

August 2026

A letter from the Primary teachers at Mountain Laurel Montessori School:

Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year! We are looking forward to seeing our returning students, welcoming rising Toddler students and all of the students new to the Primary program. Please review this important information from the Primary teachers, Ms. Sarah Goodman and Mrs. Michelle Fitzhugh. This information is intended to assist you with your child's continuation or transition to the Primary classes.

Meet the Teachers and Parent Orientation:

Parent Orientation is **Wednesday, September 2nd, 2026 at 5:00 PM** in your child's classroom. This is an ideal time to see your child's classroom and meet and greet your child's teacher. This meeting is intended for **parents only**.

New Child Orientation:

Individual meetings for children new to the Primary program will take place the week of August 31st. Your child's teacher will contact you individually, by phone or email, to schedule the time. This is a half-hour session intended to orient your child to his or her classroom and his or her teacher. During this meeting your child will find their cubby for storing their belongings, their drawer for storing their prized paintings and artwork, and see the bathroom and where the snack table is located. They will have a simple lesson or two to help with their comfort level on their first few days. This session is for children only, so parent(s) will be asked to wait outside. You will receive a call or email from your child's teacher to set up this visitation. We recommend that any children new to the Primary classroom environment attend, even if they attended Summer Camp.

First Week: September 8th-11th:

All returning and new Primary children are welcomed to school September 8th - 11th during the hours for which they are enrolled. Before Care and After Care will be running during the first week.

Children new to the Primary classroom* will also have their first day of school **Tuesday, September 2nd**. Any parents with children brand new to the school or simply new to Primary class who have had no experience in the classroom setting have the option to send their child for shortened hours, **10 AM–12 PM during that first week**. In the past we have always had new students attend for shortened days the first few days of school to help acclimate them and build up their confidence and stamina for a longer day. You may talk with your child's teacher to see what works best for your child, shortened hours or the whole day.

*New to the primary class = rising from Toddler, Summer Camp kids, and any student new to MLMS.

Arrival & Dismissal:

All students will be dropped off at the main gate in front of the building. A staff member will bring your child into the school. We will stagger drop off so that the line is not too long. Parents should not exit their cars or park, unless absolutely necessary.

Primary drop-off time is 8:15–8:30

Primary half-day pick-up time is 12:00

Primary full-day pick-up time is 3:00

Always have contact with a staff member when dropping off or picking up your child.

Always hold your child's hand in the parking lot.

You will receive a School Handbook detailing arrival and dismissal procedures and also will receive frequent notices via email informing you of any additions or changes in routines. Bus procedures are detailed in the School Handbook as well.

If your child has an Elementary sibling, please drop your children off together at 8:15 AM at the side ramp leading to the Elementary classrooms. There will be an adult to guide them to their classes.

If your child attends Before Care please come to the front door at your drop-off time, between 7:00 and 8:00 AM. Ms. Irwin and Mrs. Fitzhugh will greet your child and invite him/her into Mrs. Fitzhugh's classroom until school begins.

Staff will be available **8:15–8:30 AM** to assist your child from the car to the school. Please be on time each day. A consistent routine will assist your child to make a smooth transition into school. If you arrive after **8:30**, please walk your child to the front door and ring the doorbell. Office Personnel will greet you and walk your child to his/her classroom.

Dismissal from school for half-day students is as follows. We dismiss from the playground or courtyard on fair weather days at **12:00 PM**. For the noontime dismissal you should park in a designated parking place and walk to the playground gate to retrieve your child. On inclement weather days we typically dismiss from the front porch.

The **3:00 PM** dismissal is from the front porch and parents may line up in the queue and step out of the car to get their child at the main gate. Please pull into a designated parking space if you would like to speak with a teacher or another parent; we ask that you not leave your car unattended in the carpool line. Dismissal time is not the best time for a long conversation with your child's teacher.

Routines and Needs

Each child needs a pair of **slippers** (or indoor slip-on shoes) to be worn inside the classroom. Upon entering the building staff will assist your child with their morning routine. This includes children removing their shoes to put on their slippers, hanging up their jacket or sweater, and placing their backpacks and shoes into their cubbies. If your

child stays for lunch, he/she should be sent with a **lunchbox** and the lunchbox must be dated with the current date each day to ensure we are in compliance with daycare licensing. Please ensure that your child's belongings fit inside his/her **backpack** and the backpack is easy for him/her to carry. The backpack should not display images of superhero/cartoon characters. Please include a **full water bottle*** each day, labeled with your child's name for your child to use on the playground and during outdoor lunch.

Each child will also be asked to bring **a full change of clothing** to school in case of the need to change. If your child struggles with toileting independence, please send in extra changes of clothing as you see fit. Please bring all clothing in a labeled ziplock bag. All articles of clothing should be **labeled with your child's name or initials**: shirts, jackets, pants, shorts, socks, slippers, gloves, backpacks, shoes, hats, etc. There are many children storing their belongings in the same space. Please keep your child's belongings safe by labeling them. It also assists staff for smooth and safe transitions if all clothing items are labeled clearly.

Snack

During the course of the school year each family will be assigned one school week to provide snacks for the entire class. No extra snack foods should be included in your child's backpack daily unless it is something for Before Care or After Care. You will receive specific instructions and a description of our lovely snack routine at Parent Orientation as well as in written format at a later date. The week of your snack assignment we also ask for a bouquet of flowers to be used for flower arranging. Flower arranging is a lovely tradition in the Montessori classroom and part of our practical life curriculum.

Lunch

All children who stay past noon bring lunch from home in an insulated lunchbox. The lunchbox/bag should not display images of superhero/cartoon characters. Your child's lunchbox should fit inside your child's backpack and should be marked with your child's name in permanent ink on the outside of the lunchbox. Please place a small, clean, cloth napkin, tea towel, or mat in your child's lunchbox every day to be used as a placemat. Daycare licensing regulations require the date to be displayed on your child's lunchbox each day to ensure fresh foods. (Masking tape or small labels with the day's date work just fine and ensure MLMS stays in accordance with daycare-licensing regulations.)

Please include protein and fresh produce in your child's lunchbox every day. Sweets should be limited and no candy please. If you send candy, or it comes with a snack kit, we will send it home. Keep in mind that we require the children to eat most of their "nutritious foods" before they eat dessert. Small quantities are best. Remember food is used for fuel for your child's body. Fruits, vegetables, and proteins that are manageable to eat will satisfy hunger as well as provide your children with learning power. Do not send in **peanut butter or peanut products** due to potential nut allergies in young children. We encourage families to provide wholesome, natural foods, free of artificial flavorings and colors, with low to no sugar.

Be sure staff members are aware of any allergies your child may have.

Note: Sometimes families have specific diets for a myriad of reasons. If this is the case for your family, please contact your child's teacher and we will work out the perfect plan for your child's needs.

After lunch and playtime, full-day children will return to their classrooms.

Nap

Children younger than 4 years of age are required to attend the afternoon nap session if attending school until 3:00 PM or later. Children over four years have the option to join their classmates for afternoon activities or take a nap. If your child is three, please send two identical fitted crib sheets, a small pillow, and two identical pillowcases all marked with your child's name. If your child is four or above please send the listed nap items or be sure to sign a waiver for the school's records that you do not wish your child to nap each afternoon. If your child struggles with toileting independence, you may wish to send in extra clothing for nap time as well as class time.

Clothing

Primary-aged students are expected to dress in comfortable, clean, neat clothing in good repair. All children wear simple, comfortable, rubber-soled slippers in the classroom. We ask that slippers, clothing, outerwear, backpacks, and lunchboxes be simple and generic, without representations of commercial/fantasy characters. Footwear should not have lights. Please keep in mind that this is an active and involved environment, and although we have the children wear aprons when engaged in art and cooking activities, sometimes accidents are unavoidable. Pay close attention to fasteners for your child's ease in toileting and changing when necessary. Your child will be working toward independence. Outdoor shoes should be sturdy and safe for playground activities and walking outdoors. On rainy days rubber boots and rain jackets with hoods should be worn. We discourage jewelry and accessories of any kind that will be distracting to your child or his/her classmates, including girl's hair accessories and watches. All clothing should be modest, no spaghetti straps are to be worn, and girls are encouraged to wear stretch shorts under dresses or skirts.

We look forward to a happy and successful school year and encourage you to stay involved with the school. We will be in touch to schedule new student orientation appointments. Parents of new students can expect a phone call the first week of school to receive news of your child's transition from the teacher's perspective. If you have a question, concern, or simply want to share something with us, we encourage you to call or email. You may contact us at 540-636-4257 or by email (listed below). Good communication between home and school is a cornerstone to your child's success. Email is our main mode of communication. Please check your email regularly and feel free to email us.

We look forward to seeing and/or meeting all of you!

Sincerely,

Sarah Goodman

sgoodman@mlm-school.org

Michelle Fitzhugh

mfitzhugh@mlm-school.org

Primary Classroom Teachers at Mountain Laurel Montessori School

IMPORTANT DATES

August 30, 2026 - Campus Beautification Day 1:00-4:00 PM

Parents and teachers can interact and work together to enhance the school environment and prepare for the school year. All are welcome and encouraged to participate.

September 2, 2026

Parent Orientation at 5:00 PM

Week of August 31st

New Primary students will each have a half-hour session for orientation with their teacher. Your child's teacher will schedule this with you personally. All children new to the Primary classroom will be invited, even if they attended Summer Camp.

September 8th-11th 2026

First days of school for returning Primary students – regular hours

Returning = students who attended Primary class last school year.

September 8th and 9th, 2026

First days for new* Primary students - regular hours unless otherwise specified. Some children benefit from an adjusted schedule of 10-12 for a gentle adjustment. Some children are ready to follow the regular schedule. Please talk with your child's teacher at orientation to make a plan for your child.

*New students = rising Toddlers, those who attended Summer Camp for the first time, students new to MLMS.

Noted above: There is an option for new students to begin with a shortened day from 10:00–12:00 to ease the transition away from home. This is an option for all new Primary students whether they attended Summer Camp or not. It is a decision that can be made with input from your child's teacher.

Daily Schedule:

- 7:00–8:00 morning Laurel Club (Before Care)
- 8:15 sibling drop-off at the Elementary ramp
- 8:15–8:30 morning car line for Primary
- 12:00 half-day dismissal
- 3:00 full-day dismissal
- 3:00–6:00 afternoon Laurel Club (After Care)

Need to bring to school: (all items devoid of cartoons or trendy characters and labeled with your child's name):

- simple, comfortable rubber-soled slippers to be left at school
- full change of clothes (plus more if still working on toilet independence)
- backpack (labeled with your child's name), large enough to house their lunchbox
- water bottle (labeled with your child's name)*
- if staying for lunch - lunchbox with the date each day
- if staying for nap - 2 identical crib sheets, one child sized nap pillow (14x20), and 2 identical pillow cases (all labeled with your child's name)

*** Water Bottles** - Large metal water bottles are definitely popular right now, but are not the best for little hands and small backpacks. Here are recommended water bottles for this age. Available on Amazon, Target, Walmart and even Martin's!

Water bottles appropriate for size and storage:

[Contigo](#)

[CamelBak](#)

[Wildkin](#)