

# Rose Hill Montessori School

## THE ELEMENTARY YEARS

Grades 1 - 6

Dr. Montessori observed that the 6 to 12 year old child is in the “Intellectual Period” of his development. During this period the child explores his world more abstractly rather than concretely and develops as a social being. To aid these goals the child is endowed with great mental powers: an unlimited intellectual curiosity, a great imagination, and ability to reason.

For this stage of the child Dr. Montessori proposed that the whole universe be given. Allow the child to explore the interconnectedness of all things within a Cosmic Education. This Cosmic Education relates all areas of knowledge to the “cosmic task” and our relation to it. This cosmic task is to survive and to contribute to the total harmony of the universe.

The foundation for Dr. Montessori’s Cosmic Education is the presentation of the Great Lessons and the study of the Needs (material and spiritual) of Man.

The Great Lessons are 5 stories that take us from the beginning of the universe to the present. They allow the child to explore and understand our culture and achieve a global vision of cosmic events. They are impressionistic aids that help tie the individual subject areas together as a means to understand the world. They also help inspire further exploration.

The theme of service runs through the stories and helps to instill a sense of gratitude to both a higher power and to one’s fellow human beings.

### The Elementary Montessori Curriculum

The Montessori Elementary Curriculum is an open-ended curriculum. The elementary program is based on a three year cycle. Rather than a yearly list of subject areas taught in a scheduled linear fashion, pre-determined by a school board, all areas needed by the student will be covered sometime within a three year time frame. This allows the student to independently explore areas following his own interests.

Lessons are given based on need and interest. Besides teaching basic skills, they are intended to stimulate curiosity for further self-directed investigation. Providing guidelines on how to research using books, printed materials, and resources and experts in our community is also an important part of the curriculum.

The Montessori materials are still an important part of a student’s learning. The materials offer concrete experiences of abstract concepts, especially in math, geometry, and language. Demonstrations, experiments, charts, maps, and time-lines are regularly used in history, biology, and geography. Repetitive use of the materials helps internalize the concepts and provides a means of independent learning.

Most lessons that teach basic skills are generally taught in small groups based on ability and readiness, not on age nor grade level. This ensures that a student will progress at his own rate, and also encourages cooperative learning. The students can turn to each other, rather than to the teacher, for help.

The lessons are not lectures that require rote learning. Instead, the lessons themselves need to allow the reasoning power of the child to work. The child is required to observe, speculate, and think. Every answer or idea offered in a lesson by a child must be defended with reason and logic.

A goal of the Montessori Method of teaching is to keep an interest in learning alive and to prepare the child with the skills that allow him to become a life-long learner.

The main areas of the Montessori Elementary Curriculum include, but are not limited to:

I. **History**

History includes the Creation of the Universe, the Coming of Life, the Coming of Human Beings, the Needs of Human Beings, Phases in history, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade Idaho history.

II **Language**

Language includes the History of Language, grammar and syntax (including parts of speech, types and parts of sentences, and word study), writing, composition, creative writing, vocabulary, discussion, reports, poetry, and literature.

Within small groups time is spent reading and discussing the stories in the Junior Great Books.

III **Mathematics**

The Story of Numbers gives the student a historical background to our number system. He also studies place value, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, multiples and factors, percents, probability, graphing, squares and cubes of numbers and polynomials, powers of numbers, fractions - common and decimal, square roots and cube roots, signed numbers, non-decimal bases, introduction to algebra, ratio and proportion, measurement - standard and metric, and word problems.

IV **Geometry**

includes congruency, similarity, equivalence, polygons, angles, lines, nomenclature, Pythagoras and Euclid, area of plane figures, circle, and solid geometry.

V **Biology**

Here the student explores the world of plants, animals, and human beings: their parts, the function of all the parts, their interdependence, their specialization, classifications, etc.

VI **Geography**

In political geography the student learns to recognize the countries, major cities, waterways, and land formations of the world. Physical geography takes the student on an exploration of the nature of elements, the sun and earth, the work of air, and the work of water. For human geography the interdependencies of human beings and societies are researched.

VII **Music and Art**

The lives of composers and artists are studied as well as their major works. Sound, instruments, the orchestra, and musical genres are investigated. Various activities introduce the child to the basics of the C Major scale. Artistic processes are explored with hands-on activities led by artists from our community.

VIII **Foreign Languages**

All elementary students receive special instruction in French and Spanish. In the third through sixth grades Latin is also taught.

IX **Physical Education**

Time is spent developing and improving physical skills, agility, endurance, and good sportsmanship.