

Ruffing Montessori School



Handbook

Who We Are

Founded in 1959, Ruffing Montessori School (“Ruffing”) has been a pioneer in the Montessori approach to education in Ohio and in the United States. Ruffing was the second Montessori school in the United States at both the primary and elementary levels. In 1977, Ruffing became the first Montessori school in Ohio to be accredited by the state to operate through the eighth grade. Ruffing provides Association Montessori Internationale (“AMI”) Montessori education for children aged three through fourteen.

The Board of Trustees

A nine-member Board of Trustees supports the principal and ensures that he or she operates Ruffing in the best interest of the school. The Board’s support includes fundraising, communications, and community-building activities. Any parent interested in helping with fundraising, communications, or community building activities is encouraged to call the school office to volunteer. In addition to the principal, the faculty consists of teaching professionals who have been specially educated in the Association Montessori Internationale Montessori Method.

Did you know?

Ruffing Montessori owns and operates in a 48,000 square foot building on 5.25 acres of land in Rocky River, Ohio.

Montessori Educational Philosophy

The Montessori Method of education is based on the observation and discoveries of Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician. Its fundamental philosophy is based on the concept that all children carry within them the people they will become. In order to develop their physical, intellectual, and spiritual powers to the fullest, children must have freedom – a freedom to be achieved through order and self-discipline. Ruffing strives to bring out the “best version” of each student. To help children reach this goal, Dr. Montessori developed what she called the “prepared environment”—one that already possesses a certain order and disposes children to develop at their own speed according to their own capacities and in a noncompetitive atmosphere in their first school years. The Montessori Method introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social discipline go hand in hand. Dr. Montessori recognized that the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child.

Children free to discover move themselves toward learning. The teacher

prepares the environment, functions as the reference person, and offers the child stimulation. It is the children, however, who are motivated through the work itself to persist in chosen tasks and therefore who realize their hidden potentials.

Elementary Philosophy

The child begins the passage from concrete materials to symbols and abstraction. Focus is placed on manipulation of ideas without sensorial aides; that is, children move toward abstraction.

Children at this age possess an imagination eager to function. They are moving toward active conscious learning (they have discovered reason). They are interested in facts as they can relate to them. Their primary interests are “why,” “when,” and “how.”

Although manipulation of materials is still a large part of the learning process, children increasingly manipulate symbols. Gradually, children internalize the concepts gained through the manipulation of materials at the primary level and the use of symbols at the elementary level.

Middle School Philosophy

We provide an environment where students can experience community, affirmation, love, and support.

We provide a safe and enlivening place where students can test, discover, experience, share, and celebrate. We attempt to identify opportunities for young adolescents which focus on their developmental needs.

and tactilely sensed. Likewise, the decimal system is introduced concretely as "unit beads," "ten bars," "hundred squares," "thousand cubes," etc. In language, sandpaper letters are felt so that the children's hands touch the shape as the eyes see it. The children learn to associate the sound of the letter with its shape and feel.

- **The chaos of impressions is sorted out.** Materials are scientifically designed to aid children in ordering the impressions. This provides the foundation for logic, which is used later to develop analysis and rationale.
- **There is a focus on practical life activities.** For example, by ordering the physical movements to perform to perfection, the practice life activities such as sweeping, scrubbing, etc., further order their minds. Certain work, such as

Non-Discrimination Policy

Religion Program

Since its inception, Ruffing has offered a voluntary Roman Catholic Religion Program, which is provided outside the main classroom and within school hours. We continue to honor this tradition. We hope it fosters a sense of responsibility for growth in a Christian community by offering religious instruction

Student Behavior

and opportunities for participation in religious services and prayer.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Ruffing Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, gender expression, disability, creed, sexual orientation, religion, national or ethnic origin (ancestry), or disability in the administration of its educational policies. Ruffing admits students with any disability and of any race, color, gender, gender expression, disability, creed, sexual orientation, religion, national or ethnic origin (ancestry), to all of the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally afforded or made available to students at the school.

Code of Conduct

Prohibited behavior

- Assault, including, but not limited to, hitting, poking, slapping, and pinching
- Violation of the Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying/Cyberbullying Policy
- Violent behavior or threats of violence or harm
- Disorderly conduct, false threats and other activity causing disruption of the school environment
- Use or display of profane or obscene language
- Disruption of the school environment
- Open defiance of a teacher's authority, including persistent failure to comply with the lawful directions of teachers or school officials
- Academic dishonesty or plagiarism
- Bringing, possessing, concealing, or using a weapon
- Vandalism, malicious mischief and theft
- Use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs, including drug paraphernalia
- Violation of law
- Other violation of school or classroom rules

Ruffing expects students to behave appropriately while in the school's care. This includes all student actions during the regular school day, and at any school-related activity, regardless of time or location. This includes while traveling to and from school, at the bus stop, at school-sponsored events, while at other schools and while off campus, whenever such conduct causes a substantial and material disruption of the educational environment or the invasion of the rights of others. Students may be subject to discipline for inappropriate and unacceptable conduct.

The Montessori method supports the theory that students will achieve self-discipline through liberty. In the classroom, therefore, students are generally free to talk, move about, and choose their own activities. The teachers, however, are responsible for maintaining a learning environment within the classroom. To

do this, they must handle and correct discipline problems as well as employ sound preventative measures. Equally, it is the principal's responsibility to maintain a learning environment within the school. In dealing with disciplinary problems, the principal will be consistent and just and will consider all relevant factors and circumstances.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty refers to any type of cheating in an academic setting. This includes plagiarism, cheating, deception and sabotage. These are serious violations, which may result in discipline, including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion.

Normal Peer Conflict vs. Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying/Cyberbullying/Threats

Normal peer conflict is a part of every child's life experience. As children learn the give-and-take of social interaction and cooperation, conflict naturally occurs. Young children are still learning self-control and developing a sense of personal space.

Pushing and other unwanted physical acts, getting upset about not being first in line, taking an item from another child, disagreeing or saying, "I'm not going to be your friend anymore" are all examples of normal peer conflict. They do not mean that a bully/victim problem exists.

Bullying is a willful, conscious desire to hurt, frighten, or threaten. Bullying is usually a series of repeated, intentionally cruel incidents, or threat of harm, that involve the same children, in the same bully/victim roles. It involves an imbalance of power, either real or perceived. It can be physical or verbal and can include intimidation, inappropriate gestures or touching, and social exclusion. Due to the willful and conscious nature, younger children are not typically developmentally capable of carrying out bullying and are more often involved in normal peer conflict.

Each instance of peer conflict at Ruffing is assessed on a case-by-case basis, by professional and experienced staff/teachers who are building a deep understanding of each student. Ruffing staff will respond with appropriate intervention as needed and keep parents informed of any major conflicts/incidents. Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including expulsion. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

Harassment, intimidation, threats, bullying, or cyberbullying, by students, staff or third parties toward students is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated.

Clothing

Students are expected to dress appropriately. Any type of dress or grooming which is disruptive or inappropriate, will not be permitted. The principal reserves the right to send inappropriately dressed children home from school to change their attire. All clothing likely to be removed during school hours (sweaters, mittens, boots, etc.) should be clearly marked with the child's name.

Cell Phone and Electronics

Students may use personal electronic devices only **with permission**. A "personal electronic device" is any device that is capable of electronically communicating, sending, receiving, storing, recording and/or displaying information and data. This includes smart phones, wearable electronics (such as smart watches), tablets and portable music devices, such as iPods.

Students found in violation of the personal electronic device use and possession prohibitions as established by Ruffing may be subject to disciplinary action. For example, the device may be confiscated and will be released to the student's parents.

The taking, disseminating, transferring or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer or otherwise (commonly called texting, sexting, emailing, etc.) is strictly prohibited. Any person taking, disseminating, transferring or sharing obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise illegal images of photographs will be reported to law enforcement and/or other appropriate state or federal agencies.

Ruffing Supplied Materials/Computer Use

Students may be permitted to use Ruffing's electronic communications system. Personal use of Ruffing computers, including email access, is permitted with permission. Students may not access social media websites using Ruffing equipment, while on Ruffing property or at Ruffing-sponsored activities unless the access is approved by a Ruffing representative.

Ruffing retains ownership and control of its computers, hardware, software and data at all times. All communications and stored information transmitted received or contained in Ruffing's information system are Ruffing's property and are to be used for authorized purposes only. Use of Ruffing equipment or software for unauthorized purposes is strictly prohibited.

Files and other information, including email, sent or received, generated or stored on Ruffing servers are not private and may be subject to monitoring. By using Ruffing's system, students consent to have that use monitored by authorized Ruffing personnel. To maintain system integrity, the principal, administrator, and teachers may routinely review user files and communications. Ruffing reserves the right to access and disclose, as appropriate, all information and data contained on Ruffing computers and any Ruffing-owned email system.

Social Media Use

Because issues that arise online may affect the classroom environment, Ruffing requests that families who allow their children to use social media ensure they understand the principles of safe, courteous online behavior. Violations of the student and parent code of conduct will be addressed, regardless of whether the activity occurred during school hours, and may include suspension or dismissal from the school. Inappropriate behavior among Ruffing community members should be promptly reported to the principal or the school administrator.

Discipline

Violations of the Student Code of Conduct may result in discipline, including immediate dismissal from the school. The principal, administrator, and teachers have discretion to determine the appropriate discipline for all violations. Ruffing is committed to disciplining the child appropriately, considering their age and development.

In disciplining students, Ruffing commits to the following:

- No cruel, harsh corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as but not limited to punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting
- No discipline shall be delegated to any other child
- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time such as in a protective hug so the child may regain control
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or a similar cubicle
- No child shall be subject to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse
- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents
- No techniques of discipline intended to humiliate, shame, or frighten a child
- Discipline shall not include withholding of food, sleep, or toilet use
- Separation when used as discipline shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability

Investigations

The school administrator will take reports and conduct a prompt investigation of any complaint, including any report of an act of harassment, intimidation, threats, bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation. Any Ruffing community member who has knowledge of conduct in violation of this policy shall immediately report his/her concerns to the principal, who has overall responsibility for all investigations. Any student who has knowledge of conduct in violation of this policy or feels he/she has been harassed, intimidated, threatened, bullied, cyberbullied, or retaliated against is encouraged to immediately report his/her concerns to the principal or school administrator. This report may be made anonymously. A student may also report concerns to a teacher who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate official.

All complaints will be promptly investigated in accordance with the following procedures:

Step 1

Complaint presented to the principal.
All information will be reduced to writing and will include the specific nature of the offence(s).

Step 2

The principal shall promptly notify the parents of any complaint involving their student.

Step 3

The principal will investigate.
Ruffing will arrange meetings as may be necessary with all concerned parties as quickly and expediently as possible.

Step 4

Ruffing shall notify the complainant and parents as appropriate, when the investigation is concluded and a decision regarding disciplinary action, as warranted, is determined.
All findings related to the complaint will be reduced to writing.

Documentation related to the incident will be maintained as a part of the student's education records.

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry is also strictly prohibited. False charges shall also be regarded as a serious offense and

Parental Code of Conduct

Ruffing views a student's education as a **collaborative effort** between school, student, and parents. Families are expected to maintain a harmonious relationship with the staff and other Ruffing families. We believe that parents support the education and development of their child(ren) best when they:

- Model positive communication
- Seek to resolve any school problems by working respectfully with school staff
- Refrain from making negative comments about Ruffing and its staff and teachers
- Enforce and adhere to our attendance policy
- Support the pursuit of academic excellence by allowing their child(ren) to take personal responsibility for their work while monitoring performance
- Devote their full attention to the safe transport of their child(ren) to and from school by adhering to the drop-off and pick-up rules, **and** by not using cell phones or other devices that might distract attention
- Participate in school activities and be active partners in the school community

will result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.

Ruffing experiences tremendous support and involvement from its parents and community members. Please refer to our **Operational Return to School Plan** beginning on page 65 for detailed instructions on volunteers.

Parental participation is needed and requested on many levels and affords parents an opportunity to be actively involved in the school. Ruffing's programs are successful because of the voluntary hard work and dedication of our parents. Their willing assistance has been key to our school's many achievements. Please do not hesitate to volunteer to help.

Fundraising

While Ruffing receives most of its support from tuition revenues, these revenues alone are not enough to support the entire operation of the school. The School's two main fundraisers are the Auction and the Ruffing Leadership

Communication

Fund. These fundraisers make it possible to operate on a sound financial basis and maintain a moderate tuition level; allow the major focus to be on education instead of finances; enable Ruffing to provide excellent Montessori prepared environments to all age levels; and allow Ruffing to attract and hold excellent teaching talent.

While there are many worthy causes, in the interest of fairness to all our families Ruffing generally does not allow student-led or parent-led fundraisers. Possible exceptions include fundraisers related to Ruffing's Religion program or special classroom events, though in all cases the fundraiser would need approval by the Board of Trustees.

Volunteers

All volunteers are fingerprinted and subjected to a criminal records check.

Conferences

Teachers are more successful with students if they can share their understanding of the students directly with the parents. Formal conferences are held twice a year, usually in December and May. According to the Operational Return to School Plan, conferences will be held virtually until further notice. Both parents are expected to attend.

Parent-Teacher Appointments

If a parent has a special concern, it is not necessary to wait for the regular conference time to discuss it with the teacher. Additional parent conferences are encouraged and can be arranged virtually at any time during the school year. When you wish to contact your child's teacher, please send an email to the teacher, or a note with your child, or leave a message at the office, and the teacher will call you.

School Hours, Attendance, School Cancellation

Please refrain from discussing anything with the teachers before or during class. Also, in the event of a disagreement, **please remember that decorum and mutual respect are expected.** If a problem cannot be resolved by a meeting with the teacher, parents can contact the administrator or principal at the school office to schedule an appointment.

Other Concerns

Parents who have a question or concern about any aspect of the school operation should contact the administrator or principal at the school office.

Class Placement

We attempt to honor requests from parents to have their child placed in a particular class; however, since many factors go into class placement decisions, we cannot guarantee such placement.

School Hours

The **primary classes** meet daily from 9:00 a.m. to noon. New first year students begin with a four-week orientation session in the afternoon from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. daily. Extended day begins for older primary children (third year) during the last week in September. The extended day includes lunch and runs until 3:15 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

Elementary and middle school classes meet daily from 9:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential for success in school. **The Ohio Department of Education defines “Excessive Absenteeism” as an absence of 65 or more hours in one school year, with or without a legitimate excuse” (approximately 10 days).** However, no student will be penalized for absences related to quarantine requirements.

Most subjects are learned sequentially, requiring the understanding of each concept in the order of its presentation. Persistent absence creates a genuine hardship for *a student, the class, and the teacher* and is a serious problem. Accordingly, students are expected to be at school each day school is in session.

Absences and Tardiness

If your child is unable to attend school because of personal or family illness

Transportation- Post Covid-19

or because of a death in the family, Ohio Law requires you to please call (or email) Lisa in the school office before 9:30 a.m. and give the student's name, his/her teacher's name, and the reason for the absence. **Alerting only the teacher is not sufficient.** In order for a student to be excused for any other reason (e.g. a religious holiday), the school must be notified in advance. If the school has not received word that a child is absent by 9:30am, Lisa will contact the parent of the missing child.

All students are expected to arrive on time; **late arrivals disrupt class.** Repeated or excessive tardiness may result in counseling and/or discipline, depending on the circumstances. Should a student miss a day from school, for whatever reason, they are still expected to complete schoolwork or homework, and any missed work is expected to be made up and completed in a timely manner.

Please schedule out-of-school appointments (e.g, doctor's, dentist's, etc.) either before or after regular school hours and family vacations when school is not in session.

Cancellation of School

School may be cancelled due to extraordinary circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure, or public crisis. The school administration is aware of the hardships that an abrupt cancellation can cause. Therefore school will only be cancelled if remaining open creates a significant safety risk. Every practical means is used to notify parents of a cancellation including radio, e-mail, text and the local news stations. If you are in doubt as to whether school has been cancelled, please call the school.

If school must be cancelled during the school day, teachers will ensure that all students have satisfactory supervision and transportation to their homes before releasing them from school.

Families are responsible for the student's transportation. The roster of parents' names and addresses provided by the school may be helpful if you wish to organize a car pool. A calm atmosphere is essential in a car that brings children to school. Valuable time is lost at school if children are overexcited when they arrive. If on a particular day your child will not be riding in his/her usual car pool, please send a note informing the teacher who will be picking the child up. **Under no circumstances will your child be permitted to leave with anyone else unless the teacher has been formally notified.**

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

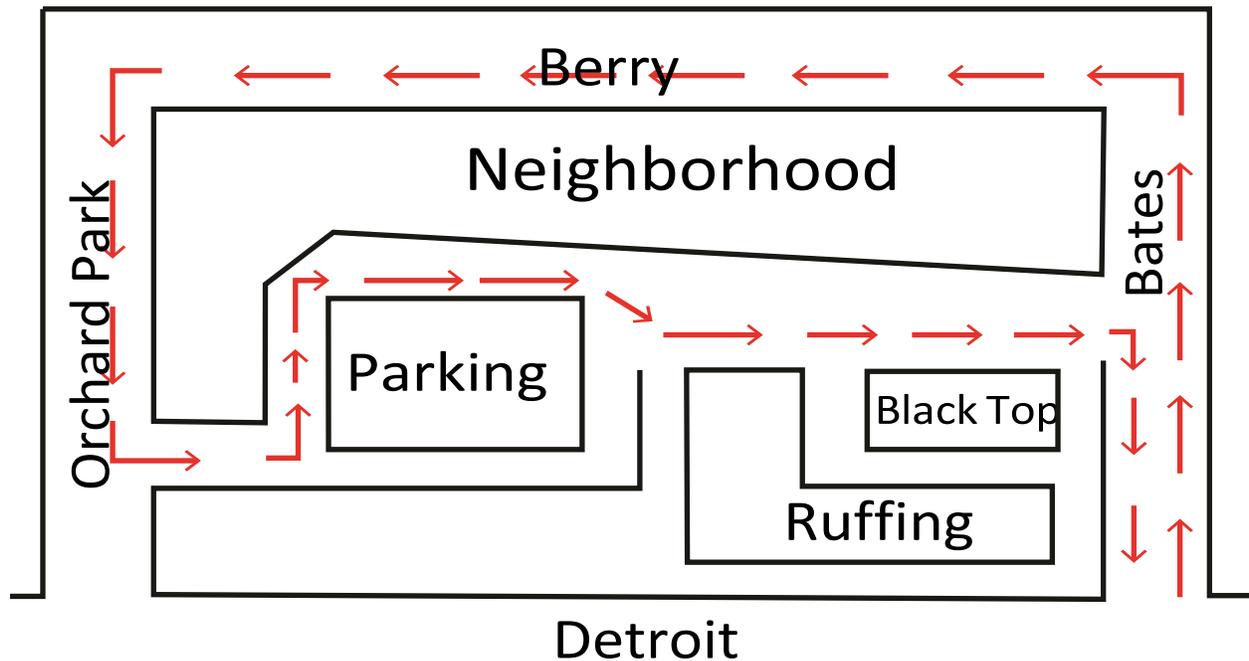
Our car line arrival and dismissal procedures meet the state guidelines for physical distancing and limited contact.

Arrival

- School drop off will begin at **8:15 am**. Please do not arrive before 8:15 am. Children will need to wait in their car until a staff member meets them and assists them from their vehicle.
- Children in Grades K-8 must have a mask on at arrival.
- **Primary and Grades 1-3 will be dropped off at the front of the building** and enter through their classroom's outside entrance (except Lynne's class which will go through the main hallway.)
- Assistants will be available to help children to their doors.
- **Grades 4-8 will be dropped off at the back of the school.** Grades 4-5 will enter through the old back entrance. Grades 6-8 will enter through the new back entrance under the large canopy and will immediately go up the stairs to the middle school classrooms.
- **Families with children in different grades will need to drop off each child at their appropriate entrance door.**
- Children who are dropped off by a bus will be helped to their assigned entry door.
- Students will sanitize their hands upon drop off and can wash their hands once in the classroom.
- **Parents will not be permitted to walk their children into the school building.**

Arrival

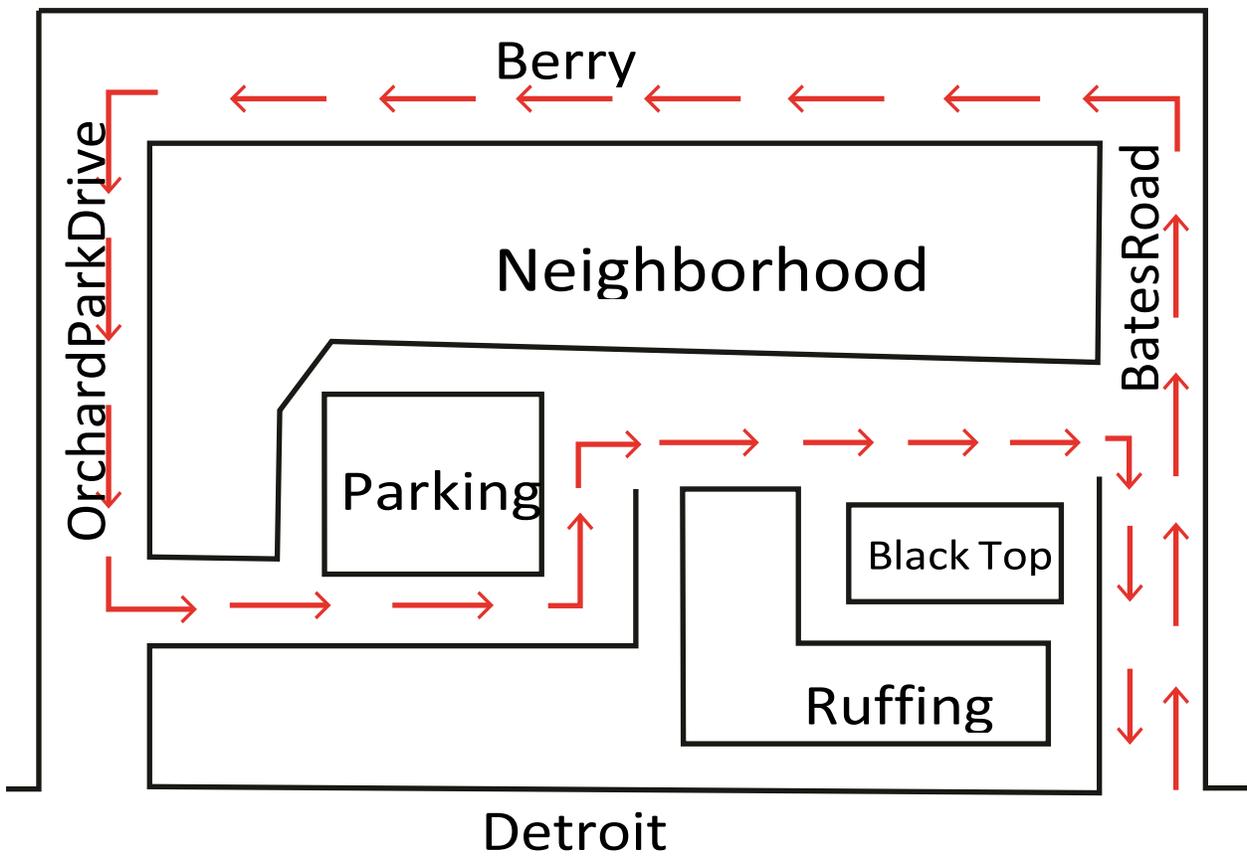
Afternoon Dismissal



Noon Dismissal (Primary)

- Please do not arrive earlier than 11:55 am.
- Turn onto Bates from Detroit Road, continue northbound on Bates – cars that turn from Detroit onto Orchard Park will be asked to go to Bates and join the line.
- Turn left on Berry.
- Turn left onto Orchard Park.
- Turn left to enter Ruffing's driveway.
- Cars will pull up along the sidewalk in front of the school.
- Pull forward as far as possible to close all gaps.

Noon Dismissal (Primary)



Late Arrival/Early Dismissal/Mid-Day Appointments

- The school must be notified if a child will be late for school.
- Upon arrival, the parent will call the office from their car at their respective external door and wait for a staff member to meet the student and help them to their room. For early dismissal, a parent will need to contact the office to indicate the exact time of pickup. The latest time for early dismissal is 2:30 pm.
- At the pre-arranged early dismissal time, parents will pull up to the curb at the child's designated drop off door and wait.
- A staff member will walk the child to their vehicle – children may not wait in the office for their ride.

Bus Routes and Operating Policies

Bus routes and stops are planned and established by the school districts that bus students to Ruffing (Avon, Avon Lake, Bay Village, Fairview Park, North Olmsted, Rocky River, and Westlake).

Safety, economy, efficiency, and allocation of resources are all considered in determining bus operation policies. Students and parents are encouraged to notify the school immediately of any safety hazards they

Medical

observe during bus operations.

Students who ride buses must obey the following rules:

- **Wear a mask.**
- Use only the bus and bus stop assigned.
- Behave in an orderly manner at the bus stop.
- Remain seated facing front while the bus is in motion.

- Talk quietly; make no unnecessary noise.
- Do not talk to the driver unless it is necessary.
- Keep head and arms inside the bus.
- Do not litter inside the bus or throw anything out of the windows.
- Be quiet when the bus is crossing railroad tracks.

Infractions of these rules will be brought to parents' attention. If infractions persist bus privileges will be denied.

Bicycles

Students may not ride bikes to school this year. With new traffic patterns, it is currently unsafe.

Please refer to the **Operational Return to School Plan** for information regarding sickness and injury. The instructions in the Operational Return to School Plan should be followed if in contradiction to these instructions.

Immunizations

Immunizations against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, rubella, measles, mumps, chicken pox, hepatitis B, and poliomyelitis are required for each student. Incoming 7th graders are also required to have immunizations for Meningitis. Parents must provide satisfactory evidence that a child registering for admission as a new student has received or is in the process of receiving the necessary immunizations unless a physician's medical waiver or a religious or philosophical objection has been filed with the school. An exemption form must be filled out and signed each school year.

Chronic Conditions

Students that have chronic medical conditions (allergies, asthma, diabetes, etc.) will have the appropriate paper work filed with the school clinic. Allergy Action Plans and Asthma Action Plans are available on the school's website and in the clinic. These must be filled out and signed by the student's parent and physician. Parents may request, and are encouraged, to meet with their child's teacher and the school nurse to discuss the student's health care needs. Prescription medications may only be dispensed by school staff with signed permission from the child's parent and a written order from the child's physician. Prescription medication must be in the original container with the pharmacy label attached, clearly stating the name of the student, the name of

the medication, and the dosage. No medication will be given that is unlabeled or in the wrong container.

Prescription & Over the Counter Medication

School staff may not dispense any medicine (including prescription and over the counter medication) without the express written permission of the child's parent. Prescription medicine requires a signed doctor's order. An Emergency Medical Authorization form will be distributed to parents at the beginning of the school year. Prescription and over the counter medicine permission forms are available on the school's website.

Illness or Injury

See **Operational Return to School Plan** for instructions relating to illness or injury.

Lice

If you become aware that your child has lice please notify the school immediately.

If Ruffing is notified that a child has lice:

Ruffing will notify each family in the effected classroom indicating that a case of lice has been reported. School officials will check each classmate and sibling of the infected child for evidence of lice. If a classmate is found to have evidence of lice, siblings of that child will be checked for lice. If a sibling is found to have lice, the classmates of the sibling will be checked.

If a child is found to have lice:

The parent must treat the child with a pediculicide according to the manufacturer's directions.

The child will be able to attend class after:

He/she has been treated with a pediculicide according to manufacturer's directions, he/she has been checked by a school official, and he/she is substantially nit free.

Any infected children will be re-checked by a school official between seven (7) and ten (10) days after treatment.

If a child is found to have lice during the school day:

The child's parent will be contacted to have the child picked up from school for treatment. After treatment and upon returning to school, the child will be examined by a school official. The child will be permitted to return to school after it is confirmed that the child is free of any live lice and is substantially nit free.

Ruffing maintains, in the school office, an extensive library of information regarding head lice which parents are encouraged to peruse.

Note: *If there are children who present with nits at school after 1 week of the initial confirmation of lice, Ruffing, at its discretion, may have a third party lice removal company (e.g. Bernadette's Lice Removal) come into the school to check and treat all students in the affected classroom, and Ruffing reserves the right to charge the families for the cost of the treatment.*

Handwashing and Personal Hygiene

Studies have shown that hand washing and personal hygiene are the most important measures a person can use to prevent illness and communicable disease. Students and staff will wash their hands with soap and water after using the restroom, if their hands are visibly soiled, if they have encountered chemicals or any other items such as soil during the educational or cleaning environment, after cleaning animal habitats or handling animals, before and after each task when preparing food, after athletic practices and games, or if they have encountered bodily fluids. Hand sanitizers may be used when the student's hands are not visibly soiled.

Change of Address/Telephone Number/Email

It is important that the school have an up-to-date address, phone number, and email for each student. If your address, phone number, or email changes please notify the school immediately.

Administrative and Miscellaneous Issues

Emergency Drills

Fire drills are conducted once each month, tornado drills are conducted during the months of April, May, and June, and crisis drills are conducted at least once per year. Detailed escape plans are posted inside the door of each classroom.

Field Trips

No field trips will be held this year until further notice.

Lunch

Students must bring their own lunch. There will not be a hot lunch program this year.

Class Snacks

Sharing of snacks is not allowed this year.

Nut Policy

Providing a safe school environment for students with life-threatening food allergies is essential in maintaining a healthy learning environment. Similar to other schools in the Greater Cleveland area, Ruffing has instituted a “Nut Free Policy” in our primary classes. No peanuts, tree nuts, food containing nuts, or nut byproducts are permitted in or to be consumed in any of the three primary classes.

In addition there is a zero nut policy for any classroom party held at Ruffing. While this may cause inconvenience to some, it is necessary to implement in order to protect the health of those students that have severe nut allergies.

Class Gift Policy

Except for the traditional Eighth Grade Class Gift (which is voluntary), in the best interests of our students, teachers, and families, Ruffing Montessori School does not allow class collections for class or teacher group gifts.

Supplies—Elementary and Middle School

The school furnishes most supplies; however, students are asked to provide some items. Each teacher will provide the students in his or her class with a list of these items.

Valuables

Common sense and consideration are the best guides in determining whether or not to bring personal possessions to school. The school administrators and staff cannot be responsible for valuables which students bring to school. It is recommended that students leave all valuables at home.

Visitors

Visitors are not allowed in the building this year.

Sibling Visitation

Financial

It is school policy that siblings may not leave their classroom during the school day to attend an event in another sibling's classroom, such as a report, birthday celebration, or graduation.

Enrollment

Upon enrollment, a completed Reservation Agreement along with the necessary non-refundable deposits must be forwarded to Ruffing by the designated date in February to secure a spot for your child(ren) in the upcoming year. If the form and deposit are not received by the due date, a spot is not guaranteed for your child(ren). The tuition deposit is credited against the total tuition due and is non-refundable. The re-enrollment date for students currently at Ruffing and intending to return in the following school year is in February. The Reservation Agreement along with the non-refundable deposit is required for re-enrollment.

Tuition

Tuition amounts are communicated to the families by January of each year. Ruffing offers three payment plans:

- **One Payment:** Tuition and fees must be paid in full by July 30.

- **Two Payments:** Tuition and fees may be paid in two equal installments. Fifty percent (50%) is due July 15 and the remaining fifty percent (50%) is due December 15.
- **Monthly Payments:** Tuition and fees may be paid in ten (10) equal installments beginning in July and ending in April. Participants must enroll with SMART Tuition Services, the administrators of this plan. There is a \$250 per student charge to enroll in this plan.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are accepted as payment under the “One Payment” and “Two Payment” plans using a link thru SMART Tuition Services.

Past Due Tuition

In order to run a successful and financially sound school it is imperative that Ruffing receive tuition and fee payments from its families as they become due. As an accommodation to its families, Ruffing permits a grace period of up to five (5) calendar days after the stated due date for the family to pay tuition and fees.

If payment of tuition is not made by a family according to one of the above listed payment plans, Ruffing has the right to refuse to admit that child(ren) to class, to deny admission to that (those) child(ren), or to permanently remove the child(ren) from the school's roster. If a family is in arrears, Ruffing has the right to declare immediately due and payable both the arrears and any and all tuition and fees remaining due from the family for the full school year. Ruffing shall have the right to withhold the child(ren)'s records until all such tuition and fees are paid.

Ruffing understands that special circumstances may occasionally arise and requests that such circumstances be brought to the attention of the administration.

Returned Check and Late Fees

A fee of \$35 will be charged for any check returned by the bank due to insufficient funds. A late fee of \$35.00 per month will be assessed on payments made more than 5 days late.

Tuition Assistance Programs

Limited tuition assistance is available for the purpose of providing some tuition relief to qualifying families. Please request a form from the school administrator. All requests for tuition assistance must be received by mid-April and applicants will be notified of a decision in mid-May. Exact dates shall be communicated to the families during the school year.