



Mission Statement

Missoula Community School is a learning community inspiring children to explore, create, and care. We strive to give each student access to the varied learning opportunities needed to support and encourage their growth as joyful learners in an environment that nurtures self-respect and respect for others.

Your Tour of Missoula Community School

Thank you for your interest in MCS. Finding a good fit for your child and your family is important in choosing an Early Childhood Program. Beginning with a small group of parents and educators with a vision of progressive school in Missoula, the Missoula Community School opened in 2001. The Board of Directors, parents and staff work diligently, with love and care, to maintain the school's focus on quality early childhood care.

Classrooms weave in mindfulness based approaches to nurture growth in focus, self-control, self-regulation and empathy. Home to the original Superheroes of Kindness, classrooms also weave in a focus on kindness and compassion. Just as we celebrate each child as unique and special, MCS celebrates Missoula as a unique and special place. We rely on the many natural and cultural resources of our extended community as an integral part of our curriculum.

MCS is licensed by the state. We are part of the STARS to Quality program, receiving our STAR 2 status recently. We rent school space from the church; MCS is not affiliated with any religious organization. We use the Montana Early Learning Guidelines along with children's interests to steer instruction.

We do accept the Best Beginnings Scholarship. Parents are expected to pay the difference between their copay and our tuition. We also offer a scholarship through MCS.

Progressive education, an educational movement that began in the late nineteenth century with John Dewey has continued in various forms to the present. The philosophy can be applied to preschool through college. In the early years Progressive Education goes hand in hand with Best Practices in Early Childhood Education.

1. Children learn through play and activities
2. The content of curriculum is relevant to children's lives
3. There is a high level of support for social learning. We believe learning happens within relationships, so teachers encourage children to play together, work together and solve problems together.



The School Day

Although there is variety in activities, each classroom follows a schedule. Children do best when they know what to expect. There are times each day when children make choices, and times when teachers provide group learning activities. The current school day is 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Before school and after school child care is available. Our Before care program runs from 7:30 - 8:30 am and our aftercare program runs from 3:30 -5:30 pm.

Daily Routine

Community Time –children can make choices, such as art, building, pretend, writing, stories, puzzles or games. Teachers guide and support children’s developing social skills and engage children in expanding their learning.

Clean up and Circle Time with Teachers- singing, discussions, games; going over the day. Learn about the theme children have expressed interest in learning more about.

Small Group Time – Children do a focused activity with their own class and their teacher.

Letter or number Bingo, experiments, nature walks, number work, story acting. This time is focused on a concept that will be offered again in a different format.

Outside Time- We believe it is essential to give children time to run, climb and use their bodies. Fresh air and sunshine are important! Even on cold days, children play outdoors for a reasonable time. Teachers monitor the outside temperature and make decisions based upon what we feel is safe.

Lunch with class and teachers- children bring lunch from home. We allow enough time for all children to eat and enjoy their meal. **Mindful eating:** Each day the children are invited to bring their full attention to the tastes, smells, thoughts and feelings that arise during a meal. Several minutes of quiet eating are often followed by children sharing their thoughts about all the growth, work and love that go into making their lunchtime meals.

Quiet Time after outside time- children rest on mats or cots, some sleep. Teachers read aloud. PreK-K children find a comfy place and listen while their teacher reads story books and chapter books. **Quiet time/ rest time for our youngest friends in the 2/3 mixed age classroom lasts longer than the other classes (typically from 12:30 -2 or 2:30 pm).*



Closing Circle – Time to reflect upon the day and share what each person feels thankful for. Closing circle is part of the mindfulness practice and brings a formal end to the school day with the song "Love Grows".

Special Activities

Mindfulness

By integrating Mindful teaching practices, the mission of MCS is to create an atmosphere of curiosity, kindness and compassion. Through empathy and focus, teachers gently cultivate children's ability to focus, self-regulate, empathize and be self-aware. Once weekly, small groups visit our Mindfulness Coordinator, Ashlie, to engage in a mindful based lesson – breathing, reading emotions, yoga, conflict resolution, and more!

Superheroes of Kindness

The heart of the Superhero of Kindness Project lies with the idea that we all hold the power of kindness within us. By knowing, understanding, and actually using this power we have the potential to send out a positive ripple that may travel for miles. The ultimate goal of any Superhero of Kindness mission is to care; let kindness flow without regard of reward.

Sports and Activities

This year has looked a little different in regards to sports and activities. Roots gymnastics was able to come join us for gymnastics and the Butterfly House has been able to visit us monthly. Each class will have a pizza day in which they will help make pizza, enjoy eating it together, and share some at home with their families.

Field Trips

Learning about our community is an important part of Missoula Community School. Children visit Missoula places, such as the Natural History Museum, local restaurants, Public Library, Art Museum, parent's work places and Grizzly Stadium. Teachers plan field trips to coordinate with what we are learning. Parent volunteers are welcome to go with the children. We have currently halted field trips due to COVID precautions, but will pick them back up once it is deemed safe.

Curriculum and Academics

Literacy, math, science, social studies and creative arts are woven through curriculum throughout the year. We focus Developmentally Appropriate Practice.



The Spiral of Life. The symbol of MCS, is drawn in one continuous, unbroken line, and has been used in cultures the world over to represent change, evolution and interconnectedness. Here at MCS we foster this interconnectedness by striving to give each child a sense of their significance within their classrooms, within their school, within their communities, and within the world at large.

Parent Participation

MCS is not a parent cooperative. We do rely on parent volunteer help to keep all the cogs moving, and ask parents to participate in our two major fundraisers. Volunteer opportunities range from washing rags to helping with pizza day. For our wine/coffee raffle we ask all parents to donate a bottle of wine, sell ten tickets and hopefully join us for a fun night drawing winners. For our auction we ask parents to consider making donations as well as to attend the event, bid, and have fun. As a COVID precaution, we have moved our annual auction to an online format for the 2020-2021 school year, but we still foresee a lot of fun and enjoyment!

Enrollment Information

In-house re-enrollment, for currently enrolled families, will begin mid January and continue through early February. MCS staff will then process new family applications in the order in which they were received. Calls to new families will begin mid February and continue through early March. We will work to be as timely as possible; thanks for understanding that this process takes time and we will contact you as soon as possible. Everyone who has filed an application will be called and informed of your status. **If you have not turned in your enrollment application, we recommend you do that sooner than later. The enrollment application is a Google form that is available on our website under the "Enrollment" tab.**

More information can always be found at www.missoulacommunityschool.org. You can also email our director, Kristal, at kristal@missoulacommunityschool.org or our assistant director, Megan, at megan@missoulacommunityschool.org.