PARENT – SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

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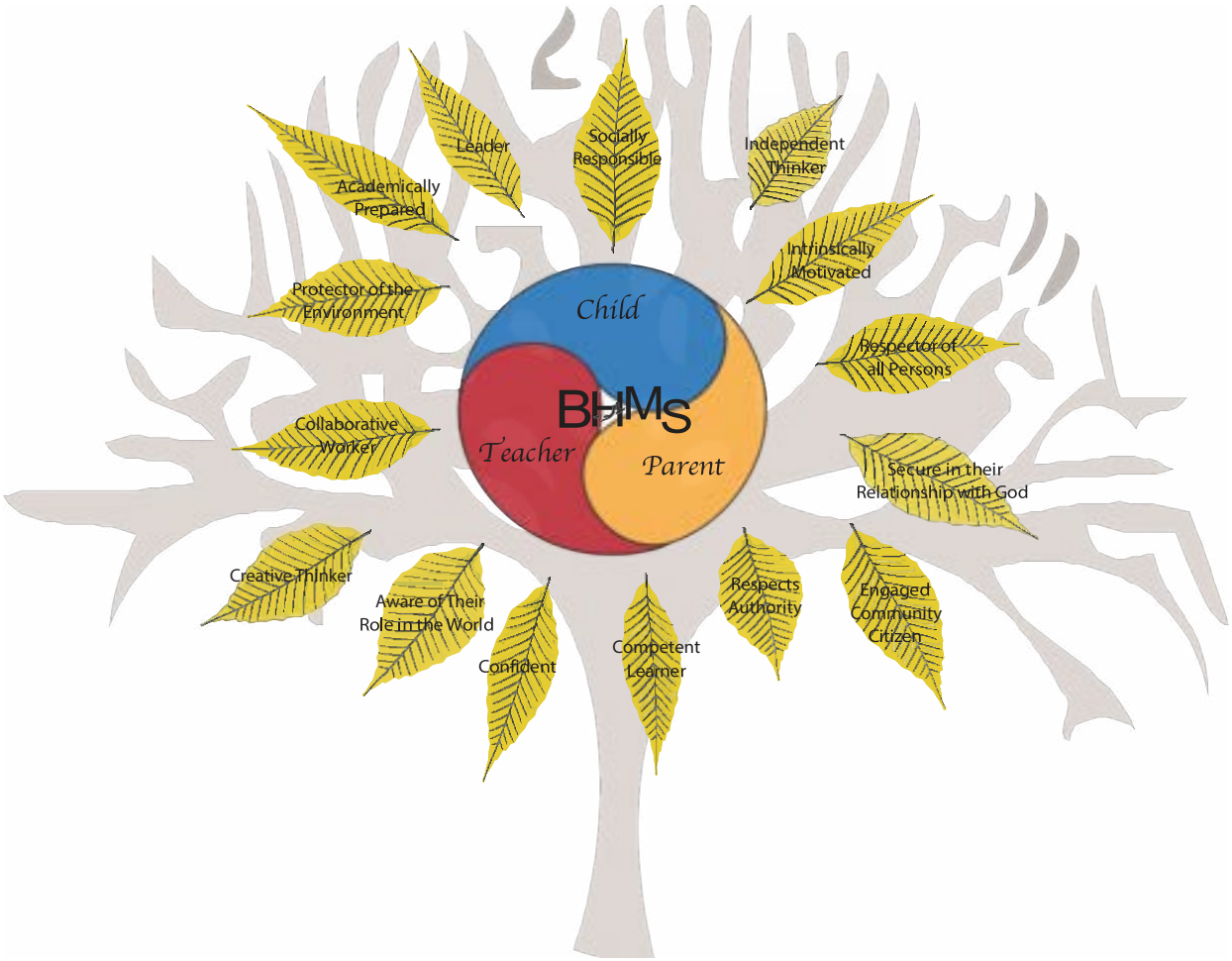
PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

Parent Teacher Child Relationship

Our goal is for parents and teachers to work collaboratively to foster the development of the child. The outcome of the parent, teacher and child relationship is our Portrait of a Graduate.

Portrait of a Graduate illustrates the skills and attributes BHMS students can develop when parents and teachers work collaboratively to foster the development of their child's academic, social, emotional, and spiritual development.

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE



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Teacher	Parent
Classroom Architect, Builder and Guardian: • *Continually creates a classroom environment to meet the changing needs of the children, (cognitive, physical, emotional, and social).* • *Establishes and enforces classroom rules, routines, and procedures.* • *Identifies volunteer opportunities and coordinates volunteer efforts to meet classroom needs*	***Lifetime Role Model:*** • *Promotes development of independence, responsibility, and accountability of the child by modeling and reinforcing desired behaviours.* • *Provides boundaries and choices; uses logical consequences in discipline.*
Instructional Designer, Facilitator and Assessor: • *Passionate about meeting the child's needs using Montessori Philosophy and methodology.* • *Provides individual children with appropriate, challenging work.* • *Shares information with parents regarding academic and developmental progress.*	***Respecter of Montessori Professional:*** • *Seeks to understand how things are done in a Montessori classroom.* • *Actions reinforce the Montessori approach and support the fundamental Montessori tenet of the teacher's authority in the classroom.*
Classroom Role Model: • *Promotes development of independence, responsibility, and accountability of the child by modeling and reinforcing desired behaviours.* • *Provides boundaries and choices; uses logical consequences in discipline.*	***Collaborative Problem Solver:*** • *Partners with teacher in problem solving to improve the educational experience for the child.*
Classroom Authority: • *Works with child in a manner consistent with Montessori philosophy.* • *Respects the child and provides freedom within limits.*	***Instructional Supporter:*** • *Committed to learning about the Montessori Method.* • *Reads Newsletter articles; attends Parent /Teacher Conferences and workshops. Asks classroom teacher(s): "What can I do to support my child?" Follows through on agreed upon steps.*
Facilitator of Problem-Solving: • *Promotes development of the child's problem-solving skills.* • *Asks questions to help the child solve his/her own problems rather than solving problems for him/her.* • *Allows the child to experience consequences of his/her actions.*	***Facilitator of Problem-Solving:*** • *Promotes development of the child's problem-solving skills.* • *Asks questions to help the child solve his/her own problems rather than solving problems for him/her.* • *Allows the child to experience consequences of his/her actions.*
Collaborative Problem-Solver: • *Partners with parent in problem solving to improve the educational experience for the child.*	***Volunteer:*** • *Volunteers time, energy and resources to School and classroom needs. Follows the lead of the classroom teacher and respects the classroom guidelines and processes.*

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Working Relationships at Bishop Hamilton Montessori School

Setting Expectations for Parents And the School

Background

The purpose of this agreement is to clarify expectations. What parents and Bishop Hamilton Montessori School can expect of each other as we enter a long-term partnership to aid the development of the children we serve. This document seeks to articulate expectations that parents can reasonably expect of BHMS and, in turn, what BHMS, with its mission of providing a superior Montessori learning environment, can reasonably expect of parents. Our aim is to reduce the misunderstanding and disappointment that can result when unstated expectations go unmet.

WHAT DOES BHMS REASONABLY EXPECT FROM PARENTS?

Commitment to Private Montessori Education

Make continuing efforts to understand, embrace, and apply the Montessori approach at home and to work in partnership with the School.

These efforts should begin before admission. The School desires parents who understand and embrace the mission and values of the School. We help parents learn about the Montessori approach by providing information and opportunities for parent education as part of the admission process so that parents can make an informed decision in choosing to enrol their children. The School continues to provide more opportunities throughout a family's tenure at the School.

Once children are enrolled, BHMS expects parents to attend regularly scheduled Parent-Teacher Conferences and Parent Education Events whenever possible and to familiarize themselves with the philosophy, policies and procedures contained in the Parent Handbook, Financial Handbook and other school publications.

BHMS staff and parents are expected to work collaboratively to foster the development of the child. The Portrait of a Graduate is depicted within the Parent-Teacher-Child Relationship and the respective roles of the partners are described. Children thrive when both the home and school environments work in harmony, sharing the same educational values and expectations. Children develop a love of learning and become responsible, independent, and capable when parents' values and expectations are consistent with those of the School and are reinforced on a consistent basis at home.

BHMS requires parents to commit to growth in parenting in a Montessori way. We have defined the real "work" of a parent, in a collaborative partnership with the School, as modeling the attributes for their child and providing opportunities for their child to develop them at home. This begins with the general principle: "Never do something for your child that he can do for himself." Whenever possible, allow your child to engage in all of the simple tasks of everyday life that he can do for himself at each stage of development. Montessori education may also entail learning a communication style that is different from the way in which you were parented. This is a commitment that takes time and will likely involve change, which typically involves some level of discomfort. You are not alone or isolated in your journey of growth as a parent. BHMS staff and other BHMS families are your support system; we are all members of a Montessori learning community.

Commitment to BHMS from Infancy to Grade 8

At BHMS, we are looking for families who share our desire to provide a continuous, learning environment for their children. We know that children are best positioned to reach their full potential when they are active learners in a consistent, nurturing and collaborative setting. Montessori allows children the time to develop at their own pace while fostering social awareness, critical thinking skills and creativity. These skills and attributes are gained over time and cannot be rushed. They enter our school as infants with natural curiosity and leave as adolescents well prepared for their future.

Montessori classes are made up of students who remain in the same classroom community for the duration of the program. Montessori pedagogy is based on the creation of multi-age Prepared Environments that meet the needs, characteristics, tendencies of students within a specific age span. For the Toddler and Junior High communities, this reflects a two-year program while the Casa and Elementary programs have a three-year cycle.

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In the first year, students become familiar with the routines and culture of the class and are introduced to, and work with, the initial materials of the curriculum gaining independence and control within this new environment. In the second year, the students work through the continuum of Montessori materials developing the foundations which in the third year will become evident. It is in the third year of the class that the students have the unique opportunity to see themselves as leaders and helpers in their community, having mastered their environment, their community and themselves.

It takes three full years for a student to truly experience all that is offered in a Casa or Elementary Montessori class. Enabling the children to experience the materials and curriculum as a follower, practitioner and leader is crucial to the child's academic, social and emotional development. The third year is a culmination of all that has come before. It is important to consider this commitment as you enroll your child, both for your child's sake and for the sake of the class which is affected when students do not complete the full cycle.

Commitment to Creating a Positive School Community

BHMS requires parents to demonstrate respect for all adults and children, the School and the School's programs. We encourage parents to become involved in the life of the school community by contributing their time, talents and finances.

We require parents to model respect for their children, their classmates, parents of classmates, teachers and other school staff. Respect begins with civility and deepens into trust. Our most fundamental behavioral guidelines for our students are: **"respect yourself, respect others, and respect the environment."** We expect the same from adults, parents and school staff at all times and in all relationships within the school community. We expect every member of our community of students, parents and staff to:

Be willing to accept full responsibility for their attitudes, actions, and ultimately for their lives; this includes speech and outward behaviour;

- Respect and abide by the School's policies;
- Follow the School's problem-solving process when concerns arise;
- Honour commitments In addition, BHMS requires parents to:
- Look for ways to make a positive contribution to the life of the School;
- Contribute to your children's moral development and to the culture and climate of the School which they experience on a daily basis through your behaviour;
- Support your children by speaking of their teachers, classmates, and school in positive terms.

Get involved in the life of the school community. At BHMS, parent involvement is not only strongly encouraged, but is an integral part of everyday life. Involvement opportunities range from serving in the classroom to helping to organize school social events. Find your area of interest and get involved, you can make a difference.

Communication and Problem Solving Between Home and School

Maintain active, direct, and respectful two-way communication with the School.
Read communications that are sent home, including notes, flyers, emails, newsletters, and calendars. Inform the School in a timely fashion of pertinent changes in your child's life. Parents are responsible for keeping contact information current and informing the school of any changes in custodial arrangements. If the custodial arrangements of your child have changed, it is your responsibility to provide a copy of the current court order to the School.

Active communication involves parents sharing observations and concerns about their child with their child's current teacher(s). In matters large and small, remember the principle of respect. Even when there is disagreement, disagree respectfully and follow the School's problem-solving process. For more detailed communication guidelines, please refer to section titled "Parent Communication Guidelines" of the Parent Handbook.

Children prosper most when the adults in their lives work in harmony and resolve conflict through side-by-side problem solving rather than face-to-face confrontation or by involving others who are not part of the problem or the solution. Asking for information, striving to see other perspectives, and remaining open to possible solutions are critical elements of collaborative problem solving.

WHAT CAN PARENTS REASONABLY EXPECT FROM THE SCHOOL?

Academic, Social, Emotional & Spiritual Development

BHMS Montessori School aspires to fulfill its mission to offer a Christian-based Montessori education in a safe community where infants to young adolescents are encouraged to reach their full potential. BHMS is committed to the academic, social, emotional and spiritual growth of each child, which is the foundation of our educational approach.

As a Montessori school, we are different from conventional schools. Our first commitment is to the multi-dimensional development of our students. BHMS's curriculum is challenging; you can expect your children to be provided with challenging work that is appropriate for them. Parents of our graduates report that their children are well prepared academically for entry to high school. It is not unusual for our students to be academically ahead of their peers, particularly in Math, Science and French.

Our aim is for each student to be far more than a repository of information. We guide students to think for themselves. Cognitive development and a solid academic foundation are important, yet they represent only one dimension of our aspirations for the children we serve. Equally significant is a child's social, emotional, spiritual, and physical development. Outcomes of a BHMS education are contained within our Portrait of a Graduate.

Students are given choices and a great deal of Freedom Within Limits during the school day. They are allowed to experience and learn from the consequences of their choices, thereby strengthening their critical thinking skills and promoting self-correction. The choices a child makes and the accompanying responsibilities influence the emerging character of that child. Choosing own work, or shaping it to a considerable degree, following that work through to completion, while working independently or in cooperation with others, Montessori students identify their interests and develop their individual gifts with the goal to strengthen intrinsic motivation and self-direction.

Significant emphasis is placed upon community service. Younger students learn by serving their small community: classmates, classroom, and family. As they grow, students reach out to the larger community and experience the many rewards of helping others. Students gain awareness and appreciation of others, of the challenges faced by others, and equally important, of their own strengths and abilities to help others and affect the world around them. Community service is an integral and important part of their lives and stays with them well beyond their BHMS years.

BHMS treats students with dignity and respect, and expects that they will treat others with the same respect. We treat each student as an individual and strive to develop each student's unique gifts within the context of the classroom and the school community. With freedom comes responsibility, and students learn to balance their personal freedom with a clear sense of responsibility to themselves, to others, and to the community as a whole.

Communication

We strive to maintain open, honest, timely, and respectful communication with you about your child and about information affecting the school community.

There are two scheduled Parent-Teacher Conferences that are followed by a written progress report. In the event of special concerns, your child's teacher will contact you to discuss them by telephone or in person. If you have a concern or question about your child's classroom or progress, please contact the classroom teacher before talking to administrative staff. Additional communication guidelines are contained in the Parent Handbook.

Members of BHMS faculty are highly trained professionals and their evaluations are confidential and based on direct observation of your child. Faculty will always offer their current, best understanding of your child's progress including strengths and needs. For all students, this evaluation is based on the teacher's observations, which may be augmented by input from administrative staff. Should it become clear that a child is not benefiting from the School's program and outside professional assistance is needed, or if the School is not the best program to meet the child's needs, we will schedule a meeting with parents.

School-wide communication is accomplished in several ways:

- Electronic Mailings and Notices
- School Calendar posted on BHMS website
- Hallway Display Board – announcements and highlights of current and upcoming events are posted

Safe and Supportive School Environment

BHMS strives to ensure an environment that is physically and emotionally safe and supportive, as well as aesthetically beautiful.

We are vigilant to ensure that the school building and grounds are physically safe, secure, and well maintained. If you notice something that needs to be addressed, please bring it to the attention of administrative staff.

Our community of children and adults comprise a social environment and culture that impacts the child's experience. We strive to make this environment emotionally supportive and safe for every child. This does not mean that there are no problems, it does mean that we will work with children in developmentally appropriate ways to deal with problems as they arise, empowering them with problem-solving and social skills and aiding them in the development of emotional intelligence to prepare for a lifetime of working with others in a variety of communities and organizations.

Professional Standards and Affiliations

BHMS maintains accreditation by the Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators (CCMA) and is licensed by the Ministry of Education.

The School's educational program has met the accreditation standards of the CCMA. Additionally, BHMS is licensed by the Ministry of Education.

Faculty continues to strengthen the educational program through an on-going review and development process. The average tenure of a BHMS member of faculty is ten years. BHMS promotes a culture of professional growth. Annually, teachers, in collaboration with the School Director, identify areas of desired or needed professional development.

Professional Affiliations / Memberships

- Montessori Canada
- The Montessori Foundation
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS)
- North American Montessori Teachers Association (NAMTA)
- Montessori Society of Canada
- AMI Canada

What Parents Can Expect from School Administration

Integrity; a focus on the needs of the individual child in harmony with the life of the community; mission driven decisions embodying good stewardship and responsible management; and an open door to your questions or concerns.

Administrative staff interface with all of the various constituencies of the school: students, parents, extended family, faculty, board members, alumni, prospective parents, professional visitors, government officials, other schools and educational organizations, and the general public. In your interactions with administration, you can expect professional, courteous, and business-like conduct, as well as mutually respectful communication. The School Director, Finance, Communications and Marketing Coordinator, Office Administrator, Director of Admissions, and Facility Custodian comprise the Administrative Team. They often face decisions requiring a balance of competing priorities. Sometimes those factors are mutually exclusive; sometimes equally well-intentioned adults see matters differently. In making decisions, Administration will focus on the interest of the individual child in balance with the needs of the school. To schedule a meeting with the School Director, please contact the Office.

Bishop Hamilton Montessori School

Since 1983

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