



# Silver Bow Montessori School

## *2016-17 Parent and Student Handbook*

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## MISSION STATEMENT

*Silver Bow Montessori School, Inc. (“SBM”) is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization dedicated to the development of the “whole” child. The school’s purpose is to nurture independent children capable of joyful learning by providing quality, authentic Montessori education that includes multi-age classrooms and self-directed, hands-on learning. SBM strives to enhance the social infrastructure and human capital of Butte and surrounding areas through its relationships with enrolled families, staff, stakeholders, and the community at large.*

To achieve our mission, Silver Bow Montessori School offers a carefully prepared environment, featuring a large campus with open spaces indoors and out. With a comfortable home-like setting, the classrooms, playground, and garden offer abundant opportunities for learning, character building, and fun. Our environment provides security for emotional growth as well as intellectual learning. We share Dr. Maria Montessori’s conviction that the preservation of each child’s dignity is crucial. Treated with respect, our students develop respect for self, others, and the environment.

Embracing the Montessori philosophy, our teachers support and nurture the development of each student, based upon individual readiness, needs, interests, and learning style. The use of hands-on materials and individual lessons allows for a natural progression from concrete work to abstract reasoning as the child develops and matures. Each student chooses appropriate materials and activities with ample time to satisfy his/her drive for mastery through repetition. Without promoting external rewards, independent work habits are nourished, preserving the child’s internal motivation. This self-paced learning and the right to exercise liberty with responsibility provide opportunities for problem solving, priority setting, and decision-making. Through multi-age groupings, a natural mentoring process develops. More experienced students share their understanding, thereby reinforcing their own learning while building leadership skills.

Our Montessori faculty seeks to accomplish this through careful planning, patient observation, and thorough record keeping. Our staff shares a passion for the child’s love of learning, honoring each child and striving daily to meet individual needs while modeling positive values with integrity. Our staff strives to model a commitment to life-long learning.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Silver Bow Montessori School admits students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. Silver Bow Montessori School, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, marital status, handicap, age, or national origin in the hiring or retention of employees; nor in determining their rank, or the compensation or fringe benefits paid to them.

## ORGANIZATION

Silver Bow Montessori School, Inc. is a non-profit corporation dedicated to serving children ages 3 through 12 through Montessori education. The school is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code.

## ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

A parent or guardian can initiate the admission process by contacting the school for information. Interested parents are invited to observe the school and meet with the Director and teachers. If after meeting, the parents and school feel that the child may benefit from enrollment at the school, enrollment is established by the following procedures:

Step 1: Call the school to schedule a tour or attend an open house.

Step 2: Complete *Application for Admission* and submit non-refundable \$25 Application Fee.

**Note on Early Childhood Program Readiness** - The SBM Early Childhood Program provides a curriculum and environment designed for children ages 3 through 6. Children in this classroom must be able to handle toileting independently unless lack of toilet training is due to a medically diagnosed condition. Children ready for this classroom have adequate communication skills to convey their needs to adults, as well as the ability to concentrate for three to five minutes at an activity. Children 3 years of age may be enrolled for a half day schedule during their first year, but full day enrollment is expected for the second year or when your child is ready. In limited cases, children between 2½ and 3 years old may be admitted based upon demonstrated readiness.

Step 3: Applications for enrollment (Early Childhood or Elementary) at SBM are accepted on a first-come, space-available basis, and a waiting list is maintained when necessary. While precedence on the waiting list is a primary factor in order of admissions, the school reserves the right to maintain age and gender balance in the classroom, as well as to consider student readiness, in all admissions decisions. Families wishing to enroll an elementary student from another school will sign a records release form that Silver Bow Montessori will forward to the student's previous school.

Step 4: If your child is selected for admission, you will receive a letter of acceptance along with documents needed to secure your enrollment. The following must be returned within ten days of acceptance in order to secure your student's enrollment:

1. Signed *Financial Policies and Conditions Agreement* – This agreement outlines policies regarding tuition, fees, service hours, withdrawal, and other matters.
2. The non-refundable \$100 enrollment fee.

A package mailed in mid-July will include the school calendar and further information about the upcoming school year in addition to the initial tuition/fees invoice and various authorizations, emergency contact, and immunization forms required for participation in school programs. These additional forms must be submitted to the school by August 15.

Step 5: A parent orientation meeting, open house, and new student orientation session are held the week before school begins. The beginning of the SBM school year typically corresponds to the beginning of school at Butte School District #1.

All children are initially enrolled on a six-week trial basis to determine compatibility with the program.

## **SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS**

The State of Montana provides a “Best Beginnings” day care scholarship program which can be used at SBM by qualifying families. Policies governing these programs may be obtained by inquiring from the SBM Client Services and Community Relations Manager.

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

### **Early Childhood Program**

The Early Childhood curriculum (for 3 to 6 years old) offers students a non-graded, individualized learning experience based upon their developmental needs. Emphasis is given to activities which foster the student's creative thinking and support the growth of his or her social maturity and inner discipline. Carefully prepared classroom environments expose children to materials and experiences through which they develop socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Daily life skills are realistically fostered in the community of the Montessori classroom.

We offer **half-day** (8:30 to 11:30 a.m. or 12:15 to 3:15 p.m.), **mixed day** (2 full days/3 half days or 5 days 8:30 a.m. to 1:00p.m.), and **full day** schooling (8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.) structured for the needs of the three- to six-year-old student.

Activities to promote use of the senses, refine skills of discrimination and observation, strengthen memory, develop coordination, and promote concentration are presented with varying degrees of challenge. Students are introduced concretely to the intellectual concepts of language, mathematics, geography, world cultures, and science. Socially, the classroom provides the young student who is ready to explore environments away from family and home a peer group with whom he or she can relate. It offers the older student opportunities to help younger students, an opportunity vital for social development.

The half-day, mixed day, and full day programs are each available for three- and four-year-old students. The full day program is required for Kindergarten students.

### **Kindergarten**

Children age 5 by September 10 (the locally prevailing definition of Kindergarten age) will typically be enrolled in the school's Kindergarten program. Montessori early childhood education is a three year program which includes the Kindergarten year. The Kindergarten year at Montessori provides the child with the valuable opportunity to be a leader of the Early Childhood classroom, as well as an opportunity to observe and participate in some activities with children aged 6 to 12. Kindergarten students travel to the library regularly with the elementary classroom and have other opportunities to participate on field trips with the elementary classroom.

### **Elementary Programs**

Students aged 6 and older are ready for intellectual work on a more abstract level. Their previous Montessori academic experience forms the basis for this work. Imagination, moral conscience, and cultural awareness can be said to be the "sensitive periods" of this stage. As the student's skills in mathematics and language are being developed, the elementary curriculum (for ages 6 to 12) presents opportunities to explore cultural subjects – science, history, geography, and the arts and sciences. Besides this handbook, the elementary teacher can provide you with specific elementary curricular information that provides details not covered here.

### **Before and After School Care**

Silver Bow Montessori School offers before and after school care for the convenience of families enrolled at the school. These services are billed as a flat rate for the month and can be included with the tuition payment. On a space available basis, enrolled families may utilize extended care on an occasional basis as a "drop-in". But please notify us in advance if you will be utilizing this service to ensure that space and adequate staffing is available. "Drop-ins" will be charged \$7.00 per hour without prorating.

Students in before and after school care are supervised and provided with a variety of group or individual activities of active or quiet nature, indoors or out as the weather allows. Montessori teachers and support staff provide students with activities and watch over them during these times: 7:30-8:30 a.m., and 3:15-5:30 p.m.

## **Early Withdrawal**

If it is necessary for a child to withdraw from the school, the school requires a 30 day written notice. It is most important to give the school this length of time in which to make arrangements for a replacement student. If no notice is given, parents are responsible for the following month's tuition. This policy is included in the Financial Policies and Procedures.

## **INFORMATION TOPICS (Alphabetized)**

### **Absences**

At both the early childhood and elementary levels, consistent attendance is required to maintain the continuity of the curriculum presented. If your child will be absent for any reason, we request that you let the head teacher know in advance or call the school's office within one half hour of school starting time.

### **AHERA Compliance**

Each year this school must comply with federal Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) regulation regarding notification, disclosure, and management of asbestos in schools to all employees and parents.

This school maintains the management plans in the following location: SBM school office, 1800 Sunset Rd., Butte, MT 59701. Management plans are available during all school in-session hours during the academic year as well as during summer programs

AHERA requires all public and non-public elementary and secondary schools to ensure that all school employees and building occupants, or other legal guardians, are informed at least once each year about all asbestos inspections, response actions, and post-response action activities, including triennial re-inspection and visual surveillance activities that are either planned or in progress. This notification must be made in writing and a copy maintained in the school's asbestos management plan. Notification methods may include the publication of an article in a school newsletter or through a separate written notice distributed to staff and sent home to a student's parent or legal guardian (e.g., this Parent/Student Manual).

Public and non-public schools must also provide a written notification to all parent, teacher, and employee organizations of the availability of the school's asbestos management plan for public inspection. A description of the steps to notify these organizations, as well as a dated copy of the notification, is to be maintained in the asbestos plan. The asbestos management plans are to be made available for inspection to representative of the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the State, the public, including parents, teachers, and other school personnel within five working days after receiving a request for its inspection.

For more information on the federal Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, please:

- Contact Don Kronenberger, the school's Designated Person; or,
- Go to [http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/asbestos\\_in\\_schools.html](http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/asbestos_in_schools.html)

### **Arrivals and Dismissals**

Getting each school day started on as positive a note as possible begins with how smoothly the transition goes from the moment you drop your child off at school. As Silver Bow Montessori School has grown, it has become important to formalize some guidelines to ensure safety and to support learning that begins even as the children enter the school grounds. Since development of independence and autonomy is an important part of the Montessori experience, saying your goodbyes in the car or at the gate is a critical starting point for this learning.

School starts at 8:30 a.m. for both the early childhood and elementary programs. Start of school for the afternoon program is 12:15 p.m. Due to the volume of arrivals, drop off windows are as follows:

Morning drop-off	8:15 to 8:30 a.m.
Afternoon session drop-off	12:05 to 12:15 p.m.

If you arrive after class begins, Early Childhood students should be brought in through the kitchen door to a staff member who will take them to the classroom. Elementary students who are late should enter the classroom quietly.

Please arrive (i.e., drive in) via the long tree-lined drive-way and depart via the parking lot outlet. This will make access and egress go more smoothly. The entrance to the school used at the beginning and end of each day is the back gate. Early Childhood students should be escorted to the gate. Parents of older children may drop students off in front of the Multi Purpose building. Staff will be at the gate watching for them. You may walk with your child to the gate, and should do so if your child(ren) are younger. Please allow children to walk on their own, holding their hands as appropriate.

Dismissal times are 11:30 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. Please meet your child for pick-up at the back gate. The pick-up windows are as follows:

Morning session pick-up	11:20 to 11:30 a.m.
Afternoon session pick-up	3:15 to 3:30 p.m.

We ask your consideration in being prompt. At 3:30 p.m., children who haven't been picked up will be brought to extended care. In keeping with the policy of most schools, we will charge a fee for untimely departures in picking up your child. A \$7.00 fee will be assessed for any pickups after 3:30, and each hour thereafter.

We are only able to release students to people listed on the emergency card that you have authorized as designated pick-up people. If you wish for a person not on the list to pick up your child, we require an oral permission via telephone from an authorized parent or guardian or a written and signed note (which is preferable). Please make sure that others who pick up and deliver your child recognize the importance of using seatbelts and child safety seats just as you do. Safety seats may be left at the school during the day if needed.

Please be sure to confirm visually or verbally with a staff member that you are picking up your child so we know that child has departed with an approved pick-up person. Per State requirements, all Early Childhood students must be signed in and out each day in the book provided at the gate. For children in extended care, a sign-out sheet is used for this purpose. Please ensure that your pickup people are aware of this as well for the safety of our students.

Because of the volume of arrivals and departures, we are concerned about the safety of the parking lot. **Please attend to your children when you are using the parking lot.**

Punctual arrivals and departures are necessary for the school to run smoothly and effectively. Observing these scheduled pick-up and drop-off guidelines allows your child to begin and end the school day positively.

### **Backpacks**

A favorite back to school item is the backpack. Please choose one that your child can comfortably wear and open (i.e. one that they can use, one that zippers or clips easily as buckles are typically still challenging for the EC students). Please ensure it is large enough not only for all the wonderful work that it will hold, but also to contain winter wear: snow-pants, hat, gloves, extra shoes, etc. and the child's lunch box.

### **Birthdays**

Children's birthdays may be celebrated on the actual birth date or the closest school day to it. Parents may bring simple treats that are easy for children to manage. Fruits, vegetables, and special treats from different parts of the world are especially enjoyable. Sugared beverages, cookies, candy, chocolate, ice cream, and cakes are not welcomed. Birthday celebrations in the early childhood classroom involve a special ceremony, called the Birthday Circle, marking the age of the child. Parents are encouraged to attend the birthday circle and tell a little about their child. Please talk to the head teacher to arrange the most suitable day for this celebration. In the elementary classroom, birthdays are also recognized at circle (with singing), and any birthday treats are served in the lunchroom after lunch.

If having a party for your child, please do not send the invitations to school to pass out, as children not invited may have hurt feelings. We will provide a parent list for each family with names, addresses, and phone numbers at the beginning of the year.

## **Bullying**

Research and increased public awareness have identified bullying in schools as a serious and complex worldwide problem. In 2015, the Montana legislature passed and the governor signed into law the Bully-Free Montana Act, which prohibits bullying of a student enrolled in a public K-12 school by another student or school employee. Consistent with anti-bullying efforts in place at other Butte schools, Silver Bow Montessori School utilizes curriculum and practices outlined in the OLWEUS bullying prevention program. Under this program, bullying is defined as behavior toward another person (whether physically, verbally, or electronically manifested) that is unwanted, that is intentional, that is repeated, and that takes advantage of an imbalance of power. Silver Bow Montessori School uses curriculum and techniques outlined in the OLWEUS program to recognize bullying when it occurs and to intervene. Our goal is a school culture (encompassing students, teachers, and parents) that recognizes and does not tolerate bullying.

## **Calendar**

The school establishes an academic year calendar annually. Efforts are made to coordinate the calendar with that of Butte School District #1. The calendar consolidates critical dates and events including PTO meetings, trips, and other dates of significance to the school.

## **Cellular Phones and Electronic Devices**

Students at Silver Bow Montessori School are required to have cell phones and electronic devices (e.g., iPads, Kindles) in silent mode and zipped up in a backpack during school hours and extended care hours. Students may not carry such devices on their persons during school whether in the classroom, on the playground, or on local field trips. If cleared with the teacher, students may use a Kindle or iPad for silent reading during reading time. Further, a student may *occasionally* access a phone device from his/her backpack for communication with parents if the student specifically asks the teacher in advance and the request is for a specific and occasional logistical need. SBM realizes that many parents and their children value the convenience of direct communication, especially when so many students have busy after-school schedules. However, this convenience must be weighed against concerns regarding the inappropriate uses and content that these devices can and do bring into the classroom and playground environment.

## **Classroom Observations**

You are welcome to visit school at any time it is in session. We strongly encourage parents to visit and see our program and your child in action. Scheduled observations of the classroom may be arranged after the second week of October. This allows individual students and the classroom as a whole to settle in before the excitement and distraction of having observers in the environment. We ask that observations be scheduled in advance to ensure there are no conflicts that day and to avoid overcrowding from too many observers at one time. Remember that you will be seeing a “snap-shot” of a day in the life of Silver Bow Montessori School. We have a handout with guidelines and recommendations we request parents to follow to maximize their time in the classroom.

## **Communication**

Bobbi Blow is the Client Services and Community Relations Manager for SBM. This role includes financial and administrative functions for the school. She is generally in the school office from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you need to speak with her outside of these times, you may call and leave a message on the school's answering machine. We check the machine at lunch and first thing in the morning and will always return your calls. You may also leave a note in the basket in the office in-box. If a parent has a concern that they want to discuss with a teacher, please contact the head teacher directly – in person, by phone, or by email – to arrange a suitable time to meet and discuss the concern. Head teachers want to take steps to ensure that they understand the concerns thoroughly. Because we have staff rotating through classrooms, please do not ask classroom assistants to relay messages or refer concerns. Also, we ask that parents not attempt to address such concerns at pick-up and drop-off as these times do not ensure confidentiality or adequate time and space to communicate effectively.

## **Conferences**

Parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled during a designated day on the school calendar each fall and spring. At these times, scheduling sheets will be posted. Parents are asked to sign up for a convenient time to have a conference. If you want to discuss your child's progress at any other time, please ask the teacher to schedule a meeting time. We appreciate if you can let us know helpful information concerning your child such as changes in health, attitudes, extended trips of parents, life events such as births, deaths, etc. which may affect behavior and readiness to learn.

## **Curriculum Night(s)**

In early September, the teachers host an evening to share and introduce parents to the Montessori curriculum, materials and classroom environment. This is an opportunity to learn some of the unique distinctions of the Montessori philosophy and practice as well as get to know staff and other parents.

## **Discipline Philosophy and Values**

Silver Bow Montessori School takes a “positive discipline” approach to a safe and peaceful school environment. We encourage and assist the students in building conflict-resolution skills and nurturing a peaceful community spirit. We provide a balance between personal liberties and boundaries as set by classroom courtesies.

In the spirit of Maria Montessori, our goal is to foster a child that will love learning, be kind to others, develop concentration and good work habits, and become independent. At Silver Bow Montessori School, we value:

- Respect for ourselves, others, and the environment;
- Honesty;
- Empathy for others and respect for differences among people and cultures;

- Accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions;
- Working cooperatively with others, which includes listening, sharing opinions, negotiating, compromising, helping the group reach consensus, and taking a stand;
- Seeking one's share of the responsibilities and the work load; and,
- Creating a balance between the needs of individual students and families and the needs of the school population as a whole.

At SBM, we follow each child's development and individual needs through repeated observation and documentation. Some behaviors, while not socially appropriate, are nonetheless developmentally typical. For example, infants may chew on books during teething; toddlers may bite; early childhood students may push each other; elementary students may fabricate information. These types of behaviors are addressed at SBM through a variety of positive redirection techniques and graded, age-appropriate responses that respect the child's dignity and development. Teachers and parents will communicate by phone and email, and meet as necessary, to create plans and agreements on how to address behavioral issues of continuing concern.

There are a handful of behaviors that cannot be tolerated. For such behaviors, the child will be sent home from school immediately. Some examples include: causing serious injury to another, destroying property, creating a situation in which teachers and/or students cannot function, and bringing weapons to school. Teachers and the school director will communicate directly with the parents/guardians about the conditions upon which the child may return to school following such behavior.

Silver Bow Montessori School deems it essential that a safe and positive learning environment be established for students and staff. Students have a right to learn in an atmosphere where their safety, dignity, and well-being can be assured. If a student's actions threaten these conditions within the school community, staff members will give their best efforts to work positively and proactively with that student, his/her parents or guardians, and additional qualified professionals as necessary, to aid that student and safeguard the learning environment of the school. These efforts notwithstanding, Silver Bow Montessori School reserves the right to take any actions necessary to protect the safety and well-being of the school community, including temporary and/or permanent separation of a student from the school.

Parents should not intervene in the disciplining of SBM students other than their own on school grounds or during school functions. Parents should feel free to convey any concerns about their child's development and experience directly to the student's head teacher. The head teacher and parent or guardian can work together to address how to best support the child's needs.

### **Emergency Notification**

One of the required documents for enrollment is the Emergency Notification form. It must be updated or re-validated every year. Please also ensure that it is updated as changes occur (i.e. for new phone numbers, e-mail addresses, approved pick-up parties, etc.) We want to be sure to

have the correct information so we will be able to contact you as quickly as possible if the need arises.

### **Field Trips**

An important part of the Montessori curriculum is experiencing and exploring the world around us. Field trips are an exciting component for students to learn and to grow. These are announced through weekly letters and newsletters with as much notice as possible. Details are explained and chaperones are frequently needed, appreciated, and encouraged to join us. If parents have ideas about places to visit or things to do, please share them with the teachers.

### **Fire Drills**

The school performs several fire drill exercises throughout the year to ensure children are prepared for an emergency. Children are taught what to do in these circumstances whether it is at school, home, or other place. It is part of the safety curriculum for the early childhood students and usually involves one of their favorite field trips to the fire station.

### **First Days of School for Children Who Are New to School and/or Very Young**

Fortunately, children with experience at the school are generally very pleased to be returning. To help prepare your younger or “new-to-school” child to begin school, we suggest you be as positive as you can. Please try to convey these ideas to your child in your own words in preparation for his/her coming to school:

- 1) “Now that you are 3 years old, you are old enough to start school and learn to do many new things.”
- 2) “I love you and am happy you can go to school and learn with other children.”
- 3) “There will be many fascinating and fun things to do at school. You will be able to choose from many blocks, puzzles, books, and many other things you want to do.”
- 4) “You will meet wonderful, new friends at school.”

Almost always, a child will become happy within five minutes after a parent has left when he/she becomes occupied with the interesting activities of the school. If your child continues crying more than 15 minutes after you have left, please rest assured that we will call to advise you. If separation issues continue beyond the first few weeks, the head teacher can meet with you to work out a plan for the transition.

### **Health**

Our school is cleaned multiple times daily with disinfectants to prevent infections. We emphasize hand washing often to students and staff. A medical history form and medical release form must be completed for every student at school. Please update this form as necessary.

Each student will be observed for signs of illness throughout the day. Students who are ill, tired, or upset will be given a chance to rest in a quiet area. When a child becomes too ill the parents will be notified to come and pick up their child immediately. Parents are required to remove their child within one hour after receiving a call from the school.

It is the parents' responsibility to notify us in the event their child is found to have a communicable disease. We then can let others know, if necessary, if their children have been in contact with the contagion. Minimally a child should be kept at home for 24 hours following any of these outlined conditions:

1. Fever of 100 degrees or higher and who also have one or more of the following:
  - \*diarrhea
  - \*earache
  - \*signs of irritability or confusion
  - \*sore throat
  - \*rash
2. Vomiting on 2 or more occasions within the past 24 hours.
3. Diarrhea or 2 or more watery stools within a 24-hour period
4. Draining rash
5. Eye discharge or pink eye
6. Fatigue that prevents participation in regular activities.
7. Open or oozing sores.
8. Lice or Scabies

### **Library Days**

The elementary classroom travels on a bi-weekly basis to the public library. This is an opportunity to not only get reading material but also to learn how to access and use the library's resources. Five- and six-year-old students from the Early Childhood classroom are invited to join them. Library cards can be applied for and once received are stored by the teachers.

### **Lunch**

Students that stay all day need to bring their own lunch. These should include nutritious items, please no sodas, Gatorade, juice boxes, or candy. Items should be packed in containers that children can open easily by themselves or with minimal assistance. We especially appreciate if students use environmentally friendly reusable containers. If you include ready to eat meals such as "Lunchables," ones that need minimal assembly and cooking are most appreciated. If you send pizza Lunchables or Easy Mac, please prepare it first so it can be reheated at school.

Elementary students learn as part of their curriculum to plan for the following things in lunches: 1) whole grain breads; 2) fresh fruit; 3) fresh vegetable; 4) a source of protein (e.g. meat, cheese, soy, etc.), and 5) environmentally responsible packaging (e.g. reduce, reuse, recycle). Please note that water and low-fat milk are provided by the school at lunch, so packing a beverage is not

necessary. If a parent prefers to send a beverage with students, the school recommends beverages without added sugar.

### **Medicines**

Please ensure that a medication form is completed if a child needs to take medication during school hours. This is a state licensure requirement. A form also needs to be completed if a child takes cough drops or other optional OTC meds. Especially for early childhood students, please ensure these meds are given to the teacher to be dispensed as instructed and as necessary. Medications, including cough lozenges, should not be kept by the child under any circumstances.

### **Pizza Friday**

A popular, elective option for lunch on Fridays is pizza. We order a variety of pizza from Silver Bow Pizza and serve it with salad or fruit for lunch. The cost is \$3.00. This can be paid on a weekly basis or can be included in your monthly invoice. The elementary students have also had an alternative hot lunch one Friday per month. PTO and parents have coordinated this effort with restaurants in the area.

### **Service Hours and Parent Participation**

Education of young children is a partnership between parents and the school. Parents play an integral role at the school. When parents contribute their time, talents, or materials, it serves to promote a sense of community and upgrades the quality of our students' experience. To maximize the school's limited resources, there is an annual commitment of 20 hours of service to school per family, or a fee of \$10 per hour in place of this service.

There are a variety of opportunities to fulfill this requirement. Examples include: attending meetings and participating in the PTO (Parent Teacher Organization), its committees and activities, particularly fundraising events; chaperoning field trips; playground coverage for teacher's meetings; assisting teachers with materials preparation; assistance in the classroom reading with students; sharing/presenting to the class on a curriculum topic, etc. Other ideas and opportunities will be announced in weekly letters, newsletters and on the website.

### **Ski Programs: Downhill and Cross Country**

Another way to enjoy Montana's unique recreational venues is through SBM's ski program. The program typically consists of 4 ski days from January through March at the Discovery Ski Area. Discounted ski equipment and lesson packages are offered. It is exciting to see our youngest EC students learn quickly and enjoy Montana's winter wonderland. Elementary students learn or improve their skills with Discovery's variety of trails and difficulty levels.

The elementary classroom, and five or six year old Early Childhood students also enjoy a series of four lessons at Homestake Lodge cross country ski area. These are held on Friday afternoons from January through March each year. There is an additional charge for both these programs.

## **Slippers**

For children in the EC classroom, a pair of comfortable, easy to put on slippers is necessary. Over-sized, noise making, light up, crocs or character-head slippers are not practical when children are walking with work trays. Such decorations can be also be distracting and make it difficult for children to easily sit cross-legged at circle times. Appropriate slippers can usually be found at Wal-Mart, Bob Ward's, or many web vendors. Please label these with the child's name. For children in the elementary classroom, sneakers are an option to change into in the classroom from snow boots.

## **Snacks**

The school serves a nutritious snack in the morning. Those students staying for the extended care program will receive an additional snack. The school does not provide breakfast. We ask each family to contribute snack provisions for the whole school one or two weeks per year. Sign-ups for this service to the school are provided at the annual parent orientation meeting, and are available throughout the year in a wall box in the Early Childhood coatroom. Recommended shopping lists, including quantities, are also available at the orientation meeting and the school office. Please check with a teacher before your snack week to help prevent duplication from the previous week.

## **Students' Clothing at School**

Children at Silver Bow Montessori School go outside in all forms of weather during the year, so please make certain your child has appropriate clothing. In coldest weather, this includes hat, waterproof gloves, snow pants, snow boots, and winter coat. When snow is on the ground, your child must have snow boots in order to go out for recess. Please label all items with names, as frequently there are many pairs of the same boots or gloves in the class. It is also recommended that students keep a change of clothing at school. These should be provided in a re-sealable bag labeled with the student's name. Clothing will be stored in tubs in the Early Childhood coatroom.

Due to space constraints, students should not leave coats, hats, and gloves overnight at school. Your cooperation in this regard will help reduce clutter and redundancy within the school's limited space.

## **Swim Program**

SBM offers an eight-week swim program in partnership with a local swim instructor, Mavis Bentley, during the spring semester. Teachers and parent volunteers also help to instruct with this life critical skill. It is strongly encouraged for all students to participate, but is not required for EC students. There is no other school on swim afternoons. Lessons are required for elementary students.

## **Tardiness**

At both the early childhood and elementary levels, tardiness is disruptive to the classroom and handicapping to the student who is late. Tardiness affects the whole classroom's experience. If your child is tardy three times in an academic year, you will receive a note from the school

asking your cooperation. If there are two additional instances of tardiness, we will ask for a meeting with the parents to address the situation.

### **Texting**

Text messaging to teachers' cellphones should only be used for straightforward logistical purposes (e.g., tardiness, library pick-up, late arrival, illness, or doctor appointments). Parental concerns should be directed to the student's head teacher by telephone, email, or in person to set up a meeting (see Communication).

### **Toys**

To avoid disappointments and/or loss, please do not allow your child to bring blankets, toys, money, stuffed animals, games, candy/gum, trading cards, etc. to school. This includes jewelry and hand sanitizers. These items distract students (even if they are in a backpack). If these items accidentally arrive at school, we will hold them for your child until the end of the day. Children are always welcome to bring an educational book, something from nature, a unique keepsake from a trip, or culturally significant item to share with their class.