive to Thrive, is an opportunity to raise funds to support and enhance the educational resources of the School. All parents are expected to participate in this important initiative each year.

Early Withdrawal Policy

Tuition payments are non-refundable because salaries and expenses related to maintaining the school for the entire year continue even when a child withdraws from the program.

Withdrawal before completion of the third year or the kindergarten year of the Primary program will result in the forfeiture of all priority status applications for siblings of the withdrawn child, even when a sibling is currently enrolled in the Parent-Child and/or Toddler programs

Exceptions to this policy are limited to the following situations:

1. Relocation out of state or another city not within a reasonable driving distance to Ronald Knox.
2. Children with special needs with written documentation from a specialist.
3. A replacement is enrolled in the program affected.

Enrollment and Discharge Procedures

Ronald Knox strives to help each child to adapt to the Montessori classroom. Every attempt is made to work not only with the child but also with the parents to achieve a positive adjustment and overall

experience throughout the entire school year. Ronald Knox believes that a child benefits from a collaborative approach that includes the school and the parents. Additionally, a specialist may be deemed necessary in order to support the child and the teacher and to foster the child's growth and development.

Ronald Knox may ask the parent to consult qualified outside professionals if the situation warrants such action:

- Cases of serious and repeated pattern of challenging behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with a child's ability to engage in developmentally appropriate self-regulation and cognitive and prosocial engagement with peers or adults
- Severe separation anxiety
- Noted speech, language and/or physical limitations or challenges
- Noted patterns of sensory challenges that significantly interfere with the child's learning and/or social behavior and/or other children in the class.
- The classroom does not meet the developmental needs of the child

In the event a situation warrants qualified outside support and a parent is unwilling to engage in a dialogue or consult an outside professional in order to best help the child, a Support Plan will be implemented and a transition to a different program or school may become necessary.

Transfers Between Classrooms

Based on the Montessori Philosophy, a child remains in the same classroom for the entirety of their three-year RKMS Primary experience.

With minimal exceptions, RKMS does not permit transfers between classrooms. As an accredited Montessori school, all of our rooms are staffed by certified Montessori teachers. There may be some stylistic differences among teachers, but all our faculty adhere to stringent Montessori principles. A transfer can often upset the balance and relationship that has been created in both environments. Such changes hinder educational development for all children.

Disenrollment

Families who are asked to leave RKMS under extreme circumstances such as being disrespectful in any way to the faculty, administration, or board members, and/or encouraging other families to act in the same unconstructive manner, and who refuse to engage in a dialogue to resolve the issue at hand, will forfeit their priority status. Should the family choose to re-apply, the school administration will make the final decision for re-admission, and the family will be placed in the Wait Pool.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Parking

RKMS has a traffic safety agreement with the Village of Wilmette stating that when it is necessary to park on Elmwood Avenue, parents will park on the south side to the east of the fire hydrant where parking is permissible. Always regard parking and traffic signs. Our overall concerns are safety and being a good neighbor to the surrounding residents who live along Elmwood Avenue.

Walking To School

When approaching from the west, please use the sidewalk on the south side of Elmwood Avenue. We then ask that you wait behind the yellow line on the sidewalk in the designated waiting area for the walkers. A faculty member will receive your child and assist them to the door.

Arrival Times

Early Bird – 7:45 a.m. Toddler – 8:15 a.m. Primary – 8:30 a.m. Parent/Child – 8:30 a.m. (Wednesdays &

Arrival Notes

- **IMPORTANT! Please arrive at school on time! Late arrivals impact faculty, staff, and all children, as well as the classroom routine.**
- Approach the school from the west (there is no left-hand turn off of Elmwood Avenue into the school drive). Enter the driveway at 2031 Elmwood Avenue and proceed to drive around the school building to the main entrance on the east side of the school. The speed limit on the grounds is 10 mph.
- **All children must wait in the car with their seat belts fastened.**
- **The parent/caregiver must remain in their vehicle until a faculty/staff member greets them.**
- **The parent/caregiver is then required to remove the child from the vehicle.**
- For a safe and efficient arrival for all, please refrain from any unnecessary conversation with the faculty/staff or other families in the carpool line. If you need to discuss an issue with your child's teacher, we ask that you contact them either by phone or email.
- You may turn right or left when exiting the driveway.
- Our faculty and staff work to move carpool along as quickly as possible. Once the last car in line is attended to, the carpool is considered closed and all faculty return to their classrooms.
- For security reasons, school doors are locked at the close of each carpool session. If you arrive after the session, please walk your child to the main entrance (east side of the building), ring the bell, and wait with your child until one of the staff members comes to receive your child. Please say your goodbyes at the door. A staff member will walk your child to the classroom.

Dismissal Times

Half Day Toddler & Primary - 11:30 a.m.
Half Day Toddler & Primary with Lunch - 12:30
p.m.
Full Day Toddler & Primary, & Kindergarten - 3:00

Dismissal Notes

- Each family is assigned a carpool number. These numbers are distributed at the beginning of the school year.
- Driving
 - Please display the number in the center of the windshield of your car so that the faculty can see it.
 - For pickup, **please remain in your vehicle** until your child is brought to you by a faculty/staff member.
 - Please assist in securing your child's seat belt (RKMS faculty/staff may not assist in securing your child's seat belt).
- Walking
 - Walking to pick your child up from school
 - Please bring your carpool number to show the staff (you may request an additional carpool number if needed).
 - Wait in the designated area in front of the school.
- If there is a change in your child's pick-up on any given day, we ask for the following:
 - Send a note with your child and have them hand the note to the faculty/staff member during arrival.
 - Even if the other family is on your carpool list, a note or phone call alleviates confusion at carpool time and speeds up the dismissal process.
 - **For last-minute changes in carpool, please call the school and enter extension 72.**

Emergency Care

We understand that emergencies can happen and can prohibit you from picking up your child on time. Please be aware that there is a late fee policy in place to ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and students. The late fee is \$50 for every 30 minutes or part thereof that your child stays at RKMS after the scheduled pick-up time. This fee covers the extra cost of paying our faculty or staff members to supervise your child until your arrival.

Ronald Knox Safety Contract & Parking/Traffic Guidelines

Families with children enrolled in the school shall be required to enter the safety contract setting forth traffic rules and regulations. These rules and regulations are requests made by the Transportation Commission regarding ingress and egress to and from school and the proper flow of traffic on Elmwood Avenue. All parents are required to review and agree to this contract on an annual basis. Please share these guidelines and procedures with caregivers or others who may be picking up your children.

Drop-Off & Pick-Up Guidelines

- At pick-up, display your carpool number in the front window of your car as soon as you enter the driveway so that it is clearly visible to the faculty.
- Drop-off and pick-up of students will occur only in the RKMS designated area.
- For pick-up, please wait until your child is brought to you. Please do not get out of your car unless necessary to secure your child in their car seat before leaving the driveway.
- Please turn OFF your car ignition while waiting on the school grounds to drop off/pick up your child. Your car ignition may be turned ON once the arrival/dismissal process begins so that you may continue to move in the carpool line without delay.
- If you need to park to drop off/pick up your child or to enter the school, please DO NOT park on the NORTH side of the street or in front of the school building. Parking is permitted on the SOUTH side of the street EAST of the fire hydrant. There is a NO PARKING zone between the school and the fire hydrant EAST of the building.

Parking & Traffic Guidelines

- Approach RKMS from the west. Left-hand turns from Elmwood into our driveway are strictly prohibited.
- Approaching Elmwood Avenue from Hunter Avenue is strongly recommended. Please note that this requires driving an extra block if you are approaching from the east.
- Refrain from exercising a three-point turn in a neighbor's driveway.
- Queuing along 21st Street to turn into Elmwood Avenue is strictly prohibited as this can cause congestion at our entrance during peak periods. If you approach from 21st Street and encounter a queue, you must turn west on Elmwood and circle the block. If backups occur repeatedly, RKMS will prohibit this route.
- The school exit will accommodate two lanes (one for right turns and one for left turns) out of the school property.
- RKMS vehicle stickers shall be issued to every family attending the school. The sticker must be displayed on the **top right windshield** of the vehicle that is mostly used to drop off and pick up your child from school.

Speed Limit

- The speed limit on Elmwood Avenue is 25 mph.

Cellphones

- Cell phone usage (including texting) is prohibited in the carpool line.

Parent-Child Program

- Parents attending the Parent-Child program shall park on the grounds of the Sisters of Christian Charity at 2041 Elmwood Avenue.

- Parents shall approach from the west and proceed all the way south to the end of the main lane. From there, parents shall turn around using the circular drive at the end of the property and proceed north to park on the east side along the pine trees.
- The speed limit on the grounds is 10 mph.
- Cell phone usage is prohibited on the grounds of the Sisters of Christian Charity.

Non-compliance with **Ronald Knox Montessori School Safety Contract** will result in the following actions:

- First Offense: e-mail from the Admissions Director
- Second Offense: a phone call from the Admissions Director
- Third Offense: a phone call from the Head of School, disciplinary action, and possible expulsion with loss of tuition and all sibling and legacy status

Thank you for your cooperation as we work together to create a safer community.

Attendance

Every effort should be made to have your child in attendance and on time for all regularly scheduled school days. Children gain the greatest exposure, as well as the opportunity to practice and master concepts through their interactions in the classroom. Please plan to schedule vacations or appointments outside of regular school time whenever possible.

Please notify your child's teacher if your child is absent for any reason. If the absence is planned in advance, we ask you to email your child's teacher with the details. If the absence is unplanned, please inform the teacher before class begins if possible. In the case of illness, it is imperative that you report the diagnosis to us so that we may inform other parents of the illness, if appropriate (no names are used); see more in the section for Health.

Health & Hygiene Practices

Healthy Hygiene Practices

At RKMS, we take the health of the children and of the faculty seriously. Healthy hygiene practices have been put in place, such as:

- Children will change from their "outdoor" shoes to "indoor" shoes or slippers on a daily basis.
- Indoor shoes or slippers will be kept at the school.
- Frequent hand washing will occur throughout the day.
 - Upon arrival to the classroom.
 - Before and after eating or handling food
 - After using the toilet or assisting a child in the bathroom.
 - After coming into contact with bodily fluid
 - After playing outdoors.
 - After touching eyes, nose, or mouth.
 - After touching a classroom pet.
 - Hand sanitizer will be used if soap and water are not readily available.

Cleaning & Air Quality

Strict cleaning and disinfection practices have been put in place, such as:

- Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected daily.
- The school will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected at the end of each day.
- Classroom windows will be opened to increase ventilation and pull in fresh air from outside.
- Each classroom has an independent air conditioning/heating unit with a UVC air purifier

COVID Related Health Guidance

COVID Exposure

Persons who test positive for COVID need to stay home until fever free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medicine) and diarrhea/vomiting has ceased for 24 hours (without the use of medicine), consistent with the CDC guidance. Additionally, they need to mask indoors for a total of 10 days from the onset of symptoms. Day 1 is the test date.

Parents of students also have the option of keeping their child at home for 5 days and mask indoors at school for 5 days.

What To Do When Your Child is Sick

The information below describes what to do when your child gets sick and when to keep them home.

Illness at School

In the event a child becomes sick at school (fever, diarrhea, vomits, etc.) or there is evidence of illness (discharge of heavy or discolored mucus from the nose, frequent coughing, etc.), a parent will be called to pick up the child within 20 minutes. A COVID test may be recommended prior to the child's return to school. Repeated COVID testing may be necessary if symptoms persist or worsen.

Contagious Diseases

The school must be notified if your child has a contagious disease (COVID, strep, chicken pox, pink eye, etc.) so that proper notification can be given to the other parents. Neither the child's nor the family's name will be disclosed. If your child has a contagious disease that requires medication, they must stay at home for at least 24 hours after beginning the medication. Also, children should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.

When to Stay Home

To know whether your child should stay home from school, the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests answering these three quick questions:

1. Does your child have a fever? Fevers of 100.4° F or more are generally a sign of illness, so children should stay home from school.
2. Is your child well enough to engage in class? If your child seems to run down to get much out of school, keep them home.
3. Do you think your child has a contagious illness, such as the flu or pinkeye? If so, talk to your doctor and keep them at home until they're no longer infectious.

General Health Guidelines

Please follow these reminders about when to keep your child home:

- Your child must stay home 24 hours after the last occurrence of fever, vomiting, diarrhea, etc., without the aid of fever-reducing medicine, anti-diarrhea medicine, etc.
- If a fever is higher than 100.4 degrees.
- If there is discharge of discolored mucus from the nose.
- If there is frequent coughing or difficulty breathing.
- If there is a skin rash or untreated infected patches of skin (unless it is a confirmed allergic reaction or diagnosed by a doctor as non-contagious).
- If the child has vomited or had diarrhea in the past 24 hours.
- If there are flu-like symptoms, including the sudden onset of chills, fever, headache, body/muscle aches, sore throat, and dry hacking cough.
- If there are strep throat symptoms, including the sudden onset of chills, fever, headache, difficulty swallowing, and occasionally earache and abdominal pain.
- If the child is exhausted and does not feel well enough to participate in all class activities.
- If there is evidence of lice, the student may return after treatment.
- If the child has symptoms of pink eye, they must wait until 24 hours after receiving antibiotic treatment or drainage has ceased.

Allergies

We recognize that an increasing number of children have life-threatening food allergies, and ensuring the safety of our students is our highest priority at all times. All children with allergies who attend RKMS will be appropriately supervised with regard to foods and materials in the classroom containing the allergens to which they are allergic.

RKMS promotes a flexible, interactive process between parents and guardians and RKMS staff concerning allergies and any modifications or potential modifications to the school's policies and procedures as may be warranted. The interactive process consists of a dialogue between the parent or guardian and the school with the objective of finding a mutually agreeable means by which a particular student with a life-threatening allergy can share in the equal enjoyment of the school's programs and activities through an identification of the precise limitations resulting from the allergy and potential reasonable accommodations that could overcome those limitations.

A child with any food allergy shall not be served any snack or food that has not been provided by his/her parent without the express written consent of their parent/guardian, as described in the procedures below. RKMS strives to be a peanut and/or tree-nut-free environment; however, it is important to note that these allergens may enter our environment through unintentional means.

All faculty and staff attend CPR/First Aid Training biannually.

Minimizing Allergens

To minimize allergens from entering or spreading in the school environment:

- All parents/guardians/caregivers shall be encouraged to refrain from serving children food containing peanuts/tree nuts in the car while driving to school.
- All children, faculty, and staff shall wash their hands prior to engaging in daily classroom activities.
- Faculty shall disinfect when cleaning tables and chairs during and/or after class.

Life-Threatening Allergies

All parents of children with life-threatening allergies must:

- Annually complete/update the required medical information on the online registration.
 - The Admissions Director will contact the parents to schedule a required meeting for children with life-threatening allergies and will send the parents appropriate allergy forms to be completed prior to the meeting.
 - Parents of children with non-life-threatening allergies, food intolerances, or asthma may request a meeting with the teacher and/or Admissions Director as well as complete the required documents.
- Provide all medications for emergency response. Please note that all medications need to be up to date (i.e., not expired), in their original containers, and clearly labeled.
- Provide an up-to-date photo of your child for the Allergy Response Kit.
- Attend a meeting to discuss your child's allergies with the Admissions Director and teacher of your child's core class.
- Review the Guidelines for Snacks/Food and Lunch and complete the Snack Consent form.
- Provide an appropriate substitute snack for your child if necessary and clearly label all snack containers sent to the school.
- Ensure that all emergency contact phone numbers are current at all times.

- Immediately report to the Admissions Director any change in your child's medical condition and make any necessary changes in your child's online registration.

Allergy/Asthma Response Kits

- Each child's Allergy/Asthma Response Kit, including the Allergy/Asthma Action Plan, will be labeled and stored in an individual Ziploc bag in the Safety Backpack in the core classroom. A duplicate Allergy/Asthma Response Kit will be located in the Gross Motor Room.
- Allergy/Asthma Response Kits will include:
 - Allergy/Asthma Action Plan
 - Photo of the child
 - Medication(s)
 - Consent to Administer Medication form
 - Life-Threatening or Non-Life-Threatening Allergy form
 - Snack Consent form
- Faculty periodically reviews the Allergy/Asthma Response Kit throughout the school year so that they may be fully prepared in the event of an emergency.

Major Allergic Reactions

In case of a major allergic reaction:

- Faculty will follow the Allergy/Asthma Action Plan in place for the child.
- Faculty will administer prescribed medications to the child.
- In the event an Epi-Pen has been administered, 911 will be called first and the parent(s) second.
- Faculty will promptly notify the administration of the emergency.
- Administration will assist in attending to the child if and when necessary.
- The child's parents will immediately be notified of the emergency.

Records & Forms

Illinois State Law requires that all children in preschool programs have a complete medical report on file, signed and dated by a pediatrician, within six months prior to the date of entry into school. The examination must include appropriate immunizations as dictated by Illinois State Law. A new physical examination is required for every child 2 years after the original form is submitted.

In addition, a Lead Assessment Questionnaire must be completed by the parent and signed and dated by the physician. A copy of the child's birth certificate is also required.

Illinois State Law also requires all kindergarten-age children to have a complete Eye Exam and Dental Exam Form on file. The Admissions Director will automatically send out forms when they are required.

Under no circumstances will children be permitted to attend the first day of school or any day thereafter unless the following documents have been submitted:

- Current Health form (within 2 years) including TB testing
- Lead Assessment Questionnaire (or documentation that a lead test has been administered)
- Copy of child's birth certificate
- Eye Exam form (for kindergarten age children)
- Dental Exam form (for kindergarten age children)

This policy is essential for the protection of your child and other members of the RKMS community.

Exemptions

Medical exemptions from immunization are accepted upon receipt of a signed doctor's statement. Religious/personal exemptions will be examined on a case-by-case basis.

In the case of exemptions, the Health form, Lead questionnaire, and TB screening documents must still be submitted to RKMS.

Guidance & Discipline

The Ronald Knox Philosophy

Discipline for children is a point of arrival, not departure. The positive model of discipline within a Montessori setting is self-discipline, where concentration, focus, and independent learning happen without contention and interruption. The development of inner discipline in children is our goal. Factors that are essential in attaining this goal are the teachers, the prepared environment, and the child.

How Guidance and Discipline Are Implemented by Staff

The teacher sets an example through their controlled and purposeful movement in the classroom. They use a modulated tone of voice, respect the child and the environment, and use consistency in reinforcing the rules. In addition to setting limits with age-appropriate ground rules, the teacher follows the child and guides their activity.

The teacher prepares the environment, which offers an atmosphere of freedom to choose materials. The materials are stimulating and self-correcting; control of error is built into all materials, which are attractive and well maintained. The configuration of the room remains consistent so that the child learns the behavioral expectations.

If behavior is not in keeping with the expectations, the teacher may take one or more of the following steps, always keeping in mind the best interests of the child involved, as well as the other children in the classroom:

- Redirect a child who deviates from the ground rules
- Separate a child from the situation until they are ready to work independently
- Consult with the Admissions Director and Head of School, when necessary, regarding a child's misbehavior
- Corporal punishment is not practiced at any time.

The teacher shall contact the parents of the child to determine the possible causes of undesirable behavior and to discuss possible strategies for modification.

The teacher may ask a child to move around the room with them until the child thinks they are ready to work independently. In a situation involving two or more children, the children will be encouraged by the teacher to actively listen to each other and work towards a resolution.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is contrary to Illinois law and Ronald Knox Montessori School policy. Bullying and other aggressive behaviors diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Deterring students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important Ronald Knox's goals.

Ronald Knox prohibits and will not tolerate aggressive student behavior, including bullying conduct of any type or on any basis, as defined below. Students are expected to act respectfully towards their peers and to avoid bullying and aggressive behaviors in their interactions with other students. Bullying or other aggressive behaviors will result in restorative actions, up to and including suspension or expulsion. In addition, bullying that is based on actual or perceived race, color, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited and may amount to a violation of a student's civil rights.

For purposes of this policy, the term *bullying* includes cyber-bullying and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward, or intended to specifically target a student that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property.
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health.
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance.
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

Bullying may take various forms, including, without limitation, one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Aggressive conduct towards other students that is not severe or pervasive shall not be deemed as bullying but may constitute gross disobedience or misconduct leading to disciplinary action.

Cyber-bullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. *Cyber-bullying* includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of *bullying*. *Cyber-bullying* also includes the distribution by electronic means of communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of *bullying*.

Restorative measures mean a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that: (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community,

(ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and/or restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.

School personnel means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in the school, including without limitation school administrators, teachers, teaching assistants, school guidance counselors, school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resource officers, and security guards.

Bullying is prohibited in each of the following situations:

1. During any school sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school sponsored or school sanctioned events or activities.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This paragraph (item #4) applies only when a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred; it does not require school personnel members to monitor any non-school related activity, function, or program.

The Head of School or designee shall develop and maintain a bullying prevention and response program that:

1. Advances the school's goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying.
2. Is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including teachers, board members, and parents/guardians.
3. Defines bullying as provided in this policy.
4. Fully implements and enforces all applicable school policies by including provisions that address the following:
 - a. conducting a prompt and thorough investigation of alleged incidents of bullying, intimidation, harassing behavior, or similar conduct,
 - b. making reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within ten (10) school days after the report of the alleged incident was received, taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation of the reported bullying incident,
 - c. involving appropriate school support personnel and other school personnel with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process,
 - d. providing each student who is determined as a result of investigation to have violated this or other school policies with disciplinary consequences and appropriate remedial actions consistent with this and other Board policies,
 - e. protecting students against retaliation for reporting such bullying conduct,
 - f. ensuring consistency with federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Head of School

- or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.
- g. The Head of School or school administrator or designee should be notified of the reported incident of bullying as soon as possible. The Head of School or designee shall investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction. The school shall provide both the victim and the aggressor with information regarding services that are available within the school community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.
 5. Examines the appropriate steps to understand and rectify conditions that foster bullying, intimidation, and harassment; this contemplates taking action to eliminate or prevent these disruptive behaviors beyond traditional punitive disciplinary actions. In addition, interventions shall be utilized to address bullying, which may include, but are not limited to school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.
 6. Includes bullying prevention and character instruction through the Montessori peace curriculum.
 7. Fully informs school personnel of the school's goal to prevent students from engaging in bullying and the measures being used to accomplish it. This includes: (a) communicating the school's expectation – and the state law requirement – that teachers and other certificated employees maintain discipline, and (b) establishing a clear process for school personnel to fulfill their obligation to report alleged acts of bullying, intimidation, harassment, and other acts of actual or threatened violence, and (c) requiring school personnel to notify the Head of School or designee of the reported incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
 8. Encourages all members of the school community, including students, parents/guardians, school personnel, volunteers, and visitors, to report alleged acts of bullying, intimidation, harassment, and other acts of actual or threatened violence to the Head of School or any school employee. A report may be made orally or in writing. Anonymous reports are accepted. No disciplinary action will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Complaint Managers:

Blythe Silva

2031 Elmwood Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091

blythe_silva@ronaldknox.org

847-256-2922, Ext. 21

Anita McGing

2031 Elmwood Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091

anita_mcging@ronaldknox.org

847-256-2922, Ext. 19

9. Actively involves students' parents/guardians in the remediation of the behavior(s) of concern. This includes ensuring that all parents/guardians are notified, as required by State law, whenever their child engages in aggressive behavior. The Head of School or designee shall, consistent with federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights, promptly inform parents/guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of services within the school and community, such as social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.
10. Communicates the school's expectation that all students conduct themselves with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students. This includes a process for commending or acknowledging students for demonstrating appropriate behavior.

11. Prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying. A student's act of reprisal or retaliation will be met with disciplinary consequences and appropriate remedial actions consistent with this and other school policies.
12. Does not punish a student for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be met with disciplinary consequences and appropriate remedial actions consistent with this and other school policies.
13. Posts this policy on the school's website, includes it in the parent handbook, and, where applicable, post it where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. Annually communicates this policy to students and their parents/guardians, and school personnel, including new employees when hired, and provides this policy periodically throughout the school year to students and faculty. This includes annually disseminating information to all students, parents, and guardians explaining the serious impact caused by bullying, intimidation, or harassment and that these behaviors will be taken seriously and are not acceptable in any form.
14. The Head of School or designee shall assist the Board with its evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness. This process shall include, without limitation:
 - a. The frequency of victimization;
 - b. Student, school personnel, and family observations of safety at a school;
 - c. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs;
 - d. The types of bullying reported; and
 - e. Bystander intervention participation.
15. Complies with State and federal law and is consistent with all other School Board policies. This includes prompting the Board to conduct a review and reevaluation of the policy to make any necessary and appropriate revisions every 2 years, and file the policy with the Illinois State Board of Education after the Board adopts or updates it.

This policy is not intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.

Building Access

Anyone entering the building beyond the front lobby must check in with the front desk, with the exception of RKMS employees. Visitors will be asked to sign in with their first and last names, reason for visit, and time of arrival.

All visitors and parents must first speak with an administrative member before entering beyond the school lobby. Visitors must sign out upon leaving the building.

Abuse Reporting

All staff and faculty at Ronald Knox Montessori School are Mandated Reporters per the state of Illinois. Any suspected abuse or neglect of a child will be reported to the Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-25-ABUSE).

Unsafe Product Recall

Per DCFS regulation, the Toddler Lead Teacher signs off each month that the classroom contains no children's products that have been recalled due to safety issues. The list of products can be found at <http://srs.dph.illinois.gov/webapp/SRSApp/pages/> and is also accessible from the Toddler class blog. Please check your home periodically for items on this list as well.

Daily Operations

Dress Prepared

- **Clothing**

Clothes should fit children comfortably so that they can move freely without worrying about straps, belts, or buttons. Clothing should be chosen so that the child can be completely independent of the adult and allow for quick access to the toilet.

To ensure order and independence and prevent losses, **please label every article of clothing with the child's last name or initials.**

Zippers can be difficult for young children to negotiate and to gain a feeling of independence and self-confidence. Try to find large zippers and ask your child to try them at the store before buying the item. Double zippers are very difficult for preschoolers and should be avoided.

- **Winter Gear**

RKMS Students go outside most days during the winter, even if only for a short time (unless the temperature is less than 5 degrees with or without the wind chill).

During the cold weather, please send your child in a warm jacket. Snow pants, boots, mittens, hats and scarves should be carried in your child's backpack each day as classes go outside as often as possible throughout the winter. To keep children dry and healthy, a teacher may keep a child from playing in the snow if the child does not have the proper winter gear. Have your child accompany you while shopping for jackets, snow pants, and boots and have them try items on and off to be sure they are manageable before sending them to school.

- **Rain Gear**

Children may also go outdoors on days when it is raining if there is no lightning or chance of a thunderstorm. Therefore, please send your child in the appropriate rain gear on these days, including a rain jacket and rain boots. Check out this link for 'muddy buddy' – which is all-weather, lightweight, waterproof, durable gear to keep your child dry, clean, and comfortable: <https://tuffo.com/muddy-buddy/>.

- **Slippers/Shoes**

One of the first routines of the day is switching from 'outdoor' shoes to 'indoor' shoes/slippers. Please make sure your child can easily take their shoes off and on independently. All children at RKMS are to bring a pair of shoes/slippers to be left at the school year- round. This keeps our environment clean and allows children the opportunity to care for themselves.

Toddler

Children in the Toddler program are asked to bring a pair of shoes to be left at the school. Details can be found in the [Guide to the Toddler Program](#).

Primary Program

1st year students are to have slip-on shoes, while 2nd year through kindergarten, students are to have **tie shoes** to develop their shoe-tying skills. Please be sure all indoor shoes have flexible soles and are easy to put on. Details can be found in the [Guide to the Primary Program](#).

Backpacks

All new students will receive their very own RKMS backpack.

Please note the following:

- Please have a complete set of clothing (shirt, pants, socks, and underwear) inside your child's backpack at all times in case of accidents or water spills.
- If your child comes home in their extra set of clothes, please replenish the backpack with a new set.
- Please do not attach any hanging key chains or decorations to the RKMS backpack. These items can be dangerous and distracting. Children get upset when they are broken or lost, so please leave these special items at home.

Water Bottle

All students are asked to bring a durable water bottle they can easily open and close on their own.

Water bottles will be kept in backpacks and used throughout the day.

Objects from Home

RKMS asks that you keep all non-necessary objects at home, such as toys, loveys, and jewelry. In the classroom, these items can easily become lost or broken, and they function as a source of distraction from the work available. Teachers may choose at their discretion to keep objects from home in a secure location away from the children until dismissal time, and parents will be reminded to keep these items at home in the future.

Label Belongings

Please label each item of your child's belongings (i.e. shoes, backpack, coat, boots, mittens, hats). Your child's initials written with a permanent marker will alleviate confusion between identical pairs of boots, etc. Having these items marked ensures that the teachers can remind your child to take their belongings home, and it gives staff the opportunity to return missing items.

Licensed Character Policy

At RKMS, we require clothing that is free of "licensed characters." This allows the child to be themselves and not take on the persona of the fictional character.

Our observations have shown that children wearing characters from TV or toys on their clothing are more likely to attempt to imitate that character while at school. This results in disruptions during the work cycle, impeding the education of all children in the room. At school, our objective is to help your child develop into their own self. This is not to say that superheroes or princesses are bad! However, we believe that there is a time for work and a time for play. Just as we as adults have our work clothes and our lounge clothes, so do children have "work" (school) clothes and play clothes.

Snack & Lunch

RKMS is committed to serving healthy snacks and lunch each day, along with having children learn the skills to prepare simple snacks for themselves. Throughout the school year, each child will have the opportunity to provide snacks for the classroom. A suggested list of what to bring will be provided to families at the beginning of the year. In the Primary Classrooms, Ronald Knox provides additional fresh fruit and vegetables as part of the daily snack for the children.

RKMS strives to be a peanut and tree nut free school. At no time may any snack or food be brought into the school containing peanuts or tree nuts.

Snack - All Programs

- Parents shall drop off snacks in the carpool line for their child's class based on a schedule created by the Lead Teacher and/or Room Parent.
- Only food with nutritional value will be served.
- Parents whose children have food allergies have the following choices:
- Parents may provide their own nutritious snacks for their children

-or-

- Parents may sign a waiver stating that they are comfortable with their child eating snacks brought in by other parties.

Parent/Child Snacks

- If your snack or other items are too much to carry along with your child, take the snack or other items to the lobby. You can ring the doorbell and someone will be happy to assist you.

Toddler Snacks

- All snacks brought in by parents, including fruits and vegetables, shall be purchased and pre-packaged by the store only. Snacks must be brought in their original packaging with the ingredients clearly listed. This is mandated by DCFS standards. Any snacks that do not meet this requirement cannot be served.

Primary Snacks

- RKMS purchases daily snacks for the children consisting of fresh fruits and vegetables. For children with allergies, parents may sign a waiver saying they are comfortable with their child eating these fruits and vegetables, or they may provide their own.
- Parents must list the ingredients of any homemade snacks.
- Any snack purchased from the store must be in the original packaging with the ingredients listed.

Lunch Program

- Lunches shall not contain peanuts or tree nuts.
- Children in the Lunch Program may bring their own bag lunch or participate in the catered hot lunch program, for an additional fee.
- Children in the Lunch Program are encouraged not to share their lunch with each other.
- In the event that a child with food allergies is enrolled in the Lunch Program, the child would have the option to eat at a separate table. The parent of the allergic child shall submit the written request to the Admissions Director.

Student Birthdays

At RKMS, birthday celebrations are kept quite simple. The primary classrooms will acknowledge your child during community time. In place of treats, we ask you to donate a gift-wrapped book for your child to open and gift to the classroom. This book will then be shared with the classroom. You may also write on the front inside cover to acknowledge the special occasion.

Teachers will share their book wish list to choose from, or you are welcome to suggest a book the class may enjoy. Please choose a book that is based in reality, as well as age-appropriate for the primary classrooms. Please, no books with copyrighted characters (Star Wars, Sesame Street, Paw Patrol).

Lastly, please refrain from giving goodie bags and bringing snacks and reserve them for gatherings outside of school.

Timeline Celebrations

Each Primary student at Ronald Knox will have a 'Timeline Celebration' ceremony during the school year. The ceremony honors the passage of time from the child's birth until the present with peers and teachers and helps build awareness of time for the child. The ceremony is done in a circle at a class community time. A candle is lit to represent the sun, and the child carries a globe around the circle once for each year of their life. As they travel around the circle, your child's teacher helps tell their life story and celebrates their growth.

Celebrations will be scheduled throughout the year, starting with the oldest students and ending with the youngest. Parents/caregivers are invited to join the class for the ceremony or alternatively can join over Zoom. The schedule will be shared on the class calendar the room parent sends to parents. A reminder will be sent close to the date of the celebration, along with a form to be completed about your child's life and a request for photos. One for each year of life they have celebrated, along with a photo of when your child was first born.

Communication

Contacting the Teacher

You may contact your child's teacher via RKMS email or phone the school phone number. If you would like a call returned, please be sure to include a phone number where you can be reached. Most communication by teachers is done either before class or immediately following dismissal; every effort is made to return messages within 2 school days.

Classroom:

Upper East ext. 11

Upper West ext. 12

Lower East ext. 15

Lower West ext. 16

Upper Toddler ext. 13

Lower Toddler ext. 17

Parent-Child ext. 22

Newsletters

RKMS takes great pride in our parent communication and, specifically, the classroom newsletters. Each newsletter features updates on activities in the classroom, pictures, and other pertinent information pertaining to the classroom.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences are held twice yearly. Conferences provide an excellent opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss the child's experience at school. Both parents are encouraged to attend.

As these conferences are conducted by the teacher, last-minute cancellations are strongly discouraged. We also appreciate promptness, as conferences are scheduled one after another. In the event that parents cannot attend any of the times available, the teacher will schedule a 15-minute phone conference instead.

Knox Notes

Knox Notes is the main method that RKMS uses to disseminate important information about upcoming events, paperwork needed, special notices, and other issues pertaining to the RKMS community. It is published every other Wednesday throughout the school year and is sent to all email addresses associated with current students' online registration. Please be sure to read through each edition to ensure you are aware of the goings-on at your child's school.

Emergency Closings

We give special thought to safety when considering closing our school due to inclement weather. If we are considering an emergency closing, parents will receive an email the night before stating that there is the potential for RKMS to close. The decision to close will be sent to RKMS families via email by 6:00 am on the day of the close. Additionally, an announcement will be given to the Emergency Closing Center for broadcast on major Chicago radio and television stations.

Parent Engagement

Education

RKMS desires to educate and support the whole family, not just the student. We offer various parent education workshops and lectures to deepen your understanding of the Montessori philosophy, the classroom functions, and the development of children. Parents who attend these sessions have found that they provide an excellent opportunity to gain more knowledge about their child's growth and education.

We also have a parent library at school that contains titles covering Montessori education and child development. If you are interested in reading more, please ask your child's teacher for recommendations. Additionally, the RKMS Facebook and Instagram pages contain many links to current topics regarding both Montessori education and child development. Parents may also consider visiting the American Montessori Society (AMS) website, <https://amshq.org/Families>.

Volunteering

The best way to be involved at RKMS is through volunteering. We host a wide variety of events throughout the school year, and our parent volunteers are what make them successful. During your child's online registration, you will be asked to select which events you would like to volunteer for, and read about each one. We thank you in advance for your participation in the Ronald Knox community!

Contributing

We are aware that each family's situation is different, and we ask for a donation that is meaningful to you during the Annual Fund/The Drive to Thrive. Additionally, we welcome any employer-matching contributions, foundation grants, and other similar contributions. Gifts and donations made to RKMS are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

"The child's development follows a path of successive stages of independence, and our knowledge of this must guide us in our behaviour towards him. We have to help the child to act, will and think for himself. This is the art of serving the spirit, an art which can be practised to perfection only when working among children." - **Dr. Maria Montessori**