

Parent Handbook



Inspiring our children
to create a better world
with their *own* two hands

**Melbourne
Montessori
School**

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MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

VALUES AND OBJECTIVES

1. The Montessori approach: The Montessori approach to learning in its most authentic understanding is the framework of our educational program. We understand that Maria Montessori's methods and materials are not a closed system; however, we commit to apply the words, wisdom, and practical advice of Maria Montessori and her closest associates as the lens through which we select, design, and evaluate our program and curriculum.
2. We believe that self-esteem, human dignity, and emotional well-being, as well as the ability to communicate and cooperate effectively with others, whether adult to adult, adult to child or child to child, must be valued as highly as academic and material success.
 - 2.1. We affirm that we will support and promote the principles and practice of Australian democracy including the commitment to elected government, the rule of law, equal rights for all before the law, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and association and the values of openness and tolerance.
 - 2.2. We affirm that we will support the ideal that all beings are interdependent and that every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings. We will support and promote the belief that we need to **protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life; and to** manage the use of renewable resources such as water, soil, forest products, and marine life in ways that do not exceed rates of regeneration and that protect the health of ecosystems.
 - 2.3. We affirm that education begins at birth and continues throughout life and that therefore all our values apply equally to adults, parents, teachers, guardians and all children in the School. We believe that intelligence is not rare among human beings.
 - 2.4. We nurture intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, and physical growth for the development of a whole, healthful being:
 - **Emotional:** Our emotions are complex and powerful and it is important that we learn to feel them fully and without fear, identify them correctly (in ourselves and others), respect them, and accept them. It is equally important, however, that we learn to harness their power and not let them control our lives unchecked.
 - **Social:** Our ability to interact positively with each other is essential to creating a peaceful world.
 - **Physical:** We acknowledge our place in the physical world and seek to discover, understand, and adopt the lifestyle habits most appropriate and beneficial for our bodies and minds.
 - **Spiritual:** While we feel it is each person's task to develop his or her own understanding of the nature of the universe and the individual's place in it, we proceed on the premise that our world is a beautiful, positive, loving place, a setting that provides the potential for each person to lead a full, free, joyful, and healthy life.
 - **Intellectual:** The intellect is an important tool in the shaping of our world. Through the development of our thinking abilities we refine our emotional responses, and we clarify our picture of the universe.

- 2.5 We approach learning seeking to understand our students' uniqueness and guide them individually and at their own pace, so they fully realise their potential.
- 2.6 We celebrate the natural diversity of human beings.
- 2.7 We affirm the ideal of the Renaissance person. Our ultimate goal is to produce individuals who not only have learned how to learn, but also have a love of learning, a wide range of interests, and an openness to new ideas and possibilities.
- 2.8 We affirm that self-esteem is one of the crucial ingredients for the full expression of a person's potential. We strive to nurture self-esteem at every level of learning.
- 2.9 We believe true success is achieved through the willingness to take risks. Individual success and failure are simply feedback mechanisms by which growth and progress are achieved.
- 2.10 We believe that wisdom can be cultivated, and consists of the ability to listen to your heart and know how best to put your intelligence to work for you.
3. **Developmental Approach to Education:** Our educational approach is centred around the stages of human development. This approach includes keeping abreast of current theories on development, regular student observation, and a constant evaluation of the curriculum to ensure that it is appropriate for the developmental stages of our students. We recognise that the first six years are critical to a person's development. For that reason, the programs in toddler and early childhood are as important as any other level of the school. Investment of resources in the early childhood years will be made accordingly.
4. **Individualisation:** We follow the Montessori curriculum which, by design, is adaptable to different paces and styles of learning. Each child works within an established curricular framework that includes the school's expectations for basic academic achievement. If a child needs more direction at certain times or is not internally motivated in a given area, we feel it is our responsibility to acknowledge the personal preference but to guide the child toward that necessary work.
5. **Active Active learning:** We promote active rather than passive ("lecture and drill") learning by: encouraging students to pursue studies in areas of their personal interests; using hands-on, experiential learning, such as concrete manipulative learning materials, experimental discovery seminar discussions, independent library research, field investigation; creating an environment in which the child's personal success is the motivation for learning.

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

Mission – Our mission at Melbourne Montessori School is to:

- Provide an enriched and welcoming learning community that embodies the Montessori principles of respect for self, respect for others and respect for the environment as well as respect for our country's freedoms and democratic principles.
- Nurture, inspire and support each child's individual development.
- Foster the growth of self-confidence, independence, self-discipline, personal and social responsibility.
- Foster children's innate love of learning and to make their introduction to education a joyful and purposeful start to a journey of life-long learning.

STEPS TO ENROLMENT AND THE FIRST WEEKS

If you are interested in registering your child to commence at Melbourne Montessori School here are the steps to enrolment. Our Enrolment Policy is on the website and will give you more detail. Below is the normal order of events, however, very fast enrolment might happen in a different order. If you are unsure of what to do next, please ask at Reception.

A. REGISTRATION

1. Registration is the first step to commencing at Melbourne Montessori School.
2. Please download a Registration form from the website or contact Reception to register your child.
3. The Registration Fee and a copy of your child's birth certificate needs to be submitted and then we can add the name of your child and family contact details to the Enrolment Register on the database.
4. Please keep in mind that the acceptance of a Registration form and fee does not guarantee a place at the school.

B. OPEN DAY OR SCHOOL TOUR

Parents/guardians are encouraged to attend an Open Day or School Tour at either campus – dates and times are on the website or please ring Reception.

C. INTERVIEW

An interview between your child, yourselves as parents/guardians and the Principal is held. The aim of the interview is to answer your questions, to allow you to understand the enrolment process and to gather initial information about your child to potentially guide class placement later.

D. OFFER OF PLACE

1. After the interview a Letter of Offer will be mailed to you in the post.
2. The letter will include details of the date of entry, the classroom and campus of the place for the child's start at Melbourne Montessori School.
3. If there is no place available your child's name will be placed on the Waiting List and you will be notified when a place becomes available.

E. INFORMATION SESSIONS

Potential Cycle 1 parents/guardians are expected to attend at least one of several available Pre-Enrolment Information Sessions. **You can either attend these after your child has secured a place at the School, or before deciding to apply for an offer of a place.** These Information Sessions are generally held every term and are also available to parents who have enrolled and commenced in the same school year.

F. ENROLMENT FORMS

If you accept a place please fill in the Enrolment Agreement within 14 days. Once we have received this form and the \$2000 Acceptance Fee your place at Melbourne Montessori School will be guaranteed.

G. ORIENTATION MORNING

If your child is going to commence in Cycle 1 the following year, you and your child are invited to attend an Orientation Morning held in early November to meet all Cycle 1 teachers and other Cycle 1 parents/guardians and children.

H. RECEIPT OF YOUR CHILD'S CLASSROOM DETAILS

1. If your child's place was confirmed before November you will receive a letter outlining the actual campus and class of your child for the next year and also a schedule for your starting days.
2. Then in January, your child's teacher will contact you, normally by phone, to make a time for you to meet them out of school hours - generally about 3pm or 3.30pm. This is an opportunity to meet the teacher and for them to introduce you and your child to the classroom.

I. TRANSITION

1. Your child will not come to School on the first day of Term 1 but rather in a staggered start from Week 2. It is very important to us that your child is very settled as they move to Melbourne Montessori School.
2. There are a number of steps which take place to reassure your child and give them the confidence to attend School at a pace that suits them.

Maria Montessori observed that children develop and grow and become mature at different rates. One of the major differences in the education at a Montessori school compared with a traditional school is the starting day and rate of uptake to full time attendance – we call this Transition.

As we discussed in your initial interview, it makes a lot of sense to recognise that children mature and develop at different rates, in different ways and for different reasons. To this end, and in the best interests of each child, Montessori schools watch the child and take cues from them as to the maximum speed we can introduce a child to the expectations of the classroom and to the hours of work ahead of them. We want each child to be successful in their learning and to experience as much as they can readily adapt to at the optimum speed. We have a list of criteria called the Readiness Checklist which guide us in these decisions as professionals.

One of the milestones which traditional schooling cannot accommodate is the readiness to work and learn, to respect others' work, consistently for five hours per day, five days per week. These skills are not linked to birthday dates or term dates or any other dates. Children develop the stamina, the motivation, the ability to focus for a length of time and the ability to ignore distractions and take direction at different speeds. This is why Montessori teachers observe children so carefully, give them opportunities to focus longer and take on ever increasingly challenging tasks.

If you have any questions about the readiness of your child to stay for more days or for full days or to move up to another cycle, please talk to your teacher about the myriad observations they take daily to understand your child – they will always be willing to set aside a time to discuss it with you.

SECTION 1

YOUR CHILD

A. WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

School Bag

Your child will need a light, durable school bag to hold their change of clothes, drink bottle, snack and, when your child comes for the full day, their lunch.

In Terms 1 and 4 your child will also need a broad-brimmed hat and sunscreen. Hats are available at Reception or bring your own.

Cycle 1 children need to arrive with sunscreen already applied as state health regulations don't allow teachers to apply sunscreen to children. We suggest you add a roll-on sunscreen to your child's bag as they can learn to apply this quite easily.

Shoes

Your child will need 'indoor' shoes and 'outdoor' shoes. We want your child to be comfortable when working inside, often on the floor. Children will be asked to wear regular or outside shoes when going out to play. Indoor shoes, like slippers, stay at School and your child changes into them when they arrive each morning.

On the days they have Sport or PMP lessons, they will also need runners.

Snacktime

Melbourne Montessori School promotes healthy eating and ask that all children bring a piece of fruit or a vegetable each day to eat as a snack. In many classrooms all fruit snacks are cut up as a fruit platter to be shared.

Nut-free Policy

Melbourne Montessori School strives to be a nut-free school as we have several students who are anaphylactic. **Do not include nuts or nut products** in their lunch including peanut butter sandwiches, nutella sandwiches, muesli bars etc at any time.

Lunch boxes

Once your child has been invited to stay for full days they will need to bring a lunch box with their lunch. Please ensure that your child can open all parts of their lunch box! Glass bottles, cans of drink, fruit drink boxes and sweets are discouraged.

Book Bag

In most classrooms, book bags are to be provided for the children when the child starts to read. The teacher will inform each family when it is appropriate for your child to start Readers. Details of size and design can be obtained from the classroom teacher.

Library Bag

The Full-Day children visit the Library once per week. Children bring their own Library Bag and independently borrow a book to take home. Details of size and design can be obtained from the classroom teacher.

Stationery

The School supplies all required stationery for the class. Cycle 2 and 3 children need to bring a small pencil case with a sharpener, eraser, HB lead pencil and coloured pencils, all labelled.

Art Smocks

Each Cycle 2 and 3 student needs to bring a smock to their weekly lesson in the Art Room. A large t-shirt or a man's shirt with the sleeves cut to elbow length is great to cover their clothes. Please try not to dress your children in their best clothes on Art day.

B. YOUR CHILD'S APPEARANCE

Clothing

Children's clothing should be clean, practical and appropriate to the weather and the type of activities in which the children are involved. Hence novelty clothes eg. tutus, fairy wings, etc. are inappropriate. Strapless sundresses, singlets and other forms of inappropriate dress should not be worn in order to protect the children from the harmful effects of the sun's rays. Thongs and high-heeled shoes are also inappropriate. A range of school t-shirts and hats with the Melbourne Montessori School logo are available from Reception.

Lost property and naming your clothing

Please label all belongings clearly with the child's name including clothing, school bag and lunch boxes. Please check the lost property box regularly for any articles belonging to your family. All lost property not collected by the end of term will be donated to charity.

Valuables

Valuable items or personal property such as special toys, jewellery, expensive sports equipment, computer or video games, etc. should not be brought to School, as the School cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage.

Mobile phones are to be handed in to the classroom teacher during the day so that they can be kept locked in a safe place until the end of the day.

C. SCHOOL HOURS

All new children have a 2-week Settling In period 9.30am-11.30am. After this 2-week period the classroom teacher will discuss with you your child's readiness to extend to half-days 9.00am -12pm. In the first year Cycle 1 children will attend a maximum of 5 half days.

Cycle One - Morning Children

The doors of the classrooms open at 8.30am. Our experience has shown that children are most settled when they have been at School for 15-20 minutes before School starts. Cycle 1 children come for the morning only and need to be collected promptly at 12 noon sharp.

Full-day

The doors of the classrooms open at 8.30am. As already mentioned, children are most settled when they have been at School for 15-20 minutes before School starts. All classes start at 9am and finish at 3pm. There is a one hour break at lunchtime for eating and play time.

Attendance book

For the Early Learners and Cycle 1 children it is a legal requirement that each child is signed in each morning by the person bringing the child to School and signed out at the time of pick up by the person collecting the child. Outside each classroom door you will find an Attendance Book. Please make sure that you are accurate in your signing on the correct line and writing in the correct time.

Cycle 2 and Cycle 3

The doors of the classrooms open at 8.30am. As already mentioned, children are most settled when they have been at School for 15-20 minutes before School starts. All classes start at 8.45am and finish at 3.15pm. There is a one hour break at lunchtime for eating and play time.

Wet/Extreme Heat Days

The children are supervised indoors whenever inclement weather prevents them from using the playground.

Supervision by Staff

During school hours staff must be notified if a child leaves the school with an adult. If a child is to be picked up by an adult unfamiliar to staff then the parent of the child must notify staff in writing of the arrangement before the event. The nominated adult should be listed in the Student Record form to be filled in annually and whenever a change occurs. *No responsibility is taken by the staff for children in the school grounds before 8:30am or after 3:30pm.*

Our teaching staff are on duty between the hours of 8.30am – 3.30pm daily. Children remain the responsibility of parents until taken to class.

Rest for your child

Children can sometimes get tired at School and so each Cycle 1 classroom has a quiet corner with an area for children to have some rest and solace if they feel the need. Cycle 2 and 3 children can choose to have some time out too sometimes.

Non-School Days

Children do not attend school on Public Holidays and on several additional days like Curriculum Days, during the year. Parents are notified of these days well in advance in the School Calendar and website.

Curriculum Days

Curriculum Days are held to ensure that teachers continue their professional development in regard to both Montessori Curriculum and current educational ideas. These days also allow adequate opportunity to review the school curriculum. Curriculum days are held regularly during the school year, usually one per term. Students do not attend School on Curriculum Days.

D. IF YOUR CHILD IS SICK**A Note of Explanation**

A note of explanation is required whenever parents wish their child to be exempted from any part of the school program for medical or religious reasons. Parents should advise the school with a written note. This is a regulatory requirement.

If your child is sick

Your child should be kept home if he/she is ill. If they have developed a runny nose which is thick and yellow or green in colour, they are infectious and should be kept home. Infection spreads rapidly and the child is best cared for at home. Please do not send the child back to school too early. Parents of children who have any of the infectious diseases will also be asked to stay at home.

Medication at School

If your child needs to take any medication, please discuss this with the classroom teacher. The staff cannot be responsible for administering medications unless there are special circumstances. Proper notice and information needs to be given to the staff. The correct administration of medication form should be filled in and signed by the parent. This form will inform the teacher of the correct dosage and time of administering the medication.

The teacher in charge must ensure that the medication is administered from its **original container, bearing the original label and instructions and before the expiry or use by date**¹.

School Medical Service

Each year a nursing sister from the School Medical Service visits the school. A general medical examination including the testing of hearing and eyesight is provided free for all of primary school age children. Before this examination can take place, parents must give written permission and complete a confidential medical card for the child. During 3rd Cycle, a colour vision-screening test and referrals from teachers and parents are also part of the medical service offered.

Immunisation

An up to date Immunisation Status Certificate is required by Medicare and must be provided upon enrolment. In the event that your child is not immunised a 'Declaration of Exemption from Immunisation' Certificate is required to be signed by the parents and a doctor. Please see the *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy* on the website.

A child cannot be enrolled in a school without an Immunisation Status Certificate which is available

¹ Children's Services Regulations 1998 S.R No. 59/1998 r.36

from your local council.

The local Council arranges for immunisation, as part of the Recommended Immunisation Schedule to be carried out in schools each year.

The current program is:

Prep: Measles/Mumps/Rubella (2nd dose)

Grade 1: Diphtheria/Tetanus/Poliomyelitis (booster dose)

The Victorian Department of Human Services policy about requirement for immunisation states: If a child's immunisation is incomplete and there is an outbreak of an infectious disease at school, then your child will be excluded until there are no more occurrences of that disease and the exclusion period has ceased. This is for your child's and other children's protection.

E. HEAD LICE

Long Hair

Long hair should be tied back to prevent the spread of head lice and to help keep the hair off the face when children are working.

Unfortunately head lice appear in all schools in Victoria, both public and private. People are repelled by the thought of head lice and sometimes the reaction is out of proportion to the discomfort caused. There are no long-term effects from hosting head lice. Parents should regularly examine their children's heads, particularly behind the ears and the back of the neck.

Children with head lice are excluded from School until they have been treated with the appropriate product. Check your child's head carefully and thoroughly and take appropriate action if you find an infestation.

Signs to look for:

- Frequent scratching of the head
- A fine black powder on the pillow
- Paler coloured matter on pillows
- The lice themselves
- Tiny white specks stuck near the root of a hair (these are the 'nits' or lice eggs)

Action to take:

- Check all members of the family
- If you find head lice you should wash the hair with an appropriate product (speak to your chemist for product advice)
- Remove all nits with a special nit removal comb available at the chemist
- Wash clothes, bed linen and towels
- Soak combs, brushes, etc. in hot water (at least 130 deg for at least 10 minutes)
- Vacuum everywhere

Remember that the appearance of head lice has absolutely nothing to do with the kind of parent you are. It has nothing to do with cleanliness: in fact lice prefer a clean healthy head of hair to a dirty one. Anyone, adult or child can get head lice.

F. INFECTIOUS DISEASES

There is a schedule published by the Department of Health entitled *Minimum Period of Exclusion from Schools and Children's Service Centres of Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts* advising parents/guardians on enrolment that the recommended minimum exclusion periods will be observed in regard to the outbreak of any infectious diseases or infestations.

See the following document for periods of exclusion:

<http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/Minimum-Period-of-Exclusion-from-Primary-Schools-and-Childrens-Schools-Centres-for-Infectious-Diseases-Cases-and-Contacts>)

G. CHILD PROTECTION

Contact Details:

For Mandatory Reporting

Child Protection
Department of Human Services
DHS Southern Region
Tel: (03) 9213 2111
1300 655 795
www.dhs.vic.gov.au/regional/southern

For Referrals & Community Support

Child FIRST
Southern Metropolitan
Glen Eira & Bayside
Tel: 1300 367 441

After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services

Tel: 131 278

24 Hours/7 days per week

SECTION 2

PARENTS

Being a parent member of the Melbourne Montessori School gives parents the opportunity for them to access quality Montessori education and brings with it certain responsibilities.

Research indicates that your child's attitude to school is influenced by your attitude. As parents, you help set the foundations for your child's learning. We look forward to sharing the excitement involved – building on the base that you have already established. We take your influence and participation seriously and respectfully at Melbourne Montessori. We look forward to you being involved in your child's education. The following considerations can help you and your child within our school community.

A. PARENTS AND THE CLASSROOM

Arrival

Children are most settled when they have been at School for 15-20 minutes before School starts. We advise you to bring your child before 9.00am. Parents are requested to have their child at their classroom by 9.00am at the latest.

Entering the child's workspace

Parents and grandparents are all welcomed into the classroom on special days: Parents' and Special Friends' Day, Grandparents' and Special Friends Day and Open Day. For the Cycle 1s you are also welcome to come into the class at special times on Italian Day, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day.

In addition, you can also organise for an *Observation* or help with cleaning the class at designated times or help with various rosters. There are opportunities to come into the classroom for special activities to help the teacher and assist. Some parents run cooking sessions, gardening sessions – even origami classes or yoga.

At other times, it is considered important that the child's workspace is valued as the child's domain and so parents need to say good bye at the door of their classroom. We trust and assist all the children to be independent enough to stay and work in a friendly, safe environment and our trust is transmitted through the parents strong reassurance of 'See you at 12 o'clock!' 'Have a great day!' etc and a quick farewell. These messages in words and body language give the child the confidence to know that they will be fine and that you (or another trusted adult) will be there to pick them up at home time.

Observations

You are encouraged to organise an Observation of your child's class once per year.

Please ask your classroom teacher which day and time would suit best and then let Reception know that you will be coming at this time.

An Observation lasts for about 20 - 30 mins and is a Montessori tradition.

It is a time for you to sit at the side of the room, hopefully relatively unnoticed, so that you can see your child's Montessori classroom in operation. You are asked to try to avoid interacting with the children, as we want them to focus on their work and behave as if you were not there. Parents are always delighted to see their child's class in action.

Washing Roster

In each of the classrooms, families are rostered to wash, dry and iron the classroom linen several times during the year. We ask that washing be picked up on Friday afternoon and returned on the next Monday at drop off time.

Pets at School

Although lots of children and adults love animals, unfortunately we cannot allow your family pets at School. They can be tied up outside School to wait for you if you like and sometimes we have incursions that teach young children how to treat dogs if you meet them in the park etc. Many of the classrooms have pet guinea pigs or fish which help the children learn how to care for other creatures.

Collection of children – Pick-up and Play

Once children have been signed out of School they need to be supervised at all times by their parents. Unfortunately, we cannot invite children and parents to play in the Cycle 1 playground at the same time as the full-day children are having their lunch play.

Once children have left the classroom at 3pm they are no longer under the supervision of the classroom teacher. Cycle 2 and 3 children are to make their way to the gate to await collection or if their parent/guardian has arrived and is in the yard, they are under the supervision of that adult.

Room Reps

Each class is represented by a parent from the classroom who liaises with the teacher and Principal and can be a useful starting point if you have a question about upcoming events or other local specifics. Room Reps all meet with the Principal once per month and make sure that all parents are kept informed about upcoming events, Fundraising requests, special resources which might be needed from time to time like cardboard boxes for construction etc. In Cycle 2 and 3 they organise helpers for the Art Room and Interschool Sport days etc.

Extra-Curricular Activities

There are a number of Extra-Curricular Activities which are offered at both campuses. Attendance is voluntary and these activities are run by external companies who are paid by the term. Currently, depending on the child's age, you can choose from Drama, Yoga, Chess, Sport and Write Club. Application forms are available at Reception.

After School Care Program

Children at Caulfield may use the After School Program provided at Caulfield Primary School. After School Care is offered between the hours of 3.30pm - 6.30pm from Monday to Friday at Caulfield Primary School.

Parents need to have registered their child with Caulfield Primary School before they can use the service. Details are available at Reception.

Parents then need to sign their child in on the form held at Caulfield Reception at the latest on the morning of the day they require After Care.

B. MORE INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**Reports and Parent-Teacher Interview Nights**

A child's progress at Melbourne Montessori School is reported four times per year.

A Parent Teacher Interview is held in Terms 1 and 3 and formal reports are sent home in Terms 2 and 4. The dates of the Parent Teacher Interviews are advertised on the website and parents can choose between two nights which are held across two weeks on different week days. In this way it is hoped that all parents can find a night and time which suits them. You will need to book in advance and Room Reps will inform all parents of the best way to book a 15 minute time slot for each child.

Interviews can also be made with Specialist teachers or with the Principal – please ask at Reception for these bookings.

Appointment with your classroom teacher

Our teachers like to work closely with our parents as they recognise that support from home and school increases the child's opportunity to learn. If you are concerned about any aspect of your child's school life or have an issue which you would like to discuss with your classroom teacher please arrange for an interview with them either by phoning the School or by requesting a time directly with the teacher.

Appointment times need to be outside the morning timeslot of 8.30 – 9am and afternoon timeslot of 3.00-3.15pm.

Informal parent/teacher contact is encouraged as a continual process during a child's stay at our school. Parents are asked to confide in the staff if there is something that might have upset the child at home – for example if the dog is sick or has died. A child's work or capacity to learn might be affected, even if they do not always show it. Please arrange an appointment with your classroom teacher so that full attention can be given to any issues that arise.

Parent Education Evenings

Every parent is encouraged to develop an understanding of the unique Montessori method. To do this parents are able to attend parent education sessions regularly. These take place regularly and are presented by a variety of speakers, including our staff, who talk on important issues relating to the classroom, the Montessori method and its implementation and the general education of children. Parents are encouraged to attend these evenings and the research shows that children receiving a consistent message from both home and school learn faster.

Parent Library

We have some excellent educational books in both libraries which are available for loan to parents. The aim of the Parent Library is to support family understanding of the philosophy, principles and practice of your child's Montessori education. Please ask at Reception for the best time to browse and borrow.

The School Website

The School website address is <http://www.mms.vic.edu.au> and it has lots of information on it including the weekly Broadsheet, all the School Policies, Board News, Classroom blogs, Health Information and forms needed at School. If you would like to access this information you will need to log in on the right-hand side of the webpage. Please ask your Room Rep for the log in and password.

If you experience any difficulties, please do not hesitate to contact the School.

Melbourne Montessori School Broadsheet

The Broadsheet is our regular newsletter. It is updated on the website weekly and contains all communication to the school community. Any reminders, events and important dates for the school community during the coming weeks are uploaded on to the website. The Broadsheet link is emailed out to families weekly.

Parent Directory

The Parent Directory is a list of contact details of other parents in the cycle. If you wish to know the contact details of a parent in another class, please contact your Room Rep or Reception and they will be able to put you in touch with the appropriate Room Rep.

Please notify the school if you have changed your contact details. You will be given an opportunity to inform the office of any desired alterations each year via the Family Data Sheet.

C. PARENT PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHOOL

All parents become members of the 'limited by guarantee liability Company' under which the Melbourne Montessori School is incorporated. The School is a registered school, governed by a Board made up of parents and others. Board members are also Directors of the company. From time to time, the Board establishes committees to address specific issues. The Board sets the Strategic Plan of the School, oversees fees and generally oversees the welfare of the School and its community.

Elections for positions on the Board are held at the Annual General Meeting. All Board positions are for two years, but parents may be nominated again if they wish to remain active. People standing for, and being elected to, the Board are expected to attend all monthly Board meetings, and take on a governance portfolio.

Each family can contribute to the maintenance/working bee program and participate in Parent Association responsibilities which cover fundraising and building the community through social events.

Parents who wish to assist in the classroom may make a request to the teacher offering their skills and availability; they also need to provide a Working with Children Check.

D. SIGN-IN BOOK FOR VISITORS

Visitors arriving at the School for an observation, or to assist in a classroom are required to sign in at Reception and receive a visitor's badge. This badge is required to be worn during the visit to the School and should be visible at all times. On departure, visitors are required to sign out and return their badge to Reception.

E. PARENT INVOLVEMENT LEVY OR EQUIVALENT

All Melbourne Montessori School families are required to contribute to the Parent Involvement Levy via payment or volunteering.

Parent Involvement Levy (PIL)

The message to children is that you care for their School and that working in an environment is a major way to show support and commitment. The School conducts working bees, social and fundraising activities throughout the year.

At the beginning of each term a Parent Involvement Levy (PIL) is charged on the family's fee invoice and parents choose either to pay the levy or to take part in some maintenance or fundraising activities, for a minimum of at least four hours each school term per family.

A credit for the Parent Involvement Levy can be achieved in the following ways:

- by taking part in a committee such as the Parent Association which organises community events each term or being a Room Rep for a classroom; or
- attending a Working Bee once per term (dates are in the calendar) - At each Working Bee there is a sign in sheet which should be signed by those participating. It is from this list that the Office generates the PIL credit for each family; or
- by applying to undertake specific job/s around the school. A list of these jobs can be found near Reception at each campus, alternatively speak to a classroom teacher or Room Rep for further opportunities to help. You will need to fill in a sheet which lists the work done and the person who has signed off on the work; or
- by participating in fundraising activities eg at Open Day.

The MMS website under the menu School Forms in the Parent section has the forms you need to record your contribution.

F. FUNDRAISING

- Every gift accepted by the School will be appreciated, valued and acknowledged.
- The Foundation, with the direction of the MMS Board, will lead and promote the School's fundraising efforts. They will seek funds from within the School's community and external sources, including both philanthropic and statutory bodies.
- The Parent Association will meet regularly to organise and coordinate community fundraising events eg Mothers' Day, Disco, Fathers' Day etc.
- There will be one major fundraising activity during each School year. Incidental fundraising activities will be conducted throughout each year in a coordinated manner.
- A Voluntary Building Fund Levy will be detailed on each term fee invoice. This Voluntary Building Fund Levy is tax deductible.
- While donations of funds, tangible goods, services or real property are deeply appreciated, the Principal or Business Manager needs to decide on behalf of the School how any gift is used. The School cannot accept any gift that would violate any of its core beliefs.

G. PARKING

Caulfield

Parking is a major issue in Roselea Street, both for our neighbours and for us. To help maintain everyone's rights it is important to follow a few rules.

Please enter Roselea Street from Almond Street only

Park on the school side of the street and ensure that you are not blocking a driveway, as this would be very frustrating for the people trying to leave or enter their driveway. You may wish to park in Glenhuntly Road or Almond Street and walk your children to School. This is strongly encouraged by the School, to promote emotional and physical wellbeing for both parents and children.

Brighton

Parents and visitors are asked to park on Hawthorn Road or several blocks away and then walk to and from School. Parking is a problem both for our neighbours and for us. All parents are requested to drive carefully and be aware of the children when parking. When parking, ensure that you are not blocking a driveway, as it is very frustrating for our neighbours when they try to leave or enter their driveways. Reserved spaces in the Church car park are for staff only.

H. HIRING THE CHURCH OR CAULFIELD HALL

Parents are encouraged to hire the Church or Caulfield Hall for any functions or activities which they might want to organise, subject to availability. Please make your request through the Business Manager.

I. ADVICE FOR PARENTS

Regular Early Bedtime

Regular early bedtime is essential for children to fully participate in an active school day. Please see to it that your child gets enough sleep. It has been our experience that chronic fatigue leads to many serious behavioural problems. If your child seems chronically tired, have him/her examined by a doctor and keep him/her at home for a few days.

Getting Ready for the School Day

Children need support – getting ready for school means allowing children appropriate time to have breakfast and get dressed and groomed. TV in the morning is not recommended.

Birthday Celebration

Parents are encouraged to send a fruit platter to share with friends if they wish. Cut fruit facilitates easier distribution.

Birthday Invitations

If a child is inviting some of his/her schoolmates to a private party, invitations must be posted or emailed, not given out at School.

Secular and Cultural Festivals

The following guidelines are used by the staff. All activities are undertaken with a Montessori perspective and ultimately the decision rests with each cycle teacher

- They are mindful that:
- Each classroom is unique and celebrations vary according to the term curriculum and interests of the children;
- Any activity conducted in the classrooms is age appropriate and;
- Festivals may be celebrated as part of a historical study and/or a reflection of cultural events in the Australian life style.

After School Activities

It is important to limit after school activities so that children are well rested and in a fit condition to participate in classroom learning. Remember only some learning happens at school. Each child's home provides a rich environment of family routines, conversations and activities. Children learn from the adults around them so talk about family matters, trips to the zoo, the beach and family celebrations.

J. FAQs

1. How can I as a parent prepare my child to take on more time at school?

There are many strategies that you can incorporate at home to prepare your child for longer hours at school. Talk to your teacher too, as they can give you many helpful ideas specific to your child.

Visit www.aidtolife.org the Montessori website, borrow the books and videos from our Library.

Read the blog www.howwemontessori.com – there is an Australian section.

- Create routines at home eg bed time rituals which calm a child and lead them to fall asleep quickly
- Encourage your child to become independent: to dress, undress, and pack up after play, carry their school bag and put their own fruit in the bowl.
- Encourage your child to be respectful of their belongings and provide boundaries for your child about the expectations at home e.g. Tidy the bedroom after play
- Give your child responsibilities eg when eating meals with family, ask them to set the table etc.
- Above all, be patient! Give them **time** to succeed in managing tasks for themselves

2. Why is there no homework at MMS?

Most homework is boring and repetitive and there is very little positive research around homework. However work at home is a different story. Children are encouraged to be responsible for simple tasks around the home eg, feeding the cat, laying the table, helping with cooking and washing up. Children like to be involved in the family routines and to do purposeful work. All children should be 'reading' at least one, but preferably more, book per night. This might mean the adult reads or the child reads depending on the level of ability.

3. Why do the children not wear a uniform?

Montessori children are valued for who they are, regardless of what they are wearing. They are allowed to show their personality as long as the clothing is practical for the activities they will take

part in.

4. How will my child cope with secondary school?

Many of our former students come back to speak at Open Day or to visit favourite teachers. They always talk of the easy transition to secondary school as they have become used to thinking for themselves and taking charge of their own learning. This means that it is immaterial how the learning or information comes to them, they can assimilate it and work with it.

5. Does my child need to be toilet trained before commencing Cycle 1?

Children do need to be toilet trained before commencing Cycle 1.