

Dear Cornerstone Families,

We are so excited to welcome you to the 2022-2023 academic year at Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School! This letter contains important information for new and returning families.

We are entering the fourth school year shadowed by Covid-19. Our Safe Learning Plan is still in effect, though its daily impact on our lives is significantly reduced. A copy of this document can be found on our website. The Parent Handbooks, which will be available at our Back to School Fair on August 31, include the main guidelines that ensure our community is safe, healthy, and cared for. As of this writing, we expect that masks will be optional at Cornerstone. Please pay close attention to your email for changes to this policy, as well as any others related to Covid-19.

### **Communication**

Communication is an essential part of our work with your family. Strong communication between parents and the teachers gives your child consistency between home and school, which builds security and confidence. We welcome your questions and involvement! Each guide can be contacted directly by email. Please note that staff may not read emails outside of business hours.

***You will receive weekly news updates to keep you informed of everything happening at Cornerstone! Visit [www.cornerstone-elementary.org](http://www.cornerstone-elementary.org) to sign up for NotifyMe.***

### **Items to Bring**

In addition to the school supplies list included separately in this packet, the following items are required for ***children of all ages*** to bring to school:

- Indoor shoes: Please help your child select a pair of closed-toe shoes that are comfortable and secure. We ask that you avoid shoes with characters and/or lights.
- An extra set of clothes: Children occasionally get wet or dirty during the course of the day. Please send clothes (tops, bottoms, underwear and socks) in a large, zip-locked bag so that they may be easily stored (for 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders; kindergartners should bring their clothing in a backpack or paper bag). If clothing becomes wet during the day, we will launder it here unless you prefer otherwise.

**All clothing items should be labeled with your child's name or initials.**

### **School Calendar**

Enclosed in this packet is a school calendar for 2022-2023, as well as a list of our parent partnership events. We strongly encourage you to note important dates, including conferences and in-service days, in your personal calendars now. The parent events are wonderful opportunities to learn more about your children's days and to connect with the community. We will send reminders through our weekly newsletter, Stepping Stones, before all school-related activities.

### **Before/After Care**

In order to accommodate the need for staff to prepare, collaborate, and plan, we will be adjusting our schedule slightly this year: we will either end the academic portion of our school day after the 2-hour afternoon work period, at 3:00, or we will use one afternoon each week for the guides and their teams to be out of the classroom. During those times without the regular teaching teams, we are excited to have programming such as artists-in-residence, physical education, and other "extracurricular" type activities. Your children will always be supervised by qualified adults.

School will begin at 8:45am. Details of our drop-off procedures can be found in your Parent Policies and Procedures Handbook. The building will open at 7:30am for children who require before-care. Children must be registered for before-care; forms will be available at the Back to School Fair or you can speak with Lindsay Ruble, [lindsayruble@cornerstone-elementary.org](mailto:lindsayruble@cornerstone-elementary.org). Children who are not signed up for before-care may wait with their parents until the classrooms open at 8:45.

Dismissal is at 4:00. The Boys and Girls Club is open to children in 6<sup>th</sup> grade; please notify us if you would like your child to attend and we will walk them over. This year we are thrilled to partner with the Sanneh Foundation for after-care. Children will have priority for spots in their KidzTyme program at the Conway Center, just a few minutes from Cornerstone and right off of I-94. KidzTyme is open until 6:00, is free for families, and includes a STEM lab, arts and crafts, a recreational dome for outdoor play in the winter, and snack/dinner. We will have a bus stop for children to be dropped off at the Conway Center. More information will be sent by email shortly.

Kindergarten children may participate in CMS Before/After Care (8:00-8:30 and 4:00-5:30). Please speak with Catherine Kennedy, [catherine@mtcm.org](mailto:catherine@mtcm.org), if you are interested.

### **Application for Educational Benefits**

Enclosed in this packet is the Application for Educational Benefits, which qualifies children for the National School Lunch Program, aka Free or Reduced Lunch. Unfortunately, we are no longer able to provide free meals for all children (however, Cornerstone will never deny a hungry child food). In addition to qualifying your child for free or reduced school meals, the Application for Educational Benefits provides additional value for you and the school.

For Cornerstone, your completed application determines the amount of compensatory revenue we receive from the federal government each year. This funding allows us to provide our quality programming, including educational specialists, Going Outs, our library, and more.

For families who qualify, your completed application can give you access to reduced internet rates through your local provider and summer camp discounts through the YMCA, among other benefits.

Please complete your forms at your earliest convenience and return them at the Back to School Fair. Cornerstone administration is available to assist with all aspects of this paperwork.

### **Back to School Fair and New Parent Orientation**

All families are invited to Cornerstone on ***Wednesday, August 31, between 3:00 and 6:00, for the Back to School Fair!*** Please see the enclosed flyer for details; we encourage early arrival.

Parents/guardians new to Cornerstone are invited to attend orientation sessions on September 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10:00-11:00, for an introduction to Montessori and life at Cornerstone. Kindergarten children should also plan to attend these phase-in sessions to meet their new teachers.

Please reach out at any time with questions and we look forward to seeing you in September!



Alyssa Schwartz  
Head of School