



# Tobin Montessori School

2025-26 FAMILY HANDBOOK

## Our Mission

At Tobin Montessori, we combine the best practices of Montessori philosophy and public education. We build trusting relationships within a strong community that empowers the whole child.

Students choose their work, use hands-on materials, and engage in individualized lessons within carefully prepared environments. In these mixed age classrooms, students balance freedom and responsibility to realize their full potential.

## Our Vision

At Tobin, all students will discover the joys of a Montessori education and thrive in a compassionate community. With hearts set on equity and minds prepared for action, children will develop into lifelong learners and peaceful citizens of the world.

## Our Core Values

1. We value diversity.
2. We are respectful.
3. We strive for excellence.
4. We are responsible.
5. We are resourceful, resilient learners.
6. We care about each other.

## About Our School

Tobin Montessori School is an American Montessori Society Accredited elementary school dedicated to providing a quality educational experience for children in the Children's House (3-6 years old), Lower Elementary (6-9 years old), and Upper Elementary Programs (9-11 years old). All of the classrooms are multi-age, and students remain in each level with the same teacher. In each of the levels, students engage in a wide range of activities to stimulate intellectual, physical, and social growth. In our Montessori classrooms, the beautifully prepared environments include areas such as: Practical Life, Sensorial (Children's House), Math, Language, and Cultural Studies (Science and Geography).

In addition to academics, children learn how to become responsible members of the school community. We support this work through Grace and Courtesy, and Responsive Classroom curriculums. Self-respect, respect for others, respect for the environment, compassion, and cooperation are key elements that are taught and modeled throughout the school.

Tobin Montessori is an inclusive school. Alongside our Montessori Classrooms, we have four SCALE classrooms. Students in these classrooms are included in various components of the school day and/or Montessori classrooms on an individual basis. We are also the home to two Special Start Classrooms and three Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Classrooms. We are fortunate that these students and staff are part of our community!

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**Tobin Montessori  
School**

181 Vassal Lane  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
617.349.6600  
[tobin.cpsd.us](http://tobin.cpsd.us)





## The School Day

**SCHOOL OFFICE:** 617.349.6600

**SCHOOL HOURS:** 7:45AM - 2:15PM | Mondays, Tuesdays,  
Thursdays and Fridays  
7:45AM - 1:45PM | Wednesday

### SCHEDULE

#### Arrival

- 7:10AM Breakfast Opens for ALL Students in the Cafeteria. Students may be dropped off at the entrance in the bus loop.
- 7:20-7:25AM Bus Drop Off Begins. Children's House - Grade 5 enters the cafeteria via the Bus Loop.
- 7:30AM Caregiver Drop Off begins and all classrooms open. Students may be dropped off at the main entrance, rear entrance or at door #28 (Alpine Path).
- 7:45AM Day officially starts and instruction begins

#### Dismissal

- 11AM Three-year-old half-day pick up at the Main Entrance.
- 1:45PM Wednesdays
- 2:15PM M, T, TH, F Student dismissal
- The Tobin After-School Program is available to all students in Kindergarten to Grade 5. Please contact the After School Program Office for more information: 617.349.6300; Linda Brogna, Director.*



# School Administration

Jaime Frost	Principal
Albert Jimenez	Assistant Principal
Sandra Paunov	Family Liaison
Krissie Collazo	School Clerk
Ian Kenney	School Adjustment Counselor
Kim Boglarski	School Psychologist
Sarah Button	School Nurse

The main phone number for the school is 617.349.6600. Ms. Krissie our School Clerk will answer and direct your call accordingly. If you have specific questions and want to email individuals directly, please see below.

If you have questions about...	Please contact:
CPS Forms, Paperwork, Records, Attendance, etc	Krissie Collazo, <i>School Clerk</i> kcollazo@cpsd.us
School & Family Events, Family Needs	Sandra Paunov, <i>Family Liaison</i> spaunov@cpsd.us
Transportation, Behavior, Recess, Lunch	Albert Jimenez, <i>Assistant Principal</i> aljimenez@cpsd.us
Special Education Process	Kim Boglarski, <i>School Psychologist</i> kboglarsk@cpsd.us
Social/Emotional Issues	Ian Kenney, <i>School Adjustment Counselor</i> ikenney@cpsd.us  Yesenia Stewart, <i>Social Worker</i> ystewart@cpsd.us
Math at Tobin Montessori	Eileen Gagnon, <i>Mathematics Coach</i> egagnon@cpsd.us
Literacy at Tobin Montessori	Heather Kolbe, <i>Literacy Coach</i> hkolbe@cpsd.us
Montessori Curriculum or Pedagogy	Erin Gutierrez, <i>Montessori Resource Teacher</i> egutierrez@cpsd.us
Cub's Corner Three-Year-Old Program	Maria Gutierrez magutierrez@cpsd.us
Library Books/Online Resources	Emily Litman, <i>School Librarian</i> elitman@cpsd.us
Technology at Tobin Montessori	Julie Koepke, <i>Technology Teacher</i> jkoepke@cpsd.us
Health	Sarah Button, <i>School Nurse</i> sbutton@cpsd.us
School Policies	Jaime Frost, <i>Principal</i> jfrost@cpsd.us



# DAILY ROUTINES

# Arrival

## TIMES

Breakfast	7:10 - 7:30AM
Classrooms Open	7:30AM
For Drop-Off Students School Day Begins	7:45AM

## PROTOCOL

- **All families who are dropping off students should remain outside.** Students may enter the building at 7:10AM for Breakfast or 7:30AM and walk directly to their classroom. Classrooms open at 7:30AM. **Students will be marked tardy after 7:45AM**
- In order to foster independence, all families of students should try their best to say goodbye quickly at the assigned arrival door. If you child is having a challenging time separating, Tobin Staff will be there to help. If drop-off continues to be challenging for your child, please contact administration and we will create an alternative plan.

## PARKING

There are some temporary parking spaces in the garage for quick drop offs or pick ups.

Staff will be in the bus loop at 7:10AM to greet students who want to come to school early for breakfast, which ends at 7:30AM. Please note: The bus loop is a live drop off area only. The Bus Loop Door, the Main Entrance & the Rear Entrance will open at 7:10AM for Breakfast. At 7:30AM, all of those doors and Door #28 (Alpine Path) will be open for students to enter and go to class. Staff will be there to greet students. If you need to walk your child to the Main Entrance or Door 28, please find appropriate street parking or park in the temporary spaces in the parking garage. If you park in the garage, please take the stairs or elevator up to the main entrance.

# Dismissal

## TIMES

3-year-old half day	11AM
3-year-old full day	2:15PM   M, T, TH, F
	1:45PM   Wednesdays
Preschool/K - Grade 5	2:15PM   M, T, TH, F
	1:45PM   Wednesdays

## PROTOCOL

### Bus Students:

All Bus students will be escorted to their buses by a Tobin Staff Member

### Parent/Guardian Pick-up Students:

- Children’s House, K SEI: Students being picked up will meet their parent/caregiver at Door #28.
- Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, SCALE, Special Start: Families/Caregivers will meet their child at the front door.
- Three Year Old Half Day Students: 11AM at the Main Entrance.
- Three Year Old Full Day-Cub’s Corner Students: Door #26 & Door #27.
- If you are unsure of your students assigned door, please email your child’s classroom teacher or reach out to the main office.

### EARLY RELEASE DAYS (WEDNESDAYS)

Dismissal Time is 1:45PM every Wednesday.

### 2025-2026 Early Release Dates (11:45AM Dismissal)

November 26th | Thanksgiving Break Begins

December 23rd | Winter Break Begins

June 23rd | Last Day of School, Summer Vacation Begins  
(no snow days)

# Absences/Tardiness/Dismissal Procedures

*One of the most important factors influencing student achievement in school is regular attendance and punctuality. According to the state of Massachusetts, students may not be absent more than seven days, or -fourteen half days, within a six month period.*

## ATTENDANCE

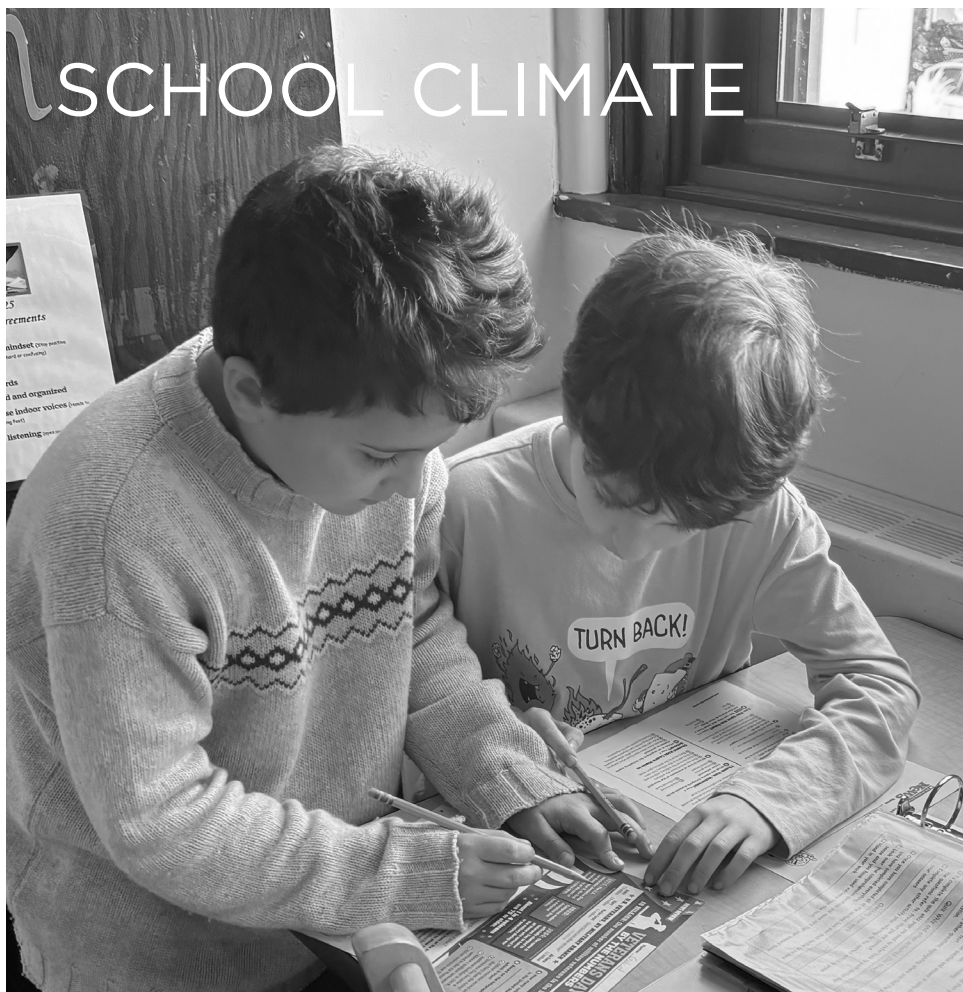
- If your child will be absent or significantly tardy, please email your child's teacher and call the main office as soon as possible. It is important for us to know whether or not to expect a child at school each day.
- Please remember to report an absence or tardy as soon as possible. If you do not contact the school, you will receive an automated message to let you know your child is not at school. If you believe the message is in error, please call the office to confirm.
- Students are marked Tardy after 7:45AM. If arriving after 7:45AM, students must sign in on the office laptop to obtain a late slip before entering the classroom.
- We encourage all students to be at school by 7:30AM. Arriving at this time allows students to settle in, get organized for the day and also decreases disruptions to other learners.

## DISMISSING A CHILD EARLY FROM SCHOOL

If you need to pick up your child before the scheduled dismissal time, please try your best to notify the classroom teacher or the main office before you arrive. When you arrive you must report to the Main Office and sign your child out at the office laptop. A Tobin Staff Member will then call to have your child come to meet you in the main office.

\*Unless you have previously notified the school, please do not stop by the main office to dismiss your child during the last 30 minutes of the school day. This makes dismissal time very challenging and oftentimes leads to cars blocking buses as they arrive for dismissal.





At Tobin Montessori, we believe that social emotional learning is just as important as learning academics. Our goal is to prepare students with the skills they need to be successful in both regulating their own emotions and navigating challenges they may encounter with others. We work alongside students:

- Learning about their strengths and areas of growth as individuals
- Developing classroom/school community guidelines
- Modeling/teaching positive behaviors
- Modeling/teaching strategies for emotional regulation
- Providing feedback for students as they encounter social/emotional successes or challenges
- Providing quiet spaces for student breaks or sensory items for calming down

## Discipline

- At Tobin, discipline is approached in a positive manner, stressing what can be done and providing the child with positive choices. Tobin Staff Members do not use punishment that would be detrimental to the child's emotional security or self-image.
- Respect and kindness towards others and responsibility for one's own behavior are stressed throughout the school. The student's behavior is reinforced by the respectful ways in which the Tobin Staff work with them. Students are involved in developing and understanding the rules within their classroom environments, and they are responsible for holding themselves accountable.
- When a student's behavior is unacceptable, it is our goal to help the child learn appropriate behavior. We work with the student(s) to develop appropriate behavior skills. Parents will be notified of any behavior modification program that may be necessary. After an initial time period, the program will be reevaluated, revised, or eliminated, depending on the progress of the child.
- The Tobin Main Office is a positive space, and administration works alongside students when they are celebrating successes or working through challenges. If behavior is deemed unsafe, parents will be notified immediately.

## Bus Behavior

Transportation is a privilege. Students are expected to treat bus drivers and bus monitors with the same respect they treat other Tobin Community Members. When students board the bus, they are expected to choose a seat quickly and remain in that seat. Switching seats while the bus is moving or during stops is not allowed. If the driver or the bus monitor feels that a student is being unsafe, the student may be assigned to a seat in the front of the bus. As per district policy, "Students who fail to comply with the rules may be suspended and/or removed indefinitely from his/her bus if the violation warrants. More serious incidents may involve suspension from school and possible police action." For more information, please visit the CPS Transportation homepage or click on this link to view the CPS Transportation Disciplinary Policies: <http://bit.ly/2wFYgUY>



Communication is the key to a successful school year! Whenever you have a question, positive feedback or a concern about your child's experience, please speak directly with your child's teacher. There are a few ways to communicate with your child's classroom teacher:

- **Communication Folders:** Every child in Children's House and Lower Elementary will have a communication folder that will go home in backpacks every day. Please check this folder for written notes from teachers, newsletters, or other notices sent home. If you need to write a note to the teacher, please write your notes in the communication folder.

- **Email:** Every Tobin Staff Member has access to email, however, email is best for quick questions and not the best medium for dialogue. Please do not use email for time-sensitive information as teachers may not check their email until after school hours. Tobin Staff Members will do their best to respond to email questions/comments in a timely manner. ParentSquare is a communication tool used by our district and school to communicate district information, schoolwide announcements, class messages, or to speak individually with families. Please be sure to set up your account before the beginning of the school year. For more information please check out: [www.cpsd.us/parentsquare](http://www.cpsd.us/parentsquare).
- **Phone/Live Conference:** When you need to speak to your child's teacher, please set up a time to talk on the phone or in person. It is important to schedule these conversations at a time when the teacher can provide undivided attention, rather than at arrival or dismissal time.

We encourage families to help their children become problem solvers! When your child shares a challenge they are having at school, work with them to develop some strategies so they can try to solve it. It is more empowering for children to be included in the problem-solving process. If you have worked with your child and the classroom teacher but feel you need more support, please contact school administration to help out.

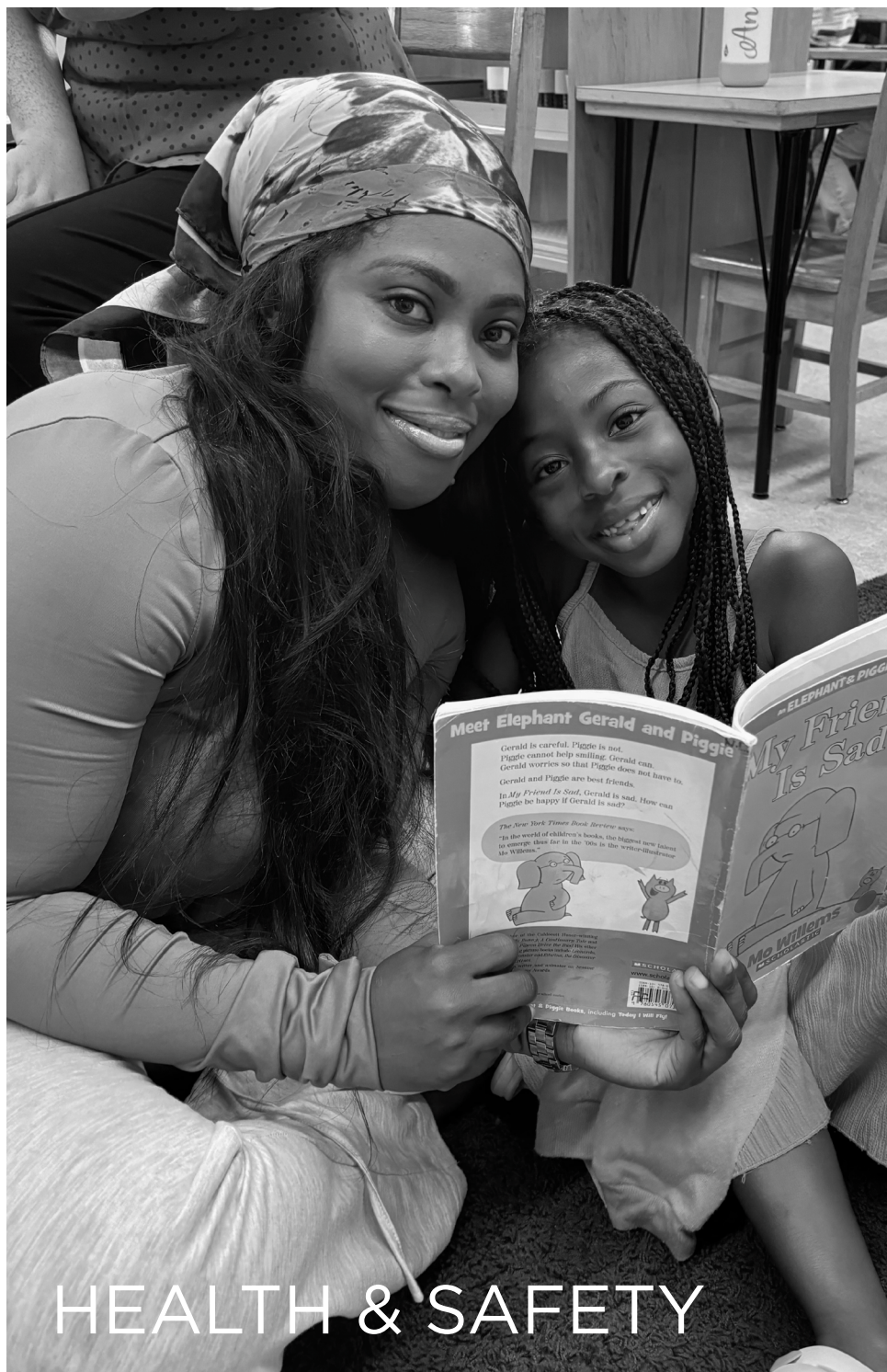
## Family Conferences

The school year is divided into trimesters. Formal Family conferences will happen at the end of the first and second trimester. Report cards will be distributed at the end of each trimester. You can find these dates on our Tobin Family Google Calendar, so please subscribe!

Conferences are generally about 20 minutes long and may vary in some ways from classroom to classroom. Some teachers do conferences jointly with the parents and child present. Others do conferences with parents only. However, all conferences at Tobin Montessori will include examples of your child's work and assessment information. Conferences at Tobin are a time for the teacher to share, but also listen. This is an important time for teachers to hear from parents about their child's experience in school, as it directly impacts their learning in the classroom.

Please check the school calendar to view the date ranges of the conference periods for each level. Your child's classroom teacher will reach out to you to schedule your family conference.





# HEALTH & SAFETY



# Health

There are times when a student should remain at home for his/her own health and welfare and for the protection of other students. When a child becomes ill at school, a parent/guardian will be notified and is expected to come for the child immediately. The following is a guideline of symptoms to be used in deciding whether or not your child should be in school. Please do **NOT** send your child to school when any of these symptoms are present or if they have experienced these symptoms in the last 24 hours:

- Temperature over 100 degrees
- Discharge from ears
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Changes in mental alertness
- Discharge from the nose that is not clear
- Eye inflammation or crusting
- Undiagnosed rash or skin eruption

*Children may return to school when they have been symptom free for 24 hours. This is without the assistance of fever-reducing medication.*

## ALLERGIES

Before the school year begins, each parent is required to fill out a form listing any of their children's known allergies. If a child has a severe food allergy, the Tobin Montessori School may ask the entire class to refrain from bringing that food to school. Please make sure your child's needs are conveyed to the teacher and the nurse. A list of building-wide allergies will be kept in the Tobin Main Office, as well as the cafeteria.



# Safety

Student safety is our number one priority, and you can help us keep Tobin Safe. Please report any unlocked doors to the Main Office. The school doors are locked at all times, and during arrival and dismissal, the front door is supervised by administration. You can also help by adhering to our visitor protocol – even if you are coming in for a short visit. All visitors are required to sign in at the office laptop upon arrival to obtain a visitor's badge that must be worn during the duration of the visit. All visitors must also sign out at our office laptop. Please note – Tobin Staff Members will not open the front door if you are buzzing. The office will unlock the door for you. Also, Tobin Staff Members will stop any visitor who is not wearing a visitor badge and direct them to the Main Office. This is in an effort to keep our community safe.

Students will only be released to parents/guardians or an adult who has been approved in writing by the parents/guardians. If a friend or babysitter will be picking up your child from school, you must write a note to the teacher. If we do not have this information in writing, we will not release the child.

It is required that all parents/guardians fill out the emergency forms provided by the school. In the case of an emergency, the school will make every attempt to reach the parents/guardians first and then use the backup list if the parents/guardians are unavailable. **Please remember to list the names of people who agree to be available to come to school in the case of an emergency.** Please also remember to update this information if it should change.

## FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills will be held periodically throughout the school year. These drills are not announced, and teachers and students are required to follow the appropriate procedures within conducting these drills. Teachers practice the routines and procedures with all students at the beginning of the school year and reinforce and remind students of them frequently.

## LOCKDOWN DRILLS

Lockdown drills will be conducted periodically throughout the school year. The goal of this drill is for students to become silent and invisible. Parents/guardians will be notified about these drills. It is important to stress that these are drills that will help keep everyone safe.

# Bus Safety

A CPS student can begin riding the bus on the day they turn four years old. This must be arranged at least two weeks in advance of their fourth birthday.

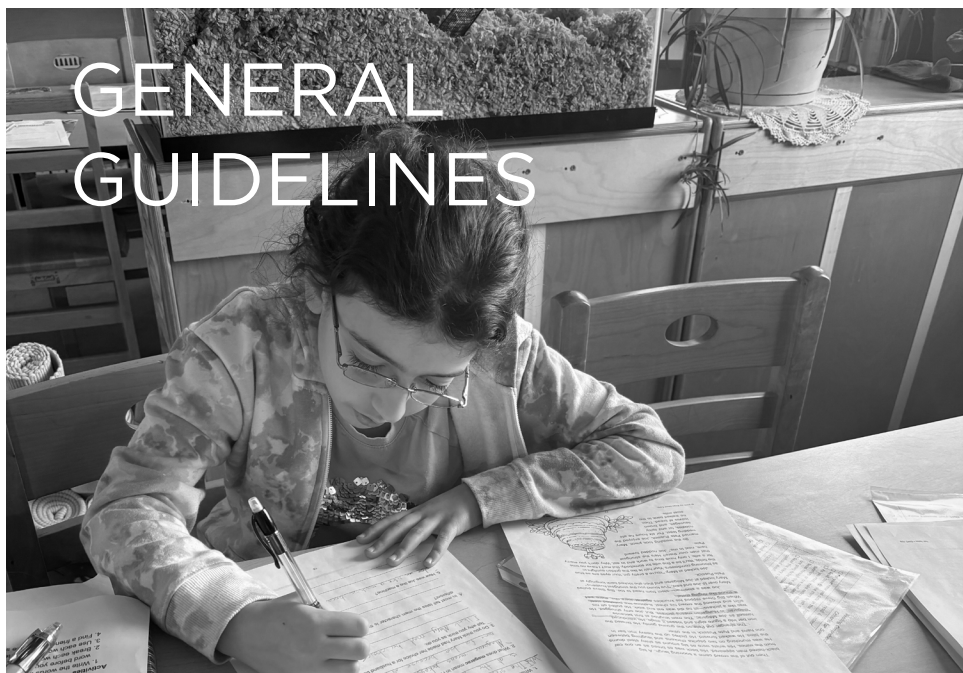
In accordance with CPS Transportation Department Safety Procedures, the following protocols are in place:

- If you need to change your child's transportation plan, you must complete a CPSD Transportation CHANGE Form, and submit it to the Tobin Main Office. Please note: It will take between 24-48 hours to complete the change in transportation. You will receive an email to notify you that the change is complete.
- Preschool - grade 2 students who ride the bus will receive a yellow bus tag that must be attached to their backpack.
- A designated parent/guardian must be at the afternoon bus stop to meet all students in Preschool, Kindergarten, First, and Second grade. The driver cannot drop off a student when the appropriate person is not waiting for the student at the assigned bus stop.
- Children who are not met at the bus stop will be taken to the Security Office at Cambridge Rindge & Latin High School after the driver completes the bus route.
- Bus Tracker is now available!! Please take full advantage of this new CPS feature that helps track buses to and from school in real time! Sign up for Bus Tracker here: <http://bit.ly/2vGLu3Z>. Please be patient the first few weeks, as buses are sometimes delayed.

## **What to do if your child does not come home on the bus as expected?**

First, call the Tobin School at 617.349.6600 and then the Transportation Department at 617.349.6862. If there is no answer, call the Safety & Security Office at 617.349.6772. The Security Office is where students are brought when there is not an adult waiting for them at the bus stop (JK-2), the student misses their stop, or they get on the wrong bus. The office is in the High School located at 459 Broadway.

**Please find the complete list of CPS Bus Safety Procedures at:**  
<http://bit.ly/2iG3tqa>



## **Snacks**

Children at all levels have snack time. Please pack your child an individual snack everyday. If you are unable to provide a snack for your child, please let your child's teacher know and we will make arrangements. Also, if you are able to donate nonperishable snack items to your child's classroom, please connect with the classroom teacher. Donations are always welcome!

## **Toys**

Children should leave their toys at home because they are often misplaced and can be distracting to learning. Toys include, but are not limited to: Legos, jewelry, video games, Pokémon cards, rainbow looms, etc. We do welcome books or other educational material for sharing.

## **Candy & Soda**

Please refrain from sending candy and soda to school. We adhere to the CPS Wellness Policy, and Tobin promotes healthy food and beverages. At times, gum may be allowed in classrooms (during standardized testing), but this will be determined by the classroom teacher.

## Cell Phones/Smart Watches

Cell phones are allowed in school; however, during the school day, they are to be powered off. If you need to get a message to your child, please call the main office at 617.349.6600. Smart watches are a huge distraction to students, please do not have them wear smart watches to school.

## Dress

- Tobin adheres to the standards stated in the *CPS Rights & Responsibilities Handbook* excerpted here: *Clothing will be deemed inappropriate if it is disturbing to other students or in any way interferes with the educational process. This includes, but is not limited to: bare midriffs, short shorts, low slung trousers, and other clothing which is offensive and/or violates acceptable standards of dress.* Parents/guardians will be notified, and students will be sent home to change if their clothing is not suitable for school.
- Hats and hoods are not allowed in classrooms, except when worn for religious, health or social emotional reasons. Students may wear hats out to recess and take them off when returning to the building.
- All children under age six should have a complete change of clothes (including socks and underwear) packed in a clear plastic bag and labeled with the child's name on each piece of clothing. Please be sure to change clothes seasonally and replace immediately if used.
- All students should wear appropriate footwear on a daily basis, especially on the days they have Physical Education. Sandals, slippery shoes, and boots make it unsafe for students to run in the gym and at recess. Please feel free to leave an extra pair of sneakers in your child's cubby if needed.

## Birthdays

The celebration of a child's birthday is a wonderful event, and we are happy to share in it. Classroom teachers will reach out to families to arrange classroom plans for your child's birthday. If you are having a party for your child outside of school, please do not send your child to school with invitations to pass out. This can make students feel upset and greatly disrupt the school day. There are many ways for families to be involved at Tobin Montessori.



# FAMILY INVOLVEMENT



We welcome and encourage you to participate in our school community in any way you can – whether this is visiting your child’s classroom to read a book or becoming a member of our School Advisory Council – any participation helps strengthen the home school connection! There are parent led groups that may vary year to year based on school and community needs – however, there are three consistent opportunities for parents to volunteer their time to support Tobin:

- **School Advisory Council**

The State of Massachusetts mandates that every school elect a group of staff, community and family members to advise the administration on the creation of the School Improvement Plan and to set goals and objectives for the community. School Council dates are on our Tobin Family Google Calendar and reminders will be sent throughout the school year..

SAC Leadership: Two co-chairs of the Council are elected to design the agenda and facilitate the meeting in conjunction with the principal.

- **Friends of Tobin**

Friends of Tobin (a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation) – The goals of this group are to supplement funding that advances learning and family involvement at Tobin Montessori and also to conduct outreach to families.

- **Room Parents**

Room Parents – Each classroom has 1-2 room parents who volunteer for the school year. Responsibilities vary with individual classrooms but usually include creating classroom contact lists, coordinating volunteers, organizing potlucks, communicating with families about classroom activities, recruiting field trip chaperones, and/or organizing rides for families to attend school events. If you want to be a Room Parent let the classroom teacher know or reach out to Sandra Paunov, our Family Liaison ([spaunov@cpsd.us](mailto:spaunov@cpsd.us)).



## School Events

The Tobin Community hosts a wide range of events each year ranging from parent education to family celebrations. All events are on the Tobin Family Calendar. At times, events may be added or changed due to weather, so be sure to check the calendar frequently. If an event is going to be rescheduled, notification will be sent home via backpack express or by email.

Tobin Events include, but are not limited to:

- **Family Education Mornings**  
Please join Erin Gutierrez, our Montessori Resource Teacher, and other Tobin staff members throughout the year to learn more about our Montessori Curriculum, Social Emotional Learning, Mathematics, Literacy and more!
- **Academic Mornings**  
Curriculum Morning, Author's Celebrations and Parent Conferences are all opportunities for you to learn more about the work your child is doing.
- **Socials and Celebrations**  
The Winter Concert, the Spring Concert, the Ice Cream Social, and Coffee Time at our School Council Meetings are all opportunities to meet staff and families! These events help us build a vibrant home away from home.

## More Ways to Get Involved

If you have any questions about ways to get involved in our Tobin Community or you are interested in assisting in organizing any of these events, please see Sandra Paunov ([spaunov@cpsd.us](mailto:spaunov@cpsd.us)), our Family Liaison, with the hours and days that are most convenient. We are particularly in need of translators for languages, such as Amharic, Bengali, Hindi, and Arabic.





*This handbook is not intended to be a complete directory of guidelines related to students, parents, and guardians. All students and parents are governed by the policies stated in the Cambridge Public Schools Rights and Responsibilities Handbook and Guide to Policies for Students and Parents. Federal and State laws and Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) policies are subject to change. Many policies can be found on the CPS website and at the Tobin Montessori School.*





[tobin.cpsd.us](http://tobin.cpsd.us)

**DOWNLOAD THE HANDBOOK ONLINE**

View and download the digital version of the Tobin Family Handbook online by scanning the QR code.



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Cambridge, MA 02138  
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