



CORNERSTONE

MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1611 Ames Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55106
651-774-5000 Phone; 651-298-0039 Fax
www.cornerstone-elementary.org

Dear Cornerstone Families,

We are so excited to welcome you to the 2025-2026 academic year at Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School! This letter contains important information for new and returning families.

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. The Parent Handbook, which you will receive at our Back to School Fair on August 27, contains information about how to communicate with the teachers and administration.

You will receive weekly news updates to keep you informed of everything happening at Cornerstone! Visit 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. 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 2025-2026, 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. The parent partnership events list is a bit sparse at this time – we are developing a wonderful set of experiences for you and your children and will share more information as it is available.

Before/After Care

School begins promptly at 8:45. Children may be dropped off beginning at 8:30. Details of our drop-off procedures can be found in your Parent Policies Handbook. The building will open at 7:45am 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. Children who are not signed up for before-care may wait with their caregiver until the classrooms open at 8:30.

Dismissal is at 3:30, with the car line operating until 3:45. Families who pick up their children after 3:45 will be fined \$10/day. If you know that you cannot regularly be on time for pickup, please plan to make after-care arrangements through one of the following options:

- The Boys and Girls Club is open to children in 6th grade; please notify us if you would like your child to attend and we will walk them over.
- We are thrilled to partner once again 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. We will have a bus stop for children to be dropped off at the Conway Center. Families should register directly with Sanneh and notify Chris Bewell, chrisbewell@cornerstone-elementary.org, to be added to the bus list.
- Kindergarten children may participate in CMS Before/After Care (7:45-8:30 and 3:30-5:15). Please speak with us if you are interested.

We strongly encourage you to schedule appointments for after school: children being picked up early disrupts the environments and takes away from valuable learning time.

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. While we are delighted to provide free meals for all children, the Application for Educational Benefits provides 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 27, between 3:00 and 6:00, for the Back to School Fair!*** Please see the enclosed flyer for details.

Parents/guardians new to Cornerstone are invited to attend orientation sessions on August 28 and 29 for an introduction to the Montessori approach and life at Cornerstone. Kindergarten children should also plan to attend these phase-in sessions to get to know their new teachers and environments.

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



Alyssa Schwartz
Head of School