



Junior School Parent Handbook



Melbourne
Montessori
School

Welcome to Melbourne Montessori School

I believe passionately that every individual has deep potential and ability and that it is the role of every teacher at Melbourne Montessori School to discover or unlock the talents, skills and interests of each child. Montessori education is fantastically organised to cater to each student's needs and to support each individual in their own way and at their own pace. I am excited to work with our teachers and the wider community to develop children into life-long learners who are fully prepared for the uncertain future we all face.



For over 45 years, we at Melbourne Montessori School, have provided the best early childhood and junior school education and are rated NQS Overall Exceeding in this area. We have gained recognition by receiving one of only seven Innovative Schools Awards for Victorian Schools in 2019 and 2020, and have also won two Lego Robotic awards for innovation.

I welcome new families to our vibrant school community!

'Expect more from Education' is our mantra and our students thrive in the small environments which have been deliberately and carefully prepared to allow our students to engage in calm surroundings where they can focus and learn in peace, supported by our wonderfully dedicated and caring, world-class staff.

At Melbourne Montessori School we provide broad opportunities for young people to become excited by the world around them, we cater for their different interests and skill levels and take students further. We surround them with passionate teachers who can light that essential spark to ask more and expect more. We encourage students to push the boundaries and start creating their own path in life in a secure, supportive environment.

We embrace rigorous study and look beyond the traditional measures of student achievement to develop and apply a holistic measure of student excellence, fulfillment and potential. We believe education should focus on preparing our children for the exciting future that lies ahead of them, equipping them with the skills and knowledge they will need to thrive in a fast-changing world.

Gay Wales
Principal

Welcome to our Junior School

It is with great pleasure that we welcome your family as members of the Melbourne Montessori Junior School community.

Children grow fast in a stimulating and challenging environment, with support and guidance from the teachers when needed and together they explore wide ranging, enquiry-based lessons from the birth of the universe through to the detailed grammar of English.

Our classrooms are purposefully designed to allow children to be self-sufficient and to work at their own pace with developmentally appropriate activities and resources they have chosen, guided by two Montessori trained educators. They lead the highly methodical teaching of activities from real-life cooking and gardening to division and multiplication. The children learn mathematics, language, science, geography, history, sensorial and practical life lessons. Specialist teachers also introduce Italian, Performing Arts, Art and Sport.

An extra special welcome to our newest members of the Junior School joining Cycle One. Starting school is an exciting time, and we eagerly anticipate sharing this exciting journey with you. Each Cycle One classroom is a happy mix of kindergarten and Prep-aged children from 3 – 6 years and every classroom is spacious, airy and naturally lit. There is a sense of calm and order as our children engage enthusiastically in a huge range of activities throughout the year.

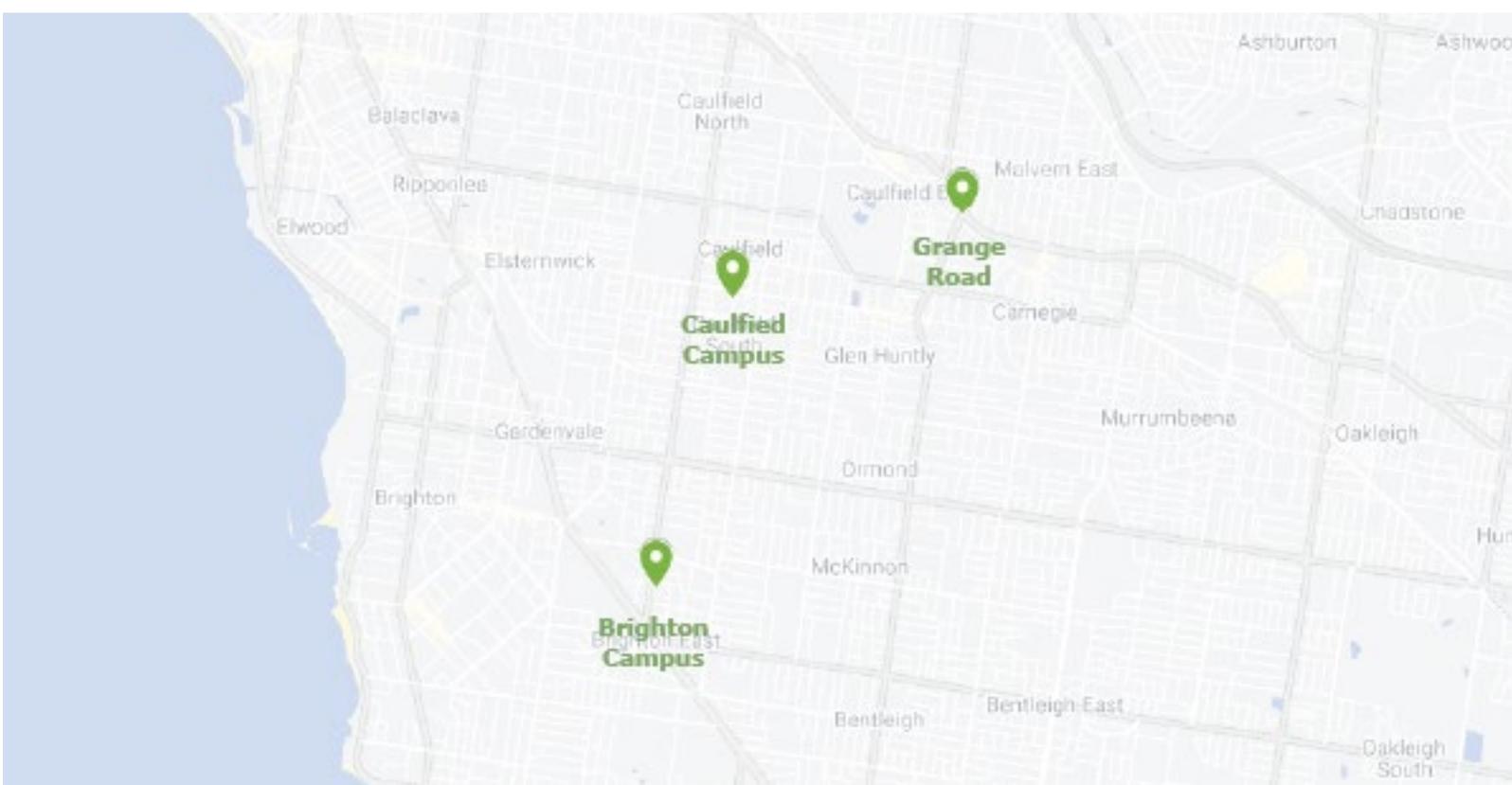
I look forward to a bright and happy 2021 with our talented students, dedicated teachers, and passionate community.



A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Jane Watson'.

Sarah Jane Watson
Deputy Principal of Junior School

Locations



Getting Here

We appreciate your cooperation and support to ensure we are as environmentally friendly as possible and have appropriate practice in place to minimise parking congestion around our campuses. We all want to help minimise carbon miles and also ease the parking pressure, so Melbourne Montessori School actively encourages the following travel methods:

- Public transport (tram, bus and train)
- Park in nearby streets and walk to school
- Park and scooter or cycle to school
- Share lifts / carpool with friends
- Staff are also encouraged to use these sustainable methods

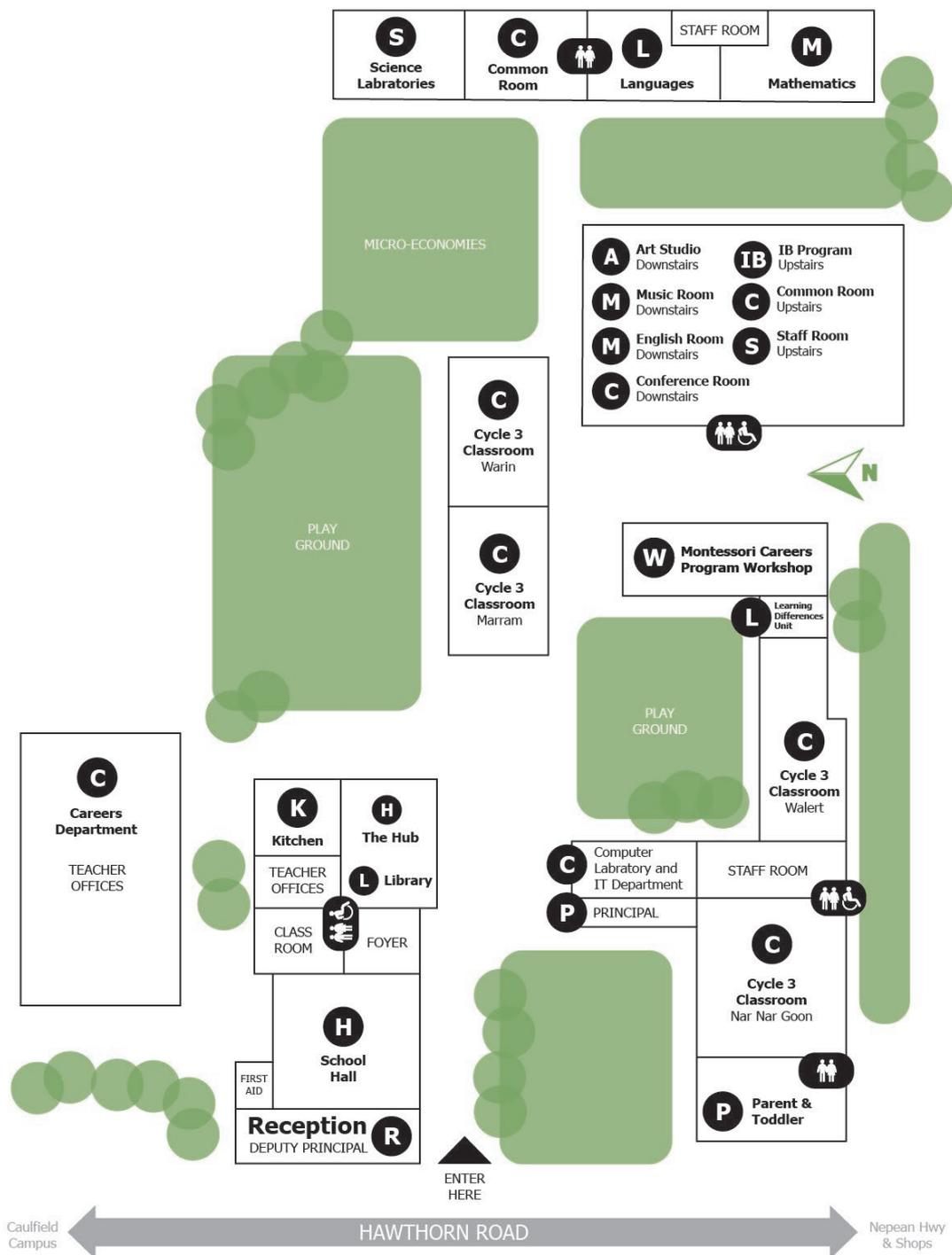
Accessibility

Please contact our friendly Reception staff should you have any concerns about the accessibility of our campuses. Melbourne Montessori School has many ramps available for people with diverse accessibility needs.

Brighton Reception: (03) 9131 5202

Caulfield Reception: (03) 9131 5201

Brighton Campus

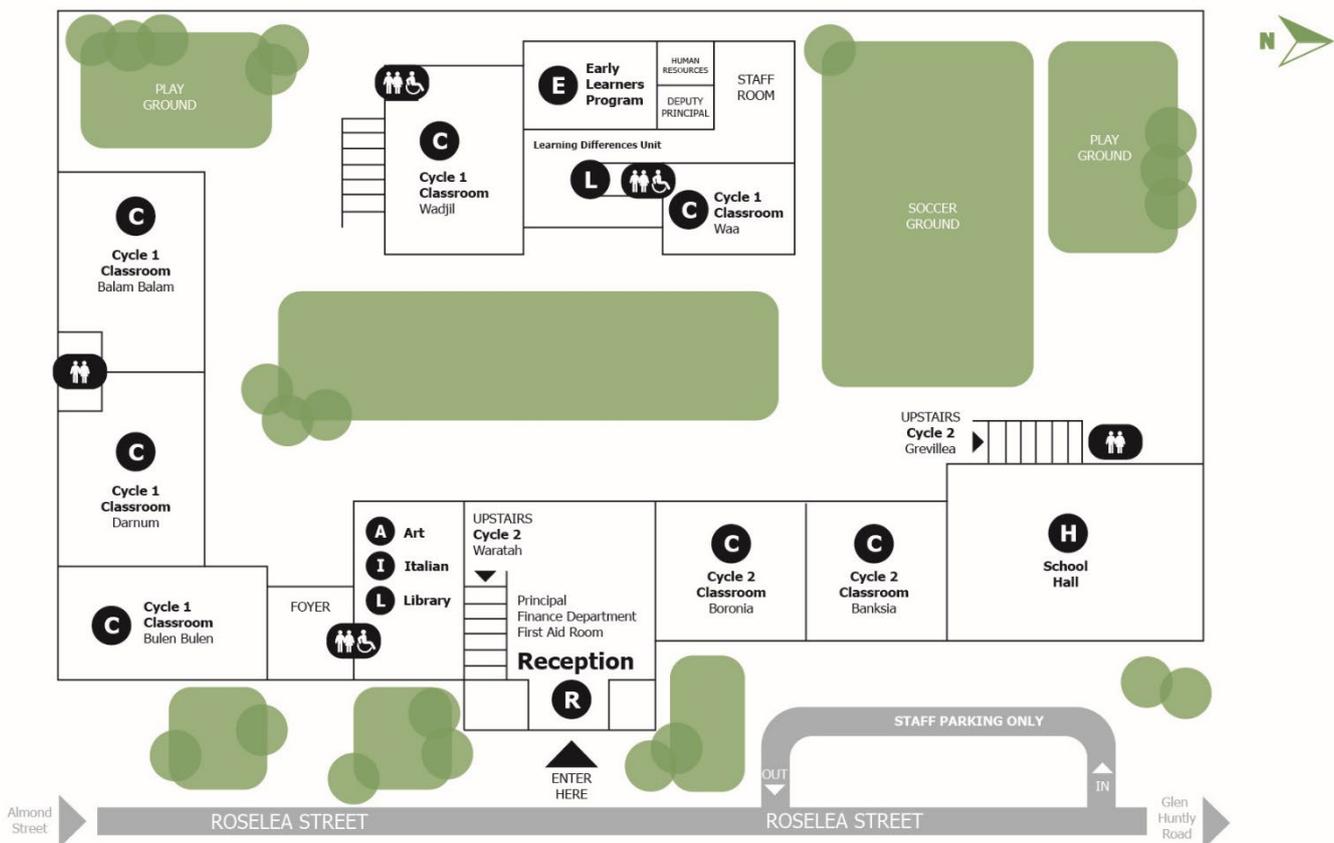


Address: 741 Hawthorn Road, BRIGHTON EAST VIC 3187

Parking

Parents and visitors are asked to park on Hawthorn Road, or several blocks away and then walk to and from School. 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.

Caulfield Campus



Address: 6 Roselea Street, CAULFIELD SOUTH VIC 3162

Parking

The Caulfield Campus of Melbourne Montessori School is located in a residential area.

To help support the safety of our children and maintain good relations with our neighbours, we ask that you **please enter Roselea Street from Almond Street only**. Please do not enter Roselea Street directly from Glen Huntly Road. This supports us with our traffic management plan and will ensure a smooth pick up / drop off time for our community.

Please park on the school side of the street and ensure that you are not blocking a driveway. You may wish to park in Glen Huntly Road, Almond Street or other side streets and walk your children to School from there. This is strongly encouraged by the School, to promote emotional and physical wellbeing for both parents and children.

Mission

Our mission at Melbourne Montessori School is to:

- Provide excellence in Montessori education from birth to eighteen years
- 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.
- Provide a safe environment that enhances the safety and well-being of all
- Nurture, inspire and support each child's individual development.
- Foster the growth of self-confidence, independence, self-discipline, an inquiring and active mind, personal and social responsibility
- Foster every child's innate love of learning and to make their introduction to education a joyful and purposeful start to a journey of life-long learning.
- Nurture, inspire and support each person's individual development

Democratic Principles

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.



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.



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.



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.



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.



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.



We approach learning seeking to **understand our students' uniqueness** and guide them individually and at their own pace, so they fully realise their potential.



We **celebrate the natural diversity of human beings**.



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.



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.



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.



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.

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.

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.

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.

History of the School

Melbourne Montessori School (MMS) has undergone significant change and transformation over the course of its 46-year history. The School has evolved from small, but passionate beginnings into a substantive, independent School that is dedicated to help children, and adults, to learn and grow and to become the best version of themselves.



1974: First Class of Melbourne Montessori School

The first Montessori Cycle One classroom in Victoria was established in 1974 at the current Brighton campus. The success of the three-year-old and four-year-old program created demand for a permanent home for two primary classes and led to the purchase in 1979 of the current Caulfield campus.

In 2005, MMS became an independent preschool and primary school for children from 3 to 12 years of age. A Montessori early childhood program, Parent and Toddler and Early Learners, was established in 2007, for children eighteen-months to three-years.

In 2014, MMS purchased the Brighton campus, adjoining Church and surrounding grounds from the Uniting Church. This supported the expansion of the Junior School to over four hundred children and allowed us to begin the much longed for Middle and Senior School.

To support our hard-working parents, in 2020 Melbourne Montessori School partnered with Headland Montessori to provide Cycle One within a Long Day Care environment.

School Hours

Parent and Toddler Group	9.30am-11.30am
Early Learners Program	Morning Session (9.15am - 11.15am) Afternoon Session (12.45pm - 2.45pm)
Cycle One	8.45am-3.00pm
Cycles 2 & 3	8.45am-3.15pm
Cycle Four	9.00am-3.45pm
Cycle Five	9.30am-3.55pm

Wet/Extreme Heat Days

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

Collection by those who are not the parent

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, who is not the parent, then the parent of the child must notify staff in writing of the arrangement before the end of day collection. Collection Authority Forms are available from School Reception at each campus.

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.

After School Care Program – Caulfield Campus Only

Prep to Year 3 children at our Caulfield Campus 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 who use Camp Australia before they can attend the service. More details are available at Reception.

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

Non-School Days

Children do not attend school on Public Holidays and on 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 regarding 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. Children do not attend School on Curriculum Days.

2021 Term Dates

Term 1

Friday 22 January 2021
Tuesday 26 January 2021
Wednesday 27 January 2021
Monday 8 March 2021
Sunday 14 March 2021
Monday 15 March 2021
Thursday 1 April 2021
Friday 2 April 2021
Sunday 4 April 2021
Monday 5 April 2021

Teaching Staff Return
Australia Day Public Holiday
First Day of Term 1
Labour Day (Non-School Day)
MMS Open Day
Non-School Day

End of Term 1 for Teaching Staff & Students

Good Friday
Easter Sunday
Easter Monday

Term 2

Monday 19 April 2021
Tuesday 20 April 2021
Sunday 25 April 2021
Friday 21 May 2021
Monday 14 June 2021
Friday 18 June 2021

Teaching Staff Return
First Day of Term 2
ANZAC Day
Curriculum Day (Non-School Day)
Queen's Birthday Public Holiday

End of Term 2 for Teaching Staff & Students

Term 3

Monday 12 July 2021
Tuesday 13 July 2021
Friday 13 August 2021
Monday 16 August 2021
Friday 17 September 2021

Teaching Staff Return
First Day of Term 3
Curriculum Day (Non-School Day)
Mid-Term Break (Non-School Day)

End of Term 3 for Teaching Staff & Students

Term 4

Monday 4 October 2021
Tuesday 5 October 2021
Friday 29 October 2021
Monday 1 November 2021
Tuesday 2 November 2021
Friday 10 December 2021
Tuesday 14 December 2021

Teaching Staff return to school
First Day of Term 4
Curriculum Day (Non-School Day)
Mid-Term Break (Non-School Day)
Melbourne Cup Public Holiday (Non-School Day)
End of Term 4 for Students
Teaching Staff Finish

What to Bring



Uniform / Clothing

There is no compulsory uniform at Melbourne Montessori School. Children are required to wear neat and tidy clothes that are comfortable and practical.

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 Clothing Labels

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.



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.



Sun Protection

In Terms 1 and 4 your child will also need a **broad-brimmed hat** and **sunscreen**. We encourage you to bring your own, alternatively there are hats available for purchase at Reception. We request that Cycle One children arrive with sunscreen already applied and you may wish to add a roll-on sunscreen to your child's bag as they can learn to apply this quite easily. Sunscreen is also provided at school for children to apply if necessary.



Shoes

Your Cycle 2 or 3 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 children have Sport or PMP lessons, they will also need runners or similar.



Snack Time

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 Cycle One classrooms, all fruit snacks are cut up as a fruit platter to be shared between the class.



Nut-Free Policy

Melbourne Montessori School strives to be a nut-free school as we have several children 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. Your classroom teacher will advise of any additional allergies relevant to your classroom.



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. We encourage you to consider sustainable food packaging.



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 Cycle One 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 of your Library Bag can be obtained from the classroom teacher. Older children can visit more frequently but will also have a dedicated session in the Library with their teacher.



Stationery

The School supplies all required stationery for classes in the Junior School. 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 child 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 would be appropriate. Alternatively, an art smock can be purchased from Reception. Please try not to dress your children in their best clothes on Art day.



Mobile Phones

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



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.

If your child is absent, you must contact your teacher via email as soon as possible and no later than by 10.00am on the day they are absent.

School Communications

Unique Parent Log-in

When your child starts at the school you will be issued with your own unique parent log-in. There is one log-in per family, not per parent. This is used when logging into the Parent Portal, your child's classroom blog, to book Parent-Teacher interview times and to access your child's school report for children from Prep to Year 6.

The School Website

The School website address is www.mms.vic.edu.au and it has lots of information on it including all School Policies, Board News, Classroom blogs, After School Activities, Health Information and forms needed at School. By using your Parent Portal log-in you can access information not available to the public. You can manage and change your personal contact information, access school reports and book Parent Teacher interviews when they are available.

Melbourne Montessori School Community News

The Community News is our regular e-newsletter. It is distributed 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 onto the website.

Reports and Parent-Teacher Interview Nights

Your child's progress at Melbourne Montessori School is reported four times per year at a 15-minute session.

A stand alone Parent Teacher Interview is held in Terms 1 and 3. The dates of the Parent Teacher Interviews are advertised on the website and bookings made via the Parent Portal on-line booking system. Interviews can also be made with Specialist teachers or with the Principal. Formal reports are distributed in Terms 2 and 4 and combined with another Parent Teacher Interview made with the teacher.

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 8.30am and afternoon timeslot of 3.00-3.30pm.

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, eg. a pet or family member is unwell or you will be working interstate. 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 invited to attend Parent Education sessions each year. 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 at School and at home, and the general education and development 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.

Parent Directory

The Parent Directory is a list of contact details of other parents in the cycle and campus. 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.

Parent Expectations

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 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.

Rest for your child

Children can sometimes get tired at School and so each Cycle One 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.

Homework

In the Junior School, there is no formal homework sent home for children to complete at night. Every child, from Cycle 1 readers to Year 6, is expected to read every night. It is also expected that Cycle 3 children will pursue some area of interest or project work from time to time.

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 8.45am. Parents are requested to have their child at their classroom by 8.45am at the latest.

Entering the child's workspace

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

In addition, you can also organise for an *Observation* 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 all other times, it is considered important that the child's workspace is valued as the child's domain and so parents need to say goodbye in a space outside of the classroom, such as at the front gate. 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 parent's 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

We request that you 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 approx. 20 -30 minutes and is an essential Montessori expectation.

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, and learn more about Montessori methods each year.

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 lizards 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 One playground at the same time as the full-day children are having their lunch play.

Once children have left the classroom at 3.00pm for **Cycle One**, they are no longer under the supervision of the classroom teacher and if their parent/guardian has arrived and is in the playground, they can play in the playground under the supervision of that adult.

Once children have left the classroom at 3.15pm for **Cycles 2 and 3**, 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 playground, they can play in the playground under the supervision of that adult.

Room Representatives

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. In Cycle Two they organise helpers for the Art Room and Interschool Sport days etc.

Extra-Curricular Activities

There are several Extra-Curricular Activities offered each term. The details are available on the website prior to the commencement of each new term. Attendance is voluntary and these activities are run by external companies, who are paid by the term. Activities can include band, chess, choir and more (subject to change).

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. The Board establishes committees to address specific issues and sets the Strategic Plan of the School with the Executive, 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; if you wish to accompany an excursion, help out in the Art Room or on Pizza Day, you need to provide a Working with Children Check and attend a session with the Principal.

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, for example Mothers' Day, Disco, Fathers' Day and more.
- 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.

Medical

If your child is sick and unable to attend school

Your child should be kept home if they are unwell. 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.

If your child is absent, you must contact your teacher via email as soon as possible and no later than by 10.00am on the day they are absent.

Medication at School

If your child needs to take any medication, please discuss this with the classroom teacher. The staff can only be responsible for administering medications in 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.**

Asthma, Allergies and Anaphylaxis

If your child suffers from asthma, allergies or anaphylaxis, parents are required to provide **at the start of each school year** a current year's Action Plan signed by their doctor, as well as providing **two sets** of medication, one for the classroom and one for the Sickbay.

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.

Please refer to the Department of Health for the periods of exclusion table:

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusion-table>

Immunisation

By law, in Victoria, to finalise enrolment for your child in a long day care, kindergarten, family day care or occasional care you must provide the service with an immunization status certificate that shows your child is:

- Up to date with vaccinations for their age OR
- On a vaccine catch-up schedule OR
- Has a medical condition preventing them from being fully vaccinated and for what period of time.

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.

HEAD LICE

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 must be 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.

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.

Signs to look for:

- Frequent scratching of the head
- A fine black powder on the pillow
- Paler coloured matter on pillows
- Live lice
- 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 degrees 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.

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. Thank you for support this regulatory requirement.

Parent and Toddler Group

Our Parent and Toddler Group is based at the Brighton Campus.

Our program caters for our youngest children and is a gentle introduction to the Montessori philosophy where a parent or caregiver attends the session with their child aged 15 months to 2.5 years.

The prepared environment in the classroom reflects order, beauty and simplicity and is set up to allow the child's growing need for activity and independence. Adults learn to respect their children's choices in a safe and nurturing setting.

The children enjoy both familiar ideas and new ideas through exploration of the seasons, gardening and cooking. They enjoy painting, singing and listening to stories and begin to learn the simple concepts of mathematics and language.

Most parents enrol for one session per week, but it is also possible to enrol in multiple sessions if places are available.

This program runs every day (Monday to Friday), from 9.30am to 11.30am, and our School Registrar will be in touch with you to organise your transition arrangements.

Early Learners Program

Our Early Learning Program is based at the Caulfield Campus.

Early Learners is a very special introduction to learning. The environment is intimate and calm and the children begin to learn about their world and how to explore and understand their world with the guidance of highly trained Montessori educators. Our School Registrar will be in touch with you to organise your transition arrangements.

This program introduces 'Practical Life' lessons as the link between a child's home environment and the classroom. These encompass:

- control of movement,
- care of self,
- care for the environment, and
- grace and courtesy.

The children enjoy both familiar ideas and new ideas through exploration of the seasons, gardening and cooking. They enjoy painting, singing and listening to stories and begin to learn the simple concepts of mathematics and language.

Maria Montessori refers to development in this period as the spiritual embryo. She believed that a second embryonic period occurred after birth, during the first three years of life, when the child's intelligence is formed. This is the time the child acquires the culture and language into which he or she is born. It is the period when the core of personality, social being and the essence of spiritual life are developed.

Children must be enrolled in the whole program, attending the morning **and** the afternoon session they are allocated to. During their experience in this program, children learn to work independently from their parent or caregiver and start to develop the methodology and work habits necessary for when they move into the Cycle One environment.

Cycle One

Cycle One is based at the Caulfield Campus.

Please be mindful that before your child can commence in Cycle One they do need to be toilet trained. That is, they do not wear a nappy or pullups, they are aware of when the need arises to go to the toilet, they can tell an adult of this, they can wipe themselves after toileting, flush the toilet and wash their hands and re-dress themselves by pulling up undies and pants.

A Typical Day

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 One children who come for the morning only, need to be collected promptly at 12 noon sharp.

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. Once your child is deemed as being ready, the Teacher will begin transitioning your child to longer periods of time spent at school. Each child is different and will be transitioned based upon readiness. 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.

Gradually, your Cycle 1 child will transition to a 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 8.45am and finish at 3pm. There is a one hour break at lunchtime for eating and play time.

Transition

New Cycle One children, in the year prior to commencement, are required to attend an Orientation Morning held in early November to meet all Cycle One teachers and other Cycle One parents/guardians and children. (This was not able to be held in 2020.) I'd keep red so you pick up to remove next year.

Before the end of the school year, you will receive a letter detailing your child's classroom allocation and starting schedule for the following year.

In late January, your child's teacher will contact you to arrange an orientation visit. This is usually out of school hours - generally about 3pm or 3.30pm and is an opportunity to meet the teacher and for them to introduce you and your child to the classroom.

Your child will not come to School on the first day of Term 1 but rather experience 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.

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.

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 8.45am - 12pm.

In the first year all Cycle One children will attend a maximum of 5 half days.

Attendance

For the Early Learners and Cycle One children it is a legal requirement that each child is signed in each morning by the person bringing the child to School (this can legally be done by an Assistant as the child arrives) 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 Two

Cycle Two is based at the Caulfield Campus.

A Typical 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 8.45am and finish at 3.15pm. There is a one-hour break at lunchtime for eating and play time.

Transition

If your child's enrolment has been finalised by early November, he or she will be invited to attend our transition days, on which our Prep, Grade 3 and any new children spend two half days and one full day in their new classroom. During these sessions your child will have the opportunity to visit their new classroom, get to know the teacher better and also spend some time with the existing children in that class.

Should your child be unable to attend the transition days your child's teacher will contact you to arrange an orientation visit, prior to the commencement of school. This is usually out of school hours, generally about 3.15pm or 3.30pm and is an opportunity to meet the teacher and for them to introduce you and your child to the classroom.

Cycle Three

Cycle Three is based at the Brighton Campus.

A Typical 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 8.45am and finish at 3.15pm. There is a one hour break at lunchtime for eating and play time.

Transition

If your child's enrolment has been finalised by early November, he or she will be invited to attend our transition days, on which our Prep, Grade 3 and any new children spend two half days and one full day in their new classroom. During these sessions your child will have the opportunity to visit their new classroom, get to know the teacher better and also spend some time with the existing children in that class.

Should your child be unable to attend the transition days your child's teacher will contact you to arrange an orientation visit, prior to the commencement of school. This is usually out of school hours, generally about 3.15pm or 3.30pm and is an opportunity to meet the teacher and for them to introduce you and your child to the classroom.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I as a parent prepare my Cycle One 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 the Montessori website (www.aidtolife.org), borrow the books and videos from our Library.

Follow this online blog (www.howwemontessori.com), there is an Australian section.

Read 'The Montessori Toddler' by Simone Davies available on Audible, at Amazon or similar.

- Create routines at home e.g. 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 e.g. 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

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 e.g. 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 Cycle 1 children should be 'reading' at least one, but preferably more, books per night. This might mean the adult reads or the child reads depending on the level of ability.

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.

Why can my child not wear novelty clothing?

Novelty clothes such as tutus, fairy wings, etc. are discouraged at Melbourne Montessori School and there is a Montessori rationale for this. Fantasy can be very interesting to an older child, over 6 years of age, but may be confusing the young child as they are developmentally not able to differentiate between reality and fantasy. Teachers have observed that when children wear, or see other children wearing, super-hero / fantasy clothing, their behaviour changes and they attempt to mimic the superhero - they can become preoccupied with working through what they have seen, and this can be overwhelming for some children. Fantasy is very different to imagination - which Montessori encourages. In a Montessori classroom they are given real, authentic opportunities as opposed to pretend ones. A three-year-old is very capable of learning basic food preparation skills, so teachers will guide them and leave them with a sense of empowerment. Even a toddler is old enough to begin learning how to sweep up a mess on the floor. Rather than supplying a toy cleaning set, a real cleaning tools, that are appropriately sized will be available, and they will be guided on how to use them effectively.

Does my child need to be toilet trained before commencing Cycle One?

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

Why is it important for my child to have a 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 children who regularly have too little sleep can experience many serious behavioural problems. If your child seems consistently tired, have him/her examined by a doctor and keep them at home for a few days and ensure regular bed times.

How can I help my child get ready for school in the morning?

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.

How may we celebrate birthdays in the classroom?

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

Can I bring birthday invitations to school?

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

How does MMS celebrate 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, interests and cultures 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.

Should my child participate in 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.



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

Melbourne Montessori School