



Magnolia Montessori School Tuition Assistance Policy

Mission and Philosophy

The mission of Magnolia Montessori School (“MMS” or “the School”) is to educate the whole child, fostering independence, empathy, confidence, and collaborative problem solving through fully-implemented Montessori methods. Our program is designed to promote curiosity, inquiry, and engagement for all students as they interact with the people in their diverse community and the environment that supports them.

A primary goal of the Magnolia Montessori School Tuition Assistance Policy is the fair and equitable distribution of the limited Tuition Assistance funds available. The policy is also intended to balance the School’s financial wellbeing with its goal to increase the socio-economic diversity of its student and family population, and to encourage families to remain members of the school community through a student’s elementary years.

This policy was adopted in December of 2020 by the School’s Board of Trustees to support the Tuition Assistance Committee in administering the School’s Tuition Assistance Policy. It should be reviewed and revised as appropriate to reflect the School’s evolving strategic plan and financial position. The purpose of this policy is to encourage a transparent and disciplined process that will ensure funds are distributed in the most equitable way to the students who demonstrate the greatest need.

All assistance is awarded on the basis of financial need as demonstrated through the analysis of documents evaluated by Tuition Aid Data Services (TADS). MMS reserves the right to request additional financial information at any time. There are no merit-based or other non-need-based scholarships awarded by MMS.

Policies

The purposes of the Tuition Assistance program is to lower financial barriers to enrollment. While families are eligible based upon demonstrated need, the School does not have unlimited resources, thus priority for awards is generally given to the following groups:

- Children receiving assistance in prior years
- Returning students who have not received assistance in prior years
- New siblings to the School of current students already receiving Tuition Assistance

The School does not generally grant need-based Tuition Assistance to families for students in the Toddler classroom or in the first two years of a Primary classroom.

Need-Blind Admission Decisions

Applicants for admission to MMS are accepted without regard to potential financial need. No applicant will be denied admission to the School because of financial need. Tuition Assistance decisions are made separately, and are based on a family's financial need and the School's Tuition Assistance budget.

Minimum Contribution

All families receiving Tuition Assistance from MMS are expected to pay tuition commensurate with their demonstrated ability to do so, as calculated by a detailed analysis of the family's income, assets, and spending choices. All families are expected to participate at some level in their child's tuition expense. It is the School's belief that families who make a financial investment in their child's education are more likely to feel empowered to exercise their rights as vested members of the MMS community.

Tuition assistance is intended primarily for tuition, and may be offered for before- and after-care in certain situations. Tuition assistance is not generally awarded for uniforms, after-school clubs, or other school fees.

Summer Programming

Assistance for any fees related to the School's summer programming will be administered separately by the Tuition Assistance Committee. Available assistance necessarily depends on enrollment and cost projections for the programming being offered each year, and these figures can not be predicted until the spring preceding the summer programming in question. The Tuition Assistance Committee will apply the principles of this policy in administering assistance for summer programming, if the Board determines that such assistance is available.

Tuition Assistance Budget

Each year's Tuition Assistance budget will be developed through a process involving the School's Executive Director, the Tuition Assistance Committee, and the Board of Trustees. The Tuition Assistance budget may include a percentage of the prior school year's gross tuition income and/or specified funds raised by or donated to the School for the purpose of supporting the School's Tuition Assistance program.

How Tuition Assistance is Awarded

MMS uses Tuition Aid Data Services (“TADS”) to determine a family’s financial need. TADS produces a Confidential Report (“CR”), which is shared with the School and provides a general assessment of a family’s ability to pay for education.

The CR offers important guidelines for student assistance, but **does not bind** the School to any specific award. Rulings on final awards ultimately rest with the School’s Tuition Assistance Committee.

Employee Tuition Waiver

As a benefit of their employment, full-time School employees are provided with a tuition waiver equivalent to the tuition charged for one full-day student per school year. This waiver may be applied to the employee’s child in any classroom, including those classrooms for which tuition assistance is not otherwise granted.

Committee

The Tuition Assistance Committee is composed of the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees, the School’s Executive Director, and another current or former member of the Board of Trustees who has been appointed by the Board to serve in that capacity.

The Executive Director serves as chair of the Committee, and is responsible for communications with current and potential families, maintaining the School’s information in TADS, and [generating/gathering/retrieving] CRs for the Committee’s consideration.

Failure to Meet Deadlines

Families who have received Tuition Assistance in prior years are required to complete the necessary information and documentation each year. Failure to meet a published deadline could result in a family losing its preferential status as a returning family. Families must pay close attention to the return date on their assistance award letters and be aware that failure to return the letter by the deadline could result in a forfeiture of their assistance award.

School Accounts in Arrears

Returning families who do not keep their account current with the School will have to wait to have their assistance application processed for the following year until their account is brought up to date. This may result in a delay in processing and the possibility that assistance funds will not be available for the family.

Appeals Process

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director to the attention of the Financial Aid Committee within one week of notification. The Financial Aid Committee will review written appeals based on additional written documentation provided that was not included in the original financial aid application. If there is no additional documentation, the request for an appeal will not be considered.

Hardship Awards

Returning families may find themselves in unexpected circumstances that suddenly and adversely affect their finances. Often, these situations occur just before or during a school year and long after the Tuition Assistance budget for the year has been depleted. In such cases, the School may consider hardship awards to current MMS students, provided the family can submit the necessary documentation to prove sudden and critical financial need. Awards beyond the Tuition Assistance budget will be made on a case-by-case basis within the confines of the School's total budget.

Confidentiality

MMS is opposed to any practice that publicly identifies recipients of assistance or distinguishes them from others. Financial information received by the School is treated with strict confidence. This information will be reviewed only by those individuals directly involved in the Tuition Assistance decision making process or in its administration.