



MONAGHAN

MONTESSORI  
SCHOOL



# Handbook

PARENT COMMUNITY HANDBOOK



*Education for Life.*



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## INTRODUCTION

This handbook comprises two major sections.

Section 1 contains information about the policies and procedures of the school.

Section 2 contains information intended to aid us all as a community that exists to support the intellectual and social development of powerful, peaceful children according to the children's authentic nature.

## MONAGHAN MONTESSORI MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Monaghan Montessori is to guide the intellectual and character development of each child along a path towards his full and unknown potential. To prepare children for life. Education for Life. We celebrate each child's individuality and help them discover how they can best contribute to our world and culture. We strive to be present in every moment.

All children are naturally curious and love to learn; we support this innate drive by providing environments that meet children's developmental needs, by creating a staff of loving and well-prepared adults and by building a community of families that actively support our mission.

## THE OUTCOMES OF MONTESSORI EDUCATION

At Monaghan Montessori we strive to achieve the following educational outcomes:

### **INTRINSIC MOTIVATION:**

Intrinsic motivation is the innate desire that drives the child to engage in an activity for enjoyment and satisfaction.

### **ABILITY TO HANDLE EXTERNAL AUTHORITY:**

The child can accept the ground rules established by external authority as appropriate boundaries in his or her interactions within the school community. These ground rules are internalized, enabling the learner to function with or without the presence of the external authority.

### **DISCIPLINE:**

Our school varies significantly from traditional education in the way we approach discipline and academic development. These differences are pervasive; they are strong and specific in their details of practice as well as in philosophical, emotional, and educational foundations. Attention to detail, clear focus, and long concentration are introduced immediately and then develop at different rates and to different degrees for each child. Through his work, the child shows spontaneous discipline. This discipline originates within him and is not imposed from without. This discipline is real, in contrast to the artificial discipline of reward and punishment common to other methods. When the child is encouraged to develop understanding, compassion, and respect, he can cultivate his own self-discipline.

### **CREATIVITY & ORIGINALITY OF THOUGHT:**

Children are confident using the knowledge and skills they have acquired to express their own ideas and creativity. They recognize the value of their own ideas, respect the creative process of others and are willing to share regardless of risk. Children find joy and satisfaction in self-expression.



### **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:**

Social responsibility requires the awareness that one's actions impact the welfare of the group and that one cannot attain complete independence and autonomy until one contributes constructively to a group process. Individuals can make a positive contribution to their community and groups within that community.

### **PREPARATION:**

Academic preparation entails providing children with skills that allow them to become independently functioning adults and life-long children. As children master one level of academic skills, they can go further and apply themselves to increasingly challenging materials across various academic disciplines. Children recognize that there is always room to grow in their abilities to read, write, speak, and think clearly and thoughtfully. Children learn how to learn by doing - experiential learning.

Children are encouraged to explore materials, integrate new concepts, analyse data, and think critically. Academic skills are essential to learning and knowing, not the aim of learning and knowing.

### **AUTONOMY:**

The autonomous child is self-directed, composed and morally independent. The ability to complete a task is an important skill taught in the Montessori classroom.

### **CONFIDENCE AND COMPETENCE:**

The confident and competent child perceives himself as being successful, has a realistic understanding of accomplishment and can learn from his mistakes. Competence is the capability for success through taking risks, reflection, and self-correction.

### **SPIRITUAL AWARENESS:**

Spiritual awareness is embodied in the child who is compassionate, empathetic, and sensitive to the natural world and the human condition.

From a religious perspective, we are ethically bound not to sow confusion in young minds, with vastly differing information at home and school.

However, as Dr Maria Montessori's fundamental motive was not to teach children (fill their minds), but rather to develop an education for peace which would be lasting, the thread of tolerance is deeply ingrained.

*"If education is always to be conceived along the same antiquated lines of a mere transmission of knowledge, there is little to be hoped from it in the bettering of man's future. For what is the use of transmitting knowledge if the individual's total development lags".*

*"Establishing lasting peace is the work of education; all politics can do is keep us out of war."*

*"Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavour always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence."*

## AFFILIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS



### ASSOCIATION MONTESSORI INTERNATIONALE

Founded by Maria Montessori, AMI is the steward of the Montessori educational approach developed over 100 years ago, building upon her work to apply it in every setting and to each child without compromising the integrity of the approach.



### SOUTH AFRICAN MONTESSORI ASSOCIATION

Leading transformation through Montessori education. SAMA is the official liaison between its member body and government departments. This representation is paramount in keeping integrity in South African Montessori schools.



### GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ensuring every learner in Gauteng does well at school and leaves our institutions with the knowledge, skills and qualifications that will give them the best chance of success in adult life.

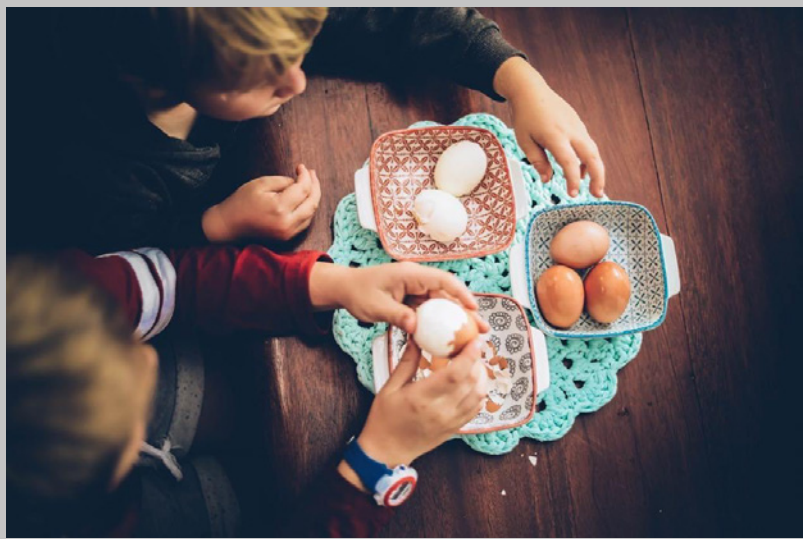


### INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION BOARD

The vision of the IEB is to advance quality teaching and learning in South Africa through an assessment process of integrity, innovation and international comparability.



## If I had my child to raise over again



*"If I had my child to raise all over again,  
I'd build her self-esteem first, and the house later.  
I'd finger paint more and point my finger less.  
I would do less correcting and more connecting.  
I'd take my eyes off my watch and watch with my eyes.  
I would care to know less and know to care more.  
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.  
I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.  
I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars.  
I'd do more hugging and less tugging.  
I'd see the oak tree in the acorn more often.  
I would be first less often and affirm much more.  
I'd model less about the love of power,  
And more about the power of love."*

*Diane Loomans*

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*"The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child's own natural desire to learn."*

Maria Montessori

## MONAGHAN MONTESSORI TEAM

### MARTIN PINCHEN

Upper Elementary Director & Head of Education



What led to my interest in Montessori Education?

I worked as a Music teacher at a Montessori school in Randburg, South Africa. In my time there the principal gave me a book to read on Montessori education called "Discovery of the Child", I was blown away.

My interest in alternative education grew from then on. How can there be an educational institute that allows children to move at their own pace and with so much FREEDOM?

I decided to do a 3-6 diploma and work in the space as well. I was lead director for about 5 years in the space and moved to the 6-12 after completing my 6-12 training.

There is something very important for children to experience in our world, it is dominated by educational stress, a world that seems to encourage endless judgmental thinking, that causes so many to feel that they are under-achieving. As a Montessori teacher, I know I can do just a little something about it. Montessori helps our children really achieve.

### JESSICA HEWITT

Lower Elementary Directress



Jessica has her B-Ed Honours Early Childhood and Foundation Phase from the University of Pretoria. She is a passionate and enthusiastic teacher, with a great love for teaching children.

It helps them build that hugely important self-esteem that will give them confidence and strength. My biggest passion is to do this and help them obtain a particular belief and a particular approach to education.

That's what is important to me: Montessori makes children enjoy their own success at their level and, along the way, we teach them not to make the destructive (and meaningless) comparisons that can spoil it all.

This is the biggest experience I have had in Montessori, watching child after child not being compared to one another. I have seen this from the Primary to Elementary Levels. And this excites me immensely!



## MONAGHAN MONTESSORI TEAM

**MIENKIE PINCHEN**  
Children's House Directress



Brought up in the small town of Graskop in the Lowveld, Mienkie's always had a love for nature and wanted to give her children a similar experience of growing up in an environment where trees and rivers are their playground.

After completing her graduation in Somatology, she realised that her true passion is teaching and has completed her National and International training in Montessori education. She is one of a small group of AMI (Association Montessori International) qualified guides in South Africa with 20 years of teaching experience.

Her love for teaching, art, and photography made her path cross with Martin, her husband of 16 years and father to their two precious boys. He is also the principal of Monaghan Montessori School.

Together with her husband as co-owner of Monaghan Montessori and lead guide of the 3-6 Children's House, she is determined to support the natural development of the human being from birth and giving children the tools they need to change society and create a peaceful and harmonious world.

**ELIZABETH MOFOKENG**  
Children's House Assistant



Elizabeth is mother to three daughters at home and loves working with little children. She has a sunny disposition, and the children love her.

We consider ourselves very lucky to have her on our team at the Monaghan Montessori School.

Elizabeth has also completed the AMI Assistants training for the 3-6 space. She is of immeasurable worth to our school family.



## MONAGHAN MONTESSORI TEAM

### GRACE BAXENDALE

Toddlers Directress



I have been so lucky in the wonderful life my parents provided for me. I was very fortunate to grow up in the beautiful Garden Route. Childhood there is innocent and free.

My Mum and Dad worked from home and always made themselves available to my sisters and I am the youngest of four girls. Growing up in Knysna was such a huge blessing. I used to walk to school most days and in the afternoon, I would spend my time exploring the forest playing down at the lagoon catching crabs and riding my bicycle. Outdoor play was just natural down there.

I've always had a passion for working with children and worked in a little school in Knysna for a few years. I was then very fortunate to have been given an amazing opportunity to work with Hayden who was 2 years old at the time and recently diagnosed with Autism.

Hayden's family put me through training, and I began doing therapy with him. I worked with Hayden for just about three years and through him I discovered Montessori. I facilitated Hayden for a year at Knysna Montessori School before moving up to Johannesburg to my then boyfriend now husband, James.

### STEFFIE MOABI

Toddlers Assistant



Steffie joined our school in January 2022 and what a joyous day that was. Her calm and peaceful manner instils confidence and structure to our precious toddler class.

She is a born caregiver which is evident in the way our little ones snuggle up to her in the most natural way.

I have really loved becoming a part of the family here and couldn't picture my life any differently.

My days are full and so is my heart. Every day I am in awe of what new experiences the toddlers have at school and what discoveries they make. Each child is so unique and brings something totally different to the environment. Each child follows their own path into becoming their own beautiful little person and I just feel so incredibly lucky to be a part of it.

My husband James and I have recently welcomed our beautiful baby boy into the world, Leo and we are totally besotted. We have four dogs that share our home and heart too in our free time we enjoy visiting markets and going camping. The outdoors feeds our souls.

## MONAGHAN MONTESSORI TEAM

### CHANELLE VISSER

Administrator



I consider myself to be an honest, hard-working person with a passion for customer care. I aim to exceed expectations and strive to maintain a high working standard.

I have gained immeasurable experience in my years of working in Hospital Administration and other environments that focused on customer care.

As a happily married mother of two High School children who were educated through mainstream schooling, I am often astounded at the Montessori way. If I could turn back time...

One of the biggest realizations that dawned on me not to long ago: Nothing you ever learn or no experience you ever have, is for nothing or useless. You will use past experiences and knowledge gained, again SOMEWHERE in your life. Often when you least expect it.

What a privilege it is to work with this amazing group of people.



“Perhaps a great future leader or a great genius is with us and his power will come from the power of the child he is today. This is the vision that we must have.”

Maria Montessori

## SECTION 1: POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### SCHOOL HOURS

Toddlers:	08h30 to 12h30	(Sport: Friday 10h00 to 11h00)
Children's House:	08h30 to 13h30	(Sport: Monday – Thursday 13h30 to 14h15)
Lower Elementary:	08h00 to 14h00	(Sport: Monday – Thursday 14h15 to 15h00)
Upper Elementary:	08h00 to 14h00	(Sport: Monday – Thursday 14h15 to 15h00)
Aftercare:	Ends at 17h00	(Please pack a healthy snack)

### PLEASE NOTE:

*The teachers on duty arrive at 07h00. Our team cannot come in earlier, nor remain later than 17h00. Please be respectful of their time. Late aftercare collections will be fined a R300 Penalty. This will be paid directly to the teachers on duty. Children are requested to be at school at the stipulated times to participate in the full work cycle.*

### PICKING YOUR CHILD UP EARLY:

Naturally, there will be occasions where you will need to take your child out of school early for a doctor's appointment or similar obligation. To ensure that your child will be ready, please let his/her class teacher know via WhatsApp what time you will be picking up your child.

### SAYING GOODBYE:

Initially, it can be difficult for parents and young children to separate at the beginning of the school year. We have found that a short and positive goodbye is easiest for the child.

We would like to encourage you to spend time with your child in the afternoon, rather than the mornings. Refrain from disappearing once the child is distracted as this leaves the child with a feeling of abandonment. Feel free to call the school for reassurance that your child has settled in and is adjusting well.

### DROP-OFF AND COLLECTION:

Unless we receive specific permission from you to do otherwise, we will not release your child to anyone other than either parent or legal guardian.

We must receive a note (or email), or in an emergency, a phone call, from you to release your child to someone else. This rule also applies to children going home with school friends as well.

All people dropping and collecting the children should have fingerprint access to come through the security gate of Monaghan Farm. Please request a form from Chanelle in the Office if needed.

### ATTENDANCE:

Even though Monaghan Montessori is less formal and more flexible than many schools, consistent attendance and prompt arrival are still essential.

Children are expected to be in class by the stipulated class times and to be present in class for the full morning session. Late arrival is disruptive and inconsiderate to the rest of the class. Consistency and routine are important to every child's educational and social development. Whenever your child misses a day or more of school for whatever reason, please inform their teacher.



## SCHOOL LIFE

### DRESS CODE:

We take pride in giving the children the freedom to express themselves, be it through art, conversations, or clothing. However, the children are expected to dress in outfits that are neat, clean, comfortable, and appropriate for school. Younger children should dress in clothing that they can put on and fasten or unfasten for themselves: pullover shirts, elastic waistbands, velcro shoes, etc.

### PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO COME TO SCHOOL WEARING:

- High-heeled or wedge shoes.
- If your daughter prefers to wear skirts or dresses, please have her wear leggings or shorts underneath them.

### REQUIREMENTS:

- All belongings to be clearly labelled.
- A child-sized school bag, containing a warm and cool change of clothes, sun hat and water bottle to be brought daily.

### LOST PROPERTY:

A lost property basket is kept in the Office. Please check this basket regularly. After each school term, all "lost & found" items will be donated to the less fortunate.

### TOYS:

Children are allowed to bring a toy to school which will be packed away during the work cycles.

### SHOW AND TELL:

Children are welcome to bring in an item from nature, a special souvenir from a trip, something they have made, or their favourite books (please ensure your child's name is clearly written inside).

### EXTRA MURAL ACTIVITIES:

Seasonal sports take place Monday to Friday and are inclusive of school fees:

*Athletics, Hockey, Cricket, and Soccer*

#### TODDLERS

Friday: 10h00 – 11h00

#### CHILDREN'S HOUSE

Monday to Thursday: 13h30 – 14h15

#### LOWER ELEMENTARY

Monday to Thursday: 14h15 – 15h00

#### UPPER ELEMENTARY

Monday to Thursday: 14h15 – 15h00

### EXTRA MURALS NOT INCL. IN SCHOOL FEES:

Will be communicated during the first term.

*PLEASE NOTE: We will not take responsibility for lost or broken toys. This is just one of the many opportunities for our children to take ownership of their belongings.*

# FOOD AND NUTRITION

## BREAKFAST:

The children's work at school is directly affected by the nutritional quality of their meals. Please provide your child with a nutritious breakfast each morning. A high-protein breakfast that includes a generous portion of meat, eggs, cheese, nuts, or beans is essential to the child's development, learning, and enjoyment at school.

This is both the universal experience of our teachers as well as the finding of well-respected public health research studies. A child who has not had a high-protein breakfast is not ready to come to school.

Read the labels of the foods you buy, and avoid sugar, corn syrup, artificial sweeteners or colouring, artificial flavouring, and other additives. Most nutritionists believe that these substances interfere with the child's ability to learn and ability to have acceptable behaviour.

## NUTRITION:

The Monaghan Montessori Community places great emphasis on the importance of good nutrition as the first step to a lifelong wellness education program. Meals are a very important part of your child's school day, and of his/her wellness education as well.

- Please ensure you pack a healthy and nutritious snack. Please do not send these items: juice, chips, sweets, chocolates, biscuits or cake.
- The school doesn't run a Halaal or Kosher kitchen.
- Children are never rewarded or punished with food.

- We try to avoid making any emotional attachments with food.
- Children are never forced to eat or drink at school. It is important for the child to realize when they are hungry or thirsty and how much food or water they need. Teachers will let you know if your child's appetite has been particularly poor.
- Lunch is served at 11am. Children are involved in table setting and are encouraged to dish up their own food. The menu changes weekly and will be send out at the beginning of each week. With each meal the children get fresh fruit and raw vegetables like cucumber, tomatos, carrots, etc.
- Breakfast is not included.

## AFTERCARE SNACK:

A healthy snack is encouraged for midday. Should your child need to stay for aftercare, please ensure a healthy snack is provided.

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS:

Children love to celebrate their birthdays with their friends. We have a special birthday ceremony in which we tell the class the story of the birthday child's life. It is especially nice to send in a special snack in honour of your child's birthday. A cake or cupcakes, enough for all the children in their class, work well.

*Please do not send party packs, chips, and cool-drinks for the children.*

Parents are welcome to join the Birthday Circle at school and may arrange a suitable time and day with the class teacher in keeping with the work cycles and break times.



# HEALTH

## WHEN YOUR CHILD IS ILL:

Please let your class teacher know if your child is going to be absent. A child with any of the following symptoms will not be allowed at school to prevent cross-infection:

- Eye or any contagious infections (e.g. Ring-worm).
- Headlice.
- Any contagious illness.
- Runny tummy or vomiting.
- Fever.
- The first 48-hours of an antibiotic course.

Children with infectious diseases, such as chicken pox, strep throat etc., must stay out of school until the contagious stage has passed. For the sake of the other children and the teacher's health, it is vital that you let the class teacher know about the doctor's diagnosis as soon as possible.

## IF YOUR CHILD GETS SICK AT SCHOOL:

If your child is ill, we will contact you to arrange for him/her to be picked up right away.

We understand how difficult it can be for working parents to break free during the day, and yet all children get ill from time to time. You will want to plan with a friend or relative in advance.

**REMEMBER:** *Because colds, flu and other childhood illnesses spread from child to child with alarming speed, please do not send your child to school if he/she has a fever, nausea, or any other symptoms of illness in a 24-hour period.*

## CHILDREN HURTING ONE ANOTHER: TOLERATING CATERPILLARS

A peaceful classroom is not a classroom where the adult ensures that no conflict can occur, but one where the children themselves, develop ways and means of resolving real life disputes as they arise. Each new child entering the environment upsets any equilibrium which has been established and presents new opportunities for learning.

Montessori teachers and administrators can help parents to become partners in this process by highlighting that peace in the environment is a process which is on-going. Inappropriate aggressive behaviour in young children should be seen as an "error". Errors provide opportunities for learning and children can be helped to use visual and verbal cues from others to moderate their own behaviour. As a child gains control of his will and greater control of a variety of communication strategies, so he will begin to either avoid conflict or to handle disagreements and challenges in proactive ways.

The teacher should intervene if a child is in real danger of being injured, or severely distressed. Occasional tears, hurt feelings, or physical discomfort are, on the other hand, important constituents of emotional growth. Standing back and ignoring disputes, or brushing off a child's distress is, indeed, abandonment. Rushing in to prevent a potentially aggressive situation or to resolve all disputes is the affective domain's equivalent to doing a child's math problems for him, or directly correcting the child's work. Guiding a child to understand that you are available if your help is really needed, but clearly conveying to the children that you have the faith that they can handle a variety of situations alone is immensely empowering.

## EMERGENCY CARE:

The Monaghan Montessori Team maintain up to date First Aid Training in basic first aid, which includes CPR, burn wounds, splints, open wounds and choking. An emergency constitutes the possibility of loss of life, loss of limb, or permanent disability.

Under those circumstances we will call an ambulance (Emer-G-Med 082 911) with the discretion of the trained first aid member dealing with the emergency. All other accidents are treated immediately to the best of our ability. Parents will be informed immediately should your child be involved in an accident at the school.

In dealing with fire emergencies, the school has the necessary compliance certificates, however Monaghan Farm itself has trained staff to deal with dangerous snakes and fires on the farm. The school's assembly point in case of fire is the parking area.

In the event of any medical situation that requires immediate medical attention, we will want your child to see a doctor right away. Please be sure to keep your emergency information form up-to-date and inform the office immediately if there is any change in your address or phone number during the academic year. We must be able to reach you at any time during the school day.

*If your child needs immediate medical attention, and you cannot be reached, your enrolment agreement authorizes us to seek medical care in your name. We will take your child to the emergency room and naturally, we will continue our efforts to contact you.*

## MEDICATION:

Except under extraordinary situations, we do not administer medication at school. Please do not send in any medication with your child, including vitamins.

Antibiotics and other medications should be scheduled so that doses are due during hours when the child is at home.

In cases involving long-term medication for chronic conditions, an authorization form must be filed with the school each year in January. Any medication changes during the school year must be accompanied by a new medication form.

*We will strictly adhere to this policy.*

“ We must respect the child and he must understand that he is respected. He needs to be prepared for everything that is going to be done for him.”

Maria Montessori





# PARENTS AND THE SCHOOL

## **A COMMUNITY BUILT ON TRUST, FRIENDSHIP, AND MUTUAL RESPECT:**

Stability and a true sense of community within the school means a great deal to us at Monaghan Montessori. Children know that they belong, that they are respected, and that they are cared for not only by their parents, but by the larger community of fellow children, teachers, and other parents in the school, many of whom have known them almost all their lives.

Monaghan Montessori brings together families who have chosen to identify with a common commitment to the shared concerns, values, and expectations they have for their children. We come from different backgrounds, but our sense of community exists despite, or perhaps because of it.

Monaghan Montessori teaches our children to understand and appreciate cultural differences and shared human values: peace, independence, human dignity, and a celebration of life.

## **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL:**

The school maintains regular contact with parents with regards to announcements, updates, and information. This will be done by means of the School and Class WhatsApp Groups, as well as emails.

## **OBSERVING THE CLASSES AT WORK:**

Parents are invited and even urged to observe the children at work. Set dates will be made available for you to book a time to come through and observe your child working and their lunch period.

You will want to see the class at its normal routine and not responding to the novelty of your presence; therefore, when you visit, please sit in the designated visitor's chair in the classroom. A great deal can be learned by patient and quiet observation of your child and his or her classmates at work.

During the first sensitive weeks of the school year, children (especially the younger children), are familiarizing themselves with a new routine and new environment. For this reason, we ask parents to avoid class observations during this period.

## **SO, WHAT DID YOU DO AT SCHOOL TODAY?**

Have you experienced frustration when asking this question? Did you get the common answer, "nothing." Possibly they tell you every day that they did the same thing such as play-dough or spooning beans. Don't be alarmed. We can assure you that your child is very busy at school doing a variety of learning activities designed to support his/her development.

Young children often have difficulty talking about what they do at school. They have done so many things that they often cannot sort out the specifics. Sometimes they don't remember the name of the materials that they used, such as the trinomial cube, the metal insets, or the addition strip board.

In addition to the difficulty children may have talking about their school experience, you may have noted that not many worksheets come home. The children can be doing complex math, word building, writing in a sand tray or on chalk boards, geography, and science lessons, all with manipulative materials that will have no paper trail to show you, their progress.

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*So how can you find out what your child is doing in school?*

- Ask your child questions that are more specific. "Did you do a counting lesson today? Did you build the tower or work with colours?"
- Occasionally bring your child into the classroom to show you his/her favourite lessons.
- Set up a time to observe your child in class.
- Read a Montessori book.
- Stop in after school and talk to your child's teacher or set up an appointment for a formal conference if you prefer.
- Come to school meetings and workshops.
- Play school with your child at home. Sometimes children will show you through their play what they are learning.
- Be patient. In time it will be obvious that your child is growing and learning every day.



“Joy is the indication of internal growth.”

Maria Montessori



## COMMUNICATION

Communication between teachers and parents are vital to ensure the well-being of the child. Could parents please inform class teachers of any changes that may be taking place in the child's life, e.g., moving house, separation of parents, new baby, death in the family, etc.

### **PARENT EVENINGS:**

During the year, parent information evenings will be held. This will give both staff and parents a chance to socialize with each other. A brief talk on various child related topics will be held.

### **FAMILY CONFERENCES:**

It is very important for teachers and parents to establish and maintain close communication. Please feel free to ask questions or discuss anything related to your child's progress.

We ask however, that you understand that the teacher's responsibility during school is to the children. Morning arrival is a very sensitive period when the teachers are greeting each learner and setting a calm, pleasant tone for the day. Interruptions need to be kept to a minimum. If you must speak with a teacher in the morning, please plan to meet before school begins. Alternatively, you can correspond via e-mail with Chanelle when a suitable date and time can be arranged for a face-to-face meeting, preferably from 2-3pm for 15 to 20 minutes Monday to Friday.

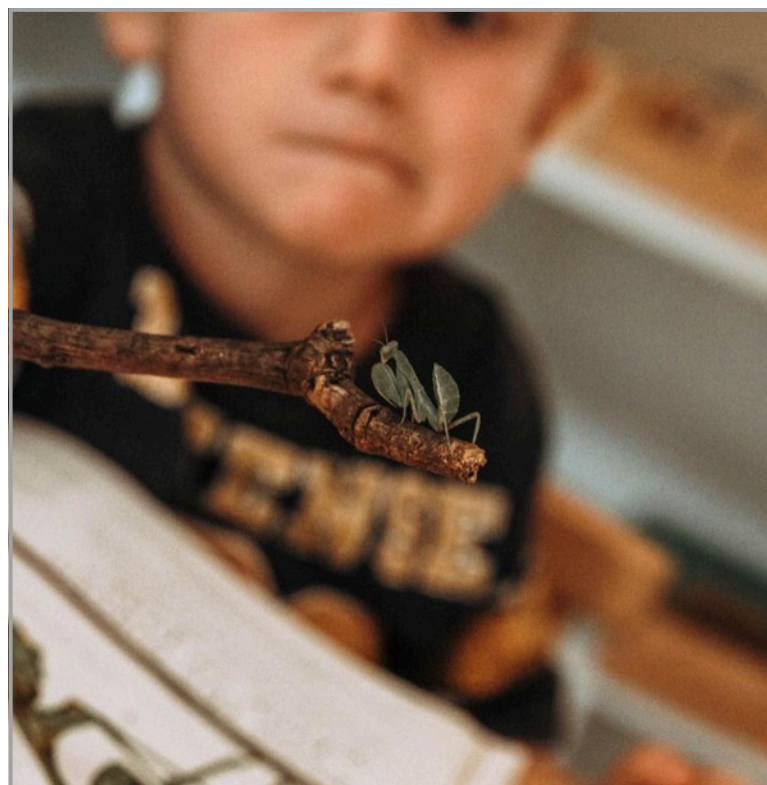
### **EVALUATION OF CHILDREN'S PROGRESS:**

The Montessori Curriculum is carefully structured and sequenced, and the teachers maintain careful records of each learner's academic progress.

Because Montessori Schools do not compare children against an arbitrary standard or the performance of their classmates, we do not use familiar letter grades. We send home written narrative reports annually and we also do parent-one-on-ones at least twice a year to discuss the children's development and discuss how the Montessori Method is contributing to their growth.

### **FACEBOOK/INSTAGRAM:**

Please join our Facebook group and Instagram accounts for regular updates, photographs, and videos on our daily school experiences. This medium is used to strengthen community between children, parents, and staff, therefore, we ask that you don't abuse this medium by placing advertising, unless specifically related to the school or parents of the school (secondhand goods etc.) on our page.



# GROUND RULES

As a school founded on the Montessori ideals, we believe that every person deserves respect. Monaghan Montessori motivates children to demonstrate kindness, courtesy, and respect toward the school and fellow children, parents, teachers, and staff.

The goal of the Montessori Method is to establish safe, warm, and caring environments within which we teach children positive and appropriate ways to handle situations. This attitude allows us to aid children to develop a strong sense of self-discipline, responsibility, and courtesy; to develop an atmosphere conducive to peaceful studies.

When anyone at Monaghan Montessori finds it difficult to follow the school's expectations about interpersonal conduct, we will quickly bring the child, family, and staff together to work toward a solution.

We follow an approach based on empowerment, mutual respect, and trust. Neither corporal punishment, nor physical nor emotional intimidation, is allowed at Monaghan Montessori. If anyone consciously or flagrantly violates the social contract regarding safety, kindness, and courtesy, our response is to identify the appropriate and natural consequences of their actions.

Any learner who repeatedly breaks the ground rules, or who on even one occasion endangers the health and safety of others, may be asked to leave the school by the Head of Education.

Please note that parents are not allowed to confront, talk to, or intimidate other children at our school, about any behaviour that may not be appropriate.

We have worked together to create a system of ground rules to create freedom within boundaries.

Ground rules are created and discussed with the class at the beginning of each term and frequently referred to throughout the year.

## **Examples of these ground rules are:**

1. We may not hurt anybody.
2. We may not break anything.
3. It must work for the group.

We prefer children not to bring cell phones and smart devices to school, and do not allow children to use cell phones or smart devices in the classroom.

## **ADMISSION POLICY:**

Monaghan Montessori reserves the right of admission due to capacity limits/age. Admission is also subject to the outcome of a three-day trial at the school by the child and a credit check.

## **SPEEDING FINES ON THE ESTATE:**

Monaghan Farm has a strict speed limit of 40km/hour. Please adhere to the speed limit. It is there to keep us safe.

Monaghan Farm issues the fines directly to the school, which then requires processing and invoicing. Violators will be issued with the fine and a R50 processing fee.



## SECTION 2: SUPPORTING CHILDREN’S DEVELOPMENT

### INTRODUCTION

The Montessori Movement is not a narrow method of teaching, but a broad philosophy of life that rests in faith in each child as a potential new beginning for humanity and the creator of the adult he will become. Every child possesses an inner force that drives him/her to grow and learn and that can be observed in his/her spontaneous activities. We respect his/her natural inquisitiveness, which makes learning an imperative, as much a basic need to the child as food, shelter, and love. We appreciate his/her relentless exploration through his/her senses and movements, which make his/her environment his/her natural school. It is our purpose to observe the child's natural interest and activities and provide an environment in which he/she can develop and learn.

### THE MONTESSORI METHOD

#### WHERE DID IT ORIGINATE?

Dr. Maria Montessori, the first woman to graduate from the University of Rome Medical School, became interested in education when she, as a doctor, was treating mentally handicapped children. After returning to the university for further study, she began her work with non-handicapped children in 1904.

After many years of intense observation of children across the globe, Dr. Montessori noted specific characteristics associated with the child's interests and abilities at each level of development. She argued that a school carefully designed to meet the needs and interests of the child would work more effectively because it would not fight human nature.

Montessori taught teachers how to “follow the child” through careful observation, allowing each child to reveal his/her strengths, weaknesses, interests, and anxieties; and strategies that work best to facilitate the development of the child's human potential.

This focus on the “whole child” led Dr. Montessori to develop a very different sort of school from the traditional adult-centred classroom. To emphasize this difference, she named her first school the “Casa dei Bambini” (The Children's Home).

#### WHAT IS THE MONTESSORI METHOD?

It is a system of education based on the child's developmental needs for freedom within limits and a carefully prepared environment that nurtures development on all levels and in all spheres. It is designed to take full advantage of the self-motivation and unique ability of every young child to develop his/her own capabilities.



## MAJOR POINTS OF THE MONTESSORI METHOD

*(Adapted from E.M. Standing, The Montessori Method: A Revolution in Education, Academy Library Guild, 1962.)*

- It is based on observations of the true nature of the child.
  - Its application is universal. The same results can be achieved in any country and with any racial, cultural, or economic group.
  - It reveals the small child as a lover of work, both intellect and of the mastery of the body (especially the hand). This work is spontaneously chosen and carried out with profound joy.
  - Through his/her work, the child shows spontaneous discipline. This discipline originates within him/her and is not imposed from without. This discipline is real, in contrast to the artificial discipline of reward and punishment common to other methods.
  - It provides suitable activities based on the vital urges of the child at each stage of development. Each stage is mastered before the next is attained.
  - It offers the child the greatest possible choice of physical and mental activity. In doing so, the child reaches the same or higher scholastic levels compared with traditional systems.
  - Each child works at his/her own pace. The quick are not held back and the slow are not pressured. The child has much opportunity to work in groups and to help other children with work he/she has already mastered.
  - It enables the teacher to guide each child individually in each subject area, according to his/her own unique needs.
  - It allows the child to grow in biological independence by respecting his/her needs and removing undue adult influence. It allows the child a large measure of liberty grounded in respect for the rights of others. This liberty is not permissive license but forms the basis of genuine discipline.
  - It does away with competition as a prime motivation for learning. The child competes with himself/herself. It presents endless opportunities for collaborative work and reciprocal assistance - joyfully given and received.
  - The child works from his/her own free choice. This choice is based on knowledge and is thus an authentic choice.
  - The Montessori Method develops the child's whole personality, not merely his/her intellectual faculties but also his/her powers of deliberation, initiative, and independent choice, with the associated emotional complements. By living as a free member of an authentic social community, the child learns the fundamental social qualities that underlie good citizenship.
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Montessori identified 'the universal characteristics of childhood' from her observations of children of different cultures at various stages in their development. These characteristics are as follows:

### **THE ABSORBENT MIND:**

A child has what Dr. Montessori called an absorbent mind, one that unconsciously soaks up information from the environment, learning at a rapid rate. This capacity to learn in this way is unique to the young child and lasts for the first six years of his/her life.

### **SENSITIVE PERIODS:**

Dr. Montessori noticed that children pass through phases when they will focus on one aspect of their environment. They will repeat activities time and time again, developing knowledge and new skills through their senses. It is at this time that tantrums are prevalent as it is the child's only way of saying that his/her need to learn (experience) is unsatisfied.

- Children want to learn.
- All children learn through active engagement.
- All children want to be independent.
- Children learn through play.

Having identified these "universal characteristics of childhood", Maria Montessori then concentrated on how best to implement these discoveries in the education of children. To do this she formulated what is now called the Montessori Method.

### **THE MAIN AIMS ARE:**

- To facilitate the development of the child's unique personality.
- To help make it possible for him/her to develop to his/her full potential.

## **IS THIS METHOD OF LEARNING SUITABLE FOR MY CHILD?**

The Montessori system has been used successfully with children from birth from all socio-economic, emotional, mental, and physical levels. We believe very strongly that intelligence is not fixed at birth, nor is the human potential anywhere near as limited as it sometimes seems in traditional education.

This system allows children to develop a meaningful degree of independence and self-discipline, which sets a pattern for a lifetime of good work habits and a sense of responsibility. Children learn to take pride in doing things for themselves carefully and well.

We treat each child as a unique individual. Children learn at their own pace, and we teach in ways that work best for them to discover and develop their own talents and possibilities. We teach children to think, not simply to memorize, regurgitate, and forget.

### **FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT:**

Children learn by doing, and children in our environment are free to move about, working alone or with others at will. They may select any activity and work with it if they wish, so long as they do not disturb anyone or wilfully damage anything and once, they have completed their task they return it to its specific place and proceed to select another activity.

The independence the child gains is empowering on a social and emotional basis and helps the child to become comfortable and confident in their ability to master the environment and learn without needing to be spoon-fed by an adult.

### **THE PREPARED ENVIRONMENT:**

Children learn through active participation; exercises are designed to draw the child's attention to the sensory properties of objects within their environment. Gradually they learn to pay attention, seeing more clearly small details in the environment around them. They have begun to observe and appreciate their surroundings. This is the key in helping the child discover how to learn.

### **CLASS SIZE AND MIXED AGES:**

A class usually contains children evenly divided among the three age levels. By consciously bringing children together in a group that allows for two-thirds of the children to return every year, the school environment promotes continuity between children and staff.

The recommendations by the International Montessori Council include an average class size of 25–30 with one qualified Montessori Guide and an Assistant. We however wish to remain a micro school with a maximum of 20 children in each class with one Montessori Guide and an Assistant.

Traditional schools assume that the teacher is the sole source of instruction, a very limited resource. Often the best teacher of a 3-year-old is another child, who is just a little bit older and has mastered a skill. This process is good for both children as children learn positively from their peers. The age range allows the more advanced child the stimulation of intellectual peers, while still having the freedom to socialize with peers of the same emotional standing.

### **THE GUIDE:**

Maria Montessori uses the term "Directress" and "Director", as the teachers are not to rule, never to master, but to guide, lead or direct the attention of the child.

The Guide works with individual children, introducing new materials and giving guidance where needed. The goal is to give the children just enough to capture their attention and spark their interest, intriguing them enough so that they will come back on their own to work with the materials alone.

### **FANTASY OR IMAGINATION:**

According to Jean Piaget, a prominent educationalist, the young child's mind (under 6 years), is unable to differentiate between fantasy and reality. This is why Montessori encouraged adults to help the child develop the wonderful gift of imagination by initially basing it in reality. We live in an abundant society with a diversity of cultures and extraordinary natural heritage. For example, it takes as much creative thought to visualize a North American Indian child's life in a tepee as it does to imagine a fairy living in a toadstool. One of these however will create an understanding and therefore an acceptance of the differences in cultures without prejudice. The other will have no significant meaning for the child because he will never be able to see the fairy or experience life in a toadstool.

Our planet and universe are buzzing with fascinating real-life events with an interesting narrative, thereby developing the child's love for books and increasing their understanding of the world around them in a fun and imaginative way.





## **THE MONTESSORI MATERIALS: A ROAD FROM THE CONCRETE TO THE ABSTRACT**

The basis of our approach is the simple observation that children learn most effectively through direct experience and the process of investigation and discovery. In her studies of children's learning, Dr. Montessori noted that most children do not learn by memorizing what they hear from their teachers or read in a text, but rather from concrete experience and direct interaction with the environment.

Asking a child to sit back and watch us perform a process or experiment is like asking a one-year-old not to put everything in his mouth. Children need to manipulate and explore everything that catches their interest. This led Montessori to emphasize the overriding importance of concrete learning apparatus and to the development of the Montessori materials for mathematics, sensory development, language, science, history, and geography.

The Montessori learning materials are not the method itself, but rather tools that we use to stimulate the child into logical thought and discovery. They are provocative and simple, each carefully designed to appeal to children at a given level of development.

Each material isolates and teaches one thing or is used to present one skill at a time as the child is ready. Montessori carefully analysed the skills and concepts involved in each subject and noted the sequence in which children most easily master them.

To facilitate the prepared order of the environment, the guide arranges the materials on the shelf following their sequence in the curriculum flowchart. The materials are displayed on low open shelves that are easily accessible to even the youngest children.

They are arranged to provide maximum eye appeal without clutter. Each has a specific place on the shelves, arranged from the upper-left-hand corner in sequence to the lower right. Materials are always arranged in sequence, from the simple to the most complex, and from the most concrete to those that are the most abstract.

## **PREPARING TOMORROW'S INNOVATIVE THINKERS TODAY:**

In a world of rapid change and new discoveries, we can only guess at the skills our children will need to succeed in the 21st century. Now, more than ever, the essential lesson is learning how to learn.

The most important years in our children's education are not high school and university, but, instead, their first twelve years of life. This is when their character and values, self-image, basic skills and knowledge, and appreciation for culture and the arts are formed.

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**CONCLUSION:**

Monaghan Montessori offers our children a world-class education, along with an education of the heart that nurtures their self-confidence, personal creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit.

We can see our children as they truly come to love learning and begin to discover their true potential as young men and women.

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The staff at Monaghan Montessori endeavour to look at the 'whole' child, to care and nurture your child on all levels and to allow your child to reach his/her full potential through purposeful activity.

*Thank you for choosing Monaghan Montessori.*




“The child who concentrates is immensely happy.”

Maria Montessori



# Contact Information



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## ABOUT US:

On the 13th of July 2010, Monaghan Montessori officially opened its doors, firstly situated in the old Bailey Residence, and later moved into the building we know today.

Monaghan Farm is the perfect setting for the Montessori Philosophy, it comes alive in a natural environment as it gives children the ability to be playful, they can get dirty, play freely, go on nature walks or work in the veggie patch.

We have recently been named by Phillip Montessori, the grandchild of Maria Montessori, as the Montessori School in South Africa that will give your child an authentic Montessori Education. We are passionate about what we do, and we have had the privilege to be a part of the Monaghan Farm Community for 13-years and the natural surroundings has formed a crucial part of our teaching environment and bringing out the best in our children.

www.farmschool.xyz

MONAGHAN



MONTESSORI  
SCHOOL



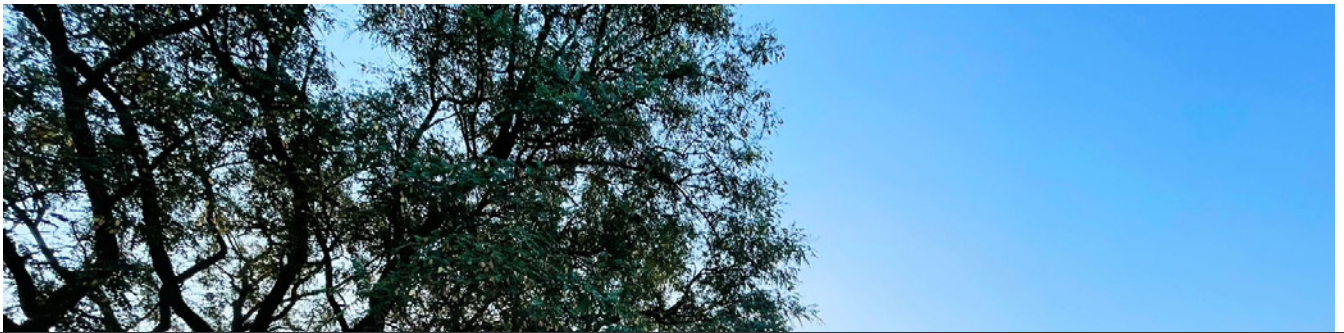
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