



MONTESSORI

PRE~SCHOOL

(F.G.M.S.)

SCHOOL HANDBOOK & CALENDAR

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

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INTRODUCTION

We would like to take this opportunity to extend a very warm welcome to the parents and children of Forest Grove Montessori Pre-School. For the next three years, we aim to provide your child(ren) with an exciting and fun-filled learning experience that is certain to be life-long.

In order to ensure that both you and your children have a happy, stimulating and successful experience, we encourage you to take a few minutes to become familiar with the contents of this information booklet and retain it for future reference.

1. THE PURPOSE OF MONTESSORI EDUCATION:

The Montessori method of early childhood education is based on **cultivating each child's natural desire to learn** and experiencing the excitement of learning by his/her own choice using Montessori materials. Through a program of individualized daily learning, children acquire the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic in the same natural way as they learn to walk and talk. This same approach of channeling their natural curiosity, enthusiasm and self- motivation into an enjoyable learning experience is applied to additional academic activities including natural sciences, geography, French introduction, music, arts, crafts and physical activities.

Therefore, the materials that the children use and the activities that they engage in, help them develop **concentration, co-ordination, and work habits** as necessary tools for more advanced learning and development at later stages of their lives. Moreover, **independence, self confidence, self-esteem**, positive and creative thinking will be instilled in children as a consequence of the implementation of Montessori principles. These habits and skills are the necessary foundation for the children's future success as well as their wholesome growth.

It is important for you to know at the outset that your children could only benefit fully from the Montessori program if they are allowed to follow through the **"three year cycle"**. This is due to the fact that the time and effort spent in learning various subjects - specially in language and math.- during the first two years, come together and into fruition in the third year.

2. SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY/MISSION:

Our mission is to create a happy and nurturing environment for children between the **ages of 1 ½ to 6 years old**, which is conducive to the development of their social, intellectual, academic, physical and artistic skills. Moreover, children are encouraged to achieve their full potential, discover joy of working and learning, explore and solve problems, develop social skills and independence. We are committed to provide children with the required individual attention and encouragement to learn and explore various subjects at an improving pace. In order to achieve the above goals, our Casa program is based on the Montessori method of early childhood education for children between the ages of **2 ½ to 6 years old**.

In addition to our **"Casa"** classes (Montessori based Program), we have a **"Toddler"** class (**ages 1 ½ up to 3 years old**) based on the "Early Childhood Method of Education" and focused on developing and enriching their vocabulary as well as eye and hand co-ordination, social skills, fine and gross motor activities, arts and craft, etc. This is a preparatory program, primarily for younger siblings of our Casa students as well as for those children who would be moving to our Casa program when they reach the ages of 2 ½ to 3 years old. Our "Toddlers" will have fun-packed, creative and educational programs on a daily basis in order to prepare them for entrance to our Montessori based program.

Parents, students, and teaching staff share equally in the achievement of our goals.

3. **DISCIPLINE:**

We regard cultivating a healthy inner discipline to be very much a part of the children's learning experience. This is achieved in a positive and constructive manner by simple explanation, gentle reminders of the logical consequences of their actions as well as suggesting appropriate ways to deal with conflicts in a way appropriate to their actions and their ages. This will promote self respect, discipline and ensures health and safety, respect for others and for maintaining materials and equipment. Scolding, spanking, or other forms of corporal punishment are not permitted.

4. **SCHOOL HOURS AND PUNCTUALITY:**

The school is open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The academic day is from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Half Day morning program is scheduled from 9:00 to 11:30 and the Half Day afternoon program (if available) is scheduled from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Before and After School Programs start at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 6:00 p.m., as applicable.

It is our intention to give the students a sense of order and punctuality. Please ensure that your child arrives on time. A student arriving late for class is both disruptive and distracting from the on going learning process. Late arrivals miss out on the excitement generated by the introduction of new topics and materials by their teachers. If your child is unable to come to school, please advise the School accordingly

5. **DROPPING OFF- PICKING UP STUDENTS:**

Students must be dropped off at the gym or the door of the classroom (as applicable and after having changed to their in-door shoes, etc.) and picked up at the same place. Parents are advised to resist the temptation of entering the classroom at all times including the drop off and pick up times. In case of early pick ups, please wait outside the classroom until the teacher has dismissed the child(ren).

Parents are also strictly advised to use the "one way" drive way to the west side of the building for entrance (as shown on the school's sign), park their cars on the lower parking lot only, refrain from parking in the **reserved parking spaces to the left of the entrance door** of the school and exit from the most easterly drive way. Please note that the School is not allowed to make use of the upper parking lot or make use of the drive way in front of the Church for entrance or egress.

6. **SEPARATION:**

The issue of separation is very important and it should not be assumed that separation is automatic or the same for each child. Most children want to come to school. Others are more apprehensive at first and this is quite normal. Sometimes a child's separation difficulties are directly reflecting a parent's own anxiety. Upon arrival, parents are asked to hand their child directly into the care of our staff. This is especially important for "new students" and their parents as there may be some "clinging" for first-timers. We ask that you say your good-byes lovingly, but quickly, and leave the school, so as not to prolong any sad feelings. It may be a good idea, however, for you to pick your child up after 1 or 2 hours for the first couple of days. By doing this, we are helping your child settle in. It will be hard at first, but a significant difference will usually emerge within a period of two weeks.

7. **RELEASING STUDENTS:**

When anyone other than the parent, or regular adult who normally takes the student home, as already listed in the enrollment form, is asked to pick up a student from school, the following procedure must be followed:

- a) The teacher must be given a signed letter from the parent stating who will be picking up the child. It is not sufficient to merely say "the child's sister" will be coming to pick him/her up - we need to know the person's full name for proper identification.
- b) If it is not possible to get a written letter to us in time, we need a phone call authorizing us to release the student and again the full name of the person to whom the student may be released.
- c) Parents are to inform the person picking-up their child to have some form of identification with them as they will be required to show it to the teacher. Parents are asked to explain this procedure to anyone picking up their child so that they do not feel embarrassed when asked for identification, and realize that it is for safety and security reasons only.
- d) The identification produced will be compared with the name given by the parent either verbally or in writing, and only if they are the same will the student be released. In case of any doubt, it is our policy not to release the student. We urge parents to be very particular about giving us adequate and proper instructions as we want to be absolutely sure that each student goes home with the person designated to pick him/her up.

8. NUTRITION AND SNACKS:

A hot nutritious mid day meal and a morning and an afternoon snacks will be provided daily, as applicable (i.e., depending on Full or Half day attendance). Please ensure that your children have nutritious breakfast as morning snack is not an adequate substitute for breakfast. Morning snacks consist of various cereals and milk and afternoon snacks normally consists of biscuits or crackers and milk. The meals and snacks provided for the children are in accordance with the Canadian Food Guide and as outlined in the Day Nurseries Act.

Children's allergies will be taken into account in serving of lunch.

We welcome parents' contributions, on a voluntary basis, to our daily snacks in the form of pre-cut fruits and vegetables, yogurt and cheeses or any other nutritious snacking food. Due to allergy and religious reasons, please ask/let us know about the ingredients used in any food brought to the school.

9. ALLERGIES:

If your child has or develops any allergies, (e.g., to paint, crayons, foods, juices, etc.) please notify the school immediately. All allergies must be listed in the student's medical information form.

10. HEALTH AND ILLNESS RELATED ISSUES:

For every one's benefit, if a child appears to be sick upon arrival at the school, the teacher has the right to refuse admittance. We trust that no parents will knowingly bring a child to the school if the child has any signs of fever, sore throat, rash, red and inflamed eyes with or without discharge, persistent cough and/or excessive nasal discharge, diarrhea, vomiting or any communicable disease (chicken pox, measles, etc.).

If a child becomes ill while at the school, he/she will be removed from the company of other children and you will be notified immediately. Should this occur, please pick up your child as soon as possible. In the event of an accident or other medical emergency, the parent acknowledges having signed the medical release form and authorizing the school to obtain immediate medical assistance for the child.

Please note that we cannot exclude children from outdoor activities at any time or once they have returned to school after being ill. If your child cannot participate in the required outdoor play area due to illness, it is our policy that the child remains at home. These guidelines are put in place for the benefit of all our children, including your own. Please help us to maintain high standards of hygiene in order to minimize the spread of diseases.

11. MEDICAL FORM:

Before any medication can be given to a child, the drug and medication administration form must be duly filled out and signed. The medication must be in the original bottle and labeled with the student 's name. We shall not administer antibiotics unless they have been given to the child during the previous 48 hours. This is for the safety of your child.

If a student has had a communicable disease, such as chicken pox, he/she must bring a doctor's certificate upon returning to school, stating that he/she is now free of communicable diseases and is able to attend School again.

12. CLOTHING AND POSSESSIONS:

For your child to participate and enjoy the daily program - specially the outdoor activities - it is essential that their clothing is suitable for the season and the daily weather forecast. It is important to provide clothing which is easy for children to manage on their own at their particular stage of development as our pre-schoolers will be encouraged to toilet, change/put on extra clothing for going outside or sleeping, etc., on their own (even though assistance will always be available). Please be consistent in dressing your children appropriately in order to pre-empt the possibility of your children catching cold.

The children are less likely to be distracted if their clothing is plain and simple in design. Moreover, a set of spare clothing should be provided to the School in case any accidents were to occur during the day. In addition to their regular outside shoes, the children are required to have a comfortable pair of inside shoes (preferably easy to manage by themselves, i.e., Velcro type, etc.).

We ask that you put your child' s name on his/her coat, boots, shoes, spare clothes, etc..

13. SLEEPING IN THE AFTERNOON:

Parents wishing their children to sleep after lunch must provide linen in the form of a pillow, a sheet and a blanket. A child feels more comfortable sleeping on personal belongings brought from home.

This linen together with the spare set of clothing must be taken home each Friday or prior to School holidays (or whenever the clothing are soiled), to be washed, and should be returned the next school day.

14. TOYS:

Toys may not be brought to School unless with prior arrangement, to avoid being misused or broken.

15. BIRTHDAYS:

If you would like your child to celebrate his/her birthday in the classroom, please let us know well in advance.

16. CALENDAR:

The new School calendar will be issued in September. It is our policy to notify parents of all events, trips or visits planned by the School. Please check the bulletin boards regularly for holidays, Parent-Teacher conferences, and other special events.

17. COMMUNICATION:

Parents who have inquiries, concerns or suggestion can freely contact the office at any time. We kindly ask that parents do not try to engage staff in lengthy conversations/discussions as this will take the time away from their attending to the children or implementing the children's daily program.

18. OBSERVATIONS:

Observations are very informative, useful and can be fun. Any parent wishing to observe their child can set up an appointment with the Teacher. Experience shows that observation should not be longer than 20 minutes.

19. PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES:

Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice a year to aid in facilitating the communication flow. Dates and times will be posted in advance for parents to sign and confirm the desired interviews. A periodical newsletter sent to the parents will inform them of the upcoming school activities in addition to their being posted on the bulletin boards.

20. PROGRESS REPORTS/INTERVIEWS:

Report cards will be sent out once a year in June. However, it should be noted that no report cards will be issued for the students in the first year of their attendance at the School. Parents are encouraged to meet during scheduled Parent-Teacher conferences to discuss and plan ways to enrich a child's progress.

21. PARENTS' NIGHT:

The School may host one Parents' Night early in the academic year in order to introduce the staff and inform parents about the varying program and curriculum. If so, the details will be available closer to the scheduled date.

22. MESSAGES AND PHONE CALLS:

Any phone calls must be made through the school number. We discourage any phone calls to the teachers. If necessary, calls to the teachers should be limited to noon time, before or after school hours. Unless an emergency, teachers are not available to speak on the phone during class times as it is disruptive to the class activities.

23. SCHOOL CLOSURES:

Extreme weather conditions may force School closures. If you hear that a local public School may be closed, call F.G.M.S. to see if we will be closed as well. You will either speak to us directly or will receive a recorded message informing you of the closure.

24. FIELD TRIPS:

On occasions during the school year, field trips will be planned to special places of interest. A notice will be sent home with your child in advance informing you of the destination, time, date and cost. The notice will also include a permission slip to be signed and returned. Parents are welcome to accompany their child on such occasions, provided they inform the office ahead of the date of the trip.

25. CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION:

Parents who have a talent, career or hobby that may be interesting to the children are encouraged to make arrangements to setup a time to attend the class.

26. EXCURSION MONEY AND DOCUMENTS:

All cash, cheques or documents sent to School must be placed in a sealed envelope. Please write your child's name and a brief explanation on the outside of the envelope.

27. CHANGE IN INFORMATION:

Should your telephone numbers or address at home or at place of business change, please remember to notify the school immediately. Any emergency contacts that should be added or removed, together with any changes in their addresses and/or phone numbers, should also be amended on the students form in the office.

28. GIFTS AND DONATIONS:

At holiday times, the parents may give personal gifts to the staff or to the classroom. Please note that your contributions and donations by way of children's books, used computers, etc., are encouraged and welcomed at any time.

29. PROBATION/TERMINATION:

Children in our Casa program must be toilet trained. The School reserve the right to terminate the registration contract and dismiss a student from the program if he or she does not seem to be benefiting from the program offered. In the event of dismissal, a full refund of the fees of the future months will be given to the parent.

30. TAX RECEIPTS:

These will be issued only at the request of the parents in February.

31. G.S.T:

No G.S.T. is charged on School fees paid by parents.

33. CONCLUSION:

We hope that by reading this booklet you are now familiar with the procedures and regulations of our School. By following these guidelines, you can be confident that your child will have a most enjoyable experience at our school. Finally, should you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact the office. Together we can make this an enjoyable and rewarding experience for your child.