

# PARENT HANDBOOK

Procedures and Policies at Hatfield Montessori Preschool

2024



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# STATEMENTS OF POLICY

## A. MISSION

### Our Vision

Our vision is to offer an individualized learning experience using the Montessori method for children to promote excellence in school and beyond.

### Our Mission

We are responsible for being a school distinguished by:

- 1 a cooperative approach between diverse children, staff and parents.
2. using the Montessori method with a team of qualified professionals
3. fostering an early education which nurtures children to develop and reach their full potential in their emotional, intellectual, physical and social development.

### Our Core Values

**Respect** We at HMP believe that respect is the foundation of our successful community.

**Excellence** Our motivation to deliver a high level of education is due to excellence which at times exceeds our own expectations.

**Ownership** Ownership at HMP reflects a high sense of responsibility and initiative to give positive results.

**Social responsibility** We are committed to our social responsibility by adopting policies that promote the well being of society and the environment.

**Diversity** HMP values the diversity of children, staff and parents which develops a more successful and unique experience as one family.

**Team work** We achieve all the above due to our remarkable Team.

## B. NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Hatfield Montessori Preschool admits pupils of any race, colour, and 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 programs or any other school administered programmes.

### **C. 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.

### **D. THE HATFIELD MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION OBJECTIVES**

(a) To provide a forum for parents/guardians and teachers at the school to exchange views for the overall benefit of their children enrolled at the school.

(b) To promote a sense of community amongst teachers and parents/guardians.

(c) To encourage parents to participate actively in school programmes /activities.

(d) To make and receive donations and to assist in raising funds for school-related purposes and improvements.

(e) To create committees to assist the owner and Directress of the school with administrative or financial tasks, as may be requested and delegated by her from time to time.

### **THE MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY**

Maria Montessori developed her philosophy of education after scientific, objective observation of a group of children she was assigned to work with in Rome in the early 1900's. Her heritage to us includes continued observation of each child in our care. Through such observation, we have gathered information by which we offer suggestions to you, as parents and partners in the education process. We hope the following suggestions will maximize your child's experience at Hatfield Montessori.

It is natural for children to react negatively to separation from their parents. We find that most children will calm down within a very short time if left with a quick, positive good-bye. Staying until a child becomes involved in a task often reassures you, but increases the child's expectation that you will stay until it's time for them to leave, too. Show them that you trust us by leaving in a consistent, positive way. Don't hesitate to ask us to hold the child while you leave, or to ring later to find out how the child is doing. We noticed that body language is important; it is easier for a child to let go who has walked in on his own than if he has been carried.

Children appreciate consistency, and thrive on order. Keeping a consistent routine at home helps the child know what to expect. Rearranging the child's schedule for your convenience or keeping them home because you have a day off doesn't send them a positive message about the value of education.

Children do better when they attend more often. We require regular attendance unless of course, they are ill, having observed that children are able to better enjoy the benefits of

remembering and repeating an activity until; they have mastered it. Those who come less often not only have trouble remembering activities presented, but also the ground rules which enable them to function more independently in the classroom.

Please consider scheduling vacations after the child has had a chance to “normalize”, or learn the ground rules of the classroom, usually at least three months after beginning to attend the programme.

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.

Here is a short list of things that you can do to help your child become more independent, and blossom into their own personalities:

- Allow freedom of movement
- Allow the child to separate from you, and to come back to you as they feel the need.
- Allow children to choose their own activity.
- Allow them to repeat an activity until they are satisfied.
- Allow the children to concentrate without interruption; even a word, a gesture, or a facial expression can distract. Interact when the child initiates interaction.
- Try to resist helping; any unnecessary help interferes with learning. You will be shown how truly capable the children can be.
- Children should be allowed to help themselves as much as possible, including dressing & undressing themselves, hanging up & putting away their own things, and making their own choices.
- Spills, mistakes, and frustration are opportunities for learning. Let the children handle their own problems as much as possible. (Step in, however, if someone may be hurt)
- Relax, be here now, and focus on the amazing child in front of you!

## **Helping Your Child Overcome Separation Anxiety**

The most important factor in helping your child to feel confident about going to school is consistency.

Order helps your child to know that today is going to be just like yesterday, and the morning routine is crucial to communicating this to your child. No matter how verbal the child, beginning each day in the same way at the same time communicates much more to him/her about your routine than any words you can say. In reverse, if each day begins differently, it is easy for the child to think that maybe the day will end differently, as well, and maybe mommy will not come back this time.

Be consistent. The more you're tempted towards giving in to a lapse in routine, the more you need to maintain order. If you choose to break the routine even once, it will take as many as 50 more repetitions of the routine before your child gains back the confidence lost.

If your child refuses to cooperate, pull out the creative choices! If they need to put their shoes on, and this is not a choice, make it into one: "Do you want to put on this shoe or this shoe?" If your child is being picky at breakfast time, and it seems as if they won't eat: "Do you want to eat breakfast now, or wait for snack time at school?" or "Do you want cereal or oatmeal?" Again, be firm with your choices, letting your child know that these are the only choices available. He/she may choose not to choose as well, in which case you may choose for them: "Do you want to choose your breakfast or would you like me to choose?" In most cases, a child enjoys choosing for him/herself, and will prefer this over your choice. Do not, however, offer more than two choices.

1. Have your child choose their clothes and set out sun hat, and so on, the night before, to reduce stress and help them look forward to the morning. Consistent bedtime routines also help.
2. Set the alarm for a little earlier, so you are not in a hurry and can be patient with your child. Give yourself a few extra minutes before you wake your child to get yourself ready for the day.
3. Be positive. Talk about what was fun yesterday (ask your child's teachers for suggestions, if necessary).
4. Be firm. Focus on the next step in getting ready. If your child is dwelling on negative things, and tries to draw you in to that sort of conversation, just repeat the routine of the morning (singing about what comes next will help to lighten the mood).
5. Don't carry your child into school ! Walking in is a confidence booster. Being carried communicates to the child that protection is needed.
6. Our activities begin by 8:15 (8.00 on Music day). If your child arrives by 7.45, it is easier for him/her to make a smooth transition from home to school.
7. Plan ahead, and give your child enough time to do as much as possible on his own. This includes putting her things away into her locker at school upon arrival.
8. Let your child know that you need his/her help and say, "I would appreciate anything you could do to help us get to school before activity time." This lets your child know that you intend to arrive at school each day on time, no matter what. It also signals that your approximate arrival at the end of the day will be the same, too.
9. Try to arrange for your child to leave school at the same general time each day. Say, "I'll see you after nap time (play time, outside time, craft time, etc.)" It really helps for those first few weeks of transition to be consistent with pick up times.
10. Above all, trust the staff. We have helped many sad children cope with this transition, and know what to expect. If you have questions or concerns, call us or bring them up when the child is not around. A child senses when a parent is worried and worries that there may be something to worry about. Call us. We will be glad to help if possible.

## Applying Montessori Principles at Home

1. Supply the child with limited choices: “Would you like ‘this’ or ‘that’?” Remember that children are just learning to make appropriate choices and **freedom within limits** provides a foundation from which to make these decisions.
2. Teach the child with real things. Take time to show him/her how to handle objects with care.
3. Encourage and empower the child to do for himself. The child is far more capable than one may realize and this builds self-esteem and independence, as well as concentration, coordination and responsibility. Dr. Montessori stated, “Any unnecessary aid is a hindrance to learning.”
4. When you teach a child a new skill, break it down into small, precise steps: “Clean your room” is overwhelming. Show the child how to organize a specific shelf, item or area.
5. Whenever possible, arrange your home so that the child can manage on his/her own: accessible dishes, personal items, clean up supplies, manageable clothing.
6. Respect the child’s slower sense of time and allow the child time to do a task without hurrying. The child needs to repeat activities frequently even after it appears to be mastered. Also, remember improvement comes with practice.
7. Make discipline interesting: “See how quietly you can close the door.” Rather than “Don’t slam the door!” **Positive language is very important.**
8. Use precise language when speaking to the child. Concise speech and new vocabulary assist the child in expressing him/herself and the power of clear communication. Do not use baby talk.
9. Don’t try to improve any activity your child has done while he/she is watching. Next time show the child first.
10. Protect the child from interruptions while he/she is concentrating.
11. When the child plays on the floor, supply the child with a rug or towel for activity to be placed on. This shows ownership of space and is more manageable to clean up.
12. Encourage hand washing after using bathroom, wiping nose, and before eating.
13. Remind child to clean up or put away immediately an activity is finished.
14. Be consistent with requests and expectations.

## APPLICATION

1. When a space that matches your schedule request becomes available, we will contact you, and decide on a date for your child to start school.
2. We will set up an appointment for you to visit the school with your child.
3. If parents and teachers feel confident at this visit that the child is ready, you will be asked to register by handing in the following:
  - Family Information Form
  - Acknowledgement of Liability Form
  - Indemnity Form
  - Medical Information Form
  - POPIA Client Consent Form



- Social Media Consent form
- My School Application Form
- CERTIFIED copy of the Birth Certificate of the child
- CERTIFIED copy of both parents' / guardian's IDs / passports
- CERTIFIED copy of ID / passport of person responsible for payment
- Copy of child's immunization card
- Copy of child's school report from previous school attended (if applicable)
- Proof of payment of registration fee

## **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**

A term's notice must be given before a child leaves the school or a term's fees will be charged in lieu of notice

## **PAYMENT POLICY**

The fees as specified in the annual registration information booklet. **SCHOOL FEES ARE PAYABLE STRICTLY IN ADVANCE.** Payment may only be made by direct bank transfer. Admission may be withdrawn if the person(s) responsible for payment of school fees is/are in breach of the fee agreement.

## **LATE PICK UP**

If a child is not collected by the time Afterschool care ends, R75.00 per 15 minutes will be charged. Taxi drivers or friends who are collecting a child should be informed of these conditions. Please try to make sure that the child's transport arrives on time.

## **SCHOOL HOURS AND CLOSURE**

Monday to Friday during school terms (except public holidays)

Arrival time: 7.15 – 8.15am..

School closes at 12.15 and children must be collected by 12.45.

After school care until 5pm is available from Monday to Friday.

## **HOLIDAYS**

No regular Holiday Care will be provided but there may be special programs.

## DAILY PROGRAMME

7.15 – 8.15	Arrival time and free choice of activities inside or outside
8.15	Morning greeting circle with discussion of date and theme “Show and Tell” time Work begins with Montessori materials Includes several activities preparing snacks
10.00 – 11.15	Snack time
11.30 -12.15 (12.45 for older groups)	Special group activities Story time

### NOTES:

Monday: In the afternoon Soccer Starz for ASC children

Wednesday: In the afternoon Yoga for ASC children

Friday: Birthdays / walk to the ducks / nature activities / special events e.g. visiting educational shows / outings

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### **A. 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 will make every effort to notify the parent as soon as possible of such an event.

### **B. 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 100, or vomiting or diarrhea within the previous 24 hours, should not be at school, and may be asked to leave the school. 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. 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.

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.

Staff illness guidelines are the same as those stated above.

### *1. 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.

### *2. 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 labeled 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.

## **C. 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:*

1. 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.
2. The school will strive towards ensuring confidentiality of this information and a non-discriminatory environment.
3. 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.

### *Accordingly:*

- All bloods will be handled with extreme caution.
- Skin exposed accidentally to blood will be washed immediately with running water and antiseptics.
- All bleeding wounds, sores, grazes and the like will be cleaned immediately with running water and antiseptics.
- All open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes and open lesions must at all times be covered completely and securely with a non-porous or waterproof dressing or plaster so that there is no risk of exposure to blood.
- New latex gloves will be worn by the directresses whenever dealing with blood or body fluid.
- Pupils will be taught that all open sores, wounds and grazes must be kept covered completely with waterproof dressings. They will be instructed never to touch the blood, open wounds, sores or grazes of others, nor to handle emergencies such as nosebleeds, cuts or scrapes of their friends. They will be taught to call for assistance from a staff member immediately.

### *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.

## ***D. FIRST AID KIT***

The Kit is stored in the office.

## ***E. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES***

The staff is instructed to handle emergency situations as follows:

- Accidental injury: First aid given, child stabilized and other children calmed (call for help with this).

As clients of LifeMed Ambulance we have access to their emergency help line and ambulance response if needed

## ***F. HANDWASHING***

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.

## ***G. 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.

\*The following are the steps that we use when helping children with toilet learning. We encourage you to use the same process at home when preparing your child to enter school.

- Have the child do as much of the dressing and undressing as possible.
- If possible have the child stand or sit on toilet for changing rather than having them lie down. Clean off all excreta calmly, to cause as little embarrassment to the child as possible.
- Talk to the child about the process while you are helping them. Younger children may need you to touch the foot you would like them to raise, but also give verbal cues.
- Direct child to wash hands when finished changing.
- Disposable Pull-ups are discouraged.

Dirty clothes will be sent home for laundering as we do not have facilities for doing this at school.

## ***H. REST TIME PROCEDURE***

Children are required to rest on a 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 may begin the rest period by reading a book to the children as a group, if possible. Before beginning to read, we make sure all children have gone to the bathroom. 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.

Set up: A mat (hiking type mattress) with a mat cover and a blanket labelled with the child's name, or a clean substitute, will be used.

## ***I. INCIDENT REPORTS***

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; when discipline other than redirection is called for; when a child becomes ill at school; 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.

## **J. PLAYGROUND SAFETY RULES**

Monitored areas and their rules:

Verandah stairs: monitor children going in and out; oversee playhouse, grounds, verandah activities and verandah bars.

The verandah is for sitting, walking, and doing activities at a table.

Toys and chairs are always returned to their place after use.

Toys and balls are CARRIED, NOT THROWN up and down stairs.

Jungle gym playhouse – no climbing on the roof.

Fences: should not be climbed on; things may not be thrown over.

Trees, sticks, rocks, living things on playground: Sticks and rocks may be observed where they are found, but NOT carried or thrown. Flowers and grass should be left for others to enjoy.

Fallen pine needles and cones MAY be used as brooms and toys.

Trees may be hugged or played under, but NOT hit or pulled on.

Things MAY NOT be thrown into trees.

Games: Catches is fine; grabbing or pushing is NOT.

Fighting games are NOT ALLOWED; hiding and adventure games are good.

Jungle gym: One child at a time on fire pole.

Stand to the side, NOT under, fire pole.

DO NOT TOUCH other people who are climbing.

Kids who can climb up can climb down; DON'T help someone go higher than they can climb.

**NO JUMPING FROM JUNGLE GYM**

**NO** throwing things at people – especially on jungle gym!

Sandpit: Sand stays in buckets, shovels and sandpit.

Bare hands, feet and legs may be buried; clothing may NOT.

**THROWING SAND IS AN IMMEDIATE LOSS OF PRIVILEGE OFFENCE.** (Child must leave sandpit and try again later)

Sandpit toys are for sandpit ONLY and are left in sandpit when finished.

Swings: Stand in designated waiting area to wait for a turn

One child OR adult only at a time on swing, except horizontal swing where 2 are allowed.

**NO CLIMBING ON TOP CROSS MEMBER OF SWINGS.**

Slide: Go UP the climbing frame, DOWN the slide, FEET FIRST, one child at a time.

Stand to the side of the slide, NOT at the bottom.

**DO NOT TOUCH** the person going down the slide OR those waiting at the top; **NO PUSHING**

All wheeled toys are to be used only on the bicycle track (not behind trees or on concrete blocks). The wheels must remain on the ground at all times.

Thanks for helping us have a safe and happy playground!

## **K. 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 in writing on the sign-in sheet. Parents must also please sign out.

## **L. RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

### **AUTHORIZED RELEASE OF CHILDREN TO NON –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 with a child for whom a court restraining order has been issued.

## **M. CHILD ABUSE**

The staff has an obligation under law to report to authorities any suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

## **N. ASSESSMENT BY PROFESSIONALS**

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

## **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, please try to limit your child to necessary items only.

## **A. THINGS TO BRING TO SCHOOL THE FIRST DAY**

Complete change of clothes labelled and kept at school or brought each day.

Sun hat will be supplied by the school.

Shoes available for when we go out to the ducks etc.

## **B. CLOTHING CHECKLIST**

Your child needs the following items for outdoor play and after:

- ❖ jacket-or jersey - one that's easy to fasten and move in
- ❖ sun hat with a brim all the way around (supplied by school)

No school uniform is prescribed. The children do however wear yellow school shirts 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 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 to school, since they cause a great disturbance in the environment and encourage aggressive behaviour.

NB. Although there is no specified uniform, clothes worn to school need to be appropriate for the environment. Remember, children need to be active, and many presentations are done on the floor which is very difficult in a short skirt.

An extra change of clothes in the bag is always useful.

**SHOES:** Please remember, your children are growing and their co-ordination, gross motor skills and posture are affected by the shoes they wear. Platform, high-heeled and backless shoes are very damaging to young feet.

**Things NOT to bring to school:** lunch boxes (if sent they will be kept in the kitchen until home time), toys, money (if a child has money with them we will put it in the office), gum, sweets, medicine that is not given to a staff member to administer, "sippy cups", baby bottles, dummies.

### **C. 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 welcomed with prior notice.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

When a child has a birthday we have a short birthday celebration on the Friday of his birthday week to make them feel special and at the same time help them to understand the passage of time and their continual growth. We light a candle to symbolize the sun and the child carries the globe of the earth on its annual journey around the sun. As the child walks we describe their progress from a newborn baby to the child they are now. If a parent or parents can be with us to add details, that adds an extra touch. It is helpful if we can borrow a few photos of the child e.g. as a baby, at 1 yr, 2 yrs etc to show to everyone. If possible these photos should be under plastic to avoid damage.

At the end we come to the current birthday and the child receives a crown and a small gift from the school as it is a special day. This is also the time when the birthday child may present a gift to the school. (Discuss with a staff member please) Then it is teatime and if you wish, the child may bring some fruit to share. Let me stress that this is not compulsory as some children prefer to have their party at home.

If the parent decides to bring something to school it must be kept simple: NO PEANUTS (they can be lethal to small children), cake or sweets. All drinks containing artificial colouring or preservatives are avoided. A selection of special fresh fruits (e.g. strawberries, pineapple etc) on a platter and popcorn seem to be acceptable to most children.



If the parent intends to send something to eat, please let the school know so that the catering plans for the day can be altered.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

The education of the child is a partnership between the school and home. This requires co-operation between the school and home in the best interests of the child.

There is also an active Parent Teacher Committee providing an additional forum for communication between staff and the parent body.

### **A. PARENT – TEACHER DISCUSSIONS**

We believe that communication is essential and encourage every family to speak with their child's teacher or the school directress whenever a problem arises, or something occurs in the child's life that may be significant. Every day is communication day at Hatfield Montessori, and we will be giving you feedback on your child whenever we can. Should you wish to speak to staff or pay fees, please restrict this to the period before 8.15. After 8.15 all staff need to be available to the children.

Formal discussions will be scheduled in the second term, and you may also schedule a time to observe your child in the learning environment any time from March onwards. Other conferences may be scheduled at your convenience when problems arise.

### **B. VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION**

Parents are encouraged to become part of Hatfield Montessori in many ways. We have a parent - teacher Association that helps with decision-making, organization and fund-raising. Parents may assist at the school and are especially welcome. For security reasons, we require that each parent or community member who wishes to volunteer with the children complete a volunteer application. These are available at the school. You may be asked to join the children for lunch, assist with art, music, or reading; or present a special project or topic you enjoy. Please note your preferences and interests on the parent registration form.

### **C. COMMUNICATION FOLDER**

This folder is to simplify communication between home and school. The idea is that all communication, printed and written notes, between the school and parents will be placed in the folder.

Parents are requested to sign that they have seen and noted the contents EACH TIME.

Folders must please be brought to school every day and placed in the designated place.

## **D. E-MAIL AND WHATSAPP GROUP**

Besides the Communication Book, there is also a Parents WhatsApp group. To simplify email communication with parents and other parties interested in the school Mail Chimp groups have been setup. News and photos of events at school are sent out in both these ways.

## **E. VISITING THE SCHOOL**

You are always welcome in the classroom but remember that the school belongs to your child and preferably wait for him/her to invite you in or ask his/her permission to come into the classroom.

Please refrain from demonstrating the material in the classroom to your child. Each exercise has a special presentation which he/she may not have been shown. By all means let your child show you what he/she can do.

## **MEALS AND SNACKS**

### **A. MEALS**

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 snack will be prepared by the staff and children.

During holiday programme, the children will be asked to bring lunch each day.

Children arriving before 8:15 may bring breakfast to school to eat at the snack table.

Nutritious snacks are offered after that time.

### **B. SNACKS**

*Morning snack:* Usually set up for self-service by children.

Types of food:

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

*Afternoon snack:*

Types of food:

Popcorn, crackers, sandwiches or fruit

## **ACTIVITIES**

### **A. CURRICULUM**

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; Maths; Language and Literacy; Science; Geography; Art; and Music. If you have skills or interests in any area we are studying, please share your expertise and enthusiasm!

## **B. VIDEOS/DVD'S**

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

## **C. 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 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.

# **POSITIVE GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE**

## **1. POSITIVE INTERACTIONS**

All staff members are asked to interact with children respectfully, according to the philosophy of Maria Montessori. Children are in turn expected to interact respectfully. The following are descriptions of positive ways to interact with children:

Follow the child: let the child initiate activity or interaction whenever possible. Let your observations of the child lead you in choosing what activities to present. When in doubt, ask a lead teacher or other staff member.

Entice or invite the child to engage in an activity: never force the issue, but always give a choice.

All unnecessary help becomes a hindrance. Show confidence in the child's ability by allowing him to do as much as possible for himself.

Help child to achieve independence by:

- Showing a child how instead of doing for
- Suggesting solutions instead of solving problems by dictating answers
- Respecting the child's right to do it himself
- Know children's names, and how to spell them correctly
- Know children's favourite activities, what they've enjoyed on a particular day, know or ask another staff member for suggestions about appropriate direction to new activities
- Show uniform interest in all the children (avoid playing favourites)
- Be friendly, warm and interested
- Clearly define boundaries of acceptable behaviour
- Confront misbehaviour early, and redirect instead of disciplining when appropriate
- Make appropriate choices of discipline vs. instruction.
- Structure appropriate consequences for misbehaviour, which help a child accept responsibility for his behaviour,
- Avoid roughhousing and over-stimulating behaviour

- Engage with children in activities when appropriate. Avoid interrupting a child who is engaged in an activity or conversation
- Communicate with children appropriately and respectfully

## **2. BEHAVIOURAL CHARTER**

- A behavioural charter is a document that outlines the ground rules of an organization, and the way all parents and staff agree to redirect misbehaviour.

## **TECHNIQUES TO TRY AND PREVENT HURTING OF OTHERS**

HMP has several positive techniques that are known to help prevent incidents.

1. Nurturing relationships between the staff and the children.
2. The staff pay attention and step in when a child is showing signs of aggression, getting overwhelmed or stressed.
3. Children are given opportunities to work in both small and large groups and the children are taught how to “share” a work/play environment with each other.
4. A variety of activities are made available to the children so that they have the opportunity to choose.
5. The children follow a daily routine which helps with their security when at the centre.
6. The routine consists of circle time, time to pursue own work and/or group work, and snack time. Children learn early how to navigate classroom transitions in a way that helps them build confidence and alleviate stress.

### **1. GROUND RULES:**

- a) Respect for others—you may not hurt another child OR disturb the child’s work. Treat others with courtesy.
- b) Respect for self—you may not do things which might endanger your safety.
- c) Respect for equipment—you must use the equipment with care and return it to its place ready for someone else to use.

Each adult in the environment is a teacher who sets the ground rules and tone by his or her example. The adult is expected to model these rules and to assist the child in following them.

#### Suggestions:

- a) Respect for others—Show respect for the children by coming down to their eye level when speaking to them. Respect their work by not interrupting them to give direction or greetings when they are working. Use “Please”, “thank you”, and “excuse me”. Use a soft voice, slow and careful movements, and tap on the shoulder instead of calling across the room to encourage non- disruptive behaviour in the environment. Help two children in disagreement to talk it over. Enter classroom quietly and do not interrupt activity in progress.
- b) Respect for self—Always make sure child knows the proper and safe way to use something: show again before making the decision to remove child from a situation, unless the child seems out of control. Then child may be redirected to another activity, a “watching” chair, or removed from the room entirely.
- c) Respect for equipment—As above, show the child how to use the equipment properly.

Present careful handling of toys and equipment if you see a child being destructive or careless. Use care in carrying and moving equipment, modeling a safe way to carry it that the children may also use, i.e., don't carry two trays at once, carry chairs with legs pointing toward floor, etc.

Children use a rug to contain their work on the floor to show ownership and keep all the pieces together. We walk around rugs and do not sit on them but put our work on them.

## **2. MISBEHAVIOUR AND CONFLICT—Using the Peace Rose or Peace Puppets.**

The "Peace Rose" is a silk flower placed in a quiet corner of the classroom. The children are shown how to use it—a child may bring it to another child if that child has hurt or disturbed him, tell the other child how that makes him feel, and then it is the other child's turn to talk. The first child hands over the rose, and the second may respond by offering an apology or an explanation. The exchange continues until both children are satisfied, and both hold the flower together and say, "I declare Peace!" or until adult intervention is required to get to that point. The adult may suggest options, or even suggest that the children take a break from the process but should avoid dictating the outcome.

Alternatively, children can go to the Peace Table to discuss a solution using the Peace Puppets with or without a staff member as mediator.

The following are suggestions for ways in which an adult in the environment should handle difficult situations with a child:

**A. GIVE THE CHILD A CHOICE.** If a situation is potentially dangerous or harmful to the child, others, or the materials or facility, say, "You might hurt \_\_\_\_\_ doing that. Can you please stop or would you like me to help you?" Make sure that both choices you give a child are acceptable to you. (Stop that or you'll get hurt is not an example of giving a child a choice.) Be ready to set a time limit (by the time I show you five fingers) and then choose for the child. If the child continues to misbehave, you may gently remove him from the situation. **DO NOT HESITATE TO REMOVE THE CHILD BEFORE YOU GIVE CHOICES IF YOU FIND THE SITUATION IMMEDIATELY THREATENING TO THE CHILD OR OTHERS.**

**B. UPON REMOVING A CHILD FROM A SITUATION, TAKE A MOMENT TO REDIRECT HIM TO A MORE POSITIVE ACTIVITY.** Suggest two activities the child may choose between. If the child can't make a choice, find a quiet spot for him to sit until he comes up with a plan of what to do next. Always have the child explain his plan in words or by showing you before you allow him to rejoin the group. Sometimes we use a timer for the child to watch, as a calming "time out" tool. Please note: Often children misbehave with the goal of getting individual attention from an adult. Try to give attention to every child for positive behaviour. If you feel you are being used in this way, redirect the child's behaviour with very minimal eye contact and language. Then you can come back a few minutes later to praise the child for "making a better choice" or "calming yourself down".

**C. PUT YOURSELF IN THE CHILD'S PLACE.** Always approach a situation from the child's point of view:

What is behind the misbehaviour? Why would the child feel it is necessary?

What logical steps could the child follow to correct the situation?

What logical, acceptable choices can I offer the child for changing the behaviour?

Will the child's dignity remain intact?

**D. IF YOU'RE NOT SURE, ASK.** What can the children involved tell you about the situation? To be effective in this process, you must create an atmosphere of calm mediation. Have the children get the Peace Rose, and take turns speaking. Model respectful listening by not interrupting. Your role as an adult is to let each child voice his feelings, and direct them toward a mutually satisfying conclusion.

**E. CONFLICTS BETWEEN CHILDREN:** If the children are handling the process using the Peace Rose/puppets, be an observer. Suggest the Peace Rose/puppets if a child comes to you with a complaint of a conflict and facilitate the process if necessary.

**F. NEVER ARGUE WITH A CHILD (YOU'LL LOSE!)** If a child wishes to argue, cut the conversation short with, "I'll be happy to talk about this when we've both calmed down. Please tell me / bring me the Peace Rose when you are ready to speak calmly to me."  
**ALWAYS COMPLETE THE DISCIPLINE CYCLE WITH A SMILE OR HUG OF FORGIVENESS.** Use that time to make sure the child understands why your actions were necessary, and to ask what he can do next time to avoid an unpleasant situation.

Staff Note: **REPORT TO PARENTS AND DIRECTRESS:** If you intervene in a situation, make sure the adult in charge is aware of it. If you feel it is necessary to talk to the child's parents, or they ask you about a situation, **PLEASE WRITE A NOTE IN STAFF OBSERVATION BOOK ABOUT IT.** See Incident Reports

### **3. LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES**

**SECOND AND THIRD REMINDERS ABOUT THE SAME MISBEHAVIOUR:** When a child repeatedly engages in the same misbehaviour, consequences are in order.

a. When a child becomes out of control, time out is recommended. Time out has many negative connotations for some children, and so we say "Please sit here until you're feeling peaceful enough to talk to me about this." Time out should only be until the child has calmed down enough to discuss the situation, or until the adult has handled any upset or injury caused to another child by the misbehaving child's actions.

Talk to the child about the problem when the child is calm, and ask what he thinks should be done. It is recommended that the adult or child bring the Peace Rose for this discussion. Often a child will have a reasonable consequence in mind. Be ready with a logical consequence in case the child is not ready.

Logical consequences include cleaning up after a mess has been made; losing playtime if out of control on the playground; taking care of a friend who's been hurt by his or her carelessness (including an apology), losing the privilege of using a piece of equipment because of careless use; being isolated if behaving rudely.

b. If after time out and logical consequences have been used, a child continues to misbehave in the same way, a team approach should be discussed with staff and parents of the child.

## **4. BITING AND HURTING POLICY**

### ***Overview of Biting***

Biting is a very common behaviour amongst young children. It is a form of communication (albeit a negative one), and is often a response to coping with a challenge or stressor. For many infants and toddlers, the biting stage is just a passing problem and they try it out as a way to get what they want from another child. It is a process of learning what is socially acceptable and what is not. In older children it signifies a problem.

At HMP we believe by understanding the developmental stages of the children in our care and their individual needs, we can help to proactively prevent many negative behaviours.

Hurting and biting are some of the most difficult behaviours to deal with

1. Occur without warning.
2. Difficult to defend against.
3. Provoke strong emotional responses in the biter, the victim, the families, and the staff.

### ***Response to Biting***

1. The Principal will inform the parents of the biter of the event and ask them to collect the child immediately. The name of the victim of the bite is kept confidential. The biter will be kept in isolation until collected by the parents.
2. We trust that parents of the biter will take responsibility for ensuring that their child understands the seriousness of these behaviours. We believe there should be some consequence (such as withdrawal of a privilege eg screen time).
3. We also inform the parent of the victim of the bite, keeping the biter's name confidential, and giving the assurance that the matter is in hand and the Biting Policy is being applied.
4. The incident is recorded on HatMon and on an Incident Report.

### ***Report on HatMon and Incident Report***

1. Every incidence of biting will be recorded on HatMon by the member of staff.
2. An Incident Report will also be completed. This is a confidential, standardised form that all staff members use to document incidents that happen at the school.

### ***The Biter***

1. The biter will be immediately removed with no emotion, using words such as "No! Biting is not okay – it hurts."
2. The response we give will not reinforce the biting, call attention to the biter nor belittle the child in any way – the child who bit will simply be taken out of the situation.
3. The biter's parents will be requested to collect the child immediately. Until the parents arrive, the child will not be allowed to return to work/play He/she will be engaged in an age-appropriate conversation with the teaching practitioner.
4. The biter may also be crying and the child will be consoled.

### ***The Victim of the Bite***

1. Staff will separate the child who was bitten from the biter.
2. The bitten child will get special attention and be comforted.
3. First aid is applied to the bite as follows:
  - a. Assess the wound and if it is bleeding, apply pressure directly to the wound, using clean, dry gauze, until the bleeding stops.
  - b. Clean the bite wound with a mild soap and warm running water for approximately 3 - 5 minutes.
  - c. Rinse thoroughly, and pat dry with a clean, dry cloth.
  - d. Cover the wound with a clean, dry dressing.
  - e. Should the wound require immediate medical attention, the parents will be notified.

### ***When Biting Continues***

1. The child will be shadowed to help prevent any further biting incidents.
2. The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine if possible what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.)
3. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behaviour.
4. The teaching staff member will meet with management on a regular basis for advice, support and strategy planning.
5. Every occurrence, including attempted bites, location, time, participants, behaviours, staff present, and circumstances has to be recorded.
6. The staff will work together as partners with the parents of both biting children and frequent victims to keep all informed and develop a joint strategy for change. A written plan of action may be developed.
7. Follow-up meetings or telephone conversations will take place as needed.
8. If a child inflicts three bites in a one week period a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behaviour and recommendations for professional help will be provided to the parents. HMP will expect the parents to cooperate to the fullest.
9. If the child again inflicts three bites in a one week period, the parents will be asked to keep the child home until feedback from the professional is received regarding re-integration to the school.
10. If a child bites the child will be required to be picked up from day care for the remainder of the day.

### ***Response to other forms of Hurt inflicted on other Children or staff***

A similar procedure will be followed as per document (Steps for Respectfully Redirecting) The same steps as for Biting will be followed if the Hurting Behaviour continues

### ***Confidentiality***

HMP and the staff will maintain complete confidentiality of all children involved when notifying parents that their child has been bitten or hit, or bit / hit another child.



## READING LIST

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

### FOR TODDLERS:

- *Understanding the Human Being*  
Dr Silvana Montanaro
- *How to raise an amazing child*  
Tim Seldin

### FOR PRE-SCHOOL:

- *Montessori: A Modern Approach*  
Paula Polk Lillard
- *The absorbent mind*  
Maria Montessori
- *Discovery of the Child*  
Maria Montessori
- *The Secret of Childhood*  
Maria Montessori
- *Montessori Play and Learn*  
Leslie Brittan
- *Teaching Montessori in the home: The Pre-School Years*  
Elisabeth G. Hainstock

### GENERAL:

- *Montessori Today*  
Paula Polk Lillard
- *Advanced Montessori Method Vol. 1 & 2*  
Maria Montessori
- *Teaching Montessori in the home: The School Years*  
Elisabeth G. Hainstock
- *Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work*  
E.M. Standing
- *Education For A New World*  
Maria Montessori
- *Montessori The Science behind the Magic*  
Angeline Stoll Lillard