

# PARENT HANDBOOK

Procedures and Policies at Hatfield Montessori  
Preschool

2019

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# Policy Statements

## The Core Values of Hatfield Montessori Preschool

*We view education as a cooperative endeavour between our children, our staff and our parent body.*

*We emphasize the importance of fostering values and aspects of character. These include*

*respect for oneself, others and our environment*

*taking ownership (at an age appropriate level) of one's own education rather than just engaging in a series of teacher-driven activities*

*learning to be compassionate and appreciative of those different to ourselves*

*learning to be self-motivated, self-disciplined and self-confident*

*developing creative thinking and problem solving, on an individual level but also within the context of being part of the school community of children and adults*

*a sense of social responsibility*

*We consider these aspects to be more foundational than academic achievement at this stage of child development; we do however encourage the children towards academic competence at developmentally-appropriate levels in the Montessori Prepared Environment.*

*Furthermore, we encourage the development of the above through including nature as an integral part of the educational setting. Thus the outside environment is considered part of the daily educational workspace of the child.*

*We believe our responsibility as staff is to model a worldview consistent with the above in all our relationships. We further promote this through our Peace Programme.*

*We also aim to respond appropriately to new challenges emerging in society but without compromising the integrity of the approach of the school as described herein.*

***Our mission*** *is to, actively and with sensitivity, work towards effecting the Core Values of the school as described above.*

## Non-discriminatory policy

Hatfield Montessori Preschool admits pupils of any race, colour, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programmes and activities generally accorded or made available to its students, and does not discriminate on the basis of race in administration of its educational or admissions policies, scholarship programmes or any other school administered programmes.

## Eligibility

Hatfield Montessori Preschool will accept children from the age of 30 months through to 6 years, and we attempt to balance our student population by age and sex. We will accept children of all income and ability levels, and will accept children with physical, emotional, developmental, and behavioural disabilities on a two-week trial, offering continued care to those to whom we feel we can offer quality care.

## Application

1. When a space that matches your schedule request becomes available we will contact you, and establish a date for your child to start school.
2. We will set up an appointment for you to visit the school with your child. We will also meet with you for a parent interview.
3. If the parents and teachers feel confident at this visit that the child is a suitable match with the school and is ready to enrol, you will be asked to register by handing in the following:

A certified copy of the birth certificate of the child/ren

A copy of their immunization card/s

Confidential report from previous school attended (if applicable)

Certified copy of parent / guardian's ID / passport.

Certified copy of ID/ passport of person responsible for payment

Family information form

Acknowledgement of liability form

Indemnity form

MRU Form (MRU -Medical Rescue Unit)

Registration fee and deposit (or proof of payment)

"My School" card application form (not compulsory but a way of supporting the school at no cost to you).

Policy documents: Parent Handbook – procedures and policies at Hatfield Montessori preschool

Policy for dealing with concerns regarding sexual behaviour/abuse, disclosures of sexual abuse, other forms of abuse and neglect

Please read these carefully. You are welcome to contact the Directress with any questions you have concerning our policies on 012 362 0269.

**Please note that your child will not start school until the payment of the registration fee and deposit has been received into the school account.**

## **Vacation and Absence**

As our budget is based on all children enrolled attending school the whole year, you will receive no reimbursement for days of absence.

## **Withdrawal of Child from the Programme**

**One full term's notice** must be given before a child leaves the school or a term's fees will be charged/deducted from the deposit, in lieu of notice. Children may be discontinued from the programme if fee payments are more than a month behind.

On rare occasions, a child may display some valid reason such as being unable to adapt to this particular environment, not being ready to separate from parents, etc. We reserve the right to discuss the situation with that child's parents/caregiver and to recommend the withdrawal of the child until the child under consideration is ready for the programme. It is also at the discretion of the school director and staff that a child may be withdrawn on the basis of inappropriate conduct.

## **Payment Policy**

The fees are as specified in the annual registration information booklet. **School fees are strictly payable only in advance.** Payment may only be made by direct bank transfer or bank guaranteed cheque. Admission may be withdrawn if the person(s) responsible for payment of school fees is/are in breach of the fee agreement.

## **School hours and Closure**

The school is open Monday to Friday during school terms. It is closed during school holidays and public holidays.

Arrival time: **7.15am – 8.15am.**

School closes at **12.15** and **children must be collected by 12.45pm.** It is important that these times be observed and respected.

We encourage you to let your child carry their bag into the school and to their locker, and to let them walk in rather than be carried. A brief, positive goodbye to them is the best approach to follow when bringing them in the morning.

**Afterschool care until 5pm is available from Monday to Thursday and until 4 pm on Fridays.**

## Late Pick up

If a child is not collected by the time Afterschool care ends, R50.00 per 15 minutes will be charged. Taxi drivers or friends who are collecting a child should be informed of these conditions. Please make every effort to ensure that the child's transport arrives on time

## Daily Programme

7.15 – 8.15	Arrival time Indoor / outdoor flow
8.15 (if no special activity)	Greeting circle, discussion of topic, "Show and Tell"
8.45	Snack table set out and children begin self- service – continues until 11am
8.30 – 11.30	Indoor / outdoor flow, with music programme, gross motor programme, special activity such as a group art project.
11.30 – 12.55	Story reading time/peace programme/ outside time for all children
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch time and rest time for those staying for the afternoon

### Note:

Monday	Soccerstarz
Wednesday	Music programme
Friday	Birthday celebrations / special events such as visiting puppet shows or demonstrations.

## **Teachers**

All our teaching staff are trained Montessori teachers.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Children's health forms**

Each child must have an authorization and registration form on file before attending the school. This authorization allows us to obtain medical treatment for the child in the event of a medical emergency. We (or MRU) will make every effort to notify the parent as soon as possible of such an event.

### **Illness guidelines**

Any child, who arrives at the school with a discharge from eyes and/or nose, or any child who has had fever over 38°C (100°F), or vomiting or diarrhoea within the previous 24 hours, should be kept at home.

Children developing those symptoms after arrival will be isolated, and the parents will be contacted to make arrangements for the child to leave the school.

If you have given your child medicine before coming to school, please inform a staff member so that we can be aware in case any side effects develop.

Please inform staff if you are made aware that your child has been exposed to a communicable disease in another setting. A child with a contagious disease may return after being treated with antibiotics for 24 hours.

Children exposed to head lice who have not been treated, or those who have been treated but are not nit-free, may be asked to leave the school.

Staff illness guidelines are the same as stated above.

### **Immunization Requirements**

Each child is required to have a record of immunization on file at the school.

Under South African law, parents may request exemption from immunization requirements. Hatfield Montessori Preschool reserves the right to refuse admission to the school to any child not immunized for a disease during an outbreak of said disease within the region. Also, children will be refused admission if displaying symptoms of a disease for which they have not been immunized.

## **Giving Medication**

The school will only administer medication prescribed by a physician with written authorization from the parents. There is a special book for these records. The medication must be stored in the original labelled container. We recommend that parents store the full amount in another container at home and transport each day's dosage in the prescription container. Medication must be handed over to a staff member and not left in the child's bag. Ask a staff member to store the medication.

## **HIV / AIDS**

### **Non-discrimination**

In terms of the fundamental human rights as contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, no pupil with HIV/AIDS may be unfairly discriminated against either directly or indirectly.

### **Disclosure**

No parent is compelled to disclose their child's HIV/AIDS status to the school. However, in order to act in the best interest of all members of Hatfield Montessori Preschool community, voluntary disclosure by parents of pupils with HIV/AIDS is encouraged. This disclosure will be in the interest of the pupil with HIV/AIDS as the school may then keep this child's parents aware of any infectious/contagious viruses etc, going around the school that may pose a health risk to their child.

The school will strive towards ensuring confidentiality of this information and a non-discriminatory environment.

Parents of a pupil with HIV/AIDS must obtain a medical opinion to assess whether the pupil, owing to his condition, poses a medically recognized health risk to others.

### **Application of Universal Precautions**

Hatfield Montessori Preschool will apply Universal Precautions to all situations occurring at the school. The basis for the consistent application of Universal Precautions lies in the assumption that in all situations, all persons are treated as potentially infected with HIV/AIDS and all bodily fluids are treated as such.

### **Education**

Although the children at Hatfield Montessori Preschool are too young to be given HIV/AIDS education with the aim of developing life-skills necessary for the prevention of the virus, they will gain from very early on the basic first aid principles to avoid transmission of the virus.



## **First Aid kit**

The Kit is stored in the office.

## **Emergency Procedures**

The staff follow a specified policy. A copy of this is pasted up in the kitchen for easy referral. We work in cooperation with the Medical Rescue Unit.

## **Hand washing**

Hand washing is encouraged after: using the bathroom, wiping your nose, changing clothes after a toileting accident, before eating, serving or preparing food and whenever you are sneezed or coughed upon.

## **Nappy changing/toilet training**

Although most children will be using the toilet by the time they attend Hatfield Montessori, we will assist children with using the bathroom and changing clothes after an accident. New children will be reminded to use the bathroom for the first few days before occasions for hand washing, such as lunch and snack, after nap, and before going outside to play.

Please make sure your child has clothes which he/she can easily remove and pull on as needed.

## **Rest time procedures**

Children are required to rest on their designated mat for a minimum of 20 minutes. We try to make the time pleasant and restful by dimming the room and playing soft music. We may allow the 6 year old children to look at a book. We make sure all children have gone to the bathroom before rest time. The mat is a covered thin mattress with a blanket; each mat has a specific child's name on it.

After the book is read, the children are reminded that it is silent time and there is no talking. We may rub backs, tummies, or legs of children who are restless, in a smooth, slow, clockwise circle, asking permission first.

## **Incident reports**

These will be completed whenever there is an injury to the head, a fall that could be serious, or when a wound, scratch, or bruise occurs that requires first aid, or when a child becomes ill at school. Furthermore, a report will be completed when discipline other than redirection is called for; or when a child raises a tantrum, has a bad dream, or requires serious concern. Such incidents will be discussed with the parent if deemed necessary.

## **Playground safety rules**

A description of these can be found pasted up in the Kitchen.

## **Taking Attendance**

Our sign-in sheet is located on a clipboard on the entrance gate. Parents must sign their children in as they arrive at the school each day with the time of arrival and initials of who brought the child. Any changes in the child's schedule or pick up person should be noted timely in writing on the sign-in sheet

Parents must also sign out.

We require children to come 3 days a week at least (unless illness prevents this) for them to benefit most from the programme. Furthermore please avoid making vacation plans for the first 3 months of their attendance to assist their successful normalizing into the environment.

## **Release of Children**

### **Authorized release of children to non– designated adults/parents:**

We will release children only to persons for whom the school has written authorization. We will make exceptions only if the parent speaks directly, in person or by phone, with the teacher responsible for the child at dismissal time. In this case the child may be released to someone the child knows, provided that person produces valid photo identification. We will not make exceptions for an adult for whom a court restraining order has been issued.

## **Child abuse allegations**

The staff has an obligation under law to report to authorities any suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Please refer to our policy document *Policy for dealing with concerns regarding sexual behaviour/abuse, disclosures of sexual abuse, other forms of abuse and neglect* for related matters.

## **Assessment by Professionals**

Occasionally it is necessary for children to be referred for assessment to audiologists, occupational therapists, psychologists, etc. In the interest of the child we require that you respond as quickly as possible so that the necessary remediation can take place without delay.

## Discipline

When a child misbehaves the teacher will use respectful verbal communication to point out why that is unacceptable in the school and will suggest acceptable alternatives. A last resort will be to isolate the child from the area and give them an activity to complete. If disrespectful and gross misbehaviour persists, the Directress may contact the parents towards a cooperative effort to address the matter. Our view is that it is primarily in the family that appropriate respect for others and appropriate social behaviour is learnt.

We prefer to address behaviour issues by encouraging the children to act and speak respectfully and considerately. The teachers model this in their interactions with the children.

## Personal Belongings

Please label **all** belongings the child brings to school with the child's name, including shoes and underwear. Each child will be provided with a locker for storing personal items, but as space is limited, limit your child to necessary items only.

## Bring to school as of the first day

A complete change of clothes labelled and kept in the school bag.

Sun hat with a brim all round labelled and kept at school.

Shoes available for when we walk to the ducks in the University Sports Grounds etc.

## Clothing checklist

The following are required:

jacket-or jersey that is easy to fasten and move in  
sun hat with a brim all the way around. NOT a cap or hoodie.

No school uniform is prescribed. Yellow school T-shirts are worn on outings. These can be bought from the school.

Please make sure that your child is neatly dressed in clean, comfortable, old clothing. It is important for your child's development that he/she is as active as possible, and as independent as possible, so do not allow them to wear any clothes that you don't want to get damaged. Hair may be worn in any style as long as it does not fall into the eyes during class. If it does, please make sure your child has a head band.

Fantasy costumes such as Spiderman **may not be worn**.

Each child should have a complete change of clothing in their bag at all times.

Please allow your child to wear sensible shoes – they play on the jungle gym and need shoes that are supportive and safe and preferably able to be undone and fastened by the children themselves.

### Things **NOT** to bring to school

toys,  
money (if a child has money with them we will put it in the office until the child is fetched to go home)  
gum  
sweets  
medicine that is not given to a staff member to administer,  
“sippy cups”  
baby bottles  
dummies.

### Show and Tell

Items that correspond to our cultural study area may be brought for the “Show and Tell” on any day. Please check with a staff member regarding the appropriateness of the child’s choices. Live animals and special guests are welcome with prior notice.

### Birthdays

When a child has a birthday we have a short birthday celebration on the Friday of that child’s birthday week. We will send out a letter to parents ahead of the Friday in the child’s communication book, to explain our approach. It is helpful to our children to respect the guidelines set out in the letter.

### Parent participation

We view the responsibility for the education of the child as a partnership between the school and home. This requires cooperation between the school and home for the best interests of the child. We assume the parents are supportive and sympathetic to the Montessori principles of childcare and education. We encourage parents to incorporate these principles in their home and family life.

We encourage the **ongoing establishment of a Parent Teacher Committee (PTA)** providing an additional forum for community and communication between staff and the parent body and families.

### Parent –teacher discussions

We encourage communication between our parents and the school. Should you wish to speak to staff or pay fees, please restrict this to the period **before 8.15 am**. After 8.15 all staff need to be available to the children.

Formal discussions are scheduled in the second term, and you may also schedule a time to observe your child in the school environment any time from March onwards. Other conferences may be scheduled at a mutually appropriate time, as need arises.

## **Volunteer participation**

Parents are encouraged to become part of Hatfield Montessori School. Besides serving on the PTA, parents are welcome to volunteer or aid the staff in a variety of ways which can include sharing with the children about a hobby or your profession, or through sharing/showing artefacts from your particular culture heritage. For security reasons, we require that each parent or community member who wishes to volunteer with the children complete a volunteer application.

## **Communication books**

To further promote communication between home and school, each child is to have an A4 hardcover exercise book, so that all printed and written notes/communications between the school and parents can be placed in the book.

Parents are requested to sign that they have seen and noted the contents- **each time** a new item is in the books. Please use the book for any written notes, queries etc. you wish to send to school.

Books must please be brought to school every day, in the child's bag. **These need to be checked by the parents daily.**

In the event of a significant change in your home or family circumstance, please inform the teacher if it is of the nature to impact your child's wellbeing. This will be kept as confidential amongst the staff. We will keep you informed of any significant changes in the school environment that may impact your child as well.

## **Hatfield\_Montessoriyahoo e-mail group and D6**

To simplify email communication with parents and other parties interested in the school a yahoo group has been set up. News and photos of events at school are also sent to the newsgroup. We are only using the mailing list functionality of this facility.

To join the mailing list via email, send a blank email to:  
Hatfield\_Montessori-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

You will receive a confirmation message. Just reply to this message and your subscription will be complete.

In addition, each parent/guardian is invited to download D6 communicator where they can access relevant information and important documents.

## Visiting the School

You are welcome in the classroom, but remember that the school is primarily the environment of your child and that it is preferable to wait for your child to invite you in. Or first ask your child's permission rather, to come for a scheduled visit. A few hours spent observing in our environment is a helpful way to gain appreciation of the Montessori approach.

## Books on Montessori education

We encourage you to borrow books from our parent library, housed in the school office. The information in these books can assist you as parent body to work with us towards furthering your child's wellbeing in this school setting and at home.

## Meals and Snacks

Cooked lunches will be provided by the school for children staying for Afterschool care on school days. The menu is displayed on the notice board each month. **Please note any special dietary concerns on your registration form.**

Morning and afternoon snacks will be prepared by the staff and children.  
Children arriving before 8:15am may bring breakfast to school to eat at the snack table.

### Morning snack:

Usually set up for self-service by children throughout morning.

Types of food:

- Always a fruit or vegetable cut into manageable pieces.
- Bread for self-service sandwiches
- A spread for self-made sandwiches
- Milk or water

### Afternoon snack:

Types of food:

- Popcorn, crackers, sandwiches or fruit

## Activities

### Curriculum

The Montessori cycle of education spans a 3-year period. Ideally, a child begins the cycle between the ages of 2 ½ to 3, when they are in a sensitive period for watching and imitating adults and older children, and before they are so social that they must do everything in a group. This enables them to develop skills of concentration and independence.

The child's second year, between the ages of 3½ and 4, will then be a year of refining skills and learning letters and numbers.

During the third year, as the child turns 5, writing and reading skills will develop in an environment that is comfortable and familiar. The primary years, after reading skills have been developed, can then be used to solidify writing and research skills and develop independent study skills valuable for lifelong learning

We work with the children on an individual and small group basis in the following areas: Practical Life (includes care of self, care of environment); Sensorial; Mathematics; Language and Literacy; Science; Geography; Art; Music and foreign languages. **If you have skills or interests in any area we are studying, we invite you to share your expertise and enthusiasm.**

### Videos/DVD's

We occasionally (usually only if outside play is impossible due to inclement weather) show a children's literary or educational video or DVD.

### Field Trips

Due to our location, many of our field trips are on the University of Pretoria grounds. Staff ratios will be maintained during trips.

Trips away from the grounds are limited. Parents will be notified in advance of any such trips and the mode of transport which will be used. Health and indemnity forms with emergency information accompany the children on off- grounds trips; the school is notified first in an emergency, and then the parents are notified.

Part of the parent authorization statement gives us permission to take your child on field trips as scheduled.