Dear Parent

Thank you for your recent enquiry about Melbourne Montessori School for your child. We are delighted to offer you the opportunity of learning more about our school. We offer a wide variety of programs delivering excellence in education from birth to secondary school.

Please find enclosed information about:

- Montessori Philosophy
- Differences between Montessori and Traditional Education
- Overview of Melbourne Montessori School
- School Tours & Information Events
- Parent & Toddler Group & Early Learners Program
- School Enrolment Process
- Enrolment Application Form
- Terms of Business and Tuition Fee Schedule

If you are interested to learn more about Melbourne Montessori School and the Montessori philosophy we would be happy to show you via a school tour and look forward to discussing how your child can benefit from a Montessori education.

Bookings are essential for all School Tours as numbers are limited. To book, please visit our website www.mms.vic.edu.au enter your preferred date and contact details.

Our school places are limited so registering your child on our Enrolment Register does not guarantee a place in our program. Children are considered when a vacancy occurs.

To be placed on our Enrolment Register, please return the following:

1. Completed Enrolment Application Form,
2. Payment of non-refundable fee of $200.00, and
3. Copy of your child’s Birth Certificate or passport.
4. For all secondary school enrolments please contact seniorschool@mms.vic.edu.au

You may have further questions, so please feel free to contact the school on (03) 9528 4478 or via email enrolments@mms.vic.edu.au

If you wish to learn more about the Montessori Method of Education, there are many online and physical resources available. We recommend you look at our website (www.mms.vic.edu.au) and the Montessori Australia Foundation website (www.montessori.org.au).

Yours faithfully

Gay Wales
Principal
Montessori Philosophy

"Help me to do it by myself" Dr. Maria Montessori’s attitude to education

Dr. Maria Montessori, physician, psychologist and noted humanitarian studied children of many racial, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds for over fifty years.

Maria was born in 1870 in Ancona, Italy. When her family moved to Rome she persuaded her parents to send her to a boys’ school that had an emphasis on science and engineering. Despite opposition, she studied to become a doctor and at the age of 26 was the first Italian woman to complete the degree of Doctor of Medicine. In 1900 she was appointed as the Director the Orthophrenic School (a model school for training teachers of children with developmental disabilities) and there experimented with materials to stimulate the senses. It was here that she succeeded in fostering the development of some of the children to such an extent that they achieved the same results on state exams as typically developing school children.

The neuro-science research of today is constantly confirming the in-depth observations and analysis made by Maria Montessori 100 years ago. Her intense scientific observation of the human being from birth to maturity allowed her to distil a body of philosophical, psychological and pedagogical principles. These, together with a vast range of autodidactic (self-correcting) materials, came to be known as the Montessori Method of Education.

The Montessori approach offers a broad vision of education as an aid to life. It is designed to help children with their task of inner construction as they grow from childhood to maturity. It succeeds because it draws its principles from the natural development of the child. Its flexibility provides a structure which each individual child’s inner motivation, combined with self-discipline, guides the child towards maturity.

Montessori classrooms provide a prepared environment where children are free to respond to their natural tendency to work. The children’s innate passion for learning is encouraged by giving them opportunities to engage in spontaneous, purposeful activities with the guidance of a trained adult (the teacher). Through their work, the children develop concentration and joyful self-discipline. Within a framework of order, the children progress at their own pace and rhythm, according to their individual capabilities.

Four Planes of Development

According to Montessori philosophy, the transformation of children from birth to adulthood occurs through a series of developmental planes. Montessori practice changes in scope and manner to embrace the child’s changing characteristics and interests.

There are four planes of development. Maria Montessori believed that if education followed the natural development of the child, then society would gradually move to a higher level of co-operation, peace and harmony.

First Plane – Infancy
Occurs between birth and six years and the child is characterised by his or her 'absorbent mind', absorbing all aspects of his or her environment, language and culture. This coincides with the development of the individual personality. It is a period when the child is moving towards physical and biological independence.
Second Plane – Childhood
Occurs between six and twelve years and sees the elaboration of mind and personality in the child. They use a 'reasoning mind' to explore the world with abstract thought and imagination. During this plane the child moves towards mental independence.

Third Plane – Adolescence
Occurs between the ages of twelve and eighteen years. In this plane the adolescent has a 'humanistic mind' eager to understand humanity and the contribution he or she can make to society. They develop their social personality and move towards social independence.

Fourth Plane – Maturity
Occurs between eighteen and twenty four years. The adult explores the world with a 'specialist mind', taking his or her place in the world. Your child's social personality is elaborated on as he or she moves towards spiritual and moral independence.

Melbourne Montessori School, which covers the first and second planes, is divided into three cycles:

- **Cycle 1** - for children aged 3 to 6 years (Mainstream education Kinder, Prep)
- **Cycle 2** - for children aged 6 to 9 years (Mainstream education grades 1, 2, 3)
- **Cycle 3** - for children aged 9 to 12 years (Mainstream education grades 4, 5, 6)
- **Cycle 4** - for children aged 12 to 15 years (Mainstream education Years 7, 8, 9)

**Prepared Environment**

Walk into a Montessori classroom and you will invariably see happy and busy children working purposefully. The classroom itself will typically be beautiful and enticing. Great care is taken to create a learning environment that will reinforce the child's independence and natural urge toward self-development. This is achieved in three ways - beauty, order and accessibility where materials are displayed on low, open shelves. Each piece of material has a specific purpose and is presented to the children in a manner that will enable them to direct their own learning.

The Montessori materials are tools to stimulate the child into logical thought and discovery. They are provocative, enticing and simple. Each piece of Montessori equipment presents one concept or idea at a time and has what is known as a “control of error”. If the child has done something incorrectly it will be self-evident. The geometric shape, for example, won't fit the hole; the water will spill on the table or the last label will not match the last picture. Being able to see his or her own mistake allows the child to work independently.

The Montessori classroom is not merely a place for individual learning. It is a vibrant community of children, where the child learns to interact socially in a variety of ways. The three-year age range enables older children to analyse what they have learnt as they teach the younger child, while the younger children are inspired to more advanced work through observing the older ones. With such a variety of levels in the classroom, each child can work at his or her own pace, unhindered by competition and encouraged by co-operation. Children attend daily and for a three-year cycle.

**The Montessori Teacher**

Montessori teachers have a VIT teacher qualification as well as an additional one-year full-time Montessori Teacher Education Diploma. The teacher is a guide or facilitator whose task it is to support the young child in his or her process of self-development. The teacher is foremost an observer, unobtrusively yet carefully monitoring each child's development, recognising and interpreting each child's needs.
The teacher provides a link between the child and the prepared environment, introducing the child to each piece of equipment when he or she is ready in a precise, clear and enticing way. On a broader level the teacher provides a link between the classroom and the parent, meeting with each child's parents to discuss progress. He/she is an example of calm, consistent, courteous and caring behaviour.

### Differences between Montessori and Traditional Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Montessori</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on helping the natural development of the human being</td>
<td>Based on the transfer of a national curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child is an active participant in learning</td>
<td>Child is a passive participant in learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed age groups</td>
<td>Same age groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children learn at their own pace and follow their own individual interest</td>
<td>Children learn from a set curriculum according to a time frame that is the same for everyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher works in collaboration with the children</td>
<td>The class is teacher led</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children teach themselves using materials specially prepared for the purpose</td>
<td>Children are taught by the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning is based on the fact that physical exploration and cognition are linked</td>
<td>Children sit at desks and learn from a whiteboard and worksheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding comes through the child’s own experiences with materials and the promotion of children’s ability to find things out for themselves</td>
<td>Learning is based on subjects and is limited to what information is given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly individual instruction</td>
<td>Mainly group instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child can work where he/she is comfortable, move around and talk at will while not disturbing others, active participation</td>
<td>Child is usually assigned own chair and encouraged to sit still and listen during group sessions, passive participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child’s individual development brings its own reward and therefore motivation</td>
<td>Motivation is achieved by a system of reward and punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment and method encourage internal self-discipline</td>
<td>Teacher acts as primary enforcer of external discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninterrupted work cycles</td>
<td>Block time, period lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child works as long as he/she wishes on chosen projects</td>
<td>Child generally given specific time limit for tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working and learning matched to the social development of the child</td>
<td>Working and learning without emphasis on the social development of the child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared emphasis on intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual development</td>
<td>Main emphasis on intellectual development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared focus on the acquisition of academic, social, practical and life skills</td>
<td>Main focus on academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers role is as an unobtrusive role in the class, the facilitator</td>
<td>The teacher is the centre of the classroom, the controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montessori</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The environment and teaching method encourages self discipline</td>
<td>The teacher acts as a primary enforcer of discipline, children become reliant on outside approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child sets own learning pace and reinforces own learning by repetition of work and internal feeling of success</td>
<td>Instruction pace usually set by group. Errors are pointed out or praise comes from the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child discovers own concepts from self-teaching, self-correcting materials</td>
<td>Child is shown concepts by teacher and corrected by teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**An Overview of Melbourne Montessori School**

Melbourne Montessori School (MMS) is an independent primary school for children from 3 to 12 years of age. There are two campuses, one in Caulfield and one in Brighton. Each has outdoor play space with interesting structures, and classrooms equipped with Montessori materials. These environments are prepared for children at each developmental level, and allow children to take responsibility for their own education. As a result our students develop a life-long passion for learning.

A Montessori education will give your child:
- the opportunity to work at their own pace in a non-competitive environment
- the opportunity to follow their natural curiosity
- follow systematic steps in learning, from the concrete to the abstract and
- an environment of stability, respect, order and beauty

All classes are multi-age, giving each child the opportunity to learn from others and the flexibility to develop their personality at their own pace, both socially and intellectually.

Children usually stay with the same teacher for three years, and this leads to strong teacher-student bonds and a deep understanding by the teacher of individual student characteristics.

**All Cycle 1 classes will be held at Brighton from 2015:**

**Cycle 1 (Age 3 to 6)**
Activities in this cycle are designed to allow your child to develop concentration, co-ordination, order and independence. Students work with concrete materials in tasks that include: manipulation of blocks; differentiation, discrimination and classification of materials; recognition and reproduction of letters; and identification of countries, animals and plants; painting, handcrafts and practical life activities.

Please note 3 and 4 year old children currently attend School from 9am to 12pm Monday to Friday. This time is gradually extended to 9am to 3pm based upon a child’s readiness, not chronological age. **In 2015, school lessons will start at 8.45am to 12pm for 3 and 4 year old children and 8.45am to 3pm for Prep children.**

**All Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 classes take place at Caulfield:**

**Cycle 2 (Age 6 to 9)**
Activities in this cycle are designed to allow your child to research their own questions about the world, building more complex understanding of concepts and connections. The major themes ('Great Stories') explored in Cycle 2 investigations are the stars, the planets, the story of life, the coming of humans, language and invention. **In 2015, school lessons will start at 8.45am to 3.15pm.**
**Cycle 3 (Age 9 to 12)**
This cycle provides an increased scientific base for a higher level of synthesis and understanding. It includes more abstract concepts and more sophisticated problem-solving. Students work in the areas of language, mathematics, geometry, geography, history, zoology and botany.

*In 2015, school lessons will start at 8.45am to 3.15pm.*

**Specialist classes**
In each cycle, students participate in a range of specialist activities. These include Italian, Music, Art, Drama and Sport.

**Cycle 4 is our new secondary cycle of Melbourne Montessori Senior School and is taking place at Brighton from 2015:**

**Cycle 4 (Age 12 to 15)**
This cycle will provide education as described in the Australian Curriculum (AusVels) Year 7-9: English, Mathematics, Science, Health, Physical Education, Languages – Italian, History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Business, Economics, The Arts, Design, Digital Technologies and will include critical and creative thinking, personal and social capabilities, intercultural understanding and ethical behaviour.

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**School Tours and Information Events**

**School Tours** are held both at the Brighton and Caulfield campuses to provide parents and guardians the opportunity to become familiar with the Montessori philosophy and our school, while observing the active Montessori environment and experiencing the spirit of our school.

Tours are conducted each fortnight at each campus (on alternating weeks) from 9:30am sharp. Bookings are essential as numbers for each tour are limited. Please book your school tour via our website [www.mms.vic.edu.au](http://www.mms.vic.edu.au).

**Open Days** are held at both campuses once a year (usually in March or April).

Bring the whole family along to enjoy an eventful morning where you can find out more about Melbourne Montessori School and the Montessori Method by talking to teachers and parents. You can experience our community through our sausage sizzle, book sale, plant sale, and other activities. This is a community event for all existing school families and prospective school families.

**Information Nights** are held throughout the year at each campus. These meetings are arranged to cover a range of queries from parents within our entire Montessori Community. Sessions may be held to discuss Continuing Montessori Education through the Primary Years and other matters of current interest to parents of children already within the school such as Asthma and Anaphylaxis.

For Prospective Parents there are two Pre-Enrolment Information sessions. These are usually held in May and late July. These cover such topics as the Montessori education, child development, the Montessori curriculum, classroom activities and equipment. The sessions may be repeated at a later stage in the year if there are still places available for the following year’s intake.
**Parent and Toddler Group - for children aged 1 year to 3 years**

This program started at Melbourne Montessori School in 2010 and operates at Brighton.

The Parent and Toddler Group sessions meet the developmental needs of children aged 1 to 3 years of age where children attend with their parents. Children attending the Parent & Toddler Group will be offered the preliminaries of a Montessori program, covering the following elements:

- practical life
- sensorial
- pre-mathematics
- pre-literacy
- culture

These provide a stimulating learning environment. These sessions also provide a wonderful opportunity to learn about Montessori philosophy and practice.

The Parent and Toddler Group is co-ordinated by a Montessori Group Leader. The number of sessions per week and the days on which they are held, may vary from year to year depending on the number of enrolments registered. We endeavour to provide enrolment to all applicants, however, it should be understood that places are limited, so timely application is encouraged. Currently sessions are conducted on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings for 2 hours from 9:30 to 11.30am.

Participation fees are in the enclosed Terms of Business Schedule.

**Early Learners Program - for children aged 2.3 year to 3 years**

The Early Learners Program is conducted at Brighton and is for children aged 2.3 years to 3 years of age.

Each program consists of a combination of two sessions per week, held on consecutive days, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. There are be up to eight children in each session. Our Montessori Early Childhood Leader and Assistant will give your child the best start to life through this Montessori Program. The children will be offered a wholly Montessori program covering the following in a stimulating learning environment:

- practical life
- sensorial
- language
- mathematics
- culture

**Program details are as follows:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Session Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program A</td>
<td>Monday morning / Tuesday afternoon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program B</td>
<td>Tuesday morning / Monday afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program C</td>
<td>Wednesday morning / Thursday afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program D</td>
<td>Thursday morning / Wednesday afternoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The morning session runs from 9.15 to 11.15am and the afternoon 12.45pm to 2.45pm.
The first session is usually one hour and thereafter two hours. The children will be introduced to the room and made comfortable and the parents will be assisted in the separation process. Parents will leave and return at the end of the session to collect their child. Punctuality is very important for the success of the program.

**School Enrolment Process**

Parents and guardians are invited to visit our school on a tour, which requires booking. Tours are conducted each fortnight at each campus (on alternating weeks) from 9:30am sharp. Bookings are essential as numbers for each tour are limited.

To help understand the enrolment process, here are the major steps for enrolling your child:

1. Complete the Enrolment Application Form.

2. Return the Enrolment Application Form with $200 non-refundable registration fee and a copy of your child’s Birth Certificate or passport. When your name is placed on the Enrolment Register you will be sent an acknowledgement letter.

3. Attend a Pre-Enrolment Information Night. These Information Nights are conducted in a group forum and attendance is compulsory. These evenings are intended to give parents an introduction to Montessori Education, Child Development and the School Curriculum.

4. Following attendance at the Information Night, parents will be asked to make an appointment to meet with the Principal for a pre-enrolment interview. Bookings can be made on the evening or by phoning the school on (03) 9528 4478.

5. Successful candidates will be offered a place for the following year (or appropriate time of entry). Parents have fourteen (14) days to accept the place and pay the non-refundable acceptance fee of $2000.00.

6. **Cycle 1’s only** - Parents and children will need to attend a compulsory Cycle 1 Orientation Morning in early November. This is an opportunity for staff, parents and children to get to know each other and will assist your child in feeling comfortable in his or her new learning environment.

7. In early December parents will receive a letter confirming their child’s classroom allocation and starting schedule. In order to facilitate a gentle introduction to school for our new students, Melbourne Montessori School conducts an initiation period over the first few weeks of the school term, gradually extending the number of hours per day and days per week spent at school. We have found this to be a most affective and appropriate introduction for our littlest or newest members of class. After the first two weeks of term this schedule will be reviewed following consultation with your child’s teacher.