



Not-for-profit • Established 1972

Family Guidebook

9 Roseview Avenue

Cambridge, ON N1R 4A5

519-622-1470

montessori@in.on.ca

www.montessoricambridge.ca

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Frequently Asked Questions

Why is enrollment for five days per week?

It is widely recognized that young children thrive on routine, predictability and continuity. They need to bond strongly with caregivers and teachers so continuity of care and the fewer individuals doing the care the better. Consistency of expectations for behaviors helps children feel secure and feeling secure and belonging is necessary before higher level learning can occur. Classmates become friends and relationships develop through attending every day. Learning is cumulative and for young children repeating activities the next day is an important aspect giving flow and continuity to the process.

Why is the school called Montessori?

Montessori education is based on the work of Italian physician, Dr. Maria Montessori, whose research gave birth to an innovative educational system. In January 2007, the centenary of her first class in Rome was celebrated around the world.

Is the school not-for-profit?

First of all, not all Montessori schools are not-for-profit. The Montessori School of Cambridge (MSC), a not-for-profit and charitable organization since 1972, has focused on providing the very best quality of care for the child by putting dollars back into the classroom. A visit to our school and a tour of our classrooms is living proof that money is invested where it counts - quality learning materials, resources and equipment for the children. The teachers and volunteer parent board work to develop programs with the best interests of the child in mind.

What is the Montessori approach?

The children's innate love of learning and desire to explore are encouraged by opportunities to spontaneously choose and engage in meaningful activities. Through their own efforts the children develop concentration and experience joyful self-discipline. Active and curious, they excel in the Montessori hands-on curriculum, progressing at their own pace. The teacher is a role model and facilitator who links a child with carefully designed learning materials and activities. He/she guides him or her during a three-year cycle of learning in a class environment that cultivates independence and self-motivation.

What training do the teachers have?

Teachers may hold traditional E.C.E. diplomas and be Registered Early Childhood Educators as well as having specialized Montessori training. Others hold B.A. degrees and have Montessori training. There is specific training for the toddler, early childhood or elementary level. Our families value the long-term commitment of our many staff members.

How is the school organized?

MSC is a not-for-profit and charitable organization operated by a volunteer Board of Directors. Programs for children under the age of six are licensed under the Child Care and Early Years Act and operated under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. The school is non-denominational.

How can parents be involved?

Collaboration with parents is encouraged through class observations, open communication and frequent dialogue with teachers including Parent-Teacher Conferences. Parents are involved on the Board of Directors,

on committees and in fundraising activities that provide resources to develop children's programs. Our motto is "Working Together for the Sake of the Children."

Mission

The Montessori School of Cambridge, guided by the education philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, is dedicated to providing a child-centered environment that inspires children to reach their full potential academically, emotionally and socially. The child's education is nurtured in a school community that promotes independence, self-esteem, self-discipline, cooperation and respect for others. Within the Montessori framework of learning and the working partnership of the child, parent and teacher, a love of learning is fostered and an "education for life" is offered.

Program Statement

Montessori pedagogy which guides the Montessori School of Cambridge and the programming offered at the school is consistent with "How Does Learning Happen?" Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years. Understanding the young child's immense potential and extreme vulnerability is key to the role of the adult in our early learning and child care for the children we serve. "Everything we do with children is education for Life." We see children as unique, extremely capable and intrinsically motivated through inborn curiosity, Dr. Montessori called this phenomenon "the absorbent mind". They come to us with diverse experiences; we see them as constructors of their own knowledge.

Goals

Montessori School of Cambridge has set the following goals in order to uphold our philosophy, achieve our commitment to beginning lifelong learning and support the needs of the children, families and educators.

1. Promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children.
2. Support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, and staff.
3. Encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate.
4. Foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry.
5. Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences.
6. Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported.
7. Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving child care.
8. Foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children.
9. Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff.
10. Support staff and others who interact with the children at MSC in relation to continuous professional learning.

Organization and Administration

The Montessori School of Cambridge (MSC) is a not-for-profit and charitable organization (established in 1972) and is operated by a volunteer Board of Directors. Programs for children under the age of six are licensed under the Child Care and Early Years Act (Ministry of Education). The school is non-denominational.

The school has a charter that sets out the objectives of the corporation and all business affairs of the school are covered under its By-Laws. All parents of children enrolled in the School are members of the Corporation for the Annual General Meeting held each fall. Board Meetings are held each month and any parent may attend. There are two salaried staff that perform administrative tasks: the Business Manager and the Principal, who work closely with the Board of Directors to direct the business of the school and provide educational leadership respectively.

Philosophy: The Montessori Approach

Dr. Maria Montessori observed that children under six have an extraordinary ability to absorb knowledge from their surroundings and are driven to do so. She called this the “absorbent mind” and recognized that the young child’s brain is more capable of learning certain skills during these years than it will ever be again. In Montessori education children’s innate love of learning and desire to explore are nurtured by opportunities to spontaneously choose and engage in meaningful activities.

The wonderful Montessori learning materials provide reasons for children to touch, manipulate and learn as their interests and curiosity directs their activity. Toddlers are explorers who learn through their senses and movement. Their program has a focus on language development, independence, practical life skills, social skills and toilet-training. Preschool, JK, and SK age children learn practical self-help skills; practice discriminating sizes, shapes, colours; learn phonetic sounds of the alphabet, print, begin to write stories and read, count, learn number symbols, explore arithmetic; discover botany, zoology and geography with hands-on materials. Under the guidance of a Montessori-trained teacher, the children experience the joy of learning. Through their own efforts they develop self-discipline and an ability to concentrate.

Montessori education ensures the development of self-esteem, and provides experience from which children build their knowledge base. They go beyond learning skills to begin cultivating their abilities to express themselves and think clearly. In the Montessori multi-age setting, they learn both from each other and because of each other through their relationships, helping friends and peer-teaching.

Philosophy: 3 Year Cycle of Learning

In the Montessori preschool (Casa de Bambini) children generally enter the class at 2.5 to 3.5 years-old and continue until turning 6 and ready to enter grade 1. The three-year cycle is a basic tenet of the Montessori

philosophy. There are developmental stages of growth and learning from 0 to 3 years of age, 3 to 6 years of age, 6 to 9 years and 9 to 12 years. Each three-year period has different interests and needs to be satisfied. The Montessori "casa" or class for the 3 to 6 year-old is designed specifically for this grouping. Teachers and children develop a strong bond over this time and the adults come to know each child very well - both strengths

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and challenges. Parents also develop a strong relationship with their child's teachers and this allows good communication to grow between home and school.

Having children attend the same class for three years allows the children to follow their interests as they progress in learning and the teachers and parents know that each child has time to learn at his or her own pace. A child may show immense enthusiasm for counting for a six week period and then become interested in art for a month, for instance. One day a child may be working with a child two years his senior and then at another time with a child who is younger. An older child will consolidate learning when he or she assists a younger child with a known activity. Younger children learn a great deal by observing - they are able to see what they will soon be able to do for themselves! Having a three-year span of ages means the classroom is very dynamic indeed. Since the program and curriculum is designed for a child to attend for three years, if a child is withdrawn early they may be gaps in learning because there was not adequate time for the child to experience all aspects of the rich curriculum.

Similarly, in the Toddler classroom there is generally a span of ages from 18 months to 3 years. Some children enter at 18 months of age and will spend two years in the Toddler community. In the second year they will be the role models and mentors to the new children. Children who enter around 2 years of age will usually spend one year in the classroom. A child usually moves to the Montessori Preschool classroom in the September after turning 3 years of age. Depending on their individual development and actual birth date, some children who turn 3 from September to December may move to Preschool and others stay in the Toddler room.



milestones

- 2011 - 2012 **MSC Celebrates 40 years of service to the community
Now educating children of first students!**
- 2010 **Full Day Program moved from 31 South St., Elementary Program closed.
All Programs consolidated at 9 Roseview Ave.**
- 2006 **Survey indicates need for Toddler & Grades 4 - 6
Renovations, investment of \$21K (classroom), \$12K (playground)
September - First Toddler Class opens**
- 2001 to 2005 **Board undertakes strategic planning for uniting 2 locations
Development goals identified
Annual Giving raises \$48K for Building Fund
Naomi Reisler Elementary Bursary Fund created
First Annual Giving raises \$10K**
- 1999 **Renovations to 31 South St. to accommodate elementary class and
develop fourth preschool class - enrollment grew to 150.
Capital investment of \$50K, plus ongoing fundraising for learning
materials/furniture**
- 1997 **Renovations at 9 Roseview create fourth new room to accommodate
new elementary program for ages 6 to 9
Capital investment of \$44K plus ongoing fundraising for learning
materials/furniture**
- 1994 **Renovations at 9 Roseview create a second half-day classroom
(total of 3 classrooms) - enrollment grew to 94
Capital grant investment of \$170K, plus ongoing fundraising for learning
materials/furniture**
- 1992 **New full-day program developed in the main floor classroom**
- 1990 **Purchased Roseview location**
- 1984 **School moves - 9 Roseview Ave. - 2 classrooms - enrollment grew to 90
Capital investment of \$10K**
- 1979 **School moves - Cambridge Memorial Hospital (former School of
Nursing) - 2 classrooms - enrollment grew to 72**
- 1972 **School opens - church basement - one classroom**



Our Team

In order for our children to succeed, teachers, parents, the Board and the Principal all have roles to play. Each role is critical to the continued success and growth of our school.

Teachers

- guide each child based on his/her unique learning needs
- recognize that parents are the most influential and have intimate knowledge of their children
- work as active partners with parents in educating children and promoting their optimal development
- are committed to the Montessori educational approach

Parents

Are welcome to become involved in their children's education by:

- coming to observe a class in session at a time prearranged with their child's teacher
- reviewing and responding to written reports on their child's progress
- conferencing with teachers
- reading the "sandpaper letter" and contributing articles
- reading the monthly e-news e-mails
- supporting the philosophy of the school through attending parent-teacher nights and reading to learn about Montessori education
- inviting friends and neighbours to school open houses and events
- attending annual General Meeting each Fall
- supporting fundraising and school spirit events
- volunteering

Volunteer Board of Directors

- is entrusted to work within the school's philosophies and mission statement
- responds positively to parents' concerns and refers concerns to the Principal
- makes viability related financial decisions
- plans for the future of the school

The Principal

- implements the school's philosophy and mission statement on a day-to-day basis
- provides a vision for the future of the school
- is responsible, ultimately, for the delivery of education true to the school's mission
- works with the Business Manager to prepare and oversee the school's budget and sees that the facility supports the programs
- oversees the school's fundraising activities
- is the school's official representative to the outside community
- is responsible for all hiring of staff and personnel matters
- has the role of admissions officer

Ethos

Our school is a community where children and adults have the opportunity to experience safety, inclusiveness, commitment, shared responsibility, conflict resolution and interdependence.

A Place of Safety

- where an individual feels accepted and is given unconditional respect
- where one is truly listened to and feels understood
- where one can take risks, mistakes can be made, learning can occur
- where co-operation is practiced
- where trust is felt

A Place of Inclusiveness

- where diversity and multiple points of view are valued
- where there is shared leadership
- where decisions are often made by consensus
- where wisdom is sought in the collective

A Place of Commitment

- where relationships are built on mutual respect, trust and cooperation
- where there is time to bond
- where the responsibility of keeping commitments is shared

A Place where conflict resolution is practiced

- where group problem-solving and mediation skills are developed

A Place where interdependence is recognized and esteemed

- where we help each other learn
- where we depend on each other for our ultimate success
- where we benefit from each other's strengths and understand each other's weaknesses

Fundraising

The Montessori School of Cambridge is a not-for-profit school. Fundraising is vital to our operation, enabling us to:

- replenish our well-equipped classrooms
- provide a variety of art materials
- develop programs
- plan for the financing of our future

The School offers a variety of fundraising activities for our school community members to choose from.

Charity Bingos

We are fortunate to have had the opportunity to raise funds for our school since 1991 through charity bingos administered by the City of Cambridge. Our volunteer teams have proven themselves to be reliable and friendly. This money goes DIRECTLY back into your child's classroom. With all the new art supplies, books, games and Montessori materials, we are confident that our classes are the best equipped in the region! Last year \$9,903.00 was raised- this works out to about \$65.00 earned per volunteer hour. We hope you will consider signing up to volunteer when we distribute information on bingo volunteer training and our bingo dates/times. This is a straightforward, enjoyable assignment and you are paired up with a veteran volunteer; it is a good use of your volunteer hours.

Basket Raffle

Each year at the June Family Picnic there is a raffle for themed baskets. Each classroom has a theme, such as, Italiano or Summer Fun, and families contribute a ten dollar item towards a gift basket. Raffle tickets are sold and then the winners drawn at the picnic. We raised \$1,600.00 last year.

Scholastic Books

When you buy Scholastic books through our school ordering process, points are earned and redeemed. Our library is stocked with great books using points from purchases made by our families. The teachers access the books for themes, library time and for reading at circle. Each classroom also makes purchases for their classrooms using bonus points. Some of the other items ordered include a book-binder, cutting boards, organizers and classroom materials to name a few. Our school is equipped with a television, DVD player and we also have a camcorder and camera, thanks to Scholastic bonus points.

Other Fundraising

There is usually one or more other small fundraising events, such as, Norcard (gift paper, calendars, chocolate etc). A variety of events are offered so that everyone may choose to participate in at least one.

School Spirit

While there are lots of festivities that are unique to your child's classroom to celebrate holidays, seasons and birthdays, some events involve the whole MSC family! Events vary from year to year, but there are a two get-togethers that have remained favourites for children, parents and staff alike.

They are:

- Family skating party, usually held at the Cambridge Centre rink, late November or early December
- End-of-year family picnic - completely free of charge, typically held at Shade's Mills Conservation Area. Activities in the past have included a bouncy castle, train rides and face painting. Parents bring a dessert to share. Themed gift baskets are raffled as a fundraiser. A fun day to wrap up the year!

A full-colour **Yearbook** is created each year and is for sale in late May/early June. This is a great keepsake that ensures MSC memories stay alive for many years to come!

Volunteers

From our humble beginnings in one classroom in 1972, our outstanding teachers, staff and Boards of Directors have worked together to support the children in their learning. Parents, like you, have also played a vital role in MSC's success as a leader in providing quality educational programming. As one of only a handful of not-for-profit Montessori schools in Canada, we depend on contributions of time, talent and financial resources from our community to ensure our school's ongoing success into the future. Over the years, our school has invested the funds raised in the set-up and development of new programs...from Toddler to SK. See our development timeline on page 5.

There are so many ways to get involved at MSC even if you only have a few hours to offer! Ask about these opportunities at the office, or come along to the Annual General Meeting and sign up! Here are a few ways to get involved, but please, if you have a special talent or professional skill to offer either personally or professionally, we'd love to hear from you.

- Committee member
- Bingo volunteer
- Special events coordinator
- Board member

We look forward to seeing you this year. Volunteering is a fun way to meet other parents/staff and help our not-for-profit school!

Programs - Overview

We strive to balance the needs of families and their children by offering various programming options. Children attend 5 days a week because consistency is important both to facilitate community building and to provide continuity for their learning.

The Toddler Program (18 months to 3 years)

The goals of our Toddler program are to provide for the child:

- a loving, secure, environment away from home
- trusting relationships with others
- opportunities for independence, sensorial experiences, language and movement, toilet training

The Preschool, JK/SK Program (2 -1/2 to 6 years)

The primary goal of our Montessori early childhood program is to help each child reach full potential in all areas of life. With successful experiences, a child increases in self-confidence and independence. Skills are developed naturally as the child's desire to learn leads him to repeat activities. In addition, the patterns of concentration, persistence and thoroughness established in early childhood produce a confident and competent learner in later years.

Toddler, Preschool, JK/SK - Admission Sequence

1. Inquiry - Parents telephone or e-mail to ask for information about enrolling a child. They may be referred to the website or information may be mailed/e-mailed to them.
2. Tour/Overview - Parents will be asked to arrange to meet with the Principal or a teacher after school hours to have an overview tour of the classroom and ask questions about the children's programs. Information will be given on Montessori principles, the school's organizational structure, the role of parents, tuition fees, admissions procedure and criteria. A Waiting List/Intent to Register Form may be requested at this time.
3. Observation Visit - Parents are strongly encouraged to make an appointment to observe a class in session before enrolling a child.
4. Waiting List/Intent to Register Form. The completed form accompanied by a non-refundable fee is returned to the school. Please also register on the Region of Waterloo OneList website <https://regionofwaterloo.onehsn.com/>
5. Offer of Admission - A place in the school will be offered based on the following Admissions criteria:
 1. Space is available in the school
 2. Age of child - Enrollment policy gives preference to preschool children 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 years of age (toilet-trained) and for the toddler program, ages 18 months and up.
 3. Date when Waiting List/Intent to Register form is received.
 4. Commitment of parent to Montessori educational approach
6. Enrollment - To ensure placement in the school, the completed REGISTRATION FORM and TUITION AGREEMENT with required POST-DATED CHEQUES must be submitted to the school within one week of the Offer of Admission.
7. Confirmation - You will receive a confirmation package. Child is enrolled and a place in the school is confirmed.
8. Orientation - Orientation will be scheduled for the child to be introduced to the teachers and the classroom.
9. Admittance to Class - All additional forms must be completed and submitted to the school.

Montessori School of Cambridge Waiting List Priorities

MSC has established the following priority system for offering available spaces to those on the waiting list:

A.	Children of MSC employees (to facilitate their ability to work)
B.	Children in care who need to move into the next age group
C.	Siblings of children already enrolled
D.	All other applicants

Notwithstanding the above priority system, applicants requesting full-time care will receive priority within a given group when a full-time space is being filled.

Late Fees

If children are picked up later than their normal departure time, a fee of \$10 per 15 minutes or any portion thereof will be charged. The late fee is directly payable to the staff member who has remained late with the child. Please be prompt, it can be distressing to children when their parent is late.

Financial Aid

Toddler/Preschool/JK/SK

The school has a "Purchase-of-Service" agreement with the Region of Waterloo. Families who apply through the Regional Child Care Subsidy office (519-883-2200) and are approved to receive childcare fee subsidy, may use the funds to pay child care fees at The Montessori School of Cambridge.

Withdrawal Policy

Parents are required to pay the non-refundable deposit and tuition as stated on the Tuition Agreement for the full year. Statutory holidays, bad weather closings, professional development days, Christmas and Easter vacations and spring break are part of the year. No refund of fees will be given due to the temporary absence of a child because of illness, or family holidays. Parents who find it necessary to withdraw their child from the program need to give one month's notice in writing. If withdrawal occurs before August 1st, the August payment is refunded as well as all post-dated cheques. If withdrawal occurs after August 1st, the August payment is non-refundable. Fees are payable for the last month the child attends and the post-dated cheques for the rest of the year are returned.

Each child's acceptance into the program will be conditional for six weeks. During this time, the teacher and the parents will discuss if the program is meeting the needs of the child. If the school and the parents agree that the withdrawal of the child from the program is best, then tuition fees for the remainder of the school year will be refunded. The deposit is NOT REFUNDABLE.

Orientation

Toddler

Orientations are scheduled during the last week of August. New children are invited to meet their teachers and some of the other new children. They are introduced to the classroom. Phasing-in details for the beginning of the school year are communicated in a mailing in August. Classroom schedules are available from staff and posted outside the classroom.

Preschool

Orientations are scheduled for each new child during the last week of June and the last week of August. New students meet their teachers and are introduced to the classroom. Phasing-in details for the beginning of the school year are communicated in a mailing in August. Classroom schedules are available from staff and posted outside each class.

Arrival and Dismissal

At arrival time, parents are asked to accompany their child inside the school and to their classroom door. You are responsible for your child's safety in the parking lot and in the public halls of the school building. Once at the classroom, it is best to encourage children to undress (and dress) themselves. It is important to your child that you wish him or her a good day. A teacher will be available to welcome your child to the classroom.

Half Day/ School Day Class on Inside Days

At dismissal time, the half-day preschool, JK, SK children who are indoors will be gathered in a circle to enjoy a song or story. Please come to the door of the classroom and wait for your child to come to you. The teacher will break at a natural point and sing or say goodbye to your child. Your child will then leave the circle to join you.

Dismissal from Playgrounds

On days scheduled for your child's class to use the playground, please come through the building and enter the playground (on the opposite side of the building to the parking lot) to pick up your child. Be sure to close the gate when you leave. If someone other than a parent is to pick up the child, please inform the school. Refer to your class schedule for specific dismissal routines.

Full Day Classes Dismissal on Inside Days

Children in the Upstairs Full Day class may be enjoying free play in their classroom on inside dismissal days. Children in the Main Floor Full Day class may be enjoying free play in the gym or be in their classroom at dismissal times. Come to the door of the classroom and a staff member will recognize you and release the child.

Parking Lot and Traffic Flow

Drop-off times and pick-up times are busy and potentially dangerous. The safety of our children depends on drivers moving slowly and being vigilant. In the school parking lot, pedestrians have the right-of-way at all times, and drivers should take care at all times.

Please remember to always turn off your vehicle while parked in the parking lot. Children are much more vulnerable to air pollution than adults due to their volume to surface ratio in their lungs. Children breathe in far more pollutants per kilogram of body weight than adults. This means it is even more important to keep our air clean for our children, so please do not let your car idle longer than 10 seconds in our parking lot. Not only is it helping your children, it is helping with our environment too!

Traffic enters off Roseview Avenue, but must exit **via the lane** at the rear of the property for the safety of the children. The lane gives access to Cambridge St. and Wellington St. Limited parking is available in the larger parking lot to the right of the school building. Parking in this area should be limited to five minutes. Parents are asked not to park in the smaller lot at the rear of the building (near the playground) and the spaces at the left front of the building. Those spaces are needed for staff parking. Parking is allowed on Roseview and side streets for up to 3 hours where permitted. As there are not enough parking spots to accommodate everyone, please park your car and drop off or pick your child up promptly as other parents are waiting to do the same. If you enter the parking lot and find no parking space is available, please exit and come around the block to allow traffic to flow. Please save conversations with other children and parents for another time and place.

Arrival and Departure Attendance Records

CCEY Act regulations require that Staff keep attendance records which indicate **the time** a child has arrived for the day and departed at the end of the day. In addition attendance checks are taken when children leave their classroom for the gym or the playground.

Release of Children

Children are released only to their parents or to people the parents have given their permission, in writing, to pick up the children. Parents are asked to keep the information current and may phone to give permission. If someone arrives to pick up a child and their name does not appear on the list and the school has not been informed otherwise, a staff member will telephone the child's parents to verify that the individual has parental permission to pick up the child. An individual sent to pick up a child whose name is not on the parents' list may be asked to show identification before the child is released and asked to wait while a staff member verifies permission.

Clothing

Toddler, Preschool, JK/SK

Please encourage your child to choose clothing that he or she can easily manage. Beltless pants are appropriate for children under four years of age. Snaps may be easier to manage than buttons; Velcro may be easier to manage than laces. On the playground, running shoes are much safer and more comfortable than sandals. Please have the children wear washable clothing as Tempera paint is washable in cold water only. (We do provide aprons, but accidents do happen!)

Since the children play outside and the weather can be unpredictable, we ask that children bring jackets, mud pants (to protect indoor clothing), and outdoor shoes or boots in season. As the weather gets colder, hats and neck warmers (scarves are not safe), snow pants and two pairs of waterproof mitts are essential.

Care of self and independence in toileting and dressing are goals in all of our programs. Please support our effort to help your child to do it himself or herself.

School Supplies

Montessori's specific approach to the classroom environment instills a sense of community and sharing. We will supply all classroom necessities (pencils, paper, glue sticks, erasers, scissors, etc.). All supplies are provided by the school, however, a backpack would be useful to carry school communications, papers and artwork.

Full-day Toddler, 6 hour Toddler, Full-day Preschool and Junior Kindergarten children have a rest period. Each child needs to bring a pillow with a removable pillowcase, a blanket and a cuddly toy. These need to stay at school. Each child is provided with a sleeping cot and a clean sheet weekly.

Friend of the Day / Show and Tell

Preschool, JK, SK

Your monthly calendar indicates when it is your child's "Show and Tell" day or sharing day. Your child might choose a book, a photograph (e.g. the child and his pet), or an object to show the class (e.g. a souvenir from a trip). It may be interesting to bring in an item that relates to the topics being studied in class that particular week. (The themes are listed on the monthly calendars that are posted outside classrooms, as well as on the website). Please limit each "Show and Tell" to one item. Seasonal items are great. e.g. leaves that have changed colour, acorns. If you are considering bringing a pet animal to school, or if you have any questions, please see a teacher for clarification.

Birthdays

Toddler, Preschool, JK/SK

Each classroom has a time-honoured birthday custom in place; please check with your child's teacher for details.

Field Trips / Guests

Toddler

The Toddler class frequently goes for a walk in the school's neighbourhood - sometimes seeing a train at the station, going to the Farmers' Market or Reid's shop.

Preschool, JK, SK

Each classroom staff will plan "class trips". Information about the destination, activity, date, time, etc. will be sent home. Parents need to sign a permission slip and return it with any fee to cover the cost of the activity and transportation (school buses are hired to provide transportation). Teachers often ask for parent volunteers to assist on trips.

As of August 2015 the Child Care and Early Years Act requires that the school obtain and retain on file a Vulnerable Sector Check for any parent who is to accompany children on a school trip or volunteer on a regular basis at the school. Please ask for information on this requirement if you wish to volunteer.

Occasionally teachers will invite visitors to the classroom to demonstrate musical instruments or to entertain with a puppet show or to give the children an experience with reptiles etc. Parents will be notified of the event and there may be a cost.

Classroom Communication

The more accurately informed we are about your child, the better we can care for him/her. Please set up an appointment to discuss your child's progress, address any questions or concerns you may have, or to inform the teacher of any changes at home that may have an effect at school. It is not possible to give full attention to your concerns while there are students in the classroom or when the class is on the playground.

Throughout the year, the Montessori School of Cambridge offers many ways to get involved in your child's development and in the school community.

Here are some forums where valuable information is offered.

- Please read all signs and notices posted outside the classroom door or on white boards
- Please check your child's "going home" file folder daily or weekly as class custom
- Keep the monthly class calendar posted at home
- Check the website often
- Sign up for e-mail news on our website
- Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Arrange a class observation at least once per year
- Attend Parent-Teacher Evening Events

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Toddler

Anecdotal Reports and Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled during the school year – in early December and early June. These conferences help the teachers and the parents to better understand the progress of each child.

Preschool, JK/SK

Progress Reports and Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled during the school year – in early December and in early June. These conferences help the teacher and the parents to better understand the progress of each child.

Development of Self-Discipline

Our school is a community where students and educators have the opportunity to experience safety, inclusiveness, commitment, shared responsibility, conflict resolution and interdependence. A primary goal is to assist children in developing self-discipline.

Prepared Environment:

Each classroom offers rich multi-sensory learning opportunities to challenge the cognitive and physical abilities of the students. Social and emotional growth is encouraged in our mixed-ages classes. Most significantly children are provided time to focus and attend to intellectual work that they are interested in. Teachers develop routines, set clear limits, apply rules fairly and consistently, encourage positive behaviour and provide natural and logical consequences for choices made by children.

Modeling of Positive Behaviour:

Montessori educators are trained in child development, have faith in the child who will develop over time and are skilled observers. They present materials to individual children as appropriate to their developmental level and they model positive social behaviours. Teachers also offer guidance through such programs as Second Step. Children are given tools to help them identify emotions, express feelings appropriately, follow a problem-solving process and seek solutions that will work for all parties.

Fostering Self-esteem:

Teachers foster self-esteem by showing respect for each child, delineating ground rules and expectations clearly and encouraging children to do their personal best to follow-through.

Peace Process or Peace Table

This process may occur at a Peace Table or in the location where the conflict has taken place. Each child is given an opportunity to share what happened and how she or he is feeling about it. Then the problem is stated and a solution discussed. Finally a solution is agreed upon and the strategy is put in place. If the solution does not work out then children are helped to seek a different solution.

Group Meeting

Teachers will lead the whole class in a discussion of a problem that is affecting the whole group. They will brainstorm for possible solutions. One solution will be chosen to try. A solution may be for a specific circumstance and or period of time and not necessarily become a regular ground rule. The group may decide that certain choices will have certain consequences in the classroom.

Notes Home

At the discretion of the teachers parents may receive written communication that their child has needed to use the Peace Table or Peace Process or that a Group Meeting has resulted in a decision to implement a certain strategy to solve a problem. The purpose of notes home is to ask for parents' support in reinforcing the importance of positive behaviour at school. It may be that parents and teachers will need to work together to find a logical or natural consequence to help a child learn to make appropriate choices.

Meeting of Parents and Teachers

Everyone will meet to work together as caring adults to find a solution. The school's Ethos statement will be a guide.

General Policies and Procedures

Lunch/Snack Guidelines

If there is a student with a food allergy you will be informed of necessary precautions.

Toddler, Preschool, JK, SK

We believe that good nutrition is an important part of young children's education. Each day of the week is designated for a different type of snack food and the children are offered a snack in the morning and in the afternoon. As of August 2015, the CCEY Act requires that the school supply and provide the two daily snacks for children attending full days.

Inclement Weather, School Closing

Typically, you will receive a phone call if our school is closing due to bad weather. You may call the main phone number 519-622-1470 and listen to the recording or listen to radio stations CHYM (96.7 FM) and DAVE FM. (107.5 FM) or check our website www.montessoricambridge.ca

Please note: the school will close, if and only if, the Waterloo Region District Public School Board closes the public schools.

In case of bad weather (not severe enough for the schools to close, yet the buses are cancelled) please be aware that many of our staff members are from outside Cambridge and we may be short-staffed if they are unable to drive to the school. We will make every effort to have at least one classroom open for 7:30 a.m.

We encourage parents to use their own judgment when travelling to the school. The highest priority is always the safety, health and well-being of our students. Please call the school if your child isn't attending. It will help us predict our numbers.

Health Policies and Procedures

Illness Policy

If your child is to be absent due to illness, please telephone before 9:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. of the day concerned. 519-622-1470

If your child has a cough, runny nose or what appears to be just a “cold” he/she may come to school provided the child is able to participate in the program. A good rule of thumb is ***“If they are able to play they are able to stay.”***

1. If your child has a fever she/he must NOT to be brought to school until 24 hours after the fever has subsided on its own. Do NOT bring your child with medications to reduce/mask the fever. If your child is ill enough to need fever reducing medication he/she is too ill to attend.
2. Diarrhea and or vomiting – your child needs to stay home for 24 hours after the last bout has occurred. If your child has vomited at school – we will contact you and your child is to be picked up within one hour. If the child has a liquid diarrhea – you will be contacted immediately and asked to pick the child up within one hour.
3. If the school is experiencing a gastrointestinal outbreak, a child may return to school only when they are symptom free (no diarrhea or vomiting) for 48 hours.
4. If your child will be absent due to illness (fever, vomiting, diarrhea, a rash, mucous from eyes or nose) or has a communicable disease please call the school 30 minutes before his or her usual arrival time on the day(s) concerned to let us know. Reportable communicable diseases include: Measles, Mumps, Chicken Pox, Hepatitis, Rubella (German Measles), Whooping Cough (Pertussis). Also please inform the school of infections such as Impetigo and Conjunctivitis.

Anaphylaxis Policy

Our school Anaphylaxis Policy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan are designed to ensure that children at risk are identified, strategies are in place to minimize the potential for accidental exposure and staff and volunteers are trained to respond in an emergency situation. Education and awareness are key to keeping students with potentially life-threatening allergies safe.

All parents in a class with a child at risk will be informed of the potential anaphylactic reaction to a causative agent and asked to cooperate with measures designed to keep the allergic child safe. If a child is severely allergic it may be that a food will be banned from a classroom or from the whole school.

Policy for the Administration of Prescribed or Non-Prescribed Medication

Procedures:

1. When it is necessary that a **prescribed or non-prescribed medication be given to a child** an “Administration Of Medications” form must be signed and dated by the parent specifying the following:
 - **Expiry Date of medication**
 - name of the child
 - name of the medication
 - dose to be administered
 - time/s to be administered
 - date to start and end
 - additional instructions
 - reason for medication

2. A prescribed medication must be brought in its **original** container, clearly labelled by the pharmacy with:
 - patient’s name
 - name of medication
 - when to be given

3. Authorization, signed by the parent must be obtained for use of such preparations as:
 - Tempra, Tylenol, antibiotics or cough preparations
 - topical applications such as antibiotic creams, suntan lotion, lip balm etc

4. Authorization and specific instructions from the parent must be received in writing for the use of Epipens, and aerosol treatments (“puffers”).

5. Medication must be stored in a locked container or cupboard.

6. Any administration of medication must be recorded on the “Child’s Medication Log” on the “Administration of Medications” form. The date, medication and dosage given, time given, and staff signature is recorded.

7. One person is designated as responsible for the administration of medication.

Behaviour Guidance and Prohibited Practices

The Montessori School of Cambridge has a written Program Statement that meets the requirements as set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act.

The Behaviour Guidance policy statement ensures clarity about the expectations for implementation of the Program Statement. Prohibited Practices and Positive Behaviour Guidance Strategies are clearly identified.

The guidance of children's behaviour has as its goal to assist each child to develop self-regulation, self-confidence and in time, self-discipline. The strategies employed will consistently encourage respect for self and others in the community. The MSC Program Statement outlines Goals, Implementation Strategies and Monitoring measures to ensure that each child will have safe and positive experiences that promote his/her healthy growth and development. If teachers have questions and concerns about a child's behaviour patterns they will follow the written **Process for Communication about Children's Development** and seeks assistance from the Principal. All teachers, staff members, consultants, supply teachers, volunteers and students who interact with the children are mandated to follow the principles of the Program Statement. As outlined in the Program Statement Implementation Policy, the Principal will observe caregiver interactions with children and document that these are aligned with the MSC Program Statement and authentic Montessori pedagogy.

Guidance of a child's behaviour needs to be appropriate to the developmental level of the child and facilitation needs to be made available as soon as possible when there is a problem with behaviour. A respectful, listening stance is the starting point and a positive attitude that communicates "together, we can solve this problem" is essential in helping a child who is developing social/emotional skills.

Prohibited Practices

- corporal punishment of a child which includes, but is not limited to spanking, slapping, hitting, pushing, shaking, or kicking
- physically moving a child against their will (unless their safety or the safety of others is in jeopardy, in such an instance documentation of said incident must be completed within 24 hours and submitted to the Principal
- deliberate, harsh or degrading measures that would humiliate a child or undermine a child's self-respect including verbal or emotional abuse
- deprivation of a child's basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing or bedding
- confinement of a child by locking exit doors or permitting a child to be locked in or out of the school building
- use of a locked or lockable room to confine a child who has been withdrawn from the others

If a **Prohibited Practice** occurs it is a **Contravention of the Program Statement** and as a result the employee's employment contract may be terminated due to unsatisfactory performance.

Annually and when revisions are made, the Principal reviews this policy with each teacher, staff member, consultant, supply teacher, volunteer and student who interacts with children.

Policy on Supervision of Volunteers and Students in Child Care

No child at Montessori School of Cambridge is supervised by a person less than 18 years of age.

At Montessori School of Cambridge only **employees will have direct unsupervised access to children.**

Volunteers and students on placement are not counted in staffing ratios at Montessori School of Cambridge.

Policies and Procedures under the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) Applicable to Volunteers and Students on Placement in Child Care

1. Volunteers and students who work directly with children are required to complete the Pre-employment Health Form (as supplied by the Waterloo Region Health Unit)
2. Vulnerable Sector Checks are required for all volunteers and students having direct contact with children.
3. Policies reviewed with volunteers and students on placement before they begin providing care and annually thereafter, include: Monitoring of Behaviour Guidance and Prohibited Practices, Playground Safety Policy, Anaphylaxis Policy, Individual Plan and emergency procedures for child with anaphylaxis and Supervision of Volunteers and Students Policy.
4. Volunteers and students who work directly with children are subject to annual Monitoring of Behaviour Guidance and Prohibited Practices and the written record is kept on file for 6 years.

Serious Occurrence Postings

Even with the best precautions, a serious occurrence, such as a serious injury to a child, an event that interrupts the daily routine or a serious complaint about the service standard, may take place. In order for transparency and parental access to information, a serious occurrence notification form will be posted on the Parent Bulletin Board for ten (10) business days. Please speak to a staff member if you have any questions or concerns about a posting.

MSC Parents Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures

We pride ourselves on ongoing communication with parents and encourage parents/guardians to discuss any concerns. Opportunities, such as daily conversations and parent-teacher conferences twice a year, are provided to ensure effective communication between parents/guardians and educators. Conferences may be scheduled throughout the year as requested by parents or educators.

At MSC we respect the privacy of children and families. All personal records and information relating to children and families are treated in a confidential manner. We will ensure that all parents can share information in confidence and this information will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children. Information is only shared with other agencies with the parent's consent, except in the case of child protection issues.

We value the input of parents and ask that a yearly survey be completed to assist MSC to provide a quality, relevant program. If you happen to have a concern, please bring it to the attention of the Principal as soon as possible in order for her to resolve the issue. Families can expect to hear back from the Principal within 5 business days. If you feel that your questions or concerns have not been dealt with satisfactorily by the Principal and staff, please contact the President or Vice President of our Board.

Procedures

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff, Principal or Board Member in responding to issue/concern:
<p>Program Room Related</p> <p>E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the classroom staff directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Principal 	<p>Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised</p> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within 5 business days. <p>Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the date and time the issue/concern was received; - the name of the person who received the issue/concern;
<p>General, Centre or Operations Related</p> <p>E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the name of the person reporting the issue/concern; - the details of the issue/concern; and - any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.
<p>Staff Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the individual directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Principal <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the Principal as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.</p> <p>Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within 5 business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.</p>

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff, Principal or Board Member in responding to issue/concern:
Principal Related	Raise the issue or concern to - the President or Vice President of the Board All issues or concerns about the conduct of the Principal that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the President or Vice President of the Board as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.	Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern. Follow up with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure a satisfactory resolution has been achieved.

MSC Emergency Management Policy and Procedures

Policy

Staff will follow the emergency response procedures by following these three phases:

1. Immediate Emergency Response;
2. Next Steps during an Emergency; and
3. Recovery.

Staff will ensure that children are kept safe, are accounted for and are supervised at all times during an emergency situation.

For situations that require evacuation of the child care centre, the **meeting place** to gather immediately will be located along the sidewalk towards 17 and 21 Roseview Ave.

If it is deemed 'unsafe to return' to the child care centre, the **evacuation site** to proceed to is located at:
 Pluto Daycare 25 Brook Street (Corner of Cambridge St.) 519 623-5200

As soon as possible the Principal/Designate will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation by email and/or phone.

Note: all directions given by emergency services personnel will be followed under all circumstances, including directions to evacuate to locations different than those listed above.

For any emergency situations involving a child with an individualized plan in place, the procedures in the child's individualized plan will be followed.

If any emergency situations happen that are not described in this document, the Principal/Designate will provide direction to staff for the immediate response and next steps. Staff will follow the direction given.

If any emergency situations result in a serious occurrence, the serious occurrence policy and procedures will also be followed.

All emergency situations will be documented in detail by the classroom teacher in the daily written record.

A full copy of the procedures will be posted in each classroom and the main office and can be viewed at your request.