



GILPIN MONTESSORI PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

IMPORTANT NUMBERS & INFORMATION

Main Office Phone	720-424-7140
Fax	720-424-7165
Attendance line	720-424-7168
Address	2949 California St, Denver CO 80205
Main Office Hours	8:00 am - 3:30 pm
School Hours	8:10 am - 11:00 am: Age 3 8:10 am – 3:00 pm: Age 4 to grade 6
Website	http://gilpin.dpsk12.org

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION

"...to provide all students the opportunity to achieve the knowledge and skills necessary to become contributing citizens in our society"

GILPIN MONTESSORI PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION & CORE VALUES

MISSION:

The mission of Gilpin Montessori Public Schools is to cultivate active, lifelong, exploratory learners in a caring, collaborative and hands-on learning environment using the internationally-successful Montessori Curriculum.

Core Values

Students, faculty and staff at Gilpin Montessori are expected to approach each day with:

- Respect
- Joy
- Commitment
- Peace
- Self-control

TENETS OF GILPIN

ALL GILPIN MONTESSORI STUDENTS AND STAFF

- Have the right to an environment that is safe and orderly.
- Have the right to be treated with courtesy and respect.
- Have the right to learn and work in an environment with high academic standards.

ALL GILPIN MONTESSORI STUDENTS AND STAFF

- Will be provided with a warm and caring environment.
- Will be provided with a safe, drug and violence free environment.
- Will be instilled with a sense of community and belonging.
- Will be encouraged to develop and expand creativity and curiosity.
- Will be encouraged to work cooperatively with their peers and seek their own interests.
- Will be active participants in an environment that promotes and embraces high academic standards.

All Gilpin Montessori School students have the right to be educated by a knowledgeable and professional educator.

All staff will act in a professional manner and present a genuine concern for the students.

Gilpin Montessori embraces the Denver Public Schools goal of preparing each student for college or career. Our classrooms are named after a university or college. Gilpin Montessori staff are encouraged to refer to students as scholars throughout the school day.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ADULT/STUDENT RATIO: Each Primary classroom has a 1:10 ratio which generally consists of one teacher and two paraprofessionals in the morning and one teacher and one paraprofessional in the afternoon.

Each Elementary classroom has a 1:15 ration which consists of one teacher and one paraprofessional.

ARRIVAL: Supervision is provided on the playground beginning at 7:55 am. Students are not permitted to arrive at school before 7:55 am.

Primary students (ages 3-5) must be dropped off at their classrooms. Licensing requirements state that an adult must sign the child in and out. Only full signatures are acceptable on the sign in/out forms, NOT initials.

Elementary students are to be dropped off on the playground to meet their teacher.

The school day starts at 8:10 am. Students will be guided into the school from the playground by their classroom teacher and take them to classrooms at the start of the school day.

Students who arrive at/after 8:15 am, will be considered tardy. At this time it will be necessary for your child to stop in the office for a tardy slip.

DEPARTURE: Licensing requires that Primary students be signed out of classrooms at the end of the school day (11:00 am for three year olds). First – Sixth graders will be walked by their classroom teachers out to the playground for dismissal.

Children will be released to a parent or guardian only, unless the parent or guardian has authorized other individuals on the Emergency Contact Form on file in the Main Office. If

pickup information needs to change, this must be done in writing; phone calls giving permission will not be accepted.

Students who that are not picked up by 3:10 pm will be taken to the main office to wait for their parent/guardian. The office will make every attempt to contact the parent, guardian or other individual authorized to pick up the child. However, if your child is not picked up by 3:15 pm, and other arrangements have not been made, the office will notify Denver Public Schools Safety & Security and/or the Denver Police Department.

If you authorize your child (grades 1-6 only) to walk home you must notify the classroom teacher and office in writing.

EARLY DEPARTURE: If you need to pick up your child(ren) early, for the safety of our students, each parent/guardian will be asked to sign the student out. Please come to the office, they will be retrieved from their classroom. As teachers begin to prepare for dismissal, safety is our number one concern. Students will not be released for early dismissal between 2:45-3:00 pm.

ATTENDANCE: Regular attendance builds a sense of community and belonging in the classroom, establishes a routine, and is essential for academic success. Gilpin Montessori, along with Denver Public Schools, has an attendance goal of 96%. Please try to schedule all vacations and appointments around school hours to minimize loss of instruction. Parents/guardians are asked to phone the school if their children will be absent. Doctor's notes are required for excused absences. Parents of students with chronic absences will be referred to Social Services, which may result in truancy court.

Attendance line: Gilpin Montessori has a phone line committed exclusively to handling student absences. If your child will be absent from school, we ask that you call 720-424-7168.

TARDIES: Is imperative that children arrive to school on time. Late arrivals interrupt learning for both that child and the other children in the classroom. Students who arrive at or after 8:15 am will be considered tardy. If a child is tardy, he or she needs to report to the main office for a tardy slip before going to the classroom. Primary age children must be accompanied to the office by the parent or guardian to pick up a tardy slip and then proceed to the classroom. Tardies will be excused with a doctor's note. Three unexcused tardies count as one unexcused absence. **Parents of students with chronic absences will be referred to Social Services, which may result in truancy court.**

CELL PHONES (Electronic Devices): Cell phones and other electronic devices are not allowed to be used in school. If your child comes to school with a cell phone or other electronic device, it must remain off or in silent mode. If a student is observed using the device during the school day, it will be removed and locked away until dismissal.

CLOTHING: Please dress your child in appropriate clothes for play and for the weather. Send a jacket or sweater, gloves, boots and hat as necessary. All students will go outside daily except when severe weather or temperatures exist.

Primary age children need to bring a complete change of clothing in a zip lock bag labeled with their name, to be stored at school.

COMMUNICATION: Communication between parents and school is important and affects your child's success. So that we may meet the need of your child, it is important to inform us if there are any changes or problems in your child's routine. Schedule changes, illnesses, separations, a parent's absence, or new siblings can affect your child's behavior. Please keep us informed so that we can be supportive of your child.

Please make an appointment if you would like to talk with your child's classroom teacher. During drop off and dismissal teachers are busy supervising students. The best way to schedule an appointment is to call or email your child's teacher.

Parents are asked to review papers that are sent home weekly with their child and return anything requiring immediate attention as soon as possible. Teachers will send home school newsletters monthly and other communication, invitations and announcements on an as needed basis.

Please ensure that phone numbers and other contact information such as email are up to date. The school will send home regular communication through email and robo calls.

Gilpin Montessori School believes that one of the key elements of a successful learning experience is the professional status teachers and staff. Professional standards have been established for faculty members. These standards include both professional growth expectations and also ethical and business behaviors. Professional growth does not only require that our faculty members act professionally, but that they are also treated professionally. We do not condone or allow unprofessional treatment of our faculty members. This includes verbal, physical, or written abuse, including email messages.

Example of behavior from students, parents, or other members of the community that will not be tolerated are:

- Loud or boisterous dialogue
- Screaming, cursing, or yelling during parent teacher conferences and/or telephone calls
- Physical threats
- Harassment of any type
- Speaking poorly of a teacher to other members of the faculty (does not refer to complaints to the proper administrative team member)
- Soliciting of negative opinions from other parents, students, and/or teachers.
- Disrespect of faculty member's personal and private life including home telephone calls, unless invited to do so by the faculty member.

If such behavior is demonstrated, faculty members have been directed to immediately stop a conference or telephone session and direct the parent or visitor to the Principal. Gilpin Montessori School considers continual occurrences of such behavior as detrimental to the educational process, not in line with our philosophy of the educational community, and may result in parent having limited access to the school building.

DONATIONS: You may have some forgotten treasures in your basement or attic that we would love to have. Such things as children's books, animal cages, fabric scraps, trays, baskets, cultural artifacts, musical instruments, learning materials, yarn, National Geographic, etc., are all treasures. Please contact the school before bringing anything. You can also make cash donations through our fundraising committee, Friends of Gilpin. Donations are tax deductible, Gilpin Montessori also has clothing and shoe recycling bin located just outside our front doors.

DRESS CODE:

Students are encouraged to dress in a manner that is neat, safe, and conducive to learning as stated in the Denver Public Schools Policy JICA- Student Dress. Student dress and personal appearance shall meet standards of reasonable cleanliness and safety and must show respect for others.

The following items are deemed disruptive and are not acceptable on school grounds, in school vehicles, or at school functions or activities:

- Hats may not be worn inside the school building.
- Shorts, dresses, skirts or other similar clothing shorter than mid-thigh length
- Sunglasses, hats or head scarves worn inside a building
- Inappropriately sheer, tight, loose, or low-cut clothing that bares or exposes the stomach, back, breasts, buttocks, or intimate parts. (i.e., garments made of fishnet,

mesh, or similar material, and midriffs, halter tops, backless clothing, tube tops, muscle tops, revealing tank tops or sundresses, “spaghetti straps,” etc.)

- Any clothing, paraphernalia, grooming, jewelry, hair coloring, accessories, or body adornments that are or contain any words, symbols or pictures that:
 - Refer to drugs, tobacco, alcohol or weapons
 - Are of a sexual nature
 - By virtue of color, arrangement, trademark or other attribute denote membership in gangs, associations or clubs which advocated drug use, violence or disruptive behavior
 - Threaten the safety or welfare of any person
 - Promote any activity prohibited by the student code of conduct
 - Otherwise disrupt the school in delivering educational services
- Inappropriate footwear, including bedroom slippers
- Underwear as outer wear
- Inappropriate grooming or hygiene

Students in violation of the dress code will be required to remove or cover up the offending garment and store it in a desk or backpack for the remainder of the day or store in the principal’s office until after the school day.

The principal or her designee will phone a parent and remind him/her about the policy when a student is found to be in violation.

(A complete version of Policy JICA may be found on the Denver Public Schools’ website at www.dpsk12.org within the Policies section.)

EXCURSIONS/FIELD TRIPS: At the time of registration, you are asked to sign a form giving permission for your child to attend a field trip. You will need to notify in advance of each excursion and may refuse to give permission for your child to participate on any specific trip. If your child arrives at school late, and the class is on a field trip, you may take the child to join the group or the child will be placed in another classroom until his/her class returns.

LOST AND FOUND: Lost & Found items will be stored in a box marked Lost & Found in the office.

MEDIA RELEASE: At registration you are asked to sign a form allowing interviews with and photos of your child which may be used by the mediator in school newsletters and promotional materials. If you do not sign it, your child will not be photographed or interviewed by the media or featured in school materials.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES: At least one formal parent teacher conference will occur during the school year. Your child's teacher will notify you of conference times and the sign up procedure. Informal conferences will occur on an as needed basis. Informal conferences may be requested by the parent or teacher.

PERSONAL ITEMS: Each child will have a cubby or another small area to store his/her work and a hook for a coat and a backpack. All of your child's belongings should be labeled with his/her name. Please leave candy, chips, soda and toys at home. This includes basketballs, footballs and other playground/recess equipment.

Absolutely no weapons or weapon facsimiles will be permitted on or near school property.

We are not responsible for lost or stolen items.

SCHOOL CALENDAR: The school will follow the Denver Public Schools calendar, which is available on the district's website: www.dpsk12.org and on Gilpin Montessori's website: <http://gilpin.dpsk12.org>. Dates of events specific to the school are listed in the school newsletter and on the school's website.

SNOW DAYS: The major television and radio stations as well as the Denver Public Schools website will provide information regarding school closings due to severe weather.

TOILET TRAINING: Denver Public Schools early education teachers and paraprofessionals are committed to supporting children and families in the process of independent toilet use, in all classrooms. If a child is struggling with the process, teachers will work with families to implement appropriate support measures, including, but not limited to the following:

- Encouraging the student to use the bathroom at regular intervals
- Encouraging the student to independently clean him/herself and change into clean clothing
- Allowing, but not requiring, a parent or guardian to return to school to assist with clean-up/changing clothing
- Allowing the use of pull-ups or training undergarments, per family preference

MONTESSORI INFORMATION

BEGINNING OF SCHOOL YEAR: For Primary students (ages 3), the first three weeks of school are used for classroom orientation. The Montessori prepared environment is quite specific and children must have a gradual introduction individually or in small groups. Parents are notified of the schedule in advance.

BLENDED CLASSROOMS: Classrooms are blended with children of different age groups together.

- Primary Classrooms: 3, 4 and 5 years old (ECE and Kindergarten).
- Lower Elementary Classrooms: 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade.
- Upper Elementary Classrooms: 4th, 5th and 6th grade.

BIRTHDAYS: Each child is unique and his or her birthday is distinctive. The Montessori Method of honoring birthdays allows this to happen. Throughout the process, the birthday child learns about the history of his/her life as well as the other children. In addition to celebrating the child's special day. It is also a history lesson. The child may bring a nutritious snack to share on that day (cake and cupcakes will not be accepted). If you plan to have a birthday (or other) party at home, please send the invitations by US mail rather than delivering them at school. It is very hurtful to children when they are not all invited and cannot understand the reason. This also applies to other parties held at home. By honoring this you are supporting the work we are doing to build community.

HOLIDAYS: In terms of recognizing holidays, the goal is to celebrate all people through the school year. We will not be emphasizing or celebrating specific holidays. During a particular season, books may be read or discussions may occur about the traditions and beliefs of specific people, but there will not be comprehensive celebrations of any particular holidays.

PARENT EDUCATION: Your knowledge and understanding of the Montessori Philosophy and participation in our program will contribute greatly to your child's success. You are your child's first and most important teacher. Your understanding of what we practice in the classroom can make the difference between a happy child and a child confused by conflicting approaches. Parent education sessions will be offered during the school year. Please look for

the topics and dates in the school newsletter and on the school's website. We realize that each parent is very busy, but we encourage you to participate in as many parent meetings as possible.

ENROLLMENT AND TUTION

ENROLLMENT POLICY: Gilpin Montessori's application process is the same as for other Denver Public Schools. Prospective students must apply before the established deadline (usually at the end of January). Applications must include: birth certificate, proof of residence, and (if applying for tuition assistance) proof of income. If child support or money from a parent who is not living in the home is received, it must also be reported since this is considered income. Priority is given to students who reside in our neighborhood boundary. Space permitting, other applicants outside this area are admitted. For more information about Denver Public Schools choice process, please go to <http://schoolchoice.dpsk12.org>.

TUITION: Denver Public Schools' Early Education Department handles tuition for our Primary students. Tuition is on a sliding scale, based on household income and household size. Please call 720-423-3698.

MEALS AND SNACKS

BREAKFAST: Breakfast is served in each classroom starting at 8:10 am. Breakfast is free for all students.

FOOD ALLERGIES: The child needs to bring a certified doctor's statement to the school verifying any food allergies. The statement will be kept on file. If your child is allergic to milk, the food service staff will provide juice as the beverage. If your child is allergic to other foods, items will be exchanged as availability allows.

LUNCH: Lunch is served from 11:00am – 12:00 pm. Parents/guardians are welcome to join their child for lunch. You may fill out an application to see if you qualify for free or reduced lunch. An adult lunch costs \$4.00.

STUDENT LUNCHES: Student lunches must be paid in advance either for the lunch of the day or for multiple lunches. Please track the number of lunches you have purchased and send in money when it is due. Checks should be made payable to Denver Public Schools. You may also pay for lunches and track your balance through <http://foodservices.dpsk12.org/>

- Meal prices: Full \$1.85 ECE-5th grade students; \$2.10 for 6th grade students
 - Reduced meal rate \$0.40
 - Milk \$0.40
 - Breakfast FREE

When a student's balance reaches \$4.20, the cashier is notified of the Low Balance and will give a written REMINDER notice to the student. Any student in grades ECE – 5, who forgets or loses his / her money, may charge up to \$5.55. Prior to this limit being reached, a written notice will be given to the student to notify the parent/guardian. If payment for charges is not received by the time this charge limit is reached, an alternate meal (cheese sandwich and white milk) will be served. If charges are still not paid after 3 alternate meals have been served, then the student will be served a healthy snack of white milk and graham crackers.

SNACKS: Nutritious snacks will be served to students daily. We are strongly committed to helping children learn nutritious patterns of eating. Special occasions warrant some exceptions.

DISCIPLINE & SAFETY

CHILD ABUSE: School personnel are required, by law, to report any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect to the County Department of Social Services. We act in the best interest of the child and we are here to support or to provide resources for the child and his/her family. Parents should report to the Principal any inappropriate behavior or action taken by staff toward children.

DISCIPLINE: Discipline is a positive process, which provides children clear and predictable ways of working on acceptable behavior. This empowers them to develop self-control by offering choices and building self-esteem. Children will be treated with respect at all times. We provide an environment where skills are acquired and practiced and children learn respect for themselves and others. Expectations are fair and clear. Teachers and other school personnel will assist children with conflict mediation as necessary. Elementary classroom will hold daily class meetings to address student issues and concerns. Please encourage your child to bring up any behavioral concerns in these daily meetings. Staff and parents work together on individual plans for the child's learning. The school adheres to all District policies procedures. If it

becomes necessary for a child to be sent home due to behavior, you will be phoned and expected to pick up your child. Reports of bullying will not be address using the Denver Public Schools Discipline Policy.

EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS: Fire and lockdown drills are conducted during the school day on a monthly basis. Other emergency drills are conducted at least twice a year. Teachers are trained on the procedures. Designated exits and outside meeting areas have been determined. Teachers take their class list with them to determine that each child is accounted for. Every child and adult in the school building must evacuate during all drills. **In the event of an actual emergency during school hours such as a fire or lockdown, parents will be notified.**

LOST CHILDREN: We have numerous safety checks in place to keep children safe. If a child cannot be located, the parent will be contacted immediately. In addition, District Security and the Denver Police Department will be alerted.

PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION: Children will be supervised on the playground by at least one certified teacher as well as paraprofessionals and other staff. The number of paraprofessionals and other staff will be determined by the number of children to be supervised.

PARKING: Traffic is most congest when students are arriving and dismissing. Parking spaces are needed for parents of Primary students who must be signed in and signed out as required by State Childcare Licensing. Parents of children in grades 1-6 are asked to drop children off on California St. or on Stout St. near the playground.

There is a turnaround area in front of the school on California St. Vehicles may be briefly parked in the circle for drop off and pick up only. On the streets, parking is not allowed in no parking zones and double parking is not allowed. Driveways and alley ways in the neighborhood may not be blocked. Illegally parked cars (in bus areas or double parked) will be ticketed. When parking on the street, please be sure to check the signs for street sweeping days.

Please do not ask your child(ren) to cross the street between cars or buses. They need to cross the street at the corners. We ask that you give attention to these safety guidelines and impress upon your children the importance of crossing safely.

HEALTH

ILLNESS: We encourage good health habits. If your child is ill, please keep him/her at home for a speedy recovery. This will prevent the spread of illness to other children and staff. Please keep your child at home if he/she has:

- Fever of 100% degree Fahrenheit or higher

- Severe coughing
- High pitched whooping croupy sound with a cough
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Stiff neck
- Yellow skin or eyes
- Exposed, open skin lesions
- Conjunctivitis-pink eye, excessive tearing, redness of eyelid or lining, eye swelling, discharge, or pus.
- Unusual spots or rash
- Trouble swallowing
- Unusually dark, tea colored urine and/or grey or white stool
- Vomiting
- Continual green/yellow discharge from the nose
- Diarrhea-more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period
- Severe itching of body or scalp
- A child identified as having head lice shall not be permitted to return until treatment has occurred and all nits have been removed from the hair.
- Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness

If your child contracts a contagious disease (such as strep throat, chicken pox, pink eye, etc.) please notify the school immediately. Should your child become ill at school, you will be phoned and expected to pick up your child.

Children who are not well enough to go outside are considered ill and needed to be kept home. If your child is healthy enough to attend school and is adequately dressed, he/she should be able to go outside for a short time, even in winter or cold weather.

Students who complain of illness or are in need of first aid will be sent to the nurse's office which is adjacent to the main office. We have a nurse on site two days a week, however our office staff is trained in basic first aid.

The student will be checked and if ill, the parent/guardian will be called and required to take the child home. If the child simply needs to rest, he/she will be sent back to the classroom when he/she feels better.

INJURIES: If a child is injured, school staff will fill out an incident report and the parent/guardian or the person(s) listed on the child's emergency information will be notified. If emergency contacts cannot be notified and immediate medical care is needed, the school will call 911. However, Denver Public Schools will in no case accept financial responsibility for care. It is imperative that we have current phone numbers including at least two emergency

contacts. Minor incidents and illnesses will be referred to the school nurse and/or our trained office staff.

MEDICATION: Students should not be bringing in cough drops, cough syrup or any other drugs, including over the counter medications without a Denver Public Schools “Medication Request Release Agreement” form completed by the child’s doctor. These forms are in the school nurse’s office.

All medications must have a pharmacy label on them with the same written order contained on the medication request release agreement. Over the counter medications must be in their original unopened container. The school nurse can make a label for these medications.

Medication will not be given unless a physician has prescribed it. The school may not administer medication without official written authorization from a licensed physician and a parent or guardian. All medication, in its original container, will be stored in a locked cabinet in the nurse’s office. Medication may not be taken to the classroom.

SUNSCREEN: Children will be going outside daily. Sunscreen should be put on your child before he/she comes to school. If your child attends all day, you may send sunscreen in a clearly marked bag with your child’s name, room number, directions for application and your signature.

VISITORS/VOLUNTEERS

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS: We do not have visitations until October because of the importance of allowing time for the children to build community within the classroom and adjust to the classroom routine. After October 1st, you are welcome to come and observe your child in the classroom at any time. If you are interested in observing, it is recommended that you contact the office or your child’s teacher in advance to set up a time to observe.

IDENTIFICATION TAG: Visitors and volunteers must sign in and get a tag at the Main Office each time they visit. It is important for the school to know who is in the building or on the playground at all times.

We welcome volunteers in the classroom and elsewhere in the school, including the library and cafeteria. Please notify your child’s teacher if you are interested in volunteering. If you

would like to on a regular basis you must complete paper work required by the Denver Public Schools Office of Volunteer Services. All regular basis volunteers must go through a background check before being allowed to volunteer at the school. Paper work can be found at <http://cpc.dpsk12.org>

TRANSPORTATION

SUCCESS EXPRESS: Denver Public schools operate as a shuttle that serves a number of schools in the area, including Gilpin Montessori. If you do not live in the vicinity, you may drop off your child at any school that the shuttle, called “Success Express”, serves. The shuttle runs before and after school, on a fixed route. For more information please go to:

<http://transportation.dpsk12.org>

Staff will assist children in finding and boarding the buses. Parents are asked to do a “practice walk” with their child to help them understand the process.