

**IHM League of  
Our Lady of Grace Montessori School**

**Common New Parent Questions & Answers**

Being a new parent at a new school can come with a number of challenges, particularly trying to understand the standard protocol of that school and to do your best to make sure your child has the best experience as they are adjusting to their new school. We all have gone through this experience and have put together the list of questions we had when it was our turn and answers we now know below.

**Attendance and School Procedures**

1. Who do I contact if my child is sick and will miss school?

You can notify the school that your child is absent by either calling the school's office or emailing Miss Anne ([anne.kaja@olgmanhasset.com](mailto:anne.kaja@olgmanhasset.com)) and/or Nurse Nancy ([nursenancy@olgmanhasset.com](mailto:nursenancy@olgmanhasset.com)). Please contact the school no later than 9:30 am on the day of such absence. If your child was in school the previous day and has something highly contagious (i.e., strep, pink eye, the flu, COVID-19, etc.), please notify the school so they can follow their standard procedures for notifying other parents in the class of a potential exposure.

2. How do I know if the school is closed due to weather?

School closures for weather typically align with school closures for the Manhasset School District unless the school grounds are particularly treacherous. The school will also send out a text message if there is a closure.

3. Is there anything I can do to help make drop-off and pick-up go smoother?

Parents have had success in the past creating name signs that they included in their window with their child's name. If your child is being picked up by a different driver or in a different car than usual, please let Miss Anne know of the change. When you arrive in the morning, it is helpful for the teachers if you unbuckle your child from their car seat when you are next in line and please always keep your car in park during drop off or pick up. At pick up, always pull into the lower parking lot (next to the Chalet) or the upper parking lot by the Center to buckle in your child.

4. Where do I go when I arrive for playground duty?

When you arrive for playground duty, you can ring the doorbell at the main entrance of the school. You should sign in for playground duty at the school's office. When the children are enroute to the playground and lunch, you will walk with the first group of students to the playground (or a classroom on indoor recess days), and then you will supervise at the playground for the first recess period along with certain teachers from the school. Your

primary responsibility is making sure that the children follow the school's rules and play safely and nicely with their peers. While it is enticing to chat with fellow parents and the teachers during playground duty, your primary responsibility is supervising the children so please try to spread out enough that all children are being supervised. When the first recess period is over, you will walk those students back to the courtyard and will then meet the second group of students. You will walk those students to the playground (or classroom) and supervise in a similar manner, and then you will walk those students back to the courtyard to return to their classrooms. On days where the weather is not nice enough to go outside, the children have indoor recess where they play in a classroom, but the other procedures generally remain the same. When playground duty is over you will return to the office to sign out and then you are free to leave. It is important that you arrive on time (11:10 AM) and that if you are unable to attend that you find another parent to cover for you.

5. What do I pack with my child's lunch?

Please include utensils, a disposable napkin, and a water bottle for your child. We suggest packing lunch in easy to open containers so that your child does not have to wait for assistance to start eating lunch due to the short time that they have to eat.

6. Can I send in treats for my child's birthday?

Parents can send Dunkin Donuts munchkins into school to celebrate their child's birthday, along with juice boxes, plates and napkins that can be used for the celebration. Any school celebrations have to be cleared with your child's teacher in advance of the date of celebration. You can reach out to the East Wing teachers ([eastwing@olgmanhasset.com](mailto:eastwing@olgmanhasset.com)) and the North Wing teachers ([northwing@olgmanhasset.com](mailto:northwing@olgmanhasset.com)) directly.

### **The School Day**

7. What do I need to know to better communicate with my child about their day at school?

Some children come home from school ready to tell their parents all about their day, and others are a locked box of information. Regular communication with your child's teacher can help you better understand what your child is focusing their attention on during school, but there are some key phrases that are used to describe their activities throughout the day that will help you ask the right questions. Each day, the children start their day with the Pledge of Allegiance and their morning prayer. Following this, they each do 3 works, which are the different activities that the children are able to select from the shelves. Each child is responsible for rolling out their own rug where they sit to do their work. They also have circle time where they gather to do gross motor activities, listen to books, or sing songs as a group. Most days, the children are split up into smaller groups and are given lessons by their teachers.

8. Am I ever able to come into the school with my child?

In addition to observations, there are a few special occasions where parents have the opportunity to come to school with their children. The first occasion is the Christmas Show, which is held at the Center. The children participate in a reenactment of the Nativity and then sing Christmas Carols. Santa always makes an appearance, of course! Another fun event you can participate in is International Day, where parents sign up for a country and give a presentation to all of the OLG classes on the country they picked. There is also Parents' Day and Grandparents/Special Friends Day in the spring where you are able to come to school with your child and have them show you what their morning/afternoon at school looks like.

9. My child is off to a rough start. How do I know if my child is just adjusting or if Montessori isn't right for them?

Some children take time to adjust to a new environment. The teachers make sure to engage the children in various activities so that they are distracted upon arrival. 99% of children will adjust within a couple of weeks. It is very rare for a child not to adjust to the Montessori environment. The presence of older children in the class is also a benefit as they help the younger ones feel comfortable and safe.

### **School Communications and Observations**

10. Who do I contact if I have questions about my child's classroom or activities taking place at school, or to provide information regarding my child?

For any questions related to your child's day at school or to provide any information related to your child to his or her teachers (including birthday celebrations, allergies, special needs, etc.), you can reach out to your child's teachers at the following email addresses:

East Wing: [eastwing@olgmanhasset.com](mailto:eastwing@olgmanhasset.com)

North Wing: [northwing@olgmanhasset.com](mailto:northwing@olgmanhasset.com)

Full Fours: [fullfours@olgmanhasset.com](mailto:fullfours@olgmanhasset.com)

Kindergarten: [kindergarten@olgmanhasset.com](mailto:kindergarten@olgmanhasset.com)

Elementary: [elementary@olgmanhasset.com](mailto:elementary@olgmanhasset.com)

For general questions, including about volunteering for playground duty and information regarding your child's pick up from school, reach out to Miss Anne ([anne.kaja@olgmanhasset.com](mailto:anne.kaja@olgmanhasset.com)). You can also always call the school office with any questions you may have. Another great resource for new parents is to contact the class parent for your child's class. Their email addresses are below:

East Wing: [joellenoffler@gmail.com](mailto:joellenoffler@gmail.com)

North Wing: [kellycturturro@gmail.com](mailto:kellycturturro@gmail.com)

Elementary: [Kmdoweny19@gmail.com](mailto:Kmdoweny19@gmail.com)

One of the amazing parts of being part of this small school community is that no matter who you reach out to at the school, they will help get you to the right person and make sure your information or questions reach the right person.

11. Does the school share photographs of the children at school?

Photos are posted on the OLG website as they become available. They are primarily taken on special occasions, including at events and on special days at school, but you will see regular uploads throughout the school year. When photos are uploaded there will be a notification in the weekly email sent by Sister Kelly, which also include a link and the password to view the photos on the OLG website. If you provided the school permission to share your child's photo, they can also occasionally be found on the OLG Instagram page. You will not be individually notified if your child's photo is used on social media or other media.

12. What are observations?

Observations are a great way to get a better sense of what your child's day at school looks like. When you observe your child at school, you sit in a room positioned behind the mirrors in your child's classroom, where you can see what they are doing but they cannot see that you are there. It is important that you do not tell your child about the observations because the best part of observation is that you can see your child in their natural element without them acting differently because they know you are there. One of your child's teachers will stop by the room to talk to you about what their day looks like, the order of activities and to answer any questions you may have. Observations are a great way of gaining insight into your child's day.

How do you set up observations?

The school will provide information on setting up observations, which take place from November through the beginning of April, with some exceptions (including right before the holidays when the children are practicing for the Christmas show). There is a form on the school's website that can be used to set up observations. Your child's teacher also may allow you to set up observations via email, particularly if there are special circumstances around your observation (i.e., to observe something in particular or if you are unable to observe during the allotted time slot). Observations only take place in your child's East Wing or North Wing classroom (i.e., not in Full Fours or Kindergarten).

### **IHM & School Events**

13. What is the IHM League and how do I participate?

The IHM League helps organize and put together all events for the OLG community throughout the school year. Our fall events include the Walkathon, Spooky Bash, Silver Tea, Christmas Playdate, Christmas Cocktail, Moms Night Out and Dads Night Out. There are a number of fun events scheduled for spring too, including a spring fundraiser, the bookfair,

and the spring after school dance. You can participate by signing up to help with an event on our sign-up genius which will be posted in the newsletter prior to the event, or you can reach out to your class mom or another member of the IHM League.

14. What is the Walk-a-thon?

The Walk-a-thon is the first event of the year and a favorite of all of the children. The students of OLG do a walk around the OLG campus to raise money for their school, decked out in matching shirts to show off their school spirit. It's a great way for the students to bond early in the school year, particularly because it's a student only event. Parents are not invited to watch or participate, but do get to see some great photos and videos of their kids in the weekly email and on OLG's social media pages.

15. What is Spooky Bash?

The Spooky Bash is OLG's Halloween themed event. Students are welcomed at the Center entrance and given OLG themed tote bags that they then use as they walk through our fully decorated trick-or-treat path. The children have a blast running from table to table in their Halloween costumes to get all of their treats and end up on the school's field and playground where they can play, dance, and do other fun activities. There are food trucks set up in the lower parking lot, where food can be purchased with cash or venmo. This event is a favorite amongst the OLG students and alumni. This is an after-school event, and all siblings and alumni are welcome. The trick-or-treat path is not stroller friendly, so please plan for alternative travel arrangements for baby siblings! Adults generally do not dress up for this event, but costumes are definitely welcome!

16. What is the Silver Tea?

The Silver Tea is our oldest fundraiser, and it is geared to present and past OLG moms. The luncheon is typically held at a local club and is a wonderful opportunity to either meet or gather with other moms from the school.

17. Where do I park for outdoor events at OLG?

A few of our signature events are located on the OLG campus. Due to the size of OLG's parking space versus the number of families that participate in our events, parking is generally located in the parking lot for Shelter Rock Elementary School. Keep an eye out for flyers and other information distributed in the weekly mail for our events, which will provide event specific information on parking. For events where parking is at Shelter Rock Elementary School, it is suggested that you park in the back of their parking lot (closest to the playgrounds). You should walk towards the playground, and you will see a gate that will be left open so you can enter the OLG campus.

**Miscellaneous**

18. What after school programming is available to students and how do I sign my child up?

The Full Fours are given the opportunity to participate in Science Club with Miss Lisa. Science Club is a 5-week after school program where the children are able to participate in hands-on, educational programs with a science theme. The Science Club tends to fill up fast, so Miss Lisa often runs more than one throughout the year depending on interest. Miss Jennifer offers an Art Class to Kindergarten-aged children. Details for these activities will be sent out by the individual teachers.

19. If I am planning my child's birthday party and want to invite their classmates, how can I get their contact information?

You can reach out to Miss Anne for contact information and to confirm that you have a current class list to help you invite the right students. Sometimes the class list will change during the school year with new students being added to the class or changing their session from half day to full day, so we would suggest reaching out to your child's teachers before working off of the list you received the first day of school.

20. Does the school do photo day?

The school does photo day in the spring. As part of photo day, your child will take an individual photo and a class photo. The school will provide ordering information in advance of photo day.

21. How can I get my volunteer hours?

Volunteer hours can be earned by volunteering for playground duty or volunteering to help with IHM events, including by signing up through the sign-up genius to assist in setting up or cleaning up after events. There are a number of ways to participate even if your schedule does not permit helping during working hours. If you don't see anything on the sign-up genius that works for you, please reach out to your class parent or another member of the IHM League and they can help you find the right volunteer opportunities.