

# Buena Vista Elementary

Colorado Springs School District 11 Public Montessori

## Primary Classroom Handbook

An Addendum to the Buena Vista Parent Handbook

# 2021/2022

*“Free the child’s potential, and you will transform him into the world.” -Maria Montessori*

Buena Vista Elementary Mission: We empower all students to be intrinsically motivated, life-long learners who embrace personal responsibility and respect for self, others, and the environment.

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## COVID-19 Guidance

Please refer to the District 11 Return-to-Learn guidelines at <https://www.d11.org/domain/5173> for up-to-date information and guidance.

## Admission

### Primary Ages

The Montessori Primary classroom consists of three age groups in one classroom. The Primary class consists of 3-year-olds, 4-year-olds, and Kindergarteners. There will be no more than 20 students in total in any one Primary Montessori classroom.

Preschool students must be three (3) years of age by October 1<sup>st</sup> of the enrollment year.  
Kindergarteners must be five (5) years of age by October 1<sup>st</sup> of the enrollment year.

### Preschool Enrollment Fees and Tuition

There are no fees or tuition for our Kindergarten students.

Enrollment fees and tuition, for preschool only, are as follows:

- Three-Day/Half-Day Option \$227.00 per month for nine months
- Five-Day/Half-Day Option \$325.00 per month for nine months
- Five-Day/Full-Day Option \$550.00 per month for nine months

When enrolling a child into the preschool Montessori program, a non-refundable one-month deposit, plus a one-time disposable materials fee of \$25 must be paid. The deposit and disposable materials fee will secure the child's place in the school. The one-month deposit will be applied to the student's May tuition payment and is non-refundable. Please refer to the Financial Contract for further details (see Appendix A).

The Montessori education program at Buena Vista Elementary does not qualify for free preschool found in other District 11 Elementary schools. Due to the nature of Montessori school and the extensive education that our teachers and staff obtain to teach in the Montessori program, the payment of tuition for preschool children is required. The Colorado Preschool Program does offer a scholarship for preschool children who qualify. More information can be found at: [www.d11.org/preschool](http://www.d11.org/preschool) and <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cpp>.

### Enrollment

The Colorado Springs School District 11 Choice Enrollment Window is open from November 1<sup>st</sup> through February 15<sup>th</sup>. Where there are more Choice Enrollment Applications than spots available in any program (Primary, Lower EI, and Upper EI), a lottery, in partnership with the District 11 Enrollment Office, will be conducted to fill available spots after the Choice window closes.

After February 15, applications will still be accepted, but those applicants will be placed at the end of the lottery-generated list in the order they are received. Enrollment offers, to those students chosen by the lottery, will go out immediately following the lottery. Any students who are not offered enrollment immediately following the lottery will be placed on a waitlist.

## Enrollment Priorities

Students entering the Primary program who are children of District 11 employees or siblings of current students, have priority enrollment. Otherwise, there is no preference given and all applicants are treated equally.

## Withdrawal

Please inform the office staff and the classroom teacher immediately if you wish to withdraw your child from Buena Vista Montessori.

## School Office Hours / Classroom Hours

All hours listed below are in accordance with and subject to the Colorado Springs School District 11 Academic Calendar.

The school office is open 7:30 am to 3:30 pm Monday through Friday during the school year.

School hours for all Kindergarten children are 8:00 am to 2:30 pm Monday through Friday.

Preschool children are opted into half-day or full-day program by their parents/guardian at the time of enrollment. The hours of attendance, per program, are as follows:

- Three-Day/Half-Day Option 8:00 am to 11:00 am Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
- Five-Day/Half-Day Option 8:00 am to 11:00 am Monday through Friday
- Five-Day/Full-Day Option 8:00 am to 2:30 pm Monday through Friday

## Arrivals

Daily arrival at school takes place outside: Ms. Catherine and Ms. Heidi welcome their students through their exterior doors on the front of the school, Ms. Joy welcomes her students through her exterior door off the big playground, and Ms. Lulu welcomes her students through the front school doors. The teachers or classroom assistants will open the door after the first bell at 7:55 am. The daily arrival is the time and place to say “good-bye” and allow the teacher to welcome the child to come inside. Fostering the independence of the child to start the day on their own builds self-confidence and self-reliance.

Per Colorado State law, all Primary students (Preschool and Kindergarten) must be signed in and out on the sheet provided by the teacher.

If you arrive later than 8:00 am, your child is considered tardy and must be signed-in on the clipboard in the vestibule at the front of the school. A staff member will escort your child to their classroom.

## Authorized Adults

The person who brings your child to school and picks up your child from school must be aged 18 or older and listed on the pick-up authorization section of the child’s PowerSchool profile. Parents or legal guardians must complete the authorization form upon enrollment. Additionally, parents or legal guardians must ensure that the pick-up authorization section of PowerSchool is up to date.

## Dismissals

The Buena Vista half-day preschool school day ends at 11:00 am. The full day school day ends at 2:30 pm. Dismissals for Primary children will be at their outside classroom door. It is expected that your child be picked up on time.

## Authorized Adults

An emergency or unusual situation may arise when an adult not listed in the authorization section must pick up the child. Parents or legal guardians will need to call the front office and give verbal permission along with the name of the person who will pick up the child. When a person who does not have permission attempts to pick up a child, a school staff member will call the parent or legal guardian and the attempted pick up will be documented in the student's file. If the parent or legal guardian does not provide permission, the student will not be released to the unauthorized person.

## Late Pick Up

If your child is not picked up by 11:05 am (for half-day students) or 2:40 pm (for full day students), your child will be taken by the teacher or classroom assistant to the office. The office staff will attempt to contact a parent or legal guardian. If contact cannot be made, additional people from the authorization list will be contacted. Children who are not picked up may be turned over to the Department of Social Services.

## Inclement Weather Procedures

It is recommended that all parents/guardians download the D11 App and follow D11, Buena Vista Elementary, and Buena Vista PTA on Facebook. If District 11 announces a Two-Hour Delay or Snow Day, the announcement will be posted in each of these places as well as on local radio and TV stations. You may also adjust your preferences through D11 Loop to receive text alerts, emails, and phone calls. Finally, you will receive an email to the email address listed in PowerSchool announcing any delays or closures.

## Green-Flag Day

In the event of inclement weather (temperature below 15 degrees or heavy precipitation) arrivals will take place at the classroom's normal entry door starting at 7:45 am.

A green flag will be posted on the front entry doors as a signal that children may enter starting at 7:45 am. Once your child is signed in, they may enter the classroom.

If inclement weather (temperature below 15 degrees or heavy precipitation) occurs throughout the school day, recess will be held inside.

## Two-Hour Delay

Should District 11 call for a Two-Hour Delay, half-day preschoolers will not have school. Kindergarten and full-day preschoolers will start school at 10:00 am with the first bell being rung at 9:55 am, or green-flag procedures starting at 9:45 am.

## Snow Day

Should District 11 call for a Snow Day, all preschoolers will have no expectation of learning for the day. District 11 may indicate that the day is a traditional snow day, or a learning snow day. Please watch for communication from your child's teacher if District 11 indicates a learning snow day.

## Preschool Tuition

There will be no refund or credit for tuition should District 11 call for a two-hour delay or snow day.

## Circle Time

Circle Time is an important part of our school community, and we enjoy having everyone present. It is crucial that your child arrives at school on time and is part of our daily circle. If your child is late, a school staff member will help your child transition from the hallway to the classroom as quietly and respectfully as possible.

## Clothing

Please dress your child appropriately for Colorado's ever-changing weather. Children go outside every day unless temperatures are below 15 degrees Fahrenheit, or there is heavy precipitation, so please have your child dressed accordingly. Clothing should be manageable for the child. Shoes should have a non-slip sole for safety and protection.

Please bring an extra pair of slippers/shoes to be used exclusively inside the classroom. Your child will change shoes before entering or exiting the classroom.

Please send an extra change of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, and socks) in a labeled zip-top bag. The school will notify you if additional clothing is needed.

## Rest Items

Full-day preschool children will bring a crib size sheet and blanket labeled with their name. These items will be taken home weekly, laundered and returned on the following school day.

## Food

### Snacks

Morning snacks are provided by the school as part of the Practical Life Curriculum in the Primary Montessori classroom.

### Lunch

Lunch meals are available for full-day children through our cafeteria. You have the option to have your child bring lunch from home or get lunch from the cafeteria. The USDA has extended their Free Lunch for All Children program through the 2021/2022 school year.

To extend the practice of Practical Life outside the classroom, it is encouraged that children bring a cloth napkin and placemat for lunch. Please be sure that these items fit in your child's lunch box and is laundered regularly.

## Special Treats

On special occasions, when parents/guardians are providing special snacks for celebrations, the Colorado Department of Health requires that the food:

- Be prepared from commercial sources
- Be prepackaged
- Be received sealed at the school, and
- Be shelf stable

Please see your classroom teacher regarding specific allergies.

## Breakfast

Buena Vista Elementary does not provide a breakfast program.

## Sunscreen

Per Colorado Department of Human Services regulations, the staff of Buena Vista Elementary are not allowed to apply sunscreen to students without parent/guardian authorization.

Please complete the sunscreen authorization form to indicate whether you would like Buena Vista staff to apply (or not apply) sunscreen on your child each day.

## Birthdays

Celebrating a child's birthday is a cornerstone of the Montessori philosophy. The child and their parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in a special birthday "Walk Around the Sun" and share photographs of the child. On or before the birthday celebration, coordinate with the classroom teacher to bring pictures of the birthday child and a special treat (see above), if desired.

## Communication

### Friday Folders

On the last school day each week, a communication folder, also known as a "Friday Folder" will be sent home. Please check your child's folder every week as it will have important information and schoolwork. On the following school day, please return the folder. It is valuable for teachers and parents to have this kind of communication regarding classroom and school activities

### Teacher Emails

Occasionally, your classroom teacher will send an email with information about the classroom and upcoming events. Please check your email regularly and notify your teacher if you are not receiving emails directly from her.

### Whole-School Emails

Each Friday, parents/guardians will receive "Monte's Weekly Update", an emailed newsletter from the front office. This newsletter is important to review each week to learn about upcoming events, and review announcements from the school, PTA, and District. Please notify the front office if you are not receiving these weekly newsletters.

## Backpacks

Please send a backpack, large enough to hold a 9x13 folder, to school with your child each day.

## Water Bottles

Buena Vista encourages the use of water bottles in the classroom to acclimate students to using reusable bottles instead of single use cups and plastic bottles. Please send a reusable water bottle, clearly labelled with your child's name, for use at school.

## Illness

It is the goal of Buena Vista Montessori to keep staff and students healthy and safe. If your child is not feeling well, it is best to keep them at home. If your child shows a symptom of illness while at school, the office will notify you and give you further instruction.

## Teaching Staff

Licensed Teachers and Unlicensed Educational Assistants will teach your child. Teachers in the Primary Montessori program have AMI or AMS certification and hold a current Colorado State Teaching License.

The primary classrooms each consist of one full-time teacher and one full-time educational assistant. The ratio is 2 adults to 20 children.

## Support Staff

Colorado Springs School District 11 employs speech, occupational, and physical therapists, as well as social workers and counselors to help children who have special needs. While these specialists are available most often to help those children enrolled through special education, their presence in the classroom provides a natural environment in which all the children can learn new skills.

## Television / Video / Computer Use

Videos and television will not be used in the primary classroom. Preschoolers are limited to 15-minute increments on computers and tablets and may not exceed 30 minutes per week.

## Montessori Environment – Glass

Buena Vista is a traditional Montessori school with a full and complete range of materials. Montessori environments value beautiful and natural materials. Glass is used for practical life. Colorado Department of Human Services holds the childcare license for Buena Vista and has granted a waiver for using glass with children under five years of age. All staff have been trained in the supervision and clean-up of glass materials.

## Child Abuse / Neglect – Reporting

Colorado State law requires that teachers and administrators report ALL cases of suspected child abuse to the El Paso County Department of Social Services (DSS) immediately. The school social worker or teacher's job is only to report, not to investigate. Criminal penalties can and have been applied when



school staff do not follow this law by reporting suspected cases of abuse. To report child abuse in El Paso County, call 719-444-5700 or 844-264-5437.

## Grievance Policy – District 11

The Principal will attempt to resolve any issue within Colorado Springs School District 11 guidelines and regulations. A complaint that cannot be resolved will be summarized in writing and submitted, by the Principal, to the Director of Instructional Support Services.

The Director of Instructional Support Services will notify the community member within five working days with a written or verbal response concerning the action taken.

## Complaint Policy

The Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care requires that their department license the Buena Vista Elementary Preschool. If you suspect licensing violation, you may file a complaint with:

Colorado Department of Human Services  
Division of Child Care  
1575 Sherman Street  
Denver, CO 80203-1714  
303-866-5958 or 800-799-5876

or

El Paso County Department of Human Service  
1675 West Garden of the Gods Road  
Colorado Springs, CO 80907  
719-578-3199

