

# **THE MONTESSORI CENTRE**

## **POLICY HANDBOOK**

**The Montessori Centre**

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Dear Parents and Guardians

Welcome to The Montessori Centre.

This handbook presents the philosophy, aims and objectives and policies of the school. It includes general information as well as answers to many of your typical questions about the education of the students at The Montessori Centre. Indeed, this handbook has been specially prepared for you.

Teaching children is a challenging activity and the work we do in class is but a small part of our professional responsibility. We want our children to enjoy school life, to achieve to the full extent of their ability and to develop particular skills and talents. We want them to grow into self-reliant young people, with a large measure of confidence and independence, aware of their self-worth and with positive social and environmental attitudes. In essence, we aim towards the proper overall development of the child.

You may be assured that members of our staff are committed to the students entrusted in their care. However and regrettably, from time to time things do go wrong. If you ever have a cause for complaint, please do not hesitate to discuss the matter with the class teacher or Administrator. I too am available if parents need to specifically speak to me.

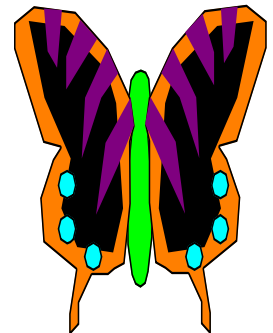
As director, I aim to create a school with a caring, stimulating and friendly atmosphere. I also aim to create an exciting environment for both our students and teachers. I hope these aims are reflected in this handbook and when you visit the centre you find that what has been written here is actually being fulfilled.

I thank you for affording us the opportunity of being able to contribute towards the overall development of your child and ask for your full cooperation in making your child's tenure with us as rewarding and enjoyable as we would all like it to be.

*Myrtle John Murray*

**DIRECTOR**

**DOES THE CATERPILLAR  
KNOW IT WILL BECOME A  
BUTTERFLY?  
IT DOESN'T MATTER, IT  
JUST DOES!**



## **PARENT/GUARDIAN COOPERATION**

At The Montessori Centre our aim is to provide our students with a facility for their proper educational and physical development. This we do via sound established principles in Early Childhood Development.

We would like to see our students perform and excel to the best of their ability and we are certain that you too, as parents/guardians, share our sentiments. However, we recognize that as hard as we may try we cannot do it alone and so we solicit your cooperation in achieving our common goal of success for the children.

We encourage you to keep showing an interest in your child's well being at school. We further implore you to encourage your children into doing any assigned home lessons and assist them if necessary. Feel free to arrange an appointment with the class teacher or the Administrator to discuss any aspect of your child's school life which might be of concern to you.

We know that as parents/guardians you will have a love for your children and the desire to see them succeed. We too have a similar desire. However, as educators we would have the professional competence to provide what we know is best for your children along the lines of education and to guide and help them in building a strong educational foundation for themselves.

In that vein various regulations and policies are instituted at the centre and which are all geared towards its smooth and proper functioning. Adherence to these regulations and policies will, invariably contribute towards the overall success of the students during their tenure with us. Towards this then, we cannot over emphasize the need for parents/guardians to cooperate with our stated policies as this will help to make our job that much easier. By cooperating, you will also be helping to reinforce in your child the aspects of our policies which are intended to enhance his/her appreciation for discipline, high standards and good social values.

Remember, you as parents/guardians and we as educators each acting alone can only do so much, but together as partners we can do ever so much.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **SCHOOL AIMS**

The aims are to encourage each child to be:

- Happy positive and confident.
- Friendly and cooperative.
- Caring and sensitive.
- Well-behaved and well-mannered.
- Able to listen and concentrate.

- Able to think for himself or herself.
- Independent with time.

## **SCHOOL OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the school are to:

- Facilitate the growth of a strong sense of discipline and complex reasoning.
- Develop in the child a sense of order, concentration skills, good coordination, self-confidence and independence.
- Create a warm and acceptable class environment.
- Cater for the intellectual, social, emotional, physical and spiritual growth and general progress of the child.
- Promote the physical well being of the child and protect the child's safety whilst at the school.
- Encourage parent participation in all school activities.

## **ADMISSIONS**

### **PRE PRIMARY STUDENTS (3 TO 5 YEARS)**

The child should be able to:

- function in all aspects of general daily routines;
- be independent in toileting skills;
- cooperate in a social group;
- show respect for authority;
- show respect for other children;
- understand and follow school and classroom rules and guidelines;
- demonstrate an eagerness to learn.

### **ELEMENTARY STUDENTS (RECEPTION TO GRADE 6)**

The child should be able to:

- function in all aspects of general daily routines;
- cooperate in a social group;
- show respect for authority;
- show respect for other children;
- demonstrate and eagerness to learn;
- work with limited supervision (Grades 3 to 6);

- understand and follow school and classroom rules and guidelines;
- cope with academic and life skills at level of targeted class.

## **FAMILIES**

Families can play a role in partnering with the school by:

- volunteering any of their free time in school related activities;
- attending school meetings and functions;
- supporting the vision and growth of the school.

For an admission parents/guardians are asked to do the following:

- fill out the centre's application form;
- present the child's birth certificate and immunization records;
- provide two (2) passport size photographs of the child;
- present the child's medical history from a physician;
- show proof of residency in the island if the parents are non nationals.

For students applying for admission to the Elementary Classes (grades 1 to 6) their parents/guardian will be further required to:

- provide performance records from the previous school the child attended;
- allow the child to undergo a school assessment which will serve to assist in determining the child's current class and level;
- provide, if existing, any medical information and diagnostic test results which may be helpful towards assessing the student's educational needs.

## **FEES**

When a student has been accepted at the centre the parent/guardian fills out a registration form, which with the other required documentation and the registration and materials fees is submitted to the administrative office. School fees can be paid in advance, for the school year or term, or by an installment plan for the term. For parents/guardians using the term installment plan, 1/3 of the fees is paid in the first week of the term and 1/3 is paid in the first week of each of the following two months. Parents/guardians using the installment plan are asked to pay on time and should cooperate in this regard. ***Installment fee payments that are paid later than the prescribed time period will be subject to a late fee charge of 10% of the tuition fee only.***

A school security fee is charged per term and is charged per child, per immediate family. This fee is to be paid at the beginning of each term.

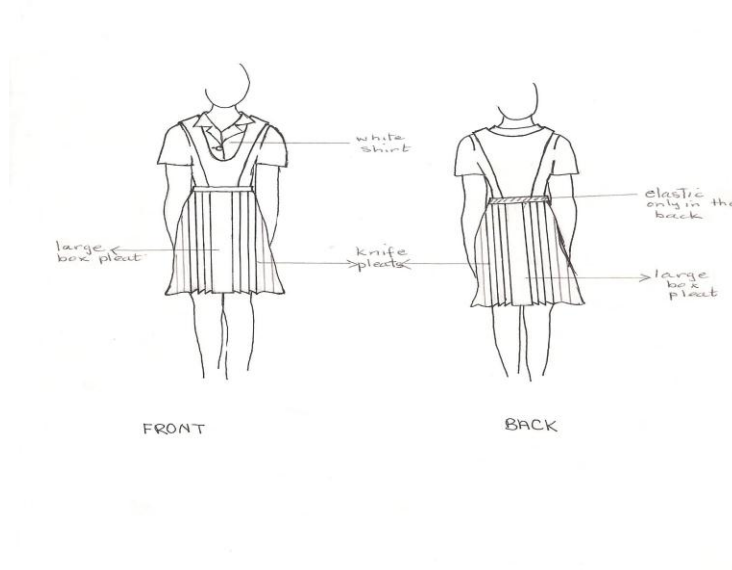
**Where a student has been away from school there is no refund or discount on tuition fees, but food fees paid will be credited. However, if a student has been absent from school for an extended period, due to illness, consideration will be given towards a discount on the student's tuition fees.**

**For a student to be first admitted to his/her class the registration, materials, security and tuition fees due, must be paid.**

Registration, materials, tuition, food and security fees are detailed in a separate Fees Schedule.

## **SCHOOL UNIFORMS**

Uniforms can be made or purchased. For purchasing, the uniform is available at the school or at T's collection opposite Clery's shoe shop on Chausee Road, Castries telephone number 459-0656. (See uniform pattern below)



The Montessori Centre has a school uniform which students are required to wear whilst at school. Our policy of having a school uniform can be viewed two fold.

First, it identifies students of the centre and helps to portray a sense of uniformity in appearance. Secondly, by having such a wear it helps to build in children an appreciation for discipline, standards and order. It is not too early for our students to be exposed to such principles.

Whilst in the class boys will need to wear their shirt in their pants. This will be particularly enforced with boys in the higher grade classes.



If a student is unable to wear the prescribed uniform he/she can be dressed in a simple and appropriate wear for school. A written excuse on such occasions would be appreciated.

Hair ribbons, bows and other hair accessories worn should match or blend with the school uniform.

Slippers should not be worn to school unless there is a medical reason for so doing. We recommend that children do not wear jewelry to school as it can be dangerous and easily damaged or lost. Girls with pierced ears should wear studs or small earrings. Boys are not permitted to wear earrings whilst at school.

A child's birthday is special and so we recognize such occasions at the centre. On that day parents/guardians can dress their child in an appropriate wear of their choice.

### **GIRLS UNIFORM**

Overalls  
White Shirts and Puff Pants  
White socks and White or Black Shoes

### **BOYS UNIFORM**

White Shirts and school shorts  
White socks and white or black shoes

There is a physical education uniform which is to be worn on PE, Tennis Track and field, and Football. It is a T-shirt with the centre's logo on it and it is worn with the P.E pants which are similar to the school uniform pants.

### **EXTRA CLOTHING**

With the Pre Primary students, in spite of our attempt to exercise caution and precision during the use of paints and water activities, there are inevitable spills and messes. So, for that and other reasons if your child is about five (5) years and under it is important that you keep a change of clothing in his/her bag every day.

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

## **CLASS SESSIONS**

The school year is based on three (3) terms:

First term - September to December

Second term - January to April

Third term - April to June

## **PRE PRIMARY CLASSES**

Classes meet on Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (half day) and from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (full day).

## **ELEMENTARY CLASSES (RECEPTION TO GRADE 6)**

Classes meet on Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Children can arrive **30 minutes** before classes begin i.e., from 7:30 a.m. and should be picked up no later than **15 minutes** after dismissal time. ***If your child is picked up more than 15 minutes following the end of the class session, there will be a \$10.00 additional charge, for every 15 minutes that the child is not picked up.*** Teachers spend time immediately after class handling record keeping, tidying cleaning and preparing the class-room for the next day. ***It is absolutely essential that they have this time available for those duties.***

## **SCHOOL CLOSURES**

### **HALFDAY DISMISSAL**

On every third Friday of the month there will be a half-day for all students. This half-day will be utilised for Staff Professional Development.

### **MIDTERM BREAK**

Once every school term there is a two (2) day mid term break for all students.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

### **ARRIVAL**

The main gate will be opened at 7:00 a.m. and classes commence at 8:00 a.m.

Parents/guardians arriving at the centre between 7:30 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. may, if they wish, accompany their child along the walkway to the classroom. Otherwise, they may allow their child to walk independently along the path way or balcony to the child's class room.

At 8:15 a.m. the doors and lower outer shutters of all classroom will be closed in an effort to minimize distraction from the outside.

Parents/guardians arriving at the school after 8:15 a.m. are asked to drop their child by the office area where the child will walk independently to his/her class. You may wait a while to observe the child enter the classroom. If you wish to see the class teacher in the morning knock on the door and please **be brief** so as not to distract the class. It is important that the class not be distracted as the children are busy working and need to concentrate.

Parents/guardians wishing to deliver an item for their child during the course of the school day should allow that to be done through the office, again to minimize the possibility of any distraction their presence may cause at the time. We will be happy to oblige.

Parents/guardians wishing to take their child/children out of the classroom during the day for appointments and other activities or who may be out of school for an extended period of time are asked to first speak to the administrative staff and the message will be communicated to the class teacher. Parents who wish may speak to class teachers in addition to the office.

## **DISMISSAL**

### **1 p.m.**

At 12:50 p.m. children will gather their take-home items from their cubbies and assemble near the staff room area at 1:00 p.m. Parents/guardians can pick up their child in that area. Again if you need to see the teacher you may do so before picking up your child.

### **3 p.m.**

At 2:45 p.m. children will gather their take-home items from their cubbies and return to the classroom to sit in the circle area.

At 2:50 p.m. doors and lower outer shutters of the classroom will be closed and children will be seated in the circle doing an exit activity.

Starting at 3:00 p.m. parents may enter the compound go to their child's classroom and knock and wait for their child to exit.

In the Pre Primary and Reception classes one teacher in the classroom will be responsible for observing parents at the door and seeing the children leave the classroom. That teacher would also be available for answering whatever questions, queries or concerns that parents may have.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is an essential part in the life of a student and is a means of developing valuable traits for life. All children from Reception to Grade 6 get some homework to solidify and integrate work taught in the class and also to help them to develop a level of personal responsibility. Parents/guardians must assist in helping to provide the proper environment which would be conducive to concentrated study so that the child can properly complete his/her assignments. ***Completed assignments are to be checked by the parents/guardian as being clean, neat and acceptable.***

Parents/guardians should remember that homework is for the child to complete and where they can monitor or assist the child where necessary, they must resist any temptation to actually do the homework for the child.

## **AUTHORIZATIONS**

At pick up time, students are released only to their parents/guardians or persons authorized by them. If there is to be a change in that, the parent/guardian must give the office prior ***written or verbal notification. No child will be released to a new person without such notification.***

If any legal situation pertaining to the student arises and which can apply to the student's presence in school, egs. picking up of the child by any one parent, visitation rights, the Administrator must be immediately notified in writing.

## **NOURISHMENT**

Your child's meals should be nutritious and should not have a lot of sugar. The amount in his/her lunch kit should be a quantity that he/she can eat. To encourage

healthy eating habits ***no potato chips, candy, corn curls, cheese balls, and chocolates*** should be packed in the lunch kit. If your child brings these items to the school they will be sent back home.

Due to health related issues the centre does not allow students to bring peanuts or peanut products to school.

## **SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME**

The centre has a school feeding programme and nutritious meals are prepared at the school for an additional fee. Four menus are available and they are rotated. ***If your child does not eat certain foods, please let us know.*** Food is prepared every school day of the week.

## **PERSONAL AND SCHOOL BELONGINGS**

Before coming to school please check your child's pockets to see what they may contain. Check especially for small "home" items. Toys and other personal items should remain at home. Please assure your child that his/her toys are for home and at school he/she has special work to do. Toys can become a distraction and cause confusion among children. If toys are brought to school the child will not be allowed to play with them.

Children may occasionally be permitted to bring in special items relating to school work, but you will be informed of those occasions.

Do also check when your child comes home for unfamiliar objects as they may be part of school material.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Parents/guardians will be the best judges as to whether their child should attend school in rainy weather. We will make every effort to open the school during such conditions.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDINGS**

Parents/guardians wishing to have photography or video recordings done of their child, ***whilst in the school setting***, must seek the permission of the Administrator to do so. The centre can arrange for such services if parents/guardians so desire.

## **HEALTH ISSUES AND ACCIDENTS**

At The Montessori Centre we are very conscious of health issues. We discuss good health habits with the students as part of our curriculum. If your child is ill, please do not send him/her to school as the school prohibits attendance of a child during an illness. Do remember that when children are ill they are generally unsettled and irritable and will definitely not enjoy their day at school. A good rule of thumb is to keep your child at home for one day after the symptoms have passed, especially if he/she had experienced a very high fever. A child having the symptoms of or experiencing diarrhoea, severe asthma, contagious skin infection, contagious eye infection, heavy nasal discharge or severe coughing should be kept at home.

When a child is absent from school, due to illness, it would be greatly appreciated if the secretary or child's teacher is informed. Children absent for prolonged illnesses must submit a doctor's certificate stating that they are well enough to return to class.

Runny noses can be epidemic with young children and those in the Pre Primary classes are more closely monitored if they present with such a condition. If the mucous is clear you will receive an alert notice indicating that your child's condition is being monitored. If the child's condition worsens to a discoloured and heavy nasal discharge it is very likely that he/she has an infection and the child will be given a notice to remain at home.

Briefly, we will refer here to two contagious conditions that can affect children. Head lice and ringworm can affect any child at any time and if you know that your child is affected with any of those conditions you should ***immediately notify*** the Administrator.

Our medical advice indicates that in the case of head lice the child be ***immediately kept at home*** and treatment commenced. After ***one week*** the hair is *again* treated and the child can then return to school ***at least one day*** after the second treatment was administered.

In the case of ringworm again the child is ***immediately kept at home*** and medical advice sought. With the immediate commencement of proper treatment (physician prescribed) the child should be ready to recommence school ***at least one day*** after the treatment was started.

In a case of an accident at school, you will be called immediately after first aid is given. All staff members have been trained in First Aid Care and CPR. If you cannot be reached, the emergency number you indicated will be called. Please make sure we have up to date addresses and telephone numbers. Once we feel hospital treatment is necessary the child will be taken to the Gros Islet Poly Clinic or Victoria Hospital even if we have not yet got into contact with you or your emergency contact person.

If your child is receiving long-term medication and you need his/her teacher to administer medication to your child whilst at school, the medication must be clearly labeled with the child's name dosage and time to be administered. ***We will only administer medication where it requires it being given during the time the student would be at school or to be given as required.*** In the case of the latter the symptoms necessitating the administering of the medication must be clearly explained to the teacher.

The school can only control medication for a student that is given to a teacher for administering to the student. The school will not accept liability for injury to any student as a result of the student taking medication, whilst at school, that was left in his/her lunch kit or school bag.

***An authorization form to administer medication must be filled out by the parent/guardian before any teacher administers medication to a child.***

All parents/guardians should understand and cooperate with our health policies. This is necessary so as to satisfy our obligations to provide a healthy environment for all persons at the school.

## **DISCIPLINE**

The Montessori Centre has established a policy on student discipline to allow for proper conduct of the students whilst at school and consequently the smooth, orderly and efficient running of the centre.

The main purpose of our policy is for the benefit of your children and so we ask you parents/guardians to please cooperate with us in this important aspect of school life.

The teachers and children in the classroom set limits for behavior and it is important that the child clearly understands class regulations and rules and the possible consequences of violating them. So, initially children are all told about such regulations and they are also reminded about them from time to time. If the child disregards such class regulations and rules the teacher seeks the underlying causes so that the child can be helped into understanding and following them.

Where in the judgment of the teacher a child's behavior is disruptive, disrespectful or injurious to the child or others at school such will not be tolerated and the child will be reminded about that. If such unacceptable behavior occurs repeatedly then the teacher may request the assistance of another class teacher or the Administrator to observe the child's behavior and so help in getting the child to accept and practice good behavior. The teacher may at that stage brief the parents/guardian about that situation.

If the problem persists the teacher will meet with the child and the Administrator to address it. However, if all of these measures fail the Administrator will contact the child's parents or guardian for a meeting to also include the child's teacher. At this stage the Administrator may recommend professional help for the child.

## **DISCIPLINE PROTOCOL REVIEW**

### **First offence**

The teacher again reviews and explains class regulations and rules with the child and indicates possible consequences.

### **Second offence**

The teacher communicates the problem to the Administrator and they meet with the child to discuss it. The teacher may communicate the problem to the child's parents or guardian.

### **Third offence**

The Administrator with the child's teacher will meet with the child's parents/guardian to discuss the problem towards seeking a remedy for the child's continued indiscipline. The Administrator may recommend professional help for the child.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

Where the child's indiscipline cannot be resolved and in the determination of the Administrator is sufficiently severe so as to be disruptive and detrimental to the well being of the class and likely to jeopardize the name of the centre, the Administrator may recommend to the Director that the child not be allowed to continue as a student at the centre.

Fighting or other violent physical acts may lead to an out of school suspension. Unruly conduct may lead to isolation from the group.

Playground indiscipline may lead to a temporary suspension from play-ground activities.

A proven act of theft may lead to a financial penalty.

Willful destruction of school property may lead to a financial penalty or the replacement of the item(s) by the child's parents/guardian.

## **CHRONIC BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS**



Where a child exhibits behavioral problems, personnel at the centre will attempt to address the situation. However, where it persists and is unduly disruptive to the class the parents/guardian will be asked to seek professional help and the centre will do all it possibly can to work with all concerned towards resolving the matter. If such fails, however, then the Administrator may recommend to the Director that the child not be allowed to continue as a student at the centre.

## **ABUSE**

The centre stands for mutual respect between parents/guardians and members of staff. Parents or guardians who think they have had an unpleasant experience with any member of staff are encouraged to please discuss the matter with the Administrator. Where a parent/guardian acts in any verbal or physically abusive manner to any member of staff or student of the centre, the Administrator may recommend to the Director that the child of such a parent/guardian not be allowed to continue as a student at the centre.

## **LIBRARY**

The school library is available for use by the children from Pre Primary to Grade 6 and each class has an assigned period. There is no fee for using the library, however, for books that are damaged or lost parents must cover that cost before their child is allowed to borrow another book. Overdue books incur a cost at the rate of \$1.00 per day. Children who abuse the rules of the library may lose the privilege of its use.

## **EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Swimming, tennis, and dance are offered to the students as extra curricular activities. All such activities are arranged within the school day and for additional fees. Students are accompanied by a member of staff to each of those activities. Where the venue for such activities is away from the school area the students are transported to and from by a school approved bus.

Any student who repeatedly behaves in an undisciplined manner, despite warnings to desist, whilst attending any extra curricular activity might not be allowed to continue to participate in that activity.

Swimming – At The Rodney Bay Aquatic Centre  
Tennis – At The St. Lucia Racquet Club  
Dance – At Sportivo Gym

Fees for extra curricular activities are detailed in a separate Extra Curricular Fees Schedule.

## **SPECIAL INFORMATION FROM HOME**

In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please consider informing the class teacher or Administrator as soon as possible. All information will be treated as confidential and we will accept your judgement as to the kind of changes which may affect your child's behaviour, security and general well being.

Some common causes of distress for the child include:

- either one or both parents or the guardian being away from home;
- a prolonged domestic situation;
- a new person living in the home;
- illness of a parent or the guardian;
- illness of a sibling;
- hospitalization of any person in the home;
- an accident or a death in the family;
- a new baby at home;
- a new helper at home;
- moving to a new home;
- the death of a pet.

The teacher or Administrator will, as well, keep you informed of any significant changes in the school environment that may affect your child.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN ACTIVITIES**

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN ORIENTATION**

There are Parent/Guardian Orientation Workshops in July or August for all parents/guardians of new students entering the Pre Primary section. You will be informed of the dates.

### **CONFERENCES**

Parent/Guardian Conferences and Observations are scheduled for each child once a year in November/March and are of one half hour duration. Please respect the time allotted for your appointment. If additional time is needed, a further conference may be scheduled.

***All discussions at these conferences between school personnel and parents/guardians will be treated as confidential.***

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN EDUCATION WORKSHOPS**

There are three (3) scheduled Parent/Guardian Education Workshops during the school year. In addition to those we ordinarily offer, we will try to set up a meeting on any pertinent topics at the request of three or more parents/guardians. Please feel free to submit topics you wish to have discussed.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN MEETINGS**

The school holds a Social Evening in September/October and at least two (2) Parent/Guardian Teacher Meetings during the school year for all parents/ guardians. You are encouraged to attend all meetings.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN VOLUNTEERING**

We would like parents/guardians to be a part of the school by volunteering one hour a month to help in various ways. For example reading stories, playing a musical instrument, supervising play acts, helping at swimming, football, assisting in the library, helping with class parties and helping in class projects e.g. art, drama. Parents/guardians who are so disposed are asked to please discuss with the Administrator your willingness to assist in any of those activities. The centre will appreciate any such assistance that you may be able to give.

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