

Edgemont Montessori School Family Handbook

2023-2024



**20 Edgemont Road
Montclair, NJ 07042
973-509-4162**

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Welcome to Edgemont

Dear Edgemont Families,

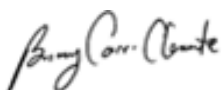
Welcome to Edgemont Montessori School!

At Edgemont Montessori, academic and personal growth is nourished every day. We have a talented, qualified professional staff working in learner-centered classrooms where individual attention is the philosophical essence, culture, and foundation. We create a nurturing, student-friendly environment where students are enhanced, engaged, and enriched, and are able to express, explore, and excel.

Involvement by families is encouraged and viewed as essential for educating each student to the fullest potential as an active and natural life-long learner. There's a real cooperative and collaborative spirit at Edgemont that is directly tied to our strong home-school partnerships, and our peaceful, family-like learning environment.

I know that all Edgemont families want their children to succeed and are eager to gather information from their school so as to remain good partners in their children's education. To this end, we have put together this informative handbook to help families better navigate and connect with our school. Be sure to keep this useful tool handy!

Briony Carr-Clemente

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Briony Carr-Clemente". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Principal
Edgemont Montessori School

Who's Who at Edgemont

Principal

As the school decision-maker, the principal sets the academic and administrative expectations for the school. Consult with her on general policy matters or if you need assistance beyond what your teacher can provide. Principal Carr-Clemente can be reached via email at bcarrclemente@montclair.k12.nj.us or by calling the school office.

Teachers

The homeroom teachers instruct your child in the core subjects such as Mathematics and English Language Arts. If you have any questions or concerns, they are your primary source for information. They can tell you about your child's academic and social progress. Check with your teacher about their preferred method of communication (phone, email, backpack note). See next page for a list of teachers and their email addresses.

Related Arts Teachers

These subject specialists teach scheduled classes across the school, such as Art, Physical Education, Spanish, Technology, Cosmic Studies, Library and Music. See next page for a list of these teachers and their email addresses.

Paraprofessionals/Teacher Assistants

The paraprofessionals and teacher assistants provide the teachers with key support and help provide individual attention to students who need it.

Specialists

These teachers work with students individually or in small groups to meet learning needs.

- Lisa Adams (Curriculum Support- Math)
- Kathy Hart (Curriculum Support- English Language Arts)
- Valerie Vega (English as a Second Language/ESL)
- Mark Yacono (English as a Second Language/ESL)
- Janette Lawrence (Resource/Inclusion Support)
- Justine Goldman (Resource/Inclusion Support)
- Cathay Macysyn (Resource/Inclusion Support)
- Jenna Sier (Reading Interventionist)

School Counselor

Ms. Gunaydin works with students and families to support academic and social success. You can contact her at egunaydin@montclair.k12.nj.us

Restorative Justice Teacher on Special Assignment (RJ TOSA)-Carissa Olivi

Ms. Olivi works with the community using Restorative Justice circles, conferencing and community building. You can contact her colivi@montclair.k12.nj.us

Child Study Team (CST)

The Child Study Team identifies, evaluates, and plans individualized education programs for students experiencing learning difficulties. For more information, please visit the MPS Pupil Services website:

https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/departments/special_education

School Secretary

Mrs. Mascellino is the person who greets you when you call or visit the school office. She is an expert in all things Edgemont and can direct you to the appropriate resource for answers. You can reach her by calling the main office or lmascellino@montclair.k12.nj.us

School Nurse

Nurse Alfaro works to ensure the well-being of students through the promotion and maintenance of good health habits. She provides screenings, referrals, and care when your child becomes ill or injured at school. You can contact her at galfaro@montclair.k12.nj.us

Custodians

Our custodians, Jeffery Singleton and Vladimir Velasquez, keep our Edgemont facilities clean and safe for our children.

Edgemont Teachers 2023-2024

Kindergarten

Kaitlin Corcoran

kcorcoran@montclair.k12.nj.us

Classroom Assistant – Amanda Mayoff

Jacque Antinoro

jantinoro@montclair.k12.nj.us

Classroom Assistant – Alethia Anderson

First Grade

Katherine-Ann Spellman

kspellman@montclair.k12.nj.us

Corrine Haggerty

chaggerty@montclair.k12.nj.us

Second Grade

Ericka White

ewhite@montclair.k12.nj.us

Kara Mancini

kmancini@montclair.k12.nj.us

Third Grade

Kate Pastorino

kpastorino@montclair.k12.nj.us

Regina O'Connor

reoconnor@montclair.k12.nj.us

Fourth Grade

Emilie DeByl

edebyl@montclair.k12.nj.us

Avril Fagan

afagan@montclair.k12.nj.us

Fifth Grade

Anna Passamano
apassamano@montclair.k12.nj.us

Dorothy Sheehan
dsheehan@montclair.k12.nj.us

Related Arts Teachers

Max Mellman - Music
mmellman@montclair.k12.nj.us

Lucia Melhuish - Art
lmelhuish@montclair.k12.nj.us

Gerald Silvera - Physical Education
gsilvera@montclair.k12.nj.us

Gloria Lepari - Cosmic Studies
glepari@montclair.k12.nj.us

Traci Cioffi - Technology and Library
tcioffi@montclair.k12.nj.us

Kathleen Martinez – Spanish
nromero@montclair.k12.nj.us

Support Teachers

Janette Lawrence
jlawrence@montclair.k12.nj.us

Justine Goldman
jgoldman@montclair.k12.nj.us

Cathay Macysyn
cmacysyn@montclair.k12.nj.us

Lisa Adams – Math Specialist
ladams@montclair.k12.nj.us

Kathy Hart – Curriculum Support
khart@montclair.k12.nj.us

Mark Yacono – English as a Second Language/ESL
myacono@montclair.k12.nj.us

Valerie Vega – English as a Second Language/ESL
vvega@montclair.k12.nj.us

Jenna Sier – Reading Interventionist
jsier@montclair.k12.nj.us

Easy Ways to Stay Connected

■ Read the Principal's Friday Letter

The Principal's Friday Letter keeps families up-to-date on current events and important issues at Edgemont. Find it in your email or on the Edgemont Website.

■ Read the PTA's Letter

The PTA's letter keeps the community abreast of upcoming PTA events and meetings.

■ Check your child's backpack

Notices from the district, school, PTA, and your child's teacher are sent home in their backpacks. You can also send messages to the teacher, the office, or the PTA via backpacks in the morning.

■ Reach out to your child's teacher

Check with individual teachers for their preferred means of communication, such as backpack note, phone call, or email.

■ Schedule a parent-teacher conference

Parent-teacher conferences are offered at least once a year to discuss your child's progress; however, you may request other conferences at any time throughout the year.

■ Attend Back-to-School Night

Back-to-School Night is an excellent opportunity to visit your child's classroom and get an overview of the school year from your child's teacher.

■ Attend PTA Meetings

PTA meetings are held about six times a year. These meetings give the community an opportunity to hear about upcoming events and help set the direction for the PTA.. Check the PTA website for more information: <https://montclairpta.org/edgemont/>

■ Check your email

The District, Edgemont School, the PTA, and your class parent all send out current event reminders and informational notices to the Edgemont School community via email. To receive email notifications, make sure the District and the School have your current email addresses.

■ Go Online

Three websites offer up-to-date information to Edgemont Families about their school:

- The Montclair Public School District website at www.montclair.k12.nj.us
- The Edgemont School website at www.montclair.k12.nj.us/edgemont
- The Edgemont PTA website at www.edgemontpta.org
- The Edgemont PTA Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/edgemontpta>

■ Sign up for Genesis

This portal on the Montclair School District website gives you access to a variety of your student's information. Be sure to create an account and keep your contact information current.

■ Opt-in to the School Directory

Opt-in on Genesis to participate in the directory in order to stay connected to the school community and to be accessible to your child's classmates for play dates, birthday party invitations, etc.

■ Offer to help

Many teachers welcome classroom volunteers on a regular basis or for special projects—if you are interested in volunteering, ask your child's teacher.

What is the PTA?

The Edgemont Parent-Teacher Association

The Edgemont Montessori PTA is a local unit of the New Jersey State PTA and National PTA. The Edgemont PTA operates under by-laws primarily set by the NJPTA and is a type of corporation called a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization—one that does charitable, service, and educational work. To learn more about those organizations please visit www.pta.org and www.njpta.org.

The Edgemont PTA is a collaboration between parents/caregivers and school staff to create the best school environment possible for our children, both in and out of the classroom. We are able to do this in large part due to a strong relationship with our principal and school staff.

Our small school serves as our own village, with everyone working together to build a community that is supportive, inclusive, and enjoyable!

Montclair is a town known for its diversity and stigma-free community, and Edgemont mirrors that spirit; the PTA is everyone, from stay-at-home parents to working parents, and each parent who contributes makes our school that much richer an environment for our children.

PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.

The Edgemont Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) serves many roles in the school. The PTA:

- Provides a forum for addressing parent's issues and concerns and for discussing PTA projects.
- Runs a whole calendar of enriching community events, programs, and fundraisers described later in this handbook.
- Subsidizes the costs of school and PTA activities for families in need, supports the donation of educational materials to the school and classrooms, and often funds such things as assemblies, buses for school trips and parent information seminars.

Membership

The Edgemont PTA welcomes all parents, caregivers, and teachers to PTA meetings and events and encourages everyone to join and be involved. Under PTA by-laws, joining is important for many reasons. Members have the right to vote and take part in the business of the PTA. Officers and committee chairs must be PTA members. The PTA Executive Board—comprised of Officers and Standing Committee Chairs—sets the agenda for the PTA and takes its direction and concerns from members and those who come to the public PTA meetings.

Membership forms are available through the Edgemont PTA website. Simply complete a form and send it back to school via backpack with the nominal membership dues fee in an envelope addressed to the PTA Mailbox. Any

family interested in requesting scholarship assistance to join should contact the Edgemont PTA President or Membership VP.

Montclair PTA Council (PTAC)

The Edgemont PTA may also take part in the Montclair PTAC, a district-wide organization composed of the presidents of each school's PTA and headed by an elected Executive Board. It is a unit of the NJPTA, and as a local group it comes together to share ideas and concerns in an effort to work towards common goals between all schools. The PTA Council has public meetings at the Montclair Public School District Offices at 22 Valley Road and may sponsor community events from time to time. To learn more about the Montclair PTA Council, please visit www.montclairpta.org.

What is the SATp?

Edgemont School Action Team for Partnership (SATp)

The School Action Team (SATp) is represented by teachers, the principal, parents, and community members working together to connect family and community involvement with school improvement goals. Edgemont's SATp aims to:

- Support the whole child through academic achievement and social and emotional learning.
- Maintain effective family advocacy, communication, and engagement
- Ensure a welcoming school environment
- Offer volunteer opportunities for family and community engagement.
- Educate families to support learning at home.
- Collaborate with Montclair Community Partners.

The SATp model is organized to provide a sustainable program of school, family, and community partnership. To achieve its goals, the SATp has representatives from the following special interest groups: Teachers, PTA, Grade Levels, Gifted and Talented, Health and Wellness, Special Education, Family Engagement, English Language Learners, and School Safety. These representatives and the principal come together as a group at SATp meetings. These working meetings are open to the school community.

Assessing your Child's Progress

Below are ways in which you can stay informed of your child's academic progress, as well as seek support for your child when necessary.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are designed to encourage open communication between parents and teachers. Parents meet individually with their child's teacher on a formal basis at least once a year to discuss their child's progress. At any time throughout the year, parents may arrange other conferences. In addition, parents are encouraged to review the written progress reports and to communicate with your child's teacher through notes in the backpacks or via email. Check with individual teachers for their preferred means of communication.

Report Cards

Standardized Report Cards are prepared three times a year. Teacher evaluations are designed to assess children's progress not only in traditional areas of academic skills, but also in social skills and physical skills as well. Report Cards are developmentally based. Each Report Card also has a comment section so teachers can communicate additional information to families. Grades may be accessed through your account in Genesis.

Testing/Assessment

Throughout the year, teachers assess their students' progress through a wide variety of methods. It is also necessary, however, to assess grade-level achievements across the entire Montclair and New Jersey school systems. This year, Edgemont Montessori students in 3rd through 5th grades will take the NJSLA Assessment in the Spring. These statewide assessments are given to 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students in order to measure achievement in the New Jersey State Learning Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts. In addition, the 5th graders will take the state assessment in Science.

School Performance Reports

The new School Performance Reports provide data on school performance as well as individual student growth. The new Student Growth Percentiles compare individual students to students state-wide with similar achievement levels in addition to student achievement. This enables you to evaluate how much your child has improved as well as their level of achievement.

If Your Child Needs Special Help

All schools within the Montclair school system provide access to a Child Study Team. The team consists of a psychologist, a social worker, and learning disability specialists who work with children and families when a problem has been identified. A parent/caregiver can request an evaluation, as well as a child's teacher. A child having difficulty may be referred to a physician or dentist, reading specialist, speech therapist, psychologist, special tutor, special education class, or other community agencies. To learn more about the Child Study Team and referral process, please visit:

https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/departments/special_education

Response to Intervention

RtI is a method for providing assistance to students who may require additional academic support in the general education classroom. Students receive individual and small group instruction based on specific needs in reading, language arts and/or math. Students may receive support in their classrooms by the classroom teacher and other support staff.

Gift and Talented

Gifted and Talented is the district's acknowledgement of "gifted" children who demonstrate advanced academic skills in mathematics or language arts. To learn more about the Gift and Talented education, please visit:

https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/departments/equity_curriculum_instruction/gifted_talented_education

SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council)

SEPAC is a district-wide volunteer group of parents and guardians that provides input to the district as well as support and information to parents and caregivers of children with special needs. SEPAC's offers resources to help you more effectively advocate for your child and navigate the system throughout your child's educational career. For more information, contact the school SEPAC liaison or visit the PTA website.

Ms. Gunaydin- Counseling and support

Edgemont Montessori offers support groups to students who may be facing a family crisis or transition that involves some form of loss or separation. When something significant happens in a family, each family member is affected. Even though death, divorce, separation or other types of loss appear to be grown-up problems, they may have a profound effect on the children in the family. Due to age and limited experiences, children may find it extremely difficult to verbalize their feelings of grief, and therefore may need help coping with the loss.

Learning Opportunities for the Family

Throughout the year, Edgemont offers families multiple opportunities to observe and participate in their child's education.

Assemblies

Edgemont Montessori holds two types of assemblies, both of which are open to families/caregivers:

General Assemblies

Student assemblies dedicated to a character education theme. In addition, Artists from various performing arts programs outside of Edgemont are invited to perform for the school community. In recent years, assembly programs have included storytelling, music and dance performances, artists-in-residence, and author visits. The assembly performances are selected to complement subjects being taught in the classroom.

Student Performances

Students and teachers prepare musical and/or stage performances for the entire Edgemont Montessori community. These assemblies offer students the valuable opportunity to perform in front of audiences. Family/caregivers are encouraged to attend.

Math Night

Join your child in playing fun and engaging math games and activities at this math competition. At the end of the night, participants receive certificates and awards.

SATp Sponsored Educational programs

The School Action Team for Partnership coordinates a variety of parent education programs throughout the year.

District-Wide Workshops

The Montclair Public Schools offer a wide range of workshops, webinars, educational seminars and other activities to support and inform parents throughout the year.

General School Information

Arrival Procedures

Arrival occurs at 8:10AM.

Drop off

Only YMCA SACC before-care students may arrive at school before 8:10AM.

If you drop off your child at school at arrival time, the safest, most courteous method is to pull into the driveway before allowing your child to leave the car. Please pull your car all the way around the circle so that the flow of street traffic is not hampered and the maximum number of cars may simultaneously drop off their children.

If your child is late

Students who arrive **after 8:20AM** must report to the main office for a late pass before entering their classroom. The main office is through the first door, on the left.

Dismissal Procedures

Dismissal occurs at 2:35PM.

On the first day of school, all classroom teachers will identify and confirm each student's dismissal routine according to the three alternatives listed below. Please confirm, in writing, your child's anticipated dismissal routine. Additionally, any time there is a change to your child's dismissal routine, please send a note to your child's teacher. Following the End of Day/Prepare for Dismissal announcement, students are required to sit quietly and patiently as the various modes of dismissal are announced:

Busser: Bussed students are dismissed by Bus Name through the center hall, main entrance as their buses arrive. Students assemble first in the multi-purpose room in lines designated by bus name and are then escorted out the main door to their bus.

After-care: If you are enrolled in the YMCA after-care program (often referred to as "extended care"), your child will be dismissed to staff in the multi-purpose room.

Walker: If your child is not bus eligible or enrolled in after-care, your child is considered a "walker" and parents need to be at the designated door at 2:35PM.

In the interest of safety during dismissal, playing (i.e. ball tossing, tag, tumbling, etc.) is prohibited on the front lawn of school until after "ALL BUSES HAVE BEEN CALLED". Please supervise your children's playtime on the playground or in the front yard areas during dismissal.

*On Early Dismissal Days, our school hours are 8:20AM to 1:10PM.

*It is also critical for Genesis to be updated with workable phone numbers and reachable contacts.

*For your child(ren)'s safety, in the event of an absence, you can expect a telephone call to verify the absence. Upon return, please send your well child(ren) back to school with an explanation note. **Homework** will be available for pick-up the day-following-the-absence; or may be made up by the student upon return, according to the teacher.

Bus Procedures

If your child is eligible to ride the bus, you should have received a letter from the transportation authority with the name, time, and location of the bus stop. Your child will be put on the bus unless you send in a note indicating that you have made alternative arrangements. Buses are identified by animals of different colors—an easy way for the children to remember.

The aides on the bus are instructed not to let students off the bus unless an adult is at the bus stop to meet them; 3rd-5th graders may only walk home from the stop if written permission is provided.

If you are not at your child's bus stop after school, the child will remain on the bus and be taken to the next school on their route. A staff member will stay with your child until you are reached by phone. You will have to make arrangements to pick up your child immediately. Call the transportation office at 973-509-4020 to find out which school is next for your school bus.

Before and After School Care

The Montclair YMCA administers the Extended Care program at our school. (This is not the same as the PTA's Enrichment Program.) Extended care is for families who need childcare in the hours before and after school. All activities are supervised. Care is available in the morning, and in the afternoon. For more information, contact the YMCA at 973-744-3400.

Walkers

Walkers are brought outside at 2:35PM. For dismissal, **Kindergarten and 1st grade** students will dismiss from the north end of the building (near/at Door H) and **2nd grade- 5th grade** students will dismiss from the south end of the building (near/at Door B)

If someone other than the authorized parent or caregiver will pick up your child on any day, you must send a note to the teacher. Written permission must be filed in the school office for children who are allowed to walk home independently.

Parking

When picking up children, please do not park in the school's driveway as it is used by the buses. Park on the park-side or in the cut-out of Edgemont Road. Cars parked on the right (school side) will block the buses and may be ticketed. Beware of parking too close to the school driveway or too far from the curb: it makes it difficult for school buses to pass and your car could get crunched.

If Your Child is Absent

When your child must be absent due to illness or other reason, the school requests you call the office (973-509-4162) that day and leave a message on the absentee student mailbox. If the school does not hear from you, expect a call from the district's robocall confirming that your child is not in school. When your child is absent the school requests an explanatory note from the parent/caregiver when your child returns to school.

Release of a Child During the School Day

If a child must be picked up during school hours, a note signed by the parent or guardian must be presented to the office on the morning of the day the child is to leave early. Simply send a note with your child in the morning and his or her teacher will ensure it is delivered to the office. The person designated in the note to pick up the child should report to the office. All children must be signed out by an approved adult or caregiver. In general, the school discourages early dismissal, but recognizes it is an occasional necessity.

If Your Child Feels Sick or is Hurt at School

Edgemont Montessori has a full-time school nurse. The nurse's office is by the main school entrance. Any child who feels under the weather or who has an accident is accompanied to the nurse's office. The school nurse will contact parents or caregivers if the child needs to go home or be alerted to the child's condition.

Lost and Found

All found articles are turned in to the office and are put in the lost and found box outside the multi-purpose room door. If your child loses something, be sure to check the box. Items not claimed by the end of the school year are given to charitable organizations. Please make certain that lunch boxes and removable clothing (coats, sweaters, hats, gloves, etc.) are marked with your child's full name.

School Visitors

It is school policy that all visitors must report to the office and sign-in before going anywhere in the building, and that they must wear a visitor's tag while inside the building. This policy applies to parents volunteering in classes as well as to outside guests. Please respect this policy; it is designed to ensure the safety of all the children. If you wish to deliver something to your child, please leave it in the office and your child will be notified.

School Breakfast/Lunch

Students are served breakfast and lunch in the multi-purpose room (and outside, weather permitting). Students may bring their lunches from home or purchase lunch at school. A menu of school lunch choices is posted on the district website at https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/departments/business_office/food_services

Parents may put money into their children's food service account and their children draw from it to make purchases. Make checks payable to Montclair Public Schools Food Service and send it to school in your child's backpack. Or you can put money on your child's account at www.mySchoolBucks.com.

Kindergarten students eat in their classroom and have their purchased lunches brought to them. The other grades line up at the kitchen to purchase their lunch and then take it to their lunch location—usually their classroom, multi-purpose room, or outside.

Information on the free or reduced cost lunch program is available on the district website. All families must complete this form online, whether or not they qualify for the free or reduced lunch. <https://www.nlappscloud.com/>

School Safety

The safety and welfare of our students, staff, and visitors is always our number one priority at Edgemont Montessori School. The Edgemont staff regularly reviews building security measures, emergency operations protocols, and receives training in emergency management. Students and staff participate in monthly emergency drills that provide everyone with understanding of proper responses to various crisis situations.

To continue to maintain a safe and secure school, we ask that you adhere to the following security procedures. We hope any small inconveniences will be replaced by feelings of safety and well-being.

1. All daily visitors to Edgemont (includes parents, caregivers, family, and friends of students) must enter through the main door of the school, sign in at the main office, and put on a visitor's pass.
2. Students are allowed to enter the school beginning at 8:10AM. Please do not drop off your child prior to 8:10AM. We encourage families to say goodbye to their children outside the door or in the main entryway of the school. Staff members are positioned along every hallway prior to the start of school to assist students in getting safely to their classrooms.
3. Once school begins, at 8:20AM, visitors must have an appointment with or be expected by the teacher in order to visit a classroom. Please ring the buzzer to be let in and then go directly to the main office and sign in. Then the office will call the teacher.
4. If you are coming to school to pick up your child during school hours, please wait in the office while Mrs. Mascellino calls the classroom to alert the teacher your child will be leaving, and then you may sign out your child.

These procedures are designed to ensure safety while keeping our family-friendly spirit. Please resist the impulse to politely hold or open the door for those you don't know and please don't be offended when a staff member or parent directs you to the front door/office rather than letting you in.

School Closings

When there is a clear indication that weather conditions could endanger the safety of children, schools will either close for the day or open two hours later than normal. If there will be a closing or delayed opening, an alert message is posted in the moving "text crawl" at the top of the home page on the district website (www.montclair.k12.nj.us). The announcement usually appears by 6 a.m. The district's automated system will also call, text, or email the families of all students. Parents may also:

- Call the Edgemont Office main line (973) 509-4162 and press option 6 - School closures and delayed openings
- Call the main number at Central Office: (973) 509-4000
- Watch or log on to New Jersey News12/Channel 62; Verizon FiOS1 News; WABC-TV/Channel 7; WNBC-TV/Channel 4; WCBS-TV/Channel 2; WNYW-TV/Channel 5; Montclair's TV34. On the radio, tune to 1010 WINS and WOR.

Delayed Opening

When there is a two-hour delayed opening, school will begin at 10:20AM. Bussed children should be at their regular morning bus stop two hours later than usual and be prepared for delays due to poor road conditions and slower moving traffic. Lunch will be served. Dismissal and afternoon buses will be at the regular time. There will be no early dismissal if the delayed opening is on an early dismissal day.

Worsening Weather Conditions and After-School Activities

While the superintendent monitors weather reports throughout the day, the district's policy is to keep schools open until the regular dismissal time. Staff members will remain on site at all schools until every child has departed on the bus, has been dismissed following their normal routine from the school, or has been picked up by a parent or caregiver. Parents may pick up their children early if they choose by reporting to the main office at the school.

In some instances, after-school activities (such as enrichment classes) may be canceled due to the weather conditions. This decision will not be made until the afternoon and will be announced via the district website as well as by email, text, and automated call. We encourage parents/guardians to have an emergency back-up plan or identify an individual who will serve as an emergency contact should after-school programs be canceled.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Edgemont Montessori adheres to the Montclair Public School District Student Code of Conduct. To learn more, please visit the QR codes below:



Overview of the Student Code of Conduct

At Edgemont Montessori School, we believe in educating the whole child to the fullest potential through the Montessori principles of student-centered / learner-friendly practices in a peaceful academic environment that fosters the cognitive, social, physical, and emotional development of the child. We believe that expectations for behavior and ways of dealing with misbehavior should be in accord with developmental goals. Clearly defined rules and procedures with incremental actions and consequences consistently carried out will foster appropriate behavior.

Edgemont Montessori has four school wide rules for consistency within classrooms and throughout the school. These school rules are:

- *Act in ways that make our school caring, safe, and joyful*
- *Do your best learning*
- *Help others be their best*
- *Take good care of our school*

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE MONTCLAIR

Charge

Nationally and in Montclair, Restorative Justice (RJ) was developed as a district-wide response to suspension rates, the racial and special education disparities in suspensions and the high levels of bullying in our schools. RJ is an approach to transforming school culture toward reparations and relationships and away from punishment and suspension. Rather than isolate, punish, and separate a child who is accused of wrongdoing, RJ is designed to build an environment and relationships of inclusion, shared responsibility and accountability. RJ is an evidence-based intervention method designed to incorporate students, staff, administrators, faculty and family—a method that will not be successful when approached with superficial implementation. In order to generate the desired outcomes with respect to bullying, suspension, school violence, and civic engagement, and to provoke a rich climate change, the necessary conditions for effectiveness must include:

1. **SUPPORT FROM THE TOP:** Strong commitment from school and district leadership to work through conflict, rather than to isolate and punish.
2. **FULL SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT:** Willingness to train staff and students on RJ circles and strategies. For RJ to become a regular part of a school's culture, it cannot be treated as a supplemental program, but as a philosophy that permeates the values and policies of the school, with demonstrated impact on reductions in bullying, suspensions and more civic engagement within the school community.
3. **VISIBILITY:** The RJ facilitator needs to be onsite, working with a core team of faculty and students, with significant facetime with students in order to help foster a preventative, inclusive culture. This facilitator has to be able to respond immediately to incident/crisis and sustain communities of care and accountability in the aftermath of an incident.

Vision

Restorative Justice Montclair (RJM) is guided by a philosophy that fosters social and emotional well-being, acceptance, empowerment and mutual respect for those who are impacted by and involved in conflict. RJM will build cultures and communities of *response-ability*, respect and reparation of relationships where harm has occurred.

THE SEVEN Rs OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

RESPECT - Form a community that encourages mutual respect.

REMIND - When a student(s) gets off track, give the whole class a reminder about appropriate behavior.

REDIRECT - Individual redirection of behavior. Use a neutral, respectful tone while addressing the individual(s) who are impeding the learning process.

REFLECT - "What can I do to support you?" Self-advocacy gives students the opportunity to communicate their own needs. Take two minutes for a one-on-one conversation; develop a code word or plan with the student.

REFER - When the previous steps have not corrected the behavior, explain that you are going to “solicit additional support.” Do not use the words “remove” or “refer.” Reflect, then assess who the most appropriate person or office is for a referral.

RESTORE/REPAIR - After a time of separation for the student(s) who exhibited disruptive behavior, if appropriate, consider reviewing what took place with the whole class. You may want to connect with students through an RJ circle to acknowledge the harm caused and initiate repair—and do so without holding a grudge. The message must be, “We are on your team!”

RESET - Provide an opportunity for class-wide reacceptance. Remember that restoration begins with the acknowledgement of wrongdoing, and while it may not be in the form of an apology, the goal is for the student(s) to take responsibility for their behavior and the harm they caused.

We also use the N.J. State Bar Foundation’s Elementary Anti-Bullying lessons at Edgemont Montessori. The definition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying as defined by the State of N.J. is as follows: any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or series of incidents that:

- is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical, or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic
- takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, or off school grounds as provided for in section 16 of P.L. 2010, Chapter 122
- substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students
- a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property
- has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students
- creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student’s education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student

School staff must follow the statutory procedures for all reported HIB incidents and protect students. A reporting procedure is in place to promptly investigate reports of violations and complaints related to HIB. The investigation will be initiated by the principal or the principal’s designee within one day of the report of the incident and shall be conducted by the school anti-bullying specialist. The principal may appoint additional personnel to assist in the investigation.

Title I Programming

Title I funds are used to promote academic excellence, enhance educational opportunities and equity for our children and families, and to improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing leadership, technical assistance and financial support to schools with the highest percentages of students participating in the free and reduced meals (FARMS) program. Find more information here: <https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/cms/one.aspx?pageId=1110874>

School Health and Wellness

School Medical Requirements

Physical examinations are required for entering Montclair schools. This applies to Kindergarten entrance as well as entering the district at any other grade level. Forms for this are available on the district web site and in the school nurse's office. (A heads up for 5th grade parents - it is strongly recommended that an updated physical examination be provided to the school nurse for 6th grade. In addition, a Tdap booster and meningitis vaccine are required for 6th grade entrance.) A parent/guardian generated **health history** is also required upon entrance to the district and those forms are also available on the district web site and through the school nurse.

A current up-to-date **vaccine record** is required for entering Montclair schools. The school nurse keeps a record of each student's immunizations and tries to control communicable disease.

The nurse also performs **annual screenings** for vision, hearing, growth, and blood pressure according to the department of education schedules. If an abnormality is found, the nurse will inform the parent with a recommendation as to the kind of doctor needed to help the child.

School Health Guide

Parents/guardians are urged to keep their child home from school when ill. If a child shows any of the following signs or symptoms of communicable illness during the night before and/or morning of school, please keep them home: fever, excessive coughing, chills, vomiting or diarrhea, undiagnosed skin rashes or eruptions, lice, or very irritated eyes with a discharge (i.e. "pink eye").

If the school nurse observes any of these signs or symptoms while a child is in school, parents/guardians will be notified and the child will need to be picked up. Telephone numbers on file will be used to contact parents/guardians. If the parents/guardian is unavailable, the designated emergency contact number will be called. *Please make sure to keep your contact information up-to-date.*

Additionally, certain communicable diseases require exclusion from school. Examples are: bacterial pink eye, measles, mumps, rubella, flu, untreated impetigo, chicken pox, some cases of ringworm of the scalp, salmonella, active cases of live lice, untreated strep, TB, whooping cough (pertussis), E. coli, hepatitis A, shigella, scabies, shingles which can not be covered by clothing, MRSA, and meningitis. If in doubt, contact the school nurse.

Communicable diseases should be reported to the school nurse directly and medical clearance is determined according to medical community guidelines.

Please also notify the nurse when there is a change in your child's health status, or if a medication has been added, deleted, or changed. It is important that the school nurse have this information should an emergency occur at school. In addition, such changes are important for the school nurse to be able to properly assess and care for your child should they become ill at school or display any side effects of a medication.

District policy on all-gender restrooms:

For the 18-19 school year and beyond, the district created all-gender restrooms for students. An all-gender

restroom, or gender-neutral restroom, is a restroom that anyone of any gender or non-gender can use. These restrooms can benefit many different people including families, differently abled persons, and transgender people. Historically, restrooms have been a place for harassment, discrimination, and threats of injury and assault towards transgender people. All-gender restrooms provide an opportunity for our community members to enter a room without being questioned or interrogated. Given the age of our school buildings, some all-gender restrooms will be multiple-stall or single-stall restrooms and may be in different locations in the building. Edgemont's all-gender restroom is properly labeled, and is located near the multipurpose room. Students will be permitted to use either the gender-neutral bathroom and/or the bathroom of their identified gender.

School Medication Policy

Medication should be administered at home whenever possible. If a medication must be administered during school hours (prescription or over-the-counter), written permission must be provided using the school district's **Medication Administration Form**, which is available through the nurse or via the district website. This form must be completed by both the parent/guardian and the student's licensed healthcare provider who is prescribing/recommending the medication before it can be administered at school by the nurse. In addition, the medication must be brought to school by the parent/caregiver and be in the original container with proper labeling. Students are not permitted to self-administer medication at school. The only medication that is allowed to be self-administered at school are those needed for a life-threatening condition (insulin, an asthma inhaler, Epi-Pen), and then only if written authorization for this self-administration is provided by the parent/guardian and agreed to by the student's healthcare provider.

Allergies

If your child has a severe allergy to food, bee sting, latex or something else, it is very important that you contact the school nurse to meet and discuss this. The school nurse will review and plan for any necessary safety measures that will need to be in place at school (through an IHP - Individualized Health Plan), as well as the need for any necessary emergency medication that will need to be on hand at school. The school nurse will also provide any necessary training for school staff.

Excused from PE (gym class)

If your child cannot participate in gym class due to a medical condition, a note from the doctor is required. This will apply to active recess also. When medically cleared to return to full activity, a note stating this is also required.

Wellness

School aged children perform best in school when they start each day with a balanced, healthy breakfast. Likewise, adequate sleep is also needed to optimize your child's performance in school. Medical experts agree that elementary school-age children require an average of 8-10 hours of sleep each night.

For further information, please contact the school nurse.

Required Forms

The Free Lunch Form: Families may complete the Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application for their household by applying safely and securely online. Families can also apply by completing the traditional paper application. Everyone must complete the free lunch application every year! Even if you do not want or do not qualify for the free lunch program, you still must complete the form to be counted as opting not to participate in the program.

Emergency Contact Information: It is extremely important to keep your emergency contact information up-to-date and complete should an emergency arise so that we can reach you promptly. The online forms on the Genesis portal on the district web site can be updated at any time.

Medical Authorization and Update: If you must leave your child in the care of someone else for any length of time, a limited power of attorney for medical services is advisable and should be left with that person, naming him or her as guardian. This information also should be on file with the school. The school should be notified if there is any change in diagnosed allergies.

Understanding a Montessori Education

Edgemont Montessori, like all of Montclair's public schools, provides a comprehensive academic program that fulfills the basic academic curriculum of the district. Edgemont is unique among these schools, however, in that Edgemont offers the core curriculum in such a way that it is enhanced by the Montessori curriculum, practices, and materials.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the Montessori approach is that Montessori takes its cues and its pace from the children. The starting point of a Montessori education is each child's innate curiosity. From that starting point, Montessori teachers recognize that a child can develop many different skills, observations and senses. Their goal is to help educate the "whole child." This philosophy develops active and natural learners. It also develops the special character of children educated through Montessori philosophy—independent thinkers, confident decision makers, empathetic individuals.

What stands out in a Montessori environment is the focus on the children themselves and on the children's learning. That focus can be seen in many ways and felt throughout the design of the learning environments (classrooms) and special programs at Edgemont Montessori School. It comes with some very special features:

A Responsive and Flexible Environment

Classrooms are termed learning environments because they are carefully geared to the diverse learning needs and styles of the students. These learning environments are prepared in such a way that the children are able to initiate their own work and that they are likely to meet with success in each investigation they seek out. The key to these prepared environments is that the children themselves be able to provide the motivation for learning, fueled by curiosity and interest.

Progressive & Developmentally Appropriate Materials

The Montessori method works with the natural developmental stages of children. For example, Montessori teachers recognize that children naturally progress from requiring concrete experiences to being able to create abstractions of those experiences. Montessori teachers also recognize that children learn by active methods and first-hand experiences. Consequently, Montessori learning environments are rich in the tools of experiential learning: models, manipulatives, and multi-sensory explorations. As children become facile with abstractions, the learning

environments reflect their development; thus, upper grade learning environments have less need for mathematical manipulatives and more need for reference books and computers.

A Comfort with Developmental Differences

Montessori teachers understand that children develop at different paces and in different ways. In fact, Montessori teachers are trained to instruct multi-grade classes. With this training, Edgemont Montessori teachers are specifically prepared to address the individual needs of their students with differentiated instruction rather than insisting that all students be on the same page at the same time. All students are challenged and encouraged to master the skills appropriate to their developmental level. To that end, students often work cooperatively in small groups or individually so that each child's needs and evolving interests are met.

Non-competitive Environment

Maria Montessori understood the need to acquire basic skills before participating in a competitive learning situation. At Edgemont Montessori, we continue to stress cooperative learning by modeling that behavior, and by structuring activities in noncompetitive ways. By having children do the same thing at different times and different things at the same time, children cooperate rather than compete.

Teacher as Facilitator and Model

Teachers at Edgemont Montessori, like at all Montessori schools, see themselves a little differently than traditional teachers might. The teacher prepares the environment, offers activities, acts as a reference person, and models behaviors and skills. In addition, the teacher is a careful observer, striving to help each student through the process of “learning how to learn.”

Montessori teachers have been described as “firm at the edges and empathetic at the center, the kind of adult who responds empathetically to children’s feelings while firmly establishing limits for the group.” (North American Montessori Teachers Association)

Further Reading about Montessori

Together with Montessori, by Cam Gordon

Montessori Today: A Comprehensive Approach to Education from Birth to Adulthood, by Paula Polk Lillard

Children of the Universe: Cosmic Education in the Montessori Elementary Classroom, by Michael Duffy and O’Neil

A Parent’s Guide to the Montessori Classroom, by Aline Wolf

Montessori Learn and Play: A Parent’s Guide to Purposeful Play from Two to Six, by Lesley Britton

The Essential Montessori: an introduction to the woman, the writings, the method and the movement, by Elizabeth Hainstock

The Montessori Controversy, by John Chattin McNichols

Curriculum at Edgemont School

As with all Montclair Elementary Schools, Edgemont Montessori’s core curriculum consists of Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Additionally, all students receive instruction in Art, Music, Physical Education, Technology, and Spanish. Below, you will find more detail on some of these curriculum subjects.

Mission Statement

At Edgemont Montessori School,
we believe in educating
the whole child to the fullest potential
through the Montessori principles of

student-centered / learner-friendly practices
in a peaceful academic environment
that fosters the cognitive, social, physical, and
emotional development of the child.

Language Arts

Edgemont Montessori uses a framework that includes the Center for the Collaborative Classroom (CCC). This integrated program develops alphabet principles, phonemic awareness, vocabulary building, whole language, fluency, and reading comprehension. Additionally, there are classrooms using the Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) framework. Built on the Science of Reading, Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts sequences deep content knowledge with research-based foundational skills.

Math

Edgemont follows the district curriculum by utilizing Montessori methods and **Go Math!** textbooks and workbooks. The Montessori Math methods are based on the Montessori principle that children understand the world through all their senses, and that only by making use of all the senses can their understanding be developed to its fullest potential (educating the whole child). Thus, the Montessori Math methods enhance the curriculum through the use of materials for children to see, touch, manipulate and explore.

During the day-to-day manipulation of concrete objects, the student builds solid concepts of numbers and mathematical structures. These concrete foundations allow a child to expand to more abstract work with pencil and paper and more complex concepts of fractions, squaring, cubing, and algebra. The power of manipulatives is widely recognized and is incorporated throughout the district curriculum.

Cosmic Studies

Cosmic Studies is a series of stories and lessons designed to provide an understanding of the history of the universe.

Cosmic Studies is highlighted by the Five Great Lessons:

The Story of the Universe
Life Comes to Earth
The Coming of Humans
The Story of Writing
The Story of Mathematics

Guided inquiry, research, and experimentation are the foundation of the Cosmic Studies curriculum which encompasses the Next Generation Science Standards and the NJ Learning Standards for Social Studies, Mathematics, Language, and Art.

Music

The basis of Edgemont Montessori's music program utilizes a multi-sensory method that combines speech, movement, and music to promote children's active participation while they learn. This 'hands-on' approach is based on the idea that children learn best by doing. The child is not the spectator, rather, the child is the participant—making the music and engaging in the process of creative expression.

Programs Complementing the Core Curriculum

One of Edgemont Montessori's distinctions as a school is its wide array of special programs designed to complement the core curriculum areas and the Montessori methods of education. Each of the programs described below adds a special dimension to the educational opportunities of Edgemont students and their families.

Band

The Band is a performance group composed of 4th and 5th graders who have a special interest and aptitude in music. Members of the ensemble practice throughout the week, including a sectional dedicated to a chosen instrument. The ensemble performs at school assemblies, Montclair festivals, and other events throughout the year.

Art EXTRAvaganza Program

Edgemont Montessori's Art EXTRAvaganza Program is an advanced course of study for 4th and 5th graders who have an interest in art and demonstrable talent. Interested students must complete a special assignment at the beginning of 4th and 5th grade in order to be considered for the program. ArtEXTRA students meet throughout the week and collaborate on large scale projects.

STEAM and Makerspace Electives Edgemont's 4th and 5th graders can also choose to participate in a STEAM or Makerspace elective. These electives enhance the Science and Technology programs and are fun ways to expand knowledge and explore creativity—no experience necessary!

English as a Second Language

Edgemont Montessori offers instruction for English as a Second Language students. While receiving special instruction in English, a critical component of the program is that students are integrated into and welcomed in regular classroom activities. The ESL program is an asset not only to the children who need language instruction, but also to the other children in the classroom who enjoy the opportunity to share new languages and cultures.

Service Learning

Edgemont Montessori employs service learning as a chance for students to apply the content of their studies and character to real problems in their communities. Edgemont supports service learning as a way to encourage students to be more compassionate and more responsible for their learning by connecting students' academic lives to their civic lives.

At Edgemont, service learning is implemented in a variety of ways, and staff and students plan and implement service learning projects that promote care and concern for animals, the environment, and the human community.

Outdoor Learning Environment

Edgemont Montessori is fortunate to have a beautiful backyard that serves as an ideal setting for Edgemont's hands-on approach to science and the arts.

Field Trips

Each class participates in several educational field trips, such as visits to the Montclair Art Museum, the Newark Museum, the American Museum of Natural History, farms, historical sites, and other destinations that relate to the students' units of study. There is often a small fee to cover costs and students may be asked to bring a "brown bag" lunch that is completely disposable. Teachers may also request parent volunteers to participate as chaperones.

Student Council

The Student Council consists of elected student officers and classroom representatives. Each year, the Student Council undertakes a variety of school-wide projects such as food drives and other community service projects.

Recess at Edgemont

On August 10, 2018, Governor Murphy signed P.L. 2018, c. 73 which requires, among other things, that school districts provide a daily recess period for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

At Edgemont, we value the positive effects of outdoor play, unstructured play, and recess. Recess has been proven to improve children's attention to academic tasks, thus enhancing achievement and learning. There's tons of research and here's some of what was learned: **A safe and healthy recess has the potential to drive better student behavior, health, and learning** (Mathematica Policy Research and the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities at Stanford University). We are working to make this a continuous reality and high priority at Edgemont. Not only is recess a priority, but getting our kids outside for fresh air, nature walks, movement and a change of scenery is also paramount.

Good for the Body

Outdoor play increases fitness levels and builds active, healthy bodies, an important strategy in helping the one in three American kids who are obese get fit. Spending time outside raises levels of Vitamin D, a key component in immune function, good mood, strong bones and a healthy heart.

Mind

Exposure to natural settings may be widely effective in reducing ADHD symptoms (Check out Edgemont's growing nature spaces—trails, gardens, reflecting areas). Schools with environmental education programs score higher on standardized tests in math, reading, writing and listening (Yes, we're doing this—Eco Initiatives like recycling, composting, sustainable gardening, etc.). Exposure to environment-based education significantly increases student performance on tests of their critical thinking skills.

Spirit

Children's stress levels fall within minutes of seeing green spaces. Play protects children's emotional development whereas loss of free time and a hurried lifestyle can contribute to anxiety and depression. And, **nature makes you nicer**, enhancing social interactions, value for community and close relationships.

PTA Events and Programs

Edgemont Montessori's PTA is proud to sponsor the many programs and events described below. As they are subject to change, please keep an eye on your child's backpack, your email, and the PTA weekly newsletter for additional details. Some events do require a small fee for attending, but financial assistance is also available. Events are run solely by parent volunteers. If you would like to volunteer to help with any event, please contact the respective PTA Chairs or the PTA President at www.edgemontpta.org.

PTA PROGRAMS

Class Parents

Class parents are volunteers who act as key liaisons between families in the class, the teacher, and the PTA or SATp. Some of their responsibilities include:

- Arranging for snacks and celebrations
- Coordinating parent volunteers for field trips, tutoring, etc.
- Coordinating and publicizing events to class families throughout the year
- Collecting donations for teacher's gifts
- Helping the PTA and SATp with communication

The PTA Class Parent Coordinators will offer a short training early in the year to introduce volunteers to the role and provide support and information to class parents throughout the year. Volunteer early in the year by signing up at any of the Back to School events or by contacting the Edgemont PTA.

Enrichment Program

The PTA's Enrichment Program provides after-school classes designed to interest students and provide an introduction to special topics or skills not covered in school. Offered in two or three sessions over the course of the school year, the courses are available for all grades from K through 5. Courses usually start at 2:40PM and finish at 3:50PM.

The PTA makes an effort to keep the costs of registration low; some financial assistance is available. r.

Hospitality

The PTA serves drinks and snacks at various PTA/SATp events.

Green Initiatives

There are several initiatives to green-up our school, make it more sustainable, and build environmental awareness and engagement among students and families, namely a gardening initiative and an eco-action/sustainability learning initiative.

Spirit Wear

The sale of Edgemont Montessori T-shirts and other spirit wear generates income for the PTA and helps build Edgemont's community spirit. Spirit Days throughout the year encourage children to wear their Edgemont spirit shirts to school.

Direct Donation Program

This program allows families to simply make a tax-deductible donation directly to the PTA, ensuring the PTA receives 100% of the amount (instead of some going to fundraiser costs or vendors). You can donate any time during the year, but donations made by the end of October facilitate planning for the year.

PTA EVENTS

New Family Social

The New Family Social welcomes incoming kindergarteners and other new families to Edgemont Montessori before the start of school. Held in Edgemont's backyard a few days before classes start, this event enables incoming children and families to meet others coming to the school. Volunteers with children going into first grade and/or Buddy volunteers often host the New Family Social and share helpful information in preparation for the first day of school.

Welcome Tent

On the first day of school, the PTA and SATp set up a tent with coffee and croissants on the school's front lawn to give new parents information about various events, programs, and fundraisers.

Walk, Bike, Bus to School Day

These monthly events invite families to walk to school or take a walk in the park before school. Bussed children can take a supervised lap around Edgemont Park after being dropped off and before school begins.

Book Fairs

Held once a year, the Book Fairs raise funds to support the PTA's annual operating budget. Children visit the Book Fair with their classes, and make their own "wish list" of books they like. Parents and caregivers may then review those lists and either send money for selected items, or come in personally to view selections and make any purchases. Parents are also given convenient opportunities to browse and purchase from the fair.

Harvest Day Celebration

Harvest Celebration is a fun, all-school event held during one full school day in October. Through hands-on activities, the children learn about their food—where it comes from and how it's grown—as well as about composting, gardening, exercise, and stewardship of the environment and earth. By visiting stations inside and outside of school, the children experience activities such as making butter from cream, meeting a visiting farmer and his animals, learning about apples, using natural materials for a crafts project, taking a potato and making curly fries, learning about bees and pollen, or exploring the role of worms in recycling.

The Halloween Mash

Held near Halloween, the Halloween Mash is a safe, noisy, family-friendly event with pizza, treats, costumes, and dancing.

Elementary School Tours

For one week in February or March as set by the district, all elementary schools are open for school tours. The PTA and/or SATp coordinates a team of parent volunteers to guide prospective parents through Edgemont Montessori's learning environments and related arts classrooms. Volunteers are provided with information sheets to offer the best possible tours and help answer questions.

Teacher Appreciation Month

During the month of May, the parents provide a special catered luncheon for all Edgemont Montessori staff and stock the fridge in the staff lounge with healthy treats and beverages.

Talent Show

Each winter, all interested students—from kindergarten to 5th grade—are invited to perform in the annual Edgemont Montessori Talent Show. The talent show is informal and non-competitive; it's a wonderful way for students to express themselves and gain confidence in front of an audience. The Talent Show is held in the multi-purpose room in the evening so that all family members can attend.

School Play

Edgemont's school play is also noncompetitive and traditionally is run as a class out of the Spring session of the Enrichment program. Please check the Enrichment Offerings to register your child for the school play. Play selections have family-friendly stories and large casts. Some years the play is practiced and performed with two casts to allow all interested children a role. The play is performed during the school day and in the evening near the end of the year.

Fun Day

The crown jewel of the PTA-sponsored events, Fun Day is held on the first or second Friday in June and is Edgemont's alternative to a traditional field day. The children run sack races, play volleyball, stack boxes, blow bubbles, play drums, "bounce," have their faces painted, and celebrate the end of school with their friends and teachers. Approximately twelve separate Fun Stations are set up—each with a non-competitive activity—and every child gets an opportunity to explore each one as they rotate through the stations with their class.

School Coordinated Fundraisers

Separate from PTA Fundraisers, a few other fundraisers are undertaken during the school year. The district coordinates fundraisers for the Montclair Fund for Educational Excellence (MFEE), and Edgemont Montessori fifth graders coordinate fundraisers for their moving up celebrations.

MFEE Toasts to the Teacher

The Montclair Fund for Educational Excellence (MFEE) is a local education fund that provides approved grants to all the schools in the district twice a year. Grant applications may be submitted by any Montclair school faculty, staff or parent organization. At the heart of the MFEE mission is the presumption that sometimes a small injection of funds can power a big change in how a teacher conveys a lesson, how a student experiences new material, or how a principal inspires a faculty. For a full description of the MFEE, see their website at www.mfee.org.

Toward the end of the school year, parent volunteers are invited to host a MFEE “Toast to the Teacher” party. This is the perfect way to honor a treasured teacher, principal, or staff member who has made a difference in your child’s school experience. Parties can be a brunch, barbecue, cocktail party, or dinner. They can be targeted to adults or include children. Many parties are held at homes. Some Edgemont parties with children take place in Edgemont Park after school. Sometimes families from both classes in one grade combine parties and toast the teachers for that grade together. Party goers pay a fee for attending the party, and these funds support all MFEE programs.

Fifth Grade Fundraising Activities

Each year the fifth grade raises money to help pay for end-of-year activities. In past years, for example, the fifth grade rented a moonwalk, arranged for a private swimming session at one of the town pools, and attended a local movie theater. In order to defray costs, the fifth grade may run the Holiday Bazaar, a series of popcorn or bake sales, as well as other creative fundraisers. Some of these are run in conjunction with other all-school events; others are run during school hours.

Bake Sales

During the year, the fifth grade will run several popcorn or bake sales after school hours. Flyers will be sent home notifying you of the day.