



**Montessori**  
SCHOOL OF CAYMAN

# Toddler Student Handbook

## Montessori School of Cayman

September 2020 – June 2021

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## Our School Mission & Goal

### Our Mission

At Montessori School of Cayman it is our mission to provide an authentic and extraordinary Montessori early years & kindergarten programme, so that all of our students are given the best preschool experience and start to their education.

### Our Goal

It is our goal to deliver a whole-hearted, holistic Montessori approach and offer a happy, safe and stimulating prepared environment where children are able to explore and thrive, therefore developing a love for learning. We believe in the development of the individual child and thoroughly understand that every child is unique and requires a variety of methods to support and nurture their social, emotional and academic journeys. Our environment will help to support your child's development of their self-confidence, independence and concentration.

## Toddler Directresses 2020-2021

### Miss Kati

Miss Kati is our Lead Directress in our Toddler environment.

Born and raised in Germany. She has a wealth of experience in Montessori Early Years Education and she holds a BA in Social Work & Education. Miss Kati set out on the high seas for the Caribbean in 2014, where she was employed as a Support Officer for the Education Department of Nevis. Kati supported children from a range of schools including Montessori environments, for 2 years before taking the exciting opportunity to join Montessori School of Cayman on a full time basis in the Cayman Islands. Children are clearly a passion for Kati who joins us with 10 years' experience with children. This has included working with toddler/kindergarten Montessori based environments and 4 of these years spent working with children with behavioural challenges.

In her free time, Miss Kati loves beach walks with her rescue dog, keeping fit, active, and spending time with friends.

### Miss Isabella

Miss Isabella, or "Miss Bella", is an Assistant Directress in our Toddler environment. Miss Isabella quickly developed her love for Montessori education through her past work experience and found that her passion lies with the Toddlers! Coming from Village Montessori, Miss Isabella originally started in the Casa environment and quickly realised that her heart was with our younger learners. She started with MSC at the beginning of 2020 and loves the children, staff and the overall 'homey' feel our school brings! Miss Bella recently gained her AMI Montessori Assistant's Diploma. In her free time, she loves to spend time with her son Caleb, hang out with friends/family, and go on adventures!

### Miss Natalie

Ms. Natalie is an Assistant Directress in our Toddler environment. She is from California and moved to Cayman in 2017. Prior to this, she was a K-12 substitute teacher in California and a Primary School Teaching Assistant in England. She also volunteered at the YMCA of the Cayman Islands in the past. After working with children in various capacities, she decided to follow a path where she could support children in some of their most formative years and deepen her understanding of the Montessori method. She is passionate about the Montessori method, and how it encourages children to be independent and develop a love of learning. Miss Natalie is currently undertaking the MCI Early Years Diploma course, and will soon gain her full MCI Montessori Diploma. In her spare

time, Miss Natalie enjoys reading; going to the beach; and spending time with her family, friends, and black cat, Oolong.

## Toddler Daily Schedule 2020 - 2021

### 7:45-9:00am Arrival & Morning Work Cycle

- Upon arrival, your child will be greeted by one of their classroom teachers. The children will put their belongings in their cubby and their lunch in the kitchen before settling in the environment.
- Children will be invited to choose an activity off the shelf and watch presentations given by teachers. We also encourage the children to engage with their peers and explore with the materials and their surroundings.

### 9:00-9:30am Hand Washing, Water Time & Snack Time

- The children will wash their hands before they have an organic group snack.
- This is an opportunity for the children to practice their social skills and independence as they eat together in a group setting. The children will be encouraged to serve themselves and each other, as well as help prepare the snack for the day.

### 9:30-10:30am Outside Garden Time

- The Toddler children are invited to play freely in our garden, engaging with our many outside toys and in spontaneous play with one another.
- Water bottles, a water jug and cups are taken outside with the group so that children are encouraged and able to stop for a drink throughout playtime.
- Although our garden provides adequate shade, our Toddlers are encouraged to wear their hats outside during outdoor play time.

### 10:30-11:45am Morning Work Cycle/Special Activities/Outdoor Classroom

- As each child finishes their snack, they will be invited to choose work freely or will be invited to participate in an extra-curricular activity listed on our schedule, such as Yoga and Music. On days that there are no extra-curricular lessons, the children will continue on with their work cycle. Children will also spend a portion of this time in our outdoor classroom, where they are able to engage in a range of water, art and gardening activities.
- Children are encouraged to move around the classroom and are free to choose to work with a range of materials. At this time the teachers will move around the room assisting students and giving individual presentations. Additionally, we will be completing various art, crafts and cooking activities throughout the week.

### 11:45-12:00pm Morning Group Time

- We begin by singing our morning greeting to everyone. We will sing our special songs to help us remember both our days of the week and months of the year. We will also count our calendar days and see whose turn it is to be helper of the day and who will be feeding the pets. An interactive style lesson is given based on the weekly project theme and we discuss everyone's thoughts and ideas. Parents will be notified of the weekly project by the monthly

Project Week Calendar and Newsletter, which will be emailed and placed in each child's cubby at the beginning of each month.

### **12:00-12:30pm Toddler Lunch / Half Day Dismissal / Full Day Nap Time**

- The Toddler students will wash their hands and sit down to have their lunch. Parents are welcome to collect their children from 12:15pm. All half days must be collected by 12:30pm.
- After lunch has finished, our full day students will wash their hands & faces and settle down for an afternoon nap.  
The children will nap for the afternoon on nap mats provided. We ask that you provide 2 blankets for their naps, which we will send home at the end of each week to be washed.

### **2:00-3:15pm Afternoon Snack, Work Cycle & Dismissal**

- As the children begin to wake up from their naps, they will be offered a snack and invited to move freely again in the environment, choosing to work with materials independently.
- At dismissal, a teacher will bring your child to the classroom door for collection. Please make sure you have checked your child's cubby and have all your child's belongings before leaving school.

### **3:15-5:00pm After Care**

- This time is provided for the children who need to stay past 3:15pm. This is recorded daily and billed to you at the end of each month.

## Montessori Education & School Curriculum

### **Practical Life**

The Practical Life area in a Montessori Children's House is fundamental to children's development and the Montessori philosophy. These activities help the child adapt to their environment as they learn to engage in everyday exercises and activities in a purposeful way.

The activities within the Practical Life area help the child to gain control in the coordination of their movement, and support the child in gaining independence as they adapt to their society. The Practical Life exercises also aid in the growth and development of the child's intellect and concentration and will in turn also help the child develop an orderly and logical way of thinking.

Practical Life exercises can be categorised into four different areas: Preliminary Activities, Care of the Self and of the Environment, Grace and Courtesy lessons and Control of Movement. Working within these areas allows the child to learn how to do every day exercises as part of their society, that enables them to care for themselves independently (e.g. washing hands), or care for their environment (e.g. dusting a table).

Grace and Courtesy activities are social lessons that help the child develop a respect for themselves, their peers and their environment. The child also is able to learn his or her own movements and how to refine his or her coordination through Control of Movement activities, such as pouring or spooning.

The repetition of working with the Practical Life materials, overtime gives the child a sense of responsibility and ownership of their learning environment. It helps them to feel as part of a community as they become a valued member. The work in Practical Life also contributes to the child's overall development of concentration, independence, fine and gross motor control, orderly working habits and logical and sequential thinking.

### **Sensorial**

The sensorial materials in a Montessori learning environment help to familiarize the child with their world through their senses. Exploring the world using all senses was important to Montessori and her beliefs on children's education as she viewed our senses as the gateways to intelligence. Children in a Montessori environment are experiencing the sensorial materials during the first plane of development and are very much sensorial learners. Montessori felt that it was appropriate to support children's experiences with the materials in the environment by giving them the tools to acquire an understanding of their world through their senses. The more classifications the child is exposed to, the more refined their thinking can become. The continued classification of their environment helps the child perceive the world more accurately. This allows the child to refine their senses. The more educated our senses are and the more experiences we have, enable our brain to become more perceptive. The sensorial materials in Montessori education also allow the children to further develop a love for their environment.

The sensorial materials invite the child to sort things by size, shape, colour, touch, sound, temperature, and weight. They further their experience with classification in a scientific manner

when completing sensorial activities that incorporate grading (e.g. from light to dark, from large to small, and from rough to smooth). The sensorial materials allow for individual work, encourage repetition and include a control of error so that the child is able to correct themselves independently, without being afraid of making a mistake.

### **Language**

The acquisition of language is something that comes naturally for the child depending on their environment. The Montessori classroom is a language-rich environment and a child is immediately given a preliminary introduction to language. Their vocabulary begins expanding through spontaneous conversations, stories, songs, poems and classified cards. In a Montessori environment, the development of language is promoted in all areas of the classroom and we focus on supporting language and the development of vocabulary is every aspect of the Toddlers' school day.

### **Counting & Numeracy**

Numeracy skills are introduced very concretely to the child and the activities progress into more abstract concepts. Like other areas of the Montessori environment, the activities move from simple to more complex. For the child to understand the concept of Mathematics, they must first understand quantity. We allow the children to explore and problem solve by giving them a range of material to manipulate. The math materials in the toddler classroom allow the child to spontaneously explore quantity and numbers in concrete form. Songs that include counting and sequencing are included every day during circle time to continue developing a mathematical foundation at this stage.

### **Arts and Crafts**

Children are encouraged to explore their imagination freely, using a variety of mediums to express themselves. We emphasize the importance on the process of the work rather than the finished product. In our environment, Arts and crafts are traditionally done at the child's own will during the morning work cycle.

### **Music**

A specialised music enrichment programme is offered for all students. Classes take place on a weekly basis and include singing, dancing and movement, games and exploration with instruments.

### **Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework**

At Montessori School of Cayman we incorporate the learning outcomes outlined in the C.I. Early Years Curriculum Framework into our curriculum in all programmes. The framework is focused around four areas of development: Exploration, Respect, Communication and Well-Being. These learning outcomes can be found in the material description for all of the Montessori activities that make up our curriculum. Each lesson description can be found on our Transparent Classroom app.

### **Various themes that will be explored by our Toddler students over this school year:**

- All About Me
- Feelings & Emotions

- Halloween & Harvest
- Colours
- Shapes
- Transportation
- Christmas
- Celebrating where we are from
- Easter
- Animals
- Plants & Seeds
- Seasons
- Fruit and Vegetables
- Under the Sea
- Being Kind to our Earth (reduce, reuse, recycle)
- Sports

## Our School Policies & Procedures

### Opening Hours

School is open Monday thru Friday.

Our doors open for the day at 7:45am and close at 5:00pm.

Half Days: **7:45am - 12:30pm**

Full Days: **7:45am – 3:15pm**

After Care: **3:15pm – 5:00pm**

### Student Drop-Off & Pick-Up

#### Toddlers

Toddler (18 months to 3 years) aged students will operate as one 'bubble' or 'pod' and will occupy the front two classrooms of our school. Toddler families are therefore asked to will use the front porch and front doors at drop-off and pick-up.

#### Casa

All Casa (ages 3-6) students will enter through the right side gate, into our Outdoor Classroom. The side door on the left will be the Casa entrance into the school building.

Please be mindful that our driveway is small and does not allow for a large number of cars to pull in at one time. We encourage a quick drop-off in order to keep the flow of traffic moving during drop-off and pick-up times. Should our front driveway be full, you are welcome to park behind our school and enter through the back garden gate. We appreciate your patience and understanding regarding this!

We ask that your child be picked up from school by their programme collection time (12.30 for half days and 3.15 for full days).

Late collection will mean an additional After Care charge at the end of the month.

Due to requested guidelines set by the C.I. Government and Public Health, Parents/caregivers will **not** be allowed access inside the building and drop-off and pick-up of all students will be done at the door.

#### Toddler Transitions

Your child's first time at school is an enormous start of a new chapter and exciting time in their lives. It's usually the first time they are away from their parents and out of their home environment. This can be overwhelming for some children and it can certainly take some time getting used to!

At Montessori School of Cayman, it is of utmost importance for us to ensure every child's start at MSC to be a positive experience. We believe in respecting the child, following their lead and doing things at their pace. Because of this, we implement a transition process to help them manage with the change and to help ease them into their new school routine.

Information about our transitions will be sent to all new starting families at MSC and we appreciate your patience, cooperation and understanding in this very important process.

## Fees and tuition

Our annual tuition reserves your child's place at school and remains the same regardless of any absences due to holidays, illnesses or otherwise.

If you withdraw your child before the end of the school year, we require 30 days written notice.

We have Annual, Semi-Annual & Monthly payment options. Please see our **School Tuition & Fees Schedule** for an updated list of our fees.

Tuition is due on the first of each month and must be paid within 5 working days. Any late payments will incur an additional \$50.00 late fee.

Please make checks payable to "Montessori School of Cayman".

Online payments are accepted though transfer to our Cayman National Bank account or our Royal Bank (Cayman) Ltd. account. If transferring from a Cayman National account, you can select our school under "Bill Payments".

Our Cayman National account details are as follows: Montessori School of Cayman Ltd., account #: 012-50891-SV. Our Royal Bank account details are as follows: Montessori School of Cayman Ltd., account #: 06975-1148477.

Please note that there are additional charges for transferring fees online from another bank.

We also accept debit/credit card payments at school. Kindly let us know if you wish to process a card payment and we can provide you with our secure payment form.

## After Care

The school will remain open until **5:00pm** for those parents wishing to use our after school care. Please make sure to inform a teacher if you need to make use of this facility. The monthly rate for after care is **\$250** per month and the daily rate for after care is **\$15**. After care attendance will be calculated and billed to you at the end of each month. Parents who have not requested after care and are late collecting their child will also be charged this amount.

## Emergencies

Parents will be contacted immediately in the event of an emergency. It is crucial that all contact numbers and information are kept up to date. If a parent cannot be reached, the school will use the emergency information on your child's file.

## Medication

Should your child require any kind of medication during school hours, please ensure that you fill out a medication form. This form gives parental permission for teachers to administer the medication, directions and dosage.

## Medical Documentation

If your child has a medical need (allergies, asthma, disabilities) please provide documentation from your child's paediatrician as well as an emergency medical plan including instructions on how and when to administer any medicine. A Medication Form must also be obtained from the office and completed by the parent. Any changes to the medication will require a new written authorization.

### **First Aid and CPR**

All staff members at Montessori School of Cayman are First Aid and CPR trained and each classroom has a fully stocked first aid kit.

### **Accidents**

Although we try to avoid them, accidents do occur. In most cases minor first aid is all that is required. When serious injuries occur, the parent or designated person is informed of the need of serious medical attention. In the event of an emergency where we are unable to make immediate telephone contact with the parents or guardians, we will call for an ambulance and accompany the injured child to hospital.

Incident/Accident reports are completed by the staff as needed and will require a parent's signature. These reports will be kept in your child's file for the full duration of their time at our school.

### **Immunisation Records**

A copy of your child's immunisation must be kept in your child's file at school. Please notify us of any updates.

### **Nutrition**

Morning snack is provided by the school each day. At Montessori School of Cayman we aim to provide healthy, organic options for all students. *Please inform the school if your child has any food allergies or special dietary requirements.*

At Montessori School of Cayman we believe in promoting and encouraging healthy eating habits and strive to teach our students about the benefits of consuming nutritious foods. The Toddler snack time is an opportunity for the children to further their development of independence, responsibility, community and socialisation as they prepare food, serve themselves/each other and share in meals.

In addition, the children are encouraged to re-hydrate by regularly drinking water throughout the day.

Lunch boxes should be brought everyday (except on special occasions on which you will be notified). Lunches are kept in your child's cubby. We ask that you place an icepack in your child's lunchbox if necessary. Lunch can be heated microwave if needed.

**Please make sure that your child's lunch box (and any heat up containers), are clearly labelled with your child's name.** This is especially important if your child has any kind of food allergies. Candy, gum, sodas or fizzy drinks are not permitted in school at any time.

**Nut-free Zone** - Please note that peanuts, tree nuts and items containing these foods are not permitted in the school. Good alternatives which can be used are 'Wow Butter', which is soy-based or 'Sun Nut Butter', which is made from sunflower seeds.

### **Diaper Bag/Spare Clothes**

A full set of spare clothes must be kept in your child's cubby at all times. Toddler students are asked to bring a bag each day to school, packed with an adequate amount of diapers/pullups, wipes, diaper cream, sunblock and insect repellent (if you wish). This bag is sent home each day to be replenished and returned to school the following morning.

### Toileting

All children in diapers/pullups are changed and encouraged to use the toilet. Those children who are no longer in diapers or pullups are reminded to use the bathroom regularly throughout the day.

### Sun Hats and Sunscreen

We advise children to bring sun hats, especially during the summer months. Please make sure your child's name is on the hat.

Because of the dangers of the sun's rays, sunscreen should be applied on your child's body before he/she leaves for school. Please be advised that it is your responsibility that sufficient sunscreen be applied to your child as you know his/her sensitivity to the sun best.

### Shoes

We request that all children have two pairs of shoes at school with them. One pair will be left inside for our Work Cycle and inside activities, while the pair they wear to school will remain as their outside (Garden Time) shoes for the day. We ask that children wear suitable footwear to school (i.e. trainers, crocs or sandals with straps). This is for the safety of your child, especially when we are in the garden. If your child insists on wearing flip-flops, they will only be allowed to wear them during time spent inside. Outside shoes must be secure.

### Hair and Jewellery

If your child has long hair, please make sure it is styled so it is out of their eyes. If you are not able to do this, please bring a hairbrush and hair bands so we can do it.

If there is a case of head lice all long hair must be tied up.

For your child's safety we request that no jewellery is worn to school. If your child wears jewellery for religious purposes, please inform a teacher. Otherwise, any jewellery will be removed and placed in your child's cubby.

### Bottles & Pacifiers

We encourage you to keep these items at home. If your child is a full day Toddler and requires one for nap time for comfort, kindly let us know and we are happy to provide it at the appropriate time.

### Naps

Our Toddler students nap once they have finished their lunch for the day. A nap mat is provided for each child and we ask that parents provide two blankets, which will be sent home each week to be washed.

If your toddler no longer naps, he or she will spend the afternoon work cycle with the Casa students, participating and engaging in their environment.

All students will head outside for afternoon garden time once the napping toddlers wake up.

### Personal Items (Toys)

Toys are only allowed at school on Fridays, which is our **"Show and Tell"** day. On this day, ONE toy may be brought which MUST be able to fit in your child's cubby.

We do however encourage children to bring in books to share with their friends.

### **Birthday Traditions**

We celebrate birthdays a little differently at Montessori School of Cayman. We celebrate each students' birthday with a special 'Walk Around the Sun'. Parents are encouraged to bring in special photographs of the birthday boy or girl beginning from birth and up to and including their celebrated age. This is a wonderful exercise in building self-esteem.

We also encourage the birthday girl or boy to bring in their favourite book as a present to their class. The children enjoy this presentation which helps them to understand the importance of giving. If you wish to partake in this tradition, please write your child's name and the date in the front of the book so we can use it for reference for years to come!

If you are planning birthday celebrations at home, a class list can be provided upon request.

### **Class Email/Phone Lists**

There are times throughout the school year when we are asked by parents for a list of students as well as phone numbers and email addresses. If you do not wish for your contact information to be given out please let us know in writing as soon as possible.

### **Photo Release**

During the year we will be taking pictures and videos of children participating in various activities. We will use these for press releases, the school newsletter, advertising, and for our website. If you do not wish for your child's photo to be used, kindly indicate this in the consent section of your child's registration form so that we may respect your wishes.

Alternatively, photos will be taken of your child throughout the year and shared with you only through the Transparent Classroom app. Once a photo has been posted of your child, you will receive an email notifying you of the upload. All photos of your child will be stored on your child's profile for the duration of their time with us at MSC.

### **Health Policy**

Our health policy has been developed with the primary concern for the wellbeing of our students and school community. In order to maintain a healthy school environment, please do not send your child to school if any of the following symptoms are present. In addition, we ask that you please follow the advice below.

#### **Appearance/Behaviour**

Children should remain at home if they appear to be under the weather. If your child is not themselves, unusually tired, pale, or lacking appetite they should not come to school.

#### **Fever (Temperature over 99.0° F)**

If your child has a fever above 99.0 °F, they will need to remain off school until the fever is completely gone without the use of a fever reducing medicine for 24 hours. Children who are found to have a fever at school will be sent home immediately and should remain at home for 24 hours without fever.

#### **Skin Problems**

If your child appears to have developed a contagious skin related issue, a doctor's note stating that they can return to school must be provided before they return.

#### **Cold/Cough**

A child may return to school once their cold or cough has subsided and they are no longer showing signs of having mucous. We ask that children who return to school are healthy enough to participate in the daily school schedule.

### **Vomiting and Diarrhoea**

A child must be symptom free for *at least 24 hours before returning to school*. If a child vomits or has diarrhoea while at school, they will be sent home immediately and asked to remain at home until they are symptom free for 24 hours.

### **Eye/Nose Discharge**

A child must remain out of school if they have excessive amounts of nasal discharge and/or discoloured nasal discharge that is green/yellow

### **Streptococcal Sore Throat/Scarlet Fever (with Rash)**

A child who has been diagnosed with strep throat, must remain away from school until at least 48 hours after treatment begins. The child will also need to be fever free for 24 hours without medicine before returning to school.

### **Head Lice**

If we have a student/students at MSC who has/have lice, we will notify the other families at MSC via email. Children must remain at home until first treatment is completed. Head lice can spread rapidly and needs quick treatment.

### **Chicken Pox**

Child needs to remain at home until all blisters have dried into scabs, about six days after the onset of the rash. Please provide a doctor's note evidencing the illness and the all clear to return to school.

### **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)**

**Bacterial** - A child should remain at home for 48 hours after treatment begins.

**Viral** - The child will remain out of school until a doctor's note is provided assuring the school that the child is no longer contagious and able to return to school.

***Our Health Policy is strictly enforced. If any of these symptoms develop during school hours, you will be called to come and pick your child up immediately.***

***Please note the school reserves the right to make the decision to send a child home due to any illness or injury. A child who comes to school should be well enough to participate in ALL day to day activities.***

### **Behavioural Expectations**

At Montessori School of Cayman believe that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are understood, supported and met and where there are clear, fair and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour.

As children develop, they learn about boundaries, the difference between right and wrong, and to consider the views and feelings, and needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. The development of these skills requires adult guidance to help encourage and model appropriate behaviours and to offer intervention and support when children struggle with conflict and emotional situations.

This policy provides guidelines on how to support this; it recognises that learning self-regulation and socially appropriate behaviour is a developmental process and that through modelling positive

behaviour always and managing challenging behaviour appropriately and competently, we can provide for the needs of each individual child as well as ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone.

### **Aims**

At Montessori School of Cayman we aim to listen to, and acknowledge the views of everyone, embracing who we are and where we have come from. In recognition of this, our expectations of behaviour are underpinned by the following values:

**RESPECT AND RECOGNITION** - to value and celebrate our own and others' contributions and uniqueness, and to show consideration for our own feelings and the feelings of others.

**FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY** - to enable children and adults to explore and express themselves freely in an environment which supports decision making and opportunities to consider the consequences of our words and actions.

**INCLUSION** - to provide access to learning for all, considering everyone's needs, background and ability, working together to share and work towards the same goal.

**HONESTY** - to empower everyone to communicate openly and honestly in their interactions with each other.

**SAFETY and TRUST** - to help everyone to feel able to express their concerns and fears in an appropriate way and to thrive physically and emotionally in their learning.

### **Guidelines**

The children at Montessori School of Cayman are learning how to behave appropriately. Many of the things they do are normal for their stage of development and we help them to learn when something is dangerous or harmful to themselves or others, and to make positive choices in their behaviour.

We do this by:

- Noticing and acknowledging positive behaviours.
- Using clear and consistent boundaries.
- Explaining the consequences of some behaviours and offering choices.
- Involving the children in problem-solving.
- Sharing information with parents/carers about their children's behaviour both at school and at home.
- Providing strategies to support turn-taking.
- Communicating and modelling positive behaviour, using a variety of strategies.
- Recognising and acknowledging feelings to encourage empathy.
- Creating an environment that minimises conflict.
- Providing planned opportunities to discuss behaviour and feelings.

### **Challenging Behaviour**

Adults will intervene when behaviour is persistently disruptive or difficult to manage.

**We do this by:**

- Being clear about the behaviour that is unacceptable.
- Supporting the child to think of solutions to put things right.
- Providing time away from the situation to calm down and reflect before talking things through.
- Working together with parents/guardians and families to share strategies and ensure we are giving a consistent message.

### **Partnerships with Parents/Guardians**

Working in partnership with our parents/guardians is integral to the success of this Behaviour Policy. To enable our Behaviour policies to work, their support and contribution is imperative.

To maintain our partnership with parents/guardians we will:

- Share the expectations of behaviour at Montessori School of Cayman, through informal and formal discussions with individuals and groups of parents/guardians
- Talk to individual parents/guardians about all aspects of their child's behaviour daily, as well as at regular parent/carer conferences.
- Be fair, non-judgemental and consistent when discussing children's behaviour with parents/guardians.

Provide extra support for parents/guardians when necessary to help manage children's challenging behaviour.

Montessori School of Cayman prioritises our partnerships with parents/guardians regarding behavioural expectations at school so that we can ensure that we have a positive and safe school environment for all those involved.

We ask that parents/guardians help by informing us of any relevant changes to their circumstances which may affect their child's behaviour e.g. new baby, moving to a new house, bereavement, divorce, separation or hospitalisation, reinforce expectations of positive behaviour by talking to their child at home, actively support staff at MSC in implementing positive behaviour strategies and be positive role-models for their child(ren).

## **Child Protection Policy**

The purpose of the Montessori School of Cayman (MSC) 'Child Protection Policy' is to:

- Support and protect the health and safety of all students enrolled at Montessori School of Cayman.
- Outline our Code of Conduct which clearly states the steps taken to keep our students safe.
- Provide definitions of abusive or neglectful behaviour.
- Explain Montessori School of Cayman's approach to reporting any concerns regarding children to staff, parents/guardians and the community.
- Clarify for staff the steps to follow if and when a cause for concern of this nature arises.
- Highlight the legal requirements and responsibilities for all staff at Montessori School of Cayman.

It is of utmost importance to us at Montessori School of Cayman that we work with parents/guardians and the community to ensure the safety and well-being of our students and to give them the very best start in life.

It is imperative for us at Montessori School of Cayman to create an environment where children are safe from any form of abuse or neglect. We also strive to keep our parents/guardians well informed and involved when it includes a child's well-being and every attempt will be made to share those concerns. However, any suspicion that a child's safety and/or emotional well-being is at risk we will be promptly and appropriately responding by following our Child Protection guidelines, which are in line with the Cayman Islands' Children Law (2012) and the procedures given to us by the Cayman Islands Department of Children and Family Services.

Clear expectations of best practices for ensuring safe, supportive, and respectful interactions between adults and children at the school are provided in the Montessori School of Cayman's Child Protection Policy.

We aim to create an environment which encourages children to develop a positive self-image, regardless of race, language, religion, culture or home background. We encourage children to establish and sustain healthy relationships within their families, with their peers and with other adults. Our aim is to help children to develop a sense of self-sufficiency and independence in our school environment and to help parents/guardians to build their understanding of commitment to the welfare of all our children at MSC.

### **Code of Conduct**

Montessori School of Cayman requires that all adults engage in safe, supportive, and respectful interactions with children at all times. The following outlines appropriate and expected conduct for physical behaviour, verbal and digital communication, and general conduct.

- All adults interacting with children must do so in open, public spaces. If one-on-one meetings are necessary for educational or emergency purposes, they should be conducted in an area where the interaction can be observed, or in a room with the door left open and another adult is notified about the meeting.
- All communication (verbal, written or digital) between adults and children should be transparent and about school or programme activities. Communication between adults and

parents/guardians of children should also be transparent and done using the school's phone or email.

- Adults will treat all children with respect and provide safe and supportive interactions that foster children's social, emotional and academic development.
- Comply with all mandatory reporting procedures.
- Cooperate fully with any investigation of misconduct or abuse of children.
- Staff of Montessori School of Cayman will **not** transport children in their personal vehicles for any reason, unless there is an emergency or unless written consent is given by that child's parent.
- Adults will **not** engage in bullying or any behaviour of that nature.
- Adults will **not** use or be under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs in the presence of children or during regular school hours.
- Adults will **not** give individual children gifts without the knowledge of the children's caregivers.

### **DEFINITIONS IN THE CAYMAN ISLANDS taken from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy (2016)**

Child Abuse is defined as any intentional act or series of acts of commission or omission by a parent or other caregiver (e.g. clergy, coach, teacher) that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child.

Child Abuse can be:

**Physical** – intentional actual or likely physical injury to a child without failure to prevent injury through neglectful actions. Some of these include (but not limited to) slapping, shaking, punching, hitting, punching, pushing, grabbing and/or pinching.

**Sexual** – any sexual act, including non-contact acts, with a child performed by an adults or an older children, including but not limited to: sexual touching on any part of the body, clothed or unclothed, penetrative sex, including penetration of the mouth, encouraging a child to engage in any sexual activity or intentionally engaging in a sexual activity in front of a child, showing children pornography or using children to create pornography, encouraging a child to engage in prostitution or exposing oneself or saying sexual things.

**Emotional** – actual or likely severe negative impact on a child's emotional, psychological and behavioural development, resulting from persistent or severe emotional/psychological ill-treatment.

**Neglect** – severe or persistent failure to provide for a child's physical, emotional or basic needs. These can include, inadequate or erratic physical care (feeding, hygiene, clothing), failure to respond to a child's distress, leaving a child alone or unsupervised, failure to ensure a child attends school or failure to support education needs, lack of stimulation resulting in developmental delay, lack of boundaries and guidance, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger and/or denial of medical care or treatment.

Concerns may be directed to the Montessori School of Cayman Head of School.

### **Legal Requirement to Notify – Children Law (2012 Revision), Part IIIA.32A:**

If a teacher, principal, counsellor or other employee/volunteer in an institution established for the

care and education of children has a reasonable suspicion that a child has been or is being abused or neglected, and the suspicion is formed in the course of the person's duties, that person shall notify the Department (MASH: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) of the suspicion as soon as practicable after s/he forms the suspicion.

A person who contravenes this section commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of five thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term of one year or both.

A notification under this section shall be made by the employee or volunteer following Montessori School of Cayman's *Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect* procedures, which are in line with the Department of Education Services (DES).

Teachers and other school employees/volunteers who have reason to believe that a student is being abused are mandated to report that information to MSC's Head of School, Briana Bergstrom. Once verbally reported, the *MSC Child Abuse Incident Report Form* will be completed and submitted to the MASH unit.

All suspicions of abuse are kept confidential and are in no circumstances discussed by members of staff to anyone.

### **Safe Environment Policy**

A safe environment policy helps limit situations in which children are at increased risk for abuse due to the physical characteristics of the building and grounds. At Montessori School of Cayman it is of utmost importance that we provide adequate supervision which allows for proactive monitoring of child and staff interactions. This limits opportunity for inappropriate or abusive interactions to occur.

Our Safe Environment Policy at MSC reflects best practices for ensuring a safe environment when it comes to visibility, supervision and access.

**Visibility** – Montessori School of Cayman will ensure open physical spaces visible to multiple persons by providing clear lines of sight throughout the building, landscaping that ensures open, visible spaces, doors with windows, no closed doors (without windows) when children are present in the room, bright lighting in all areas, and locked and unused areas or rooms accessible by personnel only.

**Supervision** – Montessori School of Cayman will ensure that the activities of children and staff are adequately supervised by implementing sufficient playground classroom and non-classroom supervision, periodic walk-throughs of the building and its grounds to ensure there are no unidentified persons on site.

**Access** – Montessori School of Cayman will ensure that access to children and staff is controlled requiring all visitors, volunteers and contractors to sign in at the main office and wear a visitor badge, ensuring all staff are aware of restrictions to noncustodial parents' access to a child or children, requiring that children entering or leaving at times other than typical arrival or dismissal do so only with parental permission, except in the case of an emergency, ensuring that all fences, gates and so on surrounding the grounds are functioning properly and in good repair.

## Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy and Provision taken from the Cayman Islands Special Needs Code of Practice

### Definition of a Child with Special Educational Needs

In general, children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which requires special educational provision to be made for them.

Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- \* have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- \* present persistent emotional/behavioural difficulties which *significantly* adversely affect educational performances and progress; or
- \* have a physical, health or sensory impairment which *significantly* hinders them from performing educationally or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age; or
- \* have communication difficulties in oral expression or listening comprehension which affect interaction with others and *significantly* and adversely affect educational progress.

Special Educational Provision means educational provision which is additional to or otherwise different from the educational provision made generally for children of the same age. This necessitates that there is substantial change in either the content, methodology or delivery of instruction.

### Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) at Montessori School of Cayman

At Montessori School of Cayman we trust that our learning environments are beneficial to students with many different types of needs and learning styles. We believe that:

- All children should be treated as individuals and given an equal opportunity to thrive and develop at their own pace in a healthy, safe and stimulating learning environment.
- Children with SEN accepted into our programme at Montessori School of Cayman
- All children benefit from a broad, balanced curriculum. Students with SEN should be allowed full access to the Montessori curriculum offered at MSC and expectations should be that they can progress within that curriculum.
- A positive and collaborative relationship with parents and community partners is important so that a child's special educational needs are identified as early as possible.
- If a child is expected to have a special educational need, a clear and concise observation plan will be put into place by the child's classroom teacher. These concerns will be communicated to parents and documentation from any observations made can be shared.
- Children that have special educational needs will normally have their needs met 'inclusively' within our school environment. If and when a child requires the services of a third party, we encourage community partners to work with individual children within our school environment during normal school hours.
- It is imperative for teachers, parents and community partners to work together in partnership in the evaluation, identification and educational planning for those children with

SEN. This facilitates the best possible progress of all children, especially those with special educational needs.

- Additional meeting times with parents may be required by either party for children who have special educational needs. These meetings will be normally be scheduled once the school day is done. It may not be appropriate to communicate concerns in depth during the school day e.g. drop off and pick up.

Depending on the nature of a child's special educational need(s), Montessori School of Cayman may not be equipped to meet all of the needs of every child. Montessori School of Cayman pledges to do what is feasible to accommodate the needs of the child and family and looks at each case individually.

### **Hurricane/Tropical Storm Policy and School Closures**

Should the island be under hurricane warning or experiencing severe weather conditions it is in the safety of all concerned that school should close. We will remain closed for the duration of the storm and any aftermath.

Our policy is that, if Government schools are closed, we will be closed. 'Daybreak' on Cayman 27 will make any announcements regarding the closure of schools, at 7:00 a.m.

\*Please also note that should the school be without electricity or water for any reason, it is in the safety of the children that we close. All parents will be notified and asked to come and collect their child immediately.

## Parent Communication, Involvement and Information

### The Journey to Independence

The work in Practical Life will support the development of your child's independence as they will be engaging in activities which support them in doing many different things for themselves. Your child's independence will grow and they will most probably want to continue their independent habits at home. We ask that you encourage your child's independence at home and allow them many opportunities to do so!

This may include: dressing themselves, brushing their teeth, feeding themselves, pouring their own drink and helping with other chores around the home.

It's important that you exercise patience with your children as they complete these independent tasks and allow them to make mistakes. If they do make a mistake, role-modelling the correct way of doing something is helpful to them.

It is also important to encourage your child to walk into school independently, carrying their own belongings themselves. This helps to develop their sense of self, self-esteem, responsibility and independence.

### Parent Teacher Communication

It is important for us (Montessori School of Cayman) to reach Parents and vice versa throughout the day in order to communicate notices regarding regular operations and health emergencies if/when they occur. Please ensure that your contact information has been updated and is accurate on our files so that we can reach you if needed.

Any notices regarding regular operations will be sent via email from [admin@caymanmontessori.com](mailto:admin@caymanmontessori.com) or from our classroom emails - [casa@caymanmontessori.com](mailto:casa@caymanmontessori.com) & [toddler@caymanmontessori.com](mailto:toddler@caymanmontessori.com). If we need to contact you throughout the day for various reasons, we will be contacting you using the classroom emails or phone numbers submitted with your child's registration form.

Should you need to contact us throughout the day for any reason, you can reach us on the following numbers:

- **Casa Group (ages 3yrs to 6yrs): 345-547-4717**
- **Toddler Group (ages 18months to 3yrs): 345-547-4716**
- **Main School Phone: 345-949-0202**

An opportunity to formally discuss your child's development and progress at school will be available during our parent/teacher conferences held in November and in April. If, at any time, you are interested in how your child is progressing, please contact their classroom teacher directly by email or phone. Please do not feel that you need to wait until the scheduled parent/teacher conferences to discuss your child's development.

Arrival and dismissal times are reserved for greeting and saying good-bye to our students. Although convenient, these times are not meant for in-depth conversation with the teachers.

If there is something unusual going on at home or in the family please let your child's teacher know. I.e. house guests, parents away on business, new caregiver, etc. Often times this will explain a child's

change in behaviour.

### **Parent Communication & Record Keeping Platform – Transparent Classroom**

At the time of your child's start with us at Montessori School of Cayman, you will receive an invitation to join our parent communication platform through Transparent Classroom.

Transparent Classroom is a platform used in both our Toddler and Casa programmes for parents to keep in contact with their child's teachers. The app ensures a solid line of communication between parents and staff.

At the end of every school day, parents are sent a daily summary of what their child has been up to each day. This can include any lessons your child has been given, photos or videos, or important notes from your child's teachers.

Transparent Classroom also provides online-record keeping and lesson planning for our Montessori teachers. Every student's Individual Learning Plan is updated and stored electronically for the entirety of your child's time with us at Montessori School of Cayman.

Parents are able to use the app to gain further understanding of the Montessori curriculum and materials. Each Montessori material and activity has been uploaded to the app so that parents are able to view a description of the lesson, learn the developmental purposes of the lesson and suggestions of how to continue to offer support at home.

Within each lesson description, parents will also find the specific learning outcomes that are targeted and taken from the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework.

### **Classroom Newsletters & Weekly Updates**

A Newsletter is sent out each month which will highlight what the children have been up to in class including monthly themes, holidays, announcements etc. We encourage you to read the monthly newsletter in order to find out about all the wonderful things going on in your child's classroom. A weekly update will also be sent out discussing the week's themes and activities in the Toddler environment.

### **School Year**

A school calendar has been provided to you and clearly lists our term dates. Please note that our school year runs from September to June. Montessori School of Cayman follows traditional school holidays and will be closed for Christmas and Easter holidays, as well as Half Term Breaks and Public Holidays.

### **Parent Grievance Policy**

It is important at Montessori School of Cayman that all procedures and actions that affect students are fair and are seen to be fair. At MSC we pride ourselves on being consistent with our decisions and fair to all students and families.

In order to support our Head of School and staff at MSC, we ask that parents first speak to their child's classroom teacher regarding their child's social, emotional, physical or academic progress. If the parent is not content with the answer provided by the child's teacher a meeting with the Head of School can be arranged.

### **Parent Library**

There is a selection of books available for parents to sign out for personal interest. Topics in these books range from child development, parenting, special needs topics, and Montessori theory. Please feel free to sign books out from the office. Please also visit [www.aidtolife.org](http://www.aidtolife.org) or [www.montessori.org](http://www.montessori.org) or for further information.

### **Montessori School of Cayman Contact Information**

#### **Physical Address:**

**Montessori School of Cayman Ltd.  
519 South Church Street, George Town  
Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands**

#### **Mailing Address:**

**Montessori School of Cayman Ltd.  
PO Box 30333, Grand Cayman  
KY1-1202, Cayman Islands**

#### **Telephone:**

**(345) 949-0202 – Classrooms  
(345) 233-0474 – School Office**

#### **Email Addresses:**

**Administration – [admin@caymanmontessori.com](mailto:admin@caymanmontessori.com)  
Casa – [casa@caymanmontessori.com](mailto:casa@caymanmontessori.com)  
Toddler – [toddler@caymanmontessori.com](mailto:toddler@caymanmontessori.com)**

#### **Website:**

**[www.caymanmontessori.com](http://www.caymanmontessori.com)**

When you have read the above information, please return the following form.

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Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

I/We \_\_\_\_\_ have read the above rules and information in  
The Montessori school of Cayman Student Handbook 20-21 and agree to comply by them.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_