



Sophia Montessori Academy

A Catholic School in the Byzantine Tradition

Key School Policies

Age and Potty Training

Children should be 2.5 years old by the first day of school and potty trained to be enrolled in the 2024-2025 school year.

Three-Year-Cycle

Montessori classrooms are organized following children's planes of development as outlined by Maria Montessori. The first year is a foundational year, the second year is a year of exploration, and the third year allows for mastery and becoming a leader and guide to younger peers.

To receive the most out of their time at Sophia Montessori, it is important for children to experience the full three-year cycle and be enrolled full week. The third year (ages 5-6) is critical in allowing children to master their social, emotional and academic skills and take on the role of guide within the classroom. We strongly encourage all families to plan to enroll for all three years.

Part-Week Primary

SMA is happy to offer part week options to students in our Primary program (Monday-Tuesday or Wednesday through Friday). Our part week options are organized as consecutive days in order to best meet children's need for consistency and routine.

SMA guides do their best to repeat lessons for part week students but when a family enrolls part week, **it is understood that their child may miss some lessons, events, activities, experiences, and celebrations. Full week schedules are encouraged to allow children the full Montessori experience.**

Part week children are invited to join SMA for field trips, special events, and Divine Liturgy when it falls on a day other than their scheduled day as long as they are accompanied by a parent for the entire duration and as long as they offer notice to SMA staff.

Kindergarten and Elementary

For children to receive the fullness of what Montessori education can offer, it is strongly encouraged for children ages kindergarten and up to be enrolled full week-full day or to supplement their learning at home in collaboration with their guides.

It is preferred for elementary students to have Montessori experience prior to enrollment.

Parent Events

Here at SMA, we strongly believe that parents are the primary educators of their children. Our role is to support, guide, and partner with parents in guiding their children to their full potential. To accomplish this, we work hard to create a strong relationship and partnership between the home and the school.

One of the ways we strive to do this is by offering parent events throughout the school year.

We offer two events that all families are expected to attend:

Orientation Day is the Friday before the first day of school. It is a time for the children to get situated and receive preliminary lessons from their guides. During that time, parents will meet with the administration team to discuss what it means to be a part of SMA, our school handbook, policies and procedures. This is an important time to prepare for a successful school year as a community as well as a time to meet other parents and welcome new families.



Sophia Montessori Academy

A Catholic School in the Byzantine Tradition

Montessori Info Night is a time to discuss what Montessori education is, what you can expect your child to do at school, and how best to support your child at home. We will discuss children's unique needs based on which year of the three-year-cycle they are in, answer questions, and offer an opportunity for parents to try their hand at the Montessori materials. This is also a great time for returning families to share their experience and wisdom with new families.

It is also expected for all families to attend our **Fall and Spring Parent/Guide Conferences**.

Throughout the year, we will also offer a variety of opportunities for families to get to know each other and grow in their role as primary educators. These events include our beginning and end of year potlucks, our annual school gala, Montessori meet ups, playdates, and others.

Volunteering

Volunteering at SMA is a beautiful way both to model an attitude of Christian charity and to build community. It reduces operating costs of the school, which in turn impacts tuition fees. Throughout the year there will be many opportunities to volunteer in the classroom and for a variety of events.

We ask each family to plan to volunteer a minimum of 10 hours per school year or if they are unable to volunteer their time to pay a \$250 fee. Parents are asked to keep a log of their hours, which will be turned in no later than May 30th. A form will be sent over the summer. Any family who is not able to complete the full 10 hours, will be asked to cover a fee of \$25 per incomplete hour.

Your volunteering is a huge support to our staff and school. Thank you!

Application Policies

A tour of the school is required before children may be placed on the waitlist. Once an application is turned in and a tour has been completed, your child will be placed on the waitlist. If a spot is open in your preferred option, we will reach out to you with the next steps.

- Start times are in August or January. Exceptions may be possible on a case-by-case basis.
- Waitlist families will be contacted in February for spots for the following school year.
- Being on the waitlist does not guarantee your child's admittance to Sophia Montessori Academy.

Application Fee:

1. Fee is non-refundable, and due at the time of application
2. One fee per family
3. The summer camp application fee is a separate fee

Other fees may apply throughout the school year (supplies, field trip, etc...)

Admission is based on space availability. Children of Holy Protection of the Mother of God parish and siblings of current students have priority for enrollment. Additional openings will be filled by families on the waitlist.



Sophia Montessori Academy

A Catholic School in the Byzantine Tradition

Frequently Asked Questions

Enrollment

- Can my child be placed on more than one waitlist?
 - Yes! You may place your child on the list for any option that would work well for you at no additional cost.
- How soon will we hear from you if we are on the waitlist?
 - In February of each year, we will contact waitlist families with open spots for the following school year. If your child is on the waitlist, you will be contacted according to the order of enrollment as soon as a spot becomes available in your preferred schedule. If a space becomes available and a date for enrollment is agreed upon, a completed enrollment packet, current health status and immunization records, and fees must be received by SMA before the child can start.

Religion

- Can my child attend SMA if we are not Catholic or Byzantine Catholic?
 - Yes, we welcome families of all faiths and from all walks of life. As a school in the Byzantine Catholic tradition, sung or chanted prayer is a big part of our daily life. We begin and end the day with prayer and attend Liturgy regularly. We use Catechesis of the Good Shepherd to teach about the Catholic Faith and life of Christ, and weekly emails keep parents informed about what their children learn throughout the week.
 - We are an independent Catholic school within the Archdiocese of Denver. Our staff is dedicated to the upholding of the teachings of the Catholic Church, and we ask for all families (whether Catholic or not) to respect all teachings of the Catholic Church as well. See below for more details as outlined by the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools office.
- What is the difference between the Roman and the Byzantine rites?
 - The Byzantine rite is one of the six rites that make up the Catholic Church. While doctrine and dogma remain emphatically the same and each rite recognizes the primacy of the Pope, the emphasis and expression look a little different. We invite you to visit our parish, [Holy Protection of the Mother of God](#), to learn more.
- Do you attend Mass/Divine Liturgy?
 - Yes, we typically attend Divine Liturgy (Byzantine Catholic Mass) or an Akathist (prayer service dedicated to a particular Saint) at St. Francis de Sales twice a month with our Chaplain, Fr. Joel Barstad. During the Great Fast, Divine Liturgy is traditionally not said during the week, so we attend a prayer service instead.

Schedule Options

- What schedule options do you offer?
 - SMA offers a Full Week, Part Day or Full day option, to Primary and Elementary students. Part week options are available to Primary students only. These include



Sophia Montessori Academy

A Catholic School in the Byzantine Tradition

Monday-Tuesday, Wednesday-Friday and Monday-Friday schedules. School days are consecutive to provide consistency for the child. Each day begins with drop off between 8:00 and 8:15am. Half Day pick up is at 12:45pm and Full Day pick up is at 3:00pm.

Fundraising and Tuition Support

- What types of fundraising and tuition support do you offer?
 - We offer a discount to siblings and Holy Protection parishioners
 - Tuition assistance is available to families in need. Once a family has been enrolled, they are eligible to apply for assistance through FACTS. More information will be provided upon enrollment.
 - ACE scholarships are available for students kindergarten age and up.
 - All proceeds from [fundraisers](#) such as King Soopers, Safeway, Dine to Donate, and others go into the SMA tuition support fund
 - Annual Gala: this event raises funds for a variety of needs for the school in addition to tuition support for families

Credentials

Sophia Montessori Academy is recognized as an independent Catholic School in the Archdiocese of Denver by Archbishop Aquila.

What Montessori credentials do your guides/guides have?

- Our lead guides are Montessori trained through MACTE accredited programs
- Our assistant guides receive intensive Montessori orientation and are supported in their continued learning.
- All staff study, research, read, and discuss Maria Montessori's methodology and educational approach and research. All staff attend a minimum of 15 hours of professional development each year.

Is SMA accredited by a Montessori institution?

- SMA is validated as a Montessori school by the [Colorado Montessori Association](#).
- At this time, SMA is not formally accredited by a Montessori institution.

Security

- What does your security look like?
 - SMA staff are responsible for the safety and security of every child in our care. To keep the environment secure, the front door is locked at all times. A staff member is present at the front desk during the day. All visitors are required to sign in at the front desk. In addition, our front door and playground are monitored by security cameras.
- All staff attend a safety training each year and complete yearly CPR, First Aid, Universal Precaution, concussion trainings. All staff are mandated reporters and complete a yearly training.



Sophia Montessori Academy

A Catholic School in the Byzantine Tradition

- A 1:10 ratio is kept at all times and adults are never alone one on one with a child without another adult nearby or without written permission from a parent/guardian.
- Staff conduct regular walkthrough of the building and its surroundings.

Immunization Requirements

- Are immunizations required for my child to attend SMA?
 - SMA follows the Colorado State requirements for immunizations. Parents are required to provide a signed immunization card to SMA prior to their children starting at school. We are also required to have a current health form signed by a physician.

Uniforms

- Do you have uniforms at SMA?
 - Yes! Uniforms are required for the children who attend SMA. Our uniforms are purchased through **Educational Outfitters**. We will give you details for uniforms in your enrollment packet.

Extra Care

- Do you offer extra care?
 - After Care (3:00-4:30) involves recess time, play and work time, crafts and projects, and story time. Currently we are not offering Before Care.

Snack and Lunch

- How do you do snack and lunch?
 - Parents provide snacks and lunches for their children. SMA provides lunch boxes and snack bags so that the items can fit into the child's snack drawer and our refrigerator. Our snack period does not have a set time. Children are welcome to have a snack when they are ready to, or as a place is available at the snack table throughout the morning. This procedure allows the children to choose when to have a snack and learn the procedure independently.
 - We are a nut free facility.

Resources

- Do you recommend any books to learn more about Montessori?
 - Yes! Some of our favorites include:
 - *Maria Montessori: Her Life and Works* by E.M. Standing
 - *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius* by Angeline Stoll Lillard
 - *Positive Discipline in the Montessori Classroom* by Jane Nelsen and Chip DeLorenzo
 - *The Montessori Method* by Maria Montessori



Sophia Montessori Academy

A Catholic School in the Byzantine Tradition

Staying in Touch

- Sign up for our Newsletter for the latest updates
- Join our Patreon to receive various perks such as swag and one-on-one consultations- <https://www.patreon.com/SophiaMontessoriAcademy>
- Follow us on Social Media
 - LinkTree- <https://linktr.ee/sophiama>
 - Instagram- <https://www.instagram.com/sophiamontessori>
 - Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/SophiaMontessoriAcademy/>
 - YouTube- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWpuvzb3g9cwfNkvYXf51Og>
 - Pinterest- <https://www.pinterest.com/SophiaMontessoriAcademy/>

Catholic School Community Beliefs and Commitments: Parents and Guardians

As outlined by the Office of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Denver

By enrolling your child in our independent Catholic School, you are joining our Catholic educational mission in our school and acknowledge that we are a Catholic community composed primarily of adherents to a religious faith. Further, you are acknowledging that the mission of the Catholic school is to bring your child to encounter Jesus Christ and the truths of our Catholic faith through their intellectual, spiritual, moral, and human formation.

The mission of a Catholic school is a fundamentally different endeavor than enrolling your children in a secular school institution. Catholic schools exist to be sanctuaries of education which serve your family, in order that our school might help you as you bring your children into an encounter with Jesus Christ. We desire to serve you as parents and support your desire for your children to be transformed by a relationship with Jesus Christ, grow in wisdom and virtue, and discover their call for their lives as young men and women created in God's image and likeness. This understanding of our mission is vital if we are to properly serve your family for the sake of your child's education and formation. Our school does not function in our mission to help bring children to Jesus Christ if not for bringing them to Jesus Christ through your family.

We believe with the Church that you are the primary educators of your children, and the family is the first school of the faith. Your children have been given to you by God the creator. The mission of your family is to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel to your children. Part of this mission is to form a home in which your children can encounter Christ so that your children can grow in wisdom and virtue through everything they encounter in their homes with you. The mission of your family is also to joyfully proclaim the Good News to the world through your words and witness. The school is considered an extension of the home. The best way for families to support our mission in the school is to live a happy, holy family life that shows children the riches of relationship, the Church's culture, and models of



Sophia Montessori Academy

A Catholic School in the Byzantine Tradition

relationship with Jesus Christ himself. Even families who do not share our religious faith are important members of our community and are called to lives of virtue and truth.

Unfortunately, the assumptions of the secular culture from which all members of our community, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, come from are increasingly at odds with the teachings of our faith. Thus, it is important for all members of our community to be aware of this disconnect and ultimately, understand and accept our community's worldview and convictions.

- For our community, the sanctity of life from the moment of conception to natural death, and the givenness of our sexuality, in all its aspects as male and female created in God's image and likeness, is the basis for human dignity and identity. It is an essential means by which we come to know God, to understand our identity as his sons and daughters, to understand how we are to love and honor one another, and to understand the vocation for which he has created us. It provides the foundation for the education and formation of the human person.
- Catholic teachings on sexual identity, marriage, family, and parenting are inseparable from the way we live and interact. These teachings allow us to fully comprehend how to love God with our whole mind, heart, and soul, and our neighbors as ourselves. We believe that sexual expression contributes to human flourishing in as much as it is integrated with a view toward its natural ends: faithful, covenantal love between a man and a woman, and a self-gift ordered to procreation. "Willed by God in the very act of creation, marriage and the family are interiorly ordained to fulfillment in Christ and have need of His graces in order to be healed from the wounds of sin and restored to their 'beginning,' that is, to full understanding and the full realization of God's plan." (*Familiaris Consortia*, 1981).
- As a community we believe that, far from being within the domain of mere opinion, a true understanding, expression, and living out of human sexuality is a foundational part of who we are and how we see the world. Given that our faith is lived out and transmitted in all aspects of our lives, it is important that all members of our community, respect these beliefs.

Our mission requires attention not merely to academic outcomes, but it requires that all students be given an education and formation rooted in our understanding of the dignity and vocation of the human person as male and female created for heaven. Therefore, in our community you can be assured that:

- All aspects of our Catholic school program will be ordered to the highest aims of education: the cultivation of wisdom and virtue, and the formation of the supernatural man and woman who thinks, judges, and acts according to right reason illuminated by the fullness of the teachings and example of Jesus Christ and his Church (*Divini Illius Magistri*, #98).
- Our Catholic School faculty and staff take to heart the school's mission to partner with and support you to guide and form your children in the fullness of truth as revealed by Jesus Christ and taught by the Church, not personal or worldly political preferences, ideologies, or agendas.



Sophia Montessori Academy

A Catholic School in the Byzantine Tradition

- Our Catholic School faculty and staff will be men and women who are outstanding in correct doctrine and integrity of life and who desire to grow in their love for Jesus Christ and his Church, joyfully giving witness to the truth of the Gospel.
- Our Catholic schools will be fully pro-life institutions, not merely recognizing the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death, but unabashedly defending it and forming students in the knowledge of the truth of the sanctity of life that they might be freed from the culture of death that pervades our world today.
- Our Catholic School will provide and protect:
 - A joyful respect and proclamation of the good of the Christian family as a domestic Church in which children can first encounter their identity as beloved children of God, the Father.
 - A curriculum that encourages children to talk to their parents and siblings about what they are learning and understanding and an education that seeks to strengthen the relationships in your family through the joyful shared pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness.
 - An understanding of History as the drama of our salvation by Jesus Christ from sin and death, in the study of human lives.
 - Instruction in math and science that allows students to come to know the logic and order of the genius behind creation.
 - Literature that forms a sacramental imagination and moral imagination in young men and women through grappling with the big questions of life in pursuit of what is true, good, and virtuous.
 - Physical formation that trains students to be a gift of self to others.
 - An immersion in art and music that seeks to form your children in recognizing and loving beauty.
 - Formation of the mind and heart which allows students to submit their identity, feelings, and desires to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
 - An environment that holds respect for the dignity of the human person, ensuring that all interactions by all members of the community towards each other and towards others outside of the school are grounded in the proper Christian charity and respect.
 - An environment that addresses issues of race, gender, poverty, and inequality in a manner that is consistent with Church teaching and avoids the influence of secular, critical philosophies and theories that contradict Church teaching.

For our school to properly support you as the primary educators of your children and partner with you in the formation and education of your children, all Catholic school families must understand and display a positive and supportive attitude toward the Catholic Church, her teachings, her work, and the mission of the Catholic school. As the Church notes, "Everyone has the obligation to recognize, respect, and bear



Sophia Montessori Academy

A Catholic School in the Byzantine Tradition

witness to the Catholic identity of the school," (The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue, 2022). While this does not mean members of our community are expected to be perfect and sinless, for the good of our community, families must refrain from public promotion or approval of any conduct or lifestyle that would discredit, disgrace, or bring scandal to the School, and the Church in the Archdiocese of Denver, or be considered a counter-witness to Catholic doctrine or morals.

Lastly, it is necessary for parents to cooperate closely with the leadership, faculty, and staff. By enrolling your child in our school, you are committing to maintaining a relationship rooted in the trust and confidence that our school and its personnel are operating for the good of your family and your child's learning and formation. Our school and personnel at some point may need to bring attention to academic, behavioral, or social concerns with your child. It is in these moments where there may be conflicts or disagreements that arise between the school and the family. In these moments, you can expect our school to engage with you to address complex issues with great respect and love for you and your child. In turn, families are asked to engage with trust that the school is seeking the best for its mission and your child and thus, expected to cooperate fully and respectfully with our school and its personnel to bring about the best resolution and outcome.

Thank you for partnering with us to support you in the mission of educating and forming your children. It is an honor to serve your family.