



Maria Montessori
Academy *Education For Life*

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2024/2025



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PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook informs parents about the structure, operation, goals and guidelines of Maria Montessori Academy and provides families with information about the Montessori education approach.

HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PROGRESSIVE MONTESSORIANS (IAPM)

The IAPM was founded by Angela Martin of Spain. Angela was born in Spain and during her teen years entered the Order of the Sacred Heart, which focused on education. She later traveled to England to continue her studies. There, Angela encountered the methods and philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori and her colleague Mr. Standing. The all-embracing concept of Montessori philosophy and methodology totally captured Angela.

A gifted student and teacher, Angela used the Montessori approach to education at the Convent. With the help of others, she began training Montessori teachers. Angela's contagious enthusiasm and inspiring knowledge led to invitations to lecture abroad. In 1962, she founded the International Association of Progressive Montessorians in London, England. She then began training teachers in the United States.

Angela deliberately included "Progressive" in the name of the organization because of Dr. Montessori's emphasis that her work was far from complete. Dr. Montessori expected her followers constantly to improve the education process through diligent observation of the child.

In 1979, Angela responded to an invitation to lecture in Victoria, B.C. As a result, she was invited to move to Victoria, which she did in 1980. Angela committed herself to establishing an excellent school, and a teacher training centre. These were not easy years but Maria Montessori Academy, the Veni e Vidi Montessori Teacher Training Centre, and the IAPM were established and continue as markers of Angela Martin's perseverance. In 1991, Angela Martin purchased the site on Wilkinson Road for Maria Montessori Academy and the Veni e Vidi Training Centre where they remained until June 2007. The Training Centre was renamed the Angela Martin Montessori Training Centre upon her death in 1993. Maria Montessori Academy then moved to its present Gordon Head location in July 2007 with the goal of going from Preschool to Grade 12. We continue to grow with over 300 students, and we look forward to our sixth graduating class in 2019.

LICENSING AND FUNDING

Licensing

Province of British Columbia
Ministry of Education, Office of Independent Schools
Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA)
Municipality of Saanich: Business License

Funding

Tuition & Registration Fees
Charitable Donations
Grants provided by the Ministry of Education Independent Schools
Grants provided by the Ministry of Children and Families
Fund-raising

Charitable Donations

As the International Association of Progressive Montessorians (IAPM) operates as a non-profit society, financial donations to the school are deductible as charitable donations for both federal and provincial income tax. The school's Board of Directors encourages donations, as this allows the school to minimize tuition fees charged. Tuition fees, other than those for childcare

expenses, e.g., Out of School Care or Preschool are generally not tax deductible.

GOVERNANCE

IAPM is a non-profit society and as such has a Board of Directors. The Board oversees the operation of the Maria Montessori Academy. Membership is by invitation to accept positions on the Board. Executive positions are determined by election and voting of the Board. In addition to participating in the collective running of school operations, each Board member has a specific area of responsibility, e.g., Education or Finance Committee. Parents of students currently attending Maria Montessori Academy are not eligible for Board membership; however, the Board welcomes current parents' participation on their subcommittees, e.g., Marketing.

PHILOSOPHY OF MARIA MONTESSORI ACADEMY

Our Mission:

From a foundation of empowerment, students of Maria Montessori Academy engage with the world thoughtfully, creatively and with a global sense of purpose.

Guiding Principles

We recognize each child as a unique individual.

We provide a safe, nurturing, and welcoming community.

We foster the personal and professional development of educational staff

We value development of the whole child and, therefore:

- We are committed to our students becoming flexible and creative problem solvers;
- We cultivate leadership, independent thought, self-confidence and innovative thinking:
- We encourage students to try new things, to take risks, and to be themselves:
- We teach students to become adept at recognizing, correcting, and learning: from their errors in a way that promotes wellness;
- We model respect, consideration for others, and a belief in peaceful conflict resolution as foundations for building community; and
- We recognize that internal satisfaction drives students' curiosity and interest and results in joyous and lifelong learning.

Our program incorporates student focused learning in a safe, nurturing, and welcoming community

The authentic delivery of the Montessori method cultivates leadership, independent thought, self-confidence, and innovative thinking across the ages.

Statement of Purpose

Maria Montessori Academy is guided by the educational philosophy and methods developed by Maria Montessori. This is accomplished under the general guidance of the Society governing the operations of the Academy, the International Association of Progressive Montessorians. Society's general purpose is to foster genuine Montessori education.

The following criteria should be adhered to:

- Provide individualized instruction consistent with the needs, abilities, and interests of each student;
- educate the whole person: that is learning activities will be included to stimulate the development of each child in the following areas:

-Intellectual: basic skills of literacy, oral communication, and numeracy; good study habits; a sense of personal competence with respect to academic learning;

-Moral: enduring personal and social values such as responsibility honesty, empathy and respect for others and their property friendship, respect for the environment and for the mystery of life;

-Emotional: an attitude of positive self-regard and a sense of general competence;

Social: basic skills of normal peer relationship including cooperation, helping, and conflict resolution;

-Physical: basic knowledge of and development of good habits in personal hygiene, nutrition, and physical fitness.

-Aesthetic: an appreciation of beauty in its varieties – nature, music, art, literature; a sense of wonder and confidence that one can create beautiful things;

-Spiritual: awareness pertaining to the soul or higher nature of man; pureness.

-To foster a cooperative relationship between parents, teachers, and students in order to maximize each child's overall development.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND POLICIES

Applying to Maria Montessori Academy is a multi-step process that looks different throughout the different ages. If you are interested in learning more about our school before applying, please attend one of our Open Houses.

Preschool and Kindergarten

To start, families will need to complete an application form and submit the non-refundable application fee. Where applicable, families are asked to include any of the following documents with their applications.

- A copy of any assessments or designations (ex. speech therapy)
- A questionnaire/letter of recommendation completed by the student's current teacher/preschool/daycare provider
- Any other relevant supporting documents

[\(Use this checklist as a guide\)](#)

Upon receipt of admissions package, the child's name is put in the wait pool for the requested enrollment date, however submission of form and fee does not guarantee placement. The Office Administrator functioning as Registrar maintains the wait pool. Licensing requires us to maintain specific staff to child ratios. Preference is given to siblings of children *presently* in the school. Other factors considered are previous Montessori experience, age, commitment to the Preschool to High School Montessori journey, and finally, date of application.

Kindergarten candidates and their families will be asked to come in for a brief meeting with the principal. Students will then be invited to take a short independent visit to a Preschool/Kindergarten class. The school administration will begin offering Preschool placements in late February.

We make every effort to be fair in the application process. Children attending Maria Montessori Academy must be toilet trained and able to use the bathroom independently. Children are allowed to go to the washroom at any time and are encouraged to do so after snack time and before heading outside to play. Children must wash their hands after using the toilet. Children are encouraged to wipe themselves and change their own clothes. Children who have "accidents" will be changed (with the assistance of the educators). Soiled clothing will be bagged and sent home for laundering. We ask parents to always ensure their child always has a change of clothing (e.g. pants, shirts, underwear, and socks).

Please Note: Children entering MMA must be toilet trained. If they are not toilet trained after the child's start date, MMA may ask the child to leave the program. Staff will help a child occasionally, as accidents do happen, but it is important that the child be self-sufficient before entrance to preschool.

Lower and Upper Elementary (Grades 1 to 6)

Senior School (Middle School - Gr. 7 to 8 and High School - Gr. 9 to 12)

To start, families will need to complete an application form and submit the non-refundable application fee.

Additionally, Elementary/Middle and High School students must include the following documents with their applications.

- A copy of the most recent learning update
- A questionnaire/letter of recommendation completed by the student's current teacher
- A copy of the most recent IEP and/or Psych-ed assessment if applicable
- Any other relevant supporting documents

[\(Use this checklist, only completed applications will be reviewed\)](#)

If students can be accommodated in the cohort they are applying to, they will be invited to book a tour. A tour of the school is a mandatory part of the application process. Applicants to the Elementary program will meet with our Principal, Miss Christine. Applicants to our Middle and High School programs will meet with our Vice-Principal, Miss Haley. We look forward to being able to show you the entire school with a focus on the area you are interested in applying to.

In January we begin the enrollment process for the upcoming year. We begin with the re-registration of returning students and then look at siblings and those with Montessori experience. When those placements are complete, we extend invitations to strong candidates to arrange visits. Visits are 2-3 consecutive days at the level the student would be joining. During the visit, candidates are encouraged to observe interactions between students and teachers. They will be asked to complete sample work from an array of topics. Visitors will get a sense of the relationship between students, their teachers, and their schoolwork. This time will be used as an information-gathering period. The student record will be shared with the classroom team, and if warranted, the inclusive education teacher. The administration evaluates the application, supporting documents, and classroom visits. Three results can come from this evaluation:

1. The student is accepted into the program
2. The student is put in the waiting pool for the program.
3. The student is declined admission into the program

Successful applicants will receive an offer from the administrative office. We do our best to finalize our offers by March/April so families can plan accordingly.

Occasionally, a student will be seeking an immediate placement that cannot be accommodated within the framework of our enrollment process. Specifically, sometimes the timeline requires the student to skip the 2-3 days of visits. The goal of these visiting days is for both the family and school to determine if it is the right fit. It gives the school a chance to determine whether we can meet the needs of the student, and it gives the family a chance to determine if the school is working for them

In exceptional circumstances, a student can omit the visits to expedite the process and be accepted under our conditional enrollment process. A probationary period allows the family to terminate the enrollment agreement without any financial penalty; and allows the school to let the family know if MMA is not the right place for their child.

Typically, the probationary period lasts for the first two terms. During the period, there is parent connection at 4-week intervals for the first term and 6-week intervals for the second term. At that time, the probationary period is removed, or it can be decided to extend it to the final term(s). If it is extended, there will be parent connection at 8-week intervals.

A big piece we want to be sure of when we enroll new students is that we can support them in all their needs. We prioritize having a balanced composition to authentically deliver a Montessori education so always want to be confident that we can give a student everything they truly need to thrive in a Montessori environment. The probationary period allows both the school and the family time to be sure that this is the best place for each student to thrive.

Some things we look at during the probationary period for an Elementary student are if the student can:

- Listen to and respect school staff, classmates, and follow the rules & expectations set out in the classroom and school
- Engage with peers in a way that aligns with our school code of conduct
- Structure their workday with *independence and motivation without disrupting the workflow of their classmates*

Returning Student Policy

Occasionally, a former student of Maria Montessori Academy may wish to return to MMA. The staff and administration have put a procedure in place to facilitate a clear discussion between teachers, administration, parents, and the student. It is not absolute that the steps are followed in chronological order.

1. Parents meet with the Vice Principal or Principal to discuss:
 - the reasons for the student leaving MMA
 - the reasons for wishing their child to return
 - the student's experience at the school they are currently attending
2. Student spends 2-3 days in the classroom.
3. Student meets with the Vice Principal or Principal to discuss the classroom visits and their present school experiences.
4. Administration meets with the staff to discuss the possibility of the student returning.
5. Parents and student are contacted by administration.

REGISTRATION POLICY

Student Registration

Siblings of children already in attendance at MMA are given priority.

B) In January/February re-enrollment of children already in attendance at MMA is determined for the up-coming school year. All parents wishing their child to return the following fall must pay a non-refundable deposit to hold their child's spot. This **non-refundable** deposit is deducted from the JUNE tuition for the following calendar year.

C) Subject to the qualifications previously outlined, spots are filled when vacancies for the next school year become available. These policies may occasionally vary to achieve a balance of ages and genders, as well as taking into consideration balancing Inclusive Education, Learning Disabilities, and ELL at all levels. Factors also considered for placement are previous Montessori experience, commitment to the Preschool to High school Montessori journey, and date of application.

June 1st - Parents of returning and new children must pay, by June 1st, one month's fees in advance, less the \$250

deposit (previously paid). These fees are credited to the June tuition of the upcoming school year and are **non-refundable**. Tuition fees for the September to May portion of the school year will be required to be processed through Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD). Any request to be exempted from this procedure must be made in writing to the Principal of Maria Montessori Academy prior to the June 1st payment being due. Paperwork relevant to the EFT processing must be completed by the requested due date as well as the signed Parent Enrollment Agreement.

Notice of Withdrawal

If you withdraw your child at any time, you forfeit all deposits and must also pay two month's tuition.

Absences

As a Group 1-classified Independent School we must account for all absences of students in kindergarten and above. If your child is absent, you must send an e-mail including the reason for every absence.

If you are planning an **extended absence** it is essential that you let the school know beforehand. The students in kindergarten and up must do educational presentation, homework, or other project dictated by the teacher(s) or their absent days will not be counted in grant calculations. Should the school lose grant money due to extended unexcused absences the parents are responsible for the difference.

The Ministry of Education will accept the following reasons for absences:

Excused Absence: illness, doctor, dentist, specialist appointments, religious holiday, inclement weather.

Educational Trip (ET): If your child in Kindergarten and up is absent due to a family holiday it can be classified as an education trip only if you supply an educational presentation, homework, or other project dictated by the teacher(s) for the days they have missed. Please submit the required assignment to your child's teacher upon return to school.

Student Enrichment Fee

The Student Enrichment Fee is required of each family. This mandatory fee (per family) will be used to supplement school programs, activities and/or equipment, and emergency preparedness supplies.

Outstanding Tuition

If tuition fees are not current, this matter will be brought to the attention of the principal and/or Board of Directors. Students will not be permitted to attend the following term unless the matter is dealt with to the satisfaction of the principal and/or the Board of Directors.

Annual Assessments

The **Debt Retirement Assessments (DRA – A and DRA-B)** are calculated into the monthly tuition payments.

Each assessment is per child per year. *Tuition sibling discounts apply only to the tuition portion.*

Re-Registration

Re-registration takes place in the end of January. A non-refundable deposit is given to secure a place until May 31st of the current school year. The rest of the following June's tuition is then required to keep the placement secure. The payment does not guarantee a specific room placement only a placement in the desired program. Change in status to Inclusive Education will set those policies in place. (see below)

Fee Setting

Prior to re-registration, fee setting is dealt with by the Board of MMA. Tuition increases are usually somewhere between 1.5 and 3% depending on circumstances.

School Supplies

At Maria Montessori Academy we prefer the students to use items that are similar in nature and in many cases to share these items as a community. Therefore, a once a year a School Supply Fee is required. In the Senior School, there will be items that need to be supplied specifically by the student. E.g., in Middle and High School each student must bring their own laptop from home.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ADMISSIONS POLICY

Admission of students with diverse learning needs is subject to all the policies and procedures that apply to other students as well as to the policies and procedures outlined in our Inclusive Education Policy.

If the child is already within the school and is requiring significant classroom adaptations and ongoing support from anyone other than the classroom teacher (more than 25 hours in a school year) MMA may require the family to have a Psycho-Educational Assessment completed. These assessments are useful in identifying a child's strengths and areas of challenge along with recommendations for how to meet a child's individual needs. These assessments must be updated every 3-5 years. These assessments are vital for students receiving Inclusive Education funding through the BC Ministry of Education. It will be expected that the parents will be responsible for the initial costs of Psycho-Educational testing unless a different arrangement is made.

It is understood that appointments for support work, e.g., speech therapy, occupational therapy, etc. may be required at facilities outside of the school. Parents, teachers, school administration, and support staff providing therapy shall work together cooperatively and openly to promote optimum development within the child. Registration within the school is for the classroom space offered to and accepted by the family. The full fee for this placement shall be paid despite absence from the program to attend outside support services.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Staff at Maria Montessori Academy

The Board of Directors believes the staff of Maria Montessori Academy are its most valuable asset. The qualifications of all staff members are impressive, as well as their enthusiasm and dedication. Staff working with the Preschool and Kindergarten children must meet the standards set out by the **Island Health Childcare Licensing Branch**. The same applies to staff working with Kindergarten-Grade 12 aged children and up who must meet the standards set up by the **Ministry of Education-Independent School Branch**.

Outside Evaluations

Preschool, Kindergarten, and Out of School Care

The Preschool, Kindergarten, and Out of School Care Programs are licensed by the Island Health Childcare Licensing Branch. The school must adhere to all Island Health regulations regarding safety, staffing, health, and class sizes. To ensure adherence to these regulations regular visits are made by a Child Care Licensing Officer who makes written reports. Irregularities are given a time by which to be remedied. Maria Montessori Academy has always had excellent reports from the Licensing Officer. All current reports are available online to the public.

Elementary, Middle, and High School

Maria Montessori Academy is classified as Group 1 Independent School. This is the highest level of funding by the Provincial Government, and it is approximately 50% of the grant money received by the Public Schools. Eligibility for this funding means that certain standards and criteria must be met in terms of staffing, curriculum, finances, and administration. The process for doing this is by two major types of evaluations. The first is a monitoring inspection by

a representative sent by the Ministry of Education. This representative looks at registration, teacher qualifications, policies and procedures and ensures that any previously recommended changes have been made. This process can take up to a day if necessary. The second type of evaluation is called an External Evaluation and is done over 2-4 days. A team of 3 or 4 representatives is sent again to have a more in-depth look at the program and its components. Usually, one person deals with the office administration, one with the principal, and the other looks at the classrooms, teachers, and the curriculum content. This External Evaluation team does not examine teacher suitability as this is the principal's responsibility.

Curriculum

In the Preschool classes, an enriched environment is provided according to acknowledged Early Childhood Education theory and Montessori practices. From Kindergarten to High School, students are taught according to the standards laid out by the provincial curriculum using the Montessori method of education. Specialists are employed to teach French, PE, Art, Music, and High School Elective Courses.

PERSONAL INFORMATION AND PRIVACY POLICY FOR PARENTS & STUDENTS

The School's Commitment to You

Safeguarding personal information of parents and students is a fundamental concern of Maria Montessori Academy. The school is committed to meeting or exceeding the privacy standards established by British Columbia's *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) and any other applicable legislation.

This *Personal Information Privacy Policy* describes the policies and practices of Maria Montessori Academy regarding the collection, use and disclosure of personal information about students and parents, including the steps the school has taken to ensure personal and financial information is handled appropriately and securely.

Maria Montessori Academy may add, modify or remove portions of this *Personal Information Privacy Policy* when it is considered appropriate to do so, and any such changes will be effective upon giving notice of the revised policy. You may ask for the most recent update of this *Personal Information Privacy Policy* at the school office. This Personal Information Privacy Policy may be supplemented or modified by agreements entered between Maria Montessori Academy and an individual from time to time.

Please see our official board policy (available on our website) for more details on the collection of information.

REPORTING OF A STUDENT'S PROGRESS

Maria Montessori Academy follows the province's updated policy as specified by the Learning Update Order. The Academy provides all students and parents/guardians with at least 5 reports during the school year - 4 Learning Updates (2 Informal Learning Updates and 2 Written Learning Updates) and 1 Summary of Learning that describes student learning in relation to the Learning Standards of the curriculum. Informal Learning Updates take the form of student-led conferences, in-person or virtual discussions, e-mails, portfolio entries, etc.

For grades K-9, the Written Learning Updates provided during the school year will include:

- communication of learning in each Area of Learning currently being studied in relation to the Learning Standards, using the Provincial Proficiency Scale;
- descriptive feedback on areas of significant growth and opportunities for further development;
- information about student attendance; and
- student-generated content including Student Self-Reflection of the Core Competencies and Student Goal Setting.

For grades 10-12, the Written Learning Updates provided during the school year will include:

- communication of learning in each learning area currently being studied in relation to the Learning Standards, using letter grades and percentages;
- descriptive feedback on areas of significant growth and opportunities for further development;
- information about student attendance; and
- student-generated content including Student Self-reflection of the Core Competencies and Student Goal Setting.

For grades K-9, the Summary of Learning will include:

- a summary of student learning in all learning areas studied during the school year using the Provincial Proficiency Scale;
- summary Descriptive Feedback on areas of significant growth and opportunities for further development;
- information about student attendance; and
- student-generated content including Student Self-Assessment of the Core Competencies and Student Goal Setting.

For grades 10-12, the Summary of Learning must include:

- a summary of student learning in all learning areas studied during the school year using letter grades and percentages;
- summary Descriptive Feedback on areas of significant growth and opportunities for further development;
- information about student attendance;
- student-generated content including Student Self-Reflection of the Core Competencies and Student Goal Setting; and
- a graduation status update indicating student progress in relation to graduation program requirements.

Oral reports are given for the three and four-year olds, with one written summative update in June. At any time during the school year teachers are always glad to discuss with parents the progress of their child. Please feel free to set a time aside for this with the classroom teachers.

FOUNDATION SKILLS ASSESSMENTS (FSA'S)

The Foundation Skills Assessment is an annual province wide assessment of all BC Students' academic skills in grades 4 and 7. This assessment measures skills in Literacy and Numeracy and provides information on how well students are progressing in foundation skills.

COMMUNICATION

Teacher-Parent-Child

Every effort should be made to communicate a classroom concern to your child's teacher first. If you are not satisfied with the measures taken, then it would be appropriate to consult the Principal or Vice Principal. If you have an administrative issue, either the Office Administrator or Principal should be contacted. Board members are always open to consultation should you still feel you have not received a satisfactory resolution at the teacher or administrative level. Board member names and email addresses are available from the office.

E-mail: office@mariamontessoriacademy.net

For convenience and ecological reasons, most school communications are sent via email including a Friday newsletter each week. Regular checking of e-mails enables parents to keep current in school happenings and administrative matters. Each teacher also has an email according to their name and Montessori address. You can also find a complete directory on our website.

Website: www.mariamontessoriacademy.net

Information about Montessori and current information about our school is available on our website. This includes our school calendar.

Phone System

Parents may leave a message through the office if there is an emergency. **250-479-4746**

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is the art of providing training that develops self-control, character, orderliness, and efficiency. In both the school and home environment the child is best supported by love, consistency, choices, and limits. Maria Montessori claimed discipline starts with spontaneous work, concentration, success, and a resulting self-worth.

The prime intent of discipline is to help children learn appropriate and acceptable behavior patterns. We recognize each child is a unique individual and differs in their level of self-control and rational understanding. This school aims to provide an environment that encourages caring and cooperative relationships in which children learn to relate with each other in positive ways.

Clear consistent limits are established appropriate to each child's age group and, when appropriate, the rationale for each limit is given. Limits are given positively and serve as a model of communication for the child. For example, "It is time to put the books away," rather than, "Don't leave the books all over the floor." Comments of discipline must always focus on the child's behavior rather than on their character.

To correct unacceptable behaviour, the individual must be aided in focusing attention on that behavior, understanding that it is unacceptable, why it is unacceptable, and the consequence of its recurrence. Arbitrary, punitive or physical action by an authority is not used.

Behaviours that are not acceptable are:

- hurting oneself or another
- destroying property
- stealing
- leaving the school grounds without permission
- inappropriate electronics use
- disobeying the designated leader/teacher/directress
- swearing
- verbal or physical violence
- bullying
- vandalism
- cyber bullying
- theft
- misuse of school property/grounds
- substance use/abuse

It is vital to look at each situation and individual, considering motive and maturity to give opportunity for reform.

Our general procedure for providing for reform is:

At the first instance of unacceptable behaviour, an explanation of its inappropriate nature is made, with discussion. A warning is given. The student is given the opportunity to make reparation.

At the second instance, the individual is usually removed from the group for a time and asked to state their mistake in written or verbal form and what would have been more appropriate. The individual is encouraged to commit to correcting the mistake. Consequences of not doing so are clarified.

At a third instance the individual would be removed from the group to the office and the parent and Principal are informed with discussion to follow.

A fourth instance would involve longer removal plus a conference with parents, child, teacher, and Principal with the possibility of school time spent at home. In some instances, an agreement or contract would be appropriate. Continued infractions would necessitate a decision for counseling or removal from the school.

At all times, details and procedures are confidential. Children are encouraged to be helpers and encouragers, to correct behaviour and not to condemn. At the same time, they are encouraged to be assertive and responsible in speaking clearly to name behaviours and to realize that all humans are on a learning path and can change.

Staff are asked to complete behavior reports when problem behaviour is observed. The steps of this process are listed below:

1. Observe problem behaviour.
2. Problem-solve with student(s).
3. Record the behaviour in a Record Form.
4. Submit minor problem behaviour incident to child's home room teacher.
5. Submit major problem behaviour incident to school office.

Examples of minor problem behaviours are:

- Out of Bounds
- Disrespectful behaviour
- Disrespecting/vandalizing property
- Teasing/name-calling
- Inappropriate language
- Lying/Cheating
- Disruptive behaviour
- Breaking playground rules

Examples of major problem behaviours are:

- Physical Actions (punch, kick, bite, hit, etc.)
- Defiance
- Verbal Actions (threats, use offensive names, ridiculing, etc.)
- Theft
- Social Exclusion (spreading rumors, gossip, excluding, etc.)

The follow up disciplinary action could include:

- Alternative Recess
- Community Service
- In-School Suspensions (1/2 day)
- In-School Suspension (Full Day)
- Suspension
- Move to Probationary Enrollment
- Expulsion

BULLYING OR HARASSMENT

Bullying or harassment is a pattern of repeated aggressive behavior, with negative intent, directed from one child to another where there is a power imbalance. It can be physical or verbal or can involve social alienation.

Forms of bullying or harassing behavior:

-Physical:

pushing	threatening with a weapon	defacing property	hitting
shoving	spitting	stealing	kicking

-Verbal aggression

mocking	intimidating phone calls/texts	extortion	name-calling	coercion
racist, sexist or homophobic remarks		taunting	verbal threats against property	
daring another to do a dangerous act		teasing	verbal threats of violence	
cyber bullying				

-Social Alienation

gossiping	inciting hatred	embarrassing remarks	exclusion
alienation	setting up someone to take the blame		public humiliation
giving dirty looks	sharing photos without permission		spreading rumours

At Maria Montessori Academy the staff are aware of what constitutes bullying or harassment and take it seriously. When bullying occurs, the situation is immediately dealt with, and the discipline process takes place. Students are encouraged and enabled to develop strategies to discourage bullying or harassing behaviors amongst their peers.

We encourage all students ‘if you see something, say something’. It is important that students know adults are there to support them, so we encourage our students to come forward if they are aware of any of the above behaviour. We know that some of this behaviour may occur in an online domain where adults are not present. We take this very seriously, even if it is behaviour that occurs online at home. We have also encouraged our students to use the [ERASE online reporting tool](#) if they are not comfortable coming forward in person.

GENDER/SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The school will promote a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination, by implementing proactive strategies and guidelines to ensure that LGBTQ+ students, employees, and families are equally welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life and treated with respect and dignity. Any language or behavior that degrades, denigrates, stereotypes, incites hatred or fear, prejudice, discrimination, harassment toward individuals based on their real or perceived sexual orientation, or gender identification will not be tolerated. Please see our Gender Inclusion Guidelines (available on our website) for more specific details.

“All our handling of [them] will bear fruit, not only at the moment,
but in the [person they are] destined to become.” Maria Montessori

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

An excellent way to become familiar with the Montessori approach is to observe the teachers and the children interacting in the classroom. Each classroom will have their own schedule and we encourage each parent to spend a short period of time observing in their child’s classroom.

SCHOOL TIMES

All classes begin at 8:30 am and end at 3:00 pm. Lunch hours are staggered throughout the various ages.

At 8:30 am all students from kindergarten and up start the day with morning exercise. There may be some exceptions in the Senior School.

PARKING

The situation becomes critical at the start and close of the school day. We require everyone's assistance in spending brief times parked in the lot and on the road. Please respect our neighbour's needs and park only in a designated parking place. Respect Fire Lane access, bus parking, and designated pick up/drop off only zones.

NUTRITION

Maria Montessori Academy is committed to following and modeling good nutritional habits. We do not encourage or support sugary or empty calorie foods. We appreciate your co-operation in this regard.

Lunches

Full day children should bring a nutritious lunch packed in reusable containers. **We strongly encourage packing a litter-free lunch.** In keeping with building on good nutrition habits we suggest lunch include a variety of foods recommended by the Canada Health and Food Guide. *All remainders including packaging from lunch and/or snack food will be sent home with your child.* Please send a water bottle to school, also water is always available in the classroom or by water fountains near the classrooms.

Snacks

Preschool/Kindergarten

Students bring their own healthy snacks from home and eat during the school day as needed. They are given a minimum of 30 minutes to sit and eat their lunch. At the beginning of the year, it is quite common that the excitement of the new year means they may not always finish their lunch, but this does correct itself.

Elementary, Middle, and High School

Students bring their own healthy snack from home and can eat it during the school day as needed. Students are given approximately 25 minutes to eat their lunches. Please send a water bottle to school, also water is always available in the classroom or by water fountains near the classrooms.

Lunch Program

The MMA Parent Group regularly organizes lunch programs that you may voluntarily participate in. The types of food may vary each year as well as what age groups it is offered to.

PLEASE BE ALERT FOR ANY ALLERGIES IN YOUR CHILD'S SPECIFIC CLASS.

MARIA MONTESSORI ACADEMY SCHOOL UNIFORMS

At MMA, the uniform is a symbol of belonging to our school and is worn with pride!

The purpose of our uniform is to bring students together and unify our student body.

It helps the students to get to know each other for who they are and not just what they wear or their differences.

The uniform also helps to eliminate distractions within the classroom and supports the students in focusing on their work.

Please note the following rules regarding uniforms and general appearance:

- Uniform items must be purchased from Cambridge Uniforms.
- Students must wear the school uniform on their way to and from school and throughout the school day, including the correct uniform for gym classes, Active Living, and Jr./Sr. Outdoor Ed. activities.
- All uniforms must be complete, fit well, kept clean, and free of holes/stains.
- No coloured shirts are to be worn under dress shirts, blouses, or golf shirts.
- Gym strip should be taken home once per week to be washed.
- Dress & golf shirts should be tucked in.

If a student is not dressed in proper uniform, the student will be asked by the teacher to return to school in proper uniform the next day.

If the student returns to school without the proper uniform a second time, a note will be sent home asking for parental assistance and support.

If the student is still not dressed correctly, corrective action will be taken. E.g. parents will be called to bring the missing piece, or students will be sent home. (Special circumstance: If an item has been lost or is on order and has not yet arrived, we will, of course, make allowances for that.)

Ordering Information:

Uniform Items must be ordered directly from [Cambridge Uniforms](https://www.cambridgeuniforms.com/). You may phone, email or go online to place your order. **Our school code is: MON145**

Website: <https://www.cambridgeuniforms.com/>

Toll free number: 1-800-924-9069

email: orders@cambridgeuniforms.com

Questions may be directed to: info@cambridgeuniforms.com

Fittings can take place virtually or you may also visit the Cambridge Uniform store in North Vancouver.

Outreach Days:

The last Thursday of each month is Outreach Day. Students are to bring a \$2 donation for our chosen charities, and then they may wear their "regular" clothes and have the choice to participate in varying monthly themes (e.g., Rainbow Day, Jersey Day, etc.). Please, no clothing with offensive slogans.

Take Me to My Child's Uniform List:

[Preschool/Kindergarten](#)

[Lower Elementary Grades 1-3](#)

[Upper Elementary
Grades 4-6](#)

Preschool/Kindergarten

All uniform items, unless otherwise listed, must be purchased from [Cambridge and Company](#)

Full Uniform Day: Wednesdays + Field Trips, Picture Days, Assembly Days

Full Uniform (Can be worn every day, but **required** on Wednesdays/Field Trips/Picture Days/Assembly Days)

- **White Dress Shirt, Oxford Collar (tie required)
- Tartan Tie
- Peter Pan Blouse (no tie required)
- Tunic/Pants/Dress Shorts
- Choice of Pullover V-Neck Sweater, Vest, or Cardigan
- Navy Socks
- All-Black Polishable Dress Shoes (no runners, boots or high heels, Velcro/slip on recommended), not from Cambridge

Casual Uniform

- **Golf Shirt
- Skort/Tunic/Pants/Dress Shorts
- Choice of Pullover V-Neck Sweater, Vest, or Cardigan
- Navy Socks
- All-Black Polishable Shoes (no boots or high heels, Velcro/slip on recommended), not from Cambridge

Mandatory, but not from Cambridge Uniforms:

- All-Black Polishable Dress Shoes (no boots or high heels, Velcro/slip on recommended), not from Cambridge
- Rain jacket & rain pants, any colour
- Rain boots, any colour
- Gym runners, non-marking soles

Also required, the MMA navy cotton tote bag

**Note: Reminder no coloured shirts are to be worn under dress shirt/blouse/golf shirt.

Lower Elementary, Grades 1-3

All uniform items, unless otherwise listed, must be purchased from [Cambridge and Company](#)

2024-25 LE Uniform Schedules:

Full uniform required on days below + Field Trips, Picture Days, Assembly Days

<u>Alpha (Miss Jess)</u>	<u>Beta (Miss Jaz)</u>	<u>Gamma (Miss Jodi)</u>
Full Uniform Day: TBA in Sept. Gym Uniform Days: TBA in Sept.	Full Uniform Day: TBA in Sept. Gym Uniform Days: TBA in Sept.	Full Uniform Day: TBA in Sept. Gym Uniform Days: TBA in Sept.

Full Uniform (Required: as Above/Field Trips/Picture Days/Assembly Days)

- **White Dress Shirt, Oxford Collar (tie required)
- Tartan Tie
- Peter Pan Blouse (no tie)
- Tunic/Kilt/Pants/Dress Shorts
- Choice of Pullover V-Neck Sweater, Vest, or Cardigan
- Navy Socks
- All-Black Polishable Shoes (no boots or high heels, Velcro/slip on recommended), not from Cambridge

Casual Uniform

- **Golf Shirt
- Skort/Kilt/Tunic/Pants/Dress Shorts
- Choice of Pullover V-Neck Sweater, Vest, or Cardigan
- MMA ¼ Zip Fleece Sweater may be worn over sweater choice above but does not replace those items and may not be worn on full uniform day listed above.
- Navy Socks
- All-Black Polishable Shoes (no boots or high heels, Velcro/slip on recommended), not from Cambridge

Mandatory Gym Strip:

- MMA gym t-shirt
- MMA gym shorts
- MMA Navy Adidas Track Pants (note: other black/grey/blue pants may not substitute for the Navy Adidas pants)
- MMA ¼ Zip Fleece Sweater
- MMA navy cotton tote bag

Mandatory, but not from Cambridge Uniforms.:

- All-Black Polishable Shoes (no boots or high heels, Velcro/slip on recommended), not from Cambridge
- Navy Waterproof Rain Jacket (everyday use)
- Rain pants, any colour
- Rain boots, any colour
- Gym runners, non-marking soles

Note about hoodies:

- MMA ¼ Zip Fleece is mandatory as of the 2023-24 school year.
- The MMA hoodie is no longer allowed.

- **No non-MMA hoodies/fleece allowed!**

**Note: Reminder no coloured shirts are to be worn under dress shirt/blouse/golf shirt.

Upper Elementary, Grades 4-6

All uniform items, unless otherwise listed, must be purchased from [Cambridge and Company](#)

Full Uniform Day: Wednesdays + Field Trips, Picture Days, Assembly Days

Outdoor Ed. Uniform: Fridays

Full Uniform (Can be worn Mon.-Thurs., but **required:** Wednesdays/Field Trips/Picture Days/Assembly Days)

- White Dress Shirt, Oxford Collar (tie required)
- Tartan Tie
- Peter Pan Blouse (no tie)
- Kilt/Tunic/Pants/Dress Shorts
- Choice of Pullover V-Neck Sweater, Vest, or Cardigan
- Navy Socks
- All-Black Polishable Shoes (no boots or high heels), not from Cambridge Uniforms

Casual Uniform

- Golf Shirt
- Skort/Kilt/Pants/Dress Shorts
- Choice of Pullover V-Neck Sweater, Vest, or Cardigan
- MMA ¼ Zip Fleece Sweater may be worn over sweater choice above but does not replace those items and may not be worn on full uniform day.
- Navy Socks
- All-Black Polishable Shoes (no boots or high heels), not from Cambridge Uniforms

Mandatory Gym Strip:

- MMA gym t-shirt
- MMA gym shorts
- MMA Navy Adidas Track Pants (note: other black/grey/blue pants may not substitute for the Navy Adidas pants)
- MMA ¼ Zip Fleece Sweater
- Also required, the MMA navy cotton tote bag or MMA gym bag

Mandatory Outdoor Ed. Fridays.:

- MMA gym t-shirt
- MMA gym shorts
- MMA Navy Adidas Track Pants
- MMA ¼ zip fleece jacket

Mandatory, but not from Cambridge Uniforms.:

- All-Black Polishable Dress Shoes (no runners, boots or high heels)
- Navy Waterproof Rain Jacket (everyday use & Outdoor Ed.)
- Gym runners, non-marking soles
- Small, comfortable backpack for Outdoor Ed.
- Waterproof rain pants for Outdoor Ed.
- Water Bottle for Outdoor Ed.
- Recommended: Trail runners/hikers for Outdoor Ed.

**Notes:

- MMA ¼ Zip Fleece is mandatory as of the 2023-24 school year.
- The MMA hoodie is no longer allowed.
- **No non-MMA hoodies/fleece allowed!**

Sigma Middle School Grades 7-8

*All uniform items, unless otherwise listed, must be purchased from [Cambridge and Company](#)

Full Uniform Days: Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays + Field Trips, Picture Days, Assembly Days

Full Uniform (Required: Full Uniform Days Mon-Wed.-Fri + Field Trips/Picture Days/Assembly Days)

- White Dress Shirt, Oxford Collar
- Silky Navy Tie (no tartan tie)
- Kilt / Grey Skirt / Pants / Dress Shorts
- Choice of Pullover V-Neck Sweater, Vest, or Cardigan
- Navy Socks
- All-Black Polishable Shoes (no boots or high heels), not from Cambridge Uniforms

Casual Uniform

- Golf Shirt
- Kilt / Grey Skirt / Pants / Dress Shorts
- Choice of Pullover V-Neck Sweater, Vest, or Cardigan
- MMA ¼ Zip Fleece Sweater
- Navy Socks
- All-Black Polishable Shoes (no boots or high heels), not from Cambridge Uniforms

Mandatory Gym Strip & Outdoor Ed. Uniform:

- MMA gym t-shirt
- MMA gym shorts (no other brands of shorts permitted)
- MMA Navy Adidas Track Pants (no other brands of pants or leggings permitted)
- MMA Hoodie or MMA ¼ zip fleece jacket
- Outdoor Ed. gear list for trips sent separately.

***please wash gym strip every week!**

Mandatory, but not from Cambridge Uniforms.:

- All-Black Polishable Dress Shoes (no runners, boots or high heels)
- Gym runners, non-marking soles
- Outdoor Ed. gear list for trips sent separately.

Notes:

- MMA ¼ Zip Fleece is mandatory & may be worn over sweater choice above but does not replace those items and may not be worn on full uniform days.
- The MMA hoodie is no longer allowed.
- **No non-MMA hoodies/fleece allowed!**

Omega High School Grades 9-12

All uniform items, unless otherwise listed, must be purchased from [Cambridge and Company](#)

Full Uniform Days: Tuesdays & Thursdays + Field Trips/Picture Days/Assembly Days

Full Uniform (Required: Full Uniform Days Tues. & Thurs. + Field Trips/Picture Days/Assembly Days)

- Navy crested blazer
- White Dress Shirt, Oxford Collar
- Silky Navy Tie (no tartan tie)
- Kilt / Grey Skirt / Pants / Dress Shorts
- Choice of Pullover V-Neck Sweater, Vest, or Cardigan
- Navy or black Socks
- All-Black Shoes (no boots, high-tops, or high heels; all-black leather sneakers such as Nike AF1 or Vans ok), not from Cambridge

Casual Uniform

- Golf Shirt
- Kilt / Grey Skirt / Pants / Dress Shorts
- Choice of Pullover V-Neck Sweater, Vest, or Cardigan
- MMA ¼ Zip Fleece Sweater
- Navy or Black Socks
- All-Black Shoes (no boots, high-tops, or high heels; all-black leather sneakers such as Nike AF1 or Vans ok), not from Cambridge

Mandatory Gym Strip / Outdoor Ed. / Active Living Uniform:

- MMA gym t-shirt
- MMA gym shorts (no other brands of shorts permitted)
- MMA Navy Adidas Track Pants (no other brands of pants or leggings permitted)
- MMA ¼ zip fleece sweater
- Gym runners, non-marking soles
- Outdoor Ed. gear list for trips sent separately.

***please wash gym strip every week!**

Notes:

- MMA 1/4 Zip Fleece is mandatory as of the 2023-24 school year
- MMA ¼ Zip Fleece may be worn over sweater choice above but does not replace those items and may not be worn on full uniform days.
- MMA ¼ Zip Fleece may only be worn in class on casual uniform days only.
- **No non-MMA hoodies/fleece allowed!**

Dress Code

It should be noted that students are expected to maintain proper uniform at all times while on the Maria Montessori Academy campus. If a student is required to change into alternate clothing for an afterschool activity (dance recital, baseball game, cadets, etc.), the student may change at school and then must directly leave school grounds. Students are not permitted to change into casual clothing and then remain on campus or change to leave campus during lunch/recess.

Accessories

While respecting the needs of the students to individualize, we reserve the right to ask any student to remove items such as jewellery, hair bands, makeup or any other accessory that impedes the concentration of a student. Parents will be included in this process.

HEALTH

The Staff and Directors of Maria Montessori Academy make every reasonable effort to safeguard your child's health and ensure their general well-being. However, we need your full cooperation to do so. Please be guided by the following information and by good sense. It is essential that we always have a current telephone number where we can contact you, or your named responsible alternate, in case of emergency.

Any lifesaving medication (including an epi pen) must be kept permanently at school. A student will not be allowed to stay at the school on any day when their emergency medication is not on location.

Life Threatening Allergies See Anaphylaxis Policy available from the office

Although it is impossible to guarantee an allergen-free environment, Maria Montessori Academy will do everything reasonable to limit the possibilities of targeted allergens from being present or around the allergic child in the school environment. Maria Montessori Academy expects the parents of anaphylactic children to participate as actively as possible in the development of procedures to protect their children, in sharing information with school staff and other parents, and in helping their children assume responsibility for their own safety. The school will:

- ensure that all teachers and any other appropriate school personnel have all necessary information regarding life threatening allergies in the school
- ensure that all parents and other students have all necessary information regarding life threatening allergies in the school
- ensure appropriate staff are trained to administer the required medication in response to an anaphylactic reaction.
- provide in-services for appropriate staff regarding anaphylaxis prevention, recognition and management, school policy, and the use of the Epi-pens with the Public Health nurse.
- maintain a current file with up to-date medical information (often including a photo) and an emergency treatment plan for each allergic child
- provide allergen free areas when possible, and avoid, whenever possible, allergens hidden in school activities (e.g., Playdough, pouring exercises, crafts)
- take special precautions in planning special events, field trips and extra-curricular events.

Illness

In the interest of safety and good health we require that sick children be kept away from school. If you have any doubt,

please do not bring your child to school. Colds and flu travel very quickly in the classroom. If your child has been ill during the night (this includes fever, throwing up etc.), **do not bring them to school the following morning**. If your child becomes ill during the day, we will phone you to come for your child.

Sending a child to school with a fever reduced by medication is not acceptable.

We ask that any child with open sores or any other potentially infectious or communicable condition be kept at home until healing is complete.

Medicine

We will administer prescription oral medicine to your child only after prior written authorization has been given to the school office. You must supply adequate quantities of the prescription needed, and any measuring devices and directions required for its administration. While every care is taken, we cannot accept responsibility for any medicines or equipment left with the Academy.

Staff do not have the skill, nor can they legally undertake the administration of complex treatments, give regular injections, or change dressings. The school does not administer or provide any non-prescription drug (for example, Tylenol) without prior written permission. If your child finds difficulty accepting medicine from a staff member, the medicine will not be administered, and you will be informed when you collect your child at the end of the school day.

Communicable Diseases

If your child contracts a communicable illness (including, for example, but not limited to measles, mumps, chicken pox, pink eye, rubella, diphtheria, hand foot & mouth disease etc.) please report this to the school as soon as possible. If school staff believe your child has a communicable disease, you will be informed immediately. Please ensure that all immunizations are up to date by the time your child begins school at the Maria Montessori Academy.

Head Lice

Head lice is no longer seen as a health hazard. Parents will be notified if their child has been found to have lice. Parents are expected to treat their child who may then return to school once he/she has been properly treated and is completely clear of any lice. When lice have been noted, parents in the school will be given this general information via email. Names of children will not be disclosed.

No Smoking

Parents, staff, students, and visitors cannot smoke/vape or use tobacco or marijuana anywhere on school property at any time, whether school is in session; that is 7 days a week 24 hours a day. This prohibition applies to the school building, parking lots, sports fields, playgrounds, driveways, courtyards, and private vehicles in the school parking lots. It applies to school vehicles or vehicles transporting students at any time. This also includes any venue where a Maria Montessori Academy event is being held.

It does not matter whether the above areas described as Maria Montessori Academy property are being used for school purposes or by sports clubs or other groups renting or permitted access to the facilities or property. Groups using Maria Montessori Academy property after school hours will be required to ensure that smoking and other use of tobacco or marijuana do not occur. No Smoking signs will be posted in and throughout the internal and external property.

Please see our board policy for more information.

REPORTING SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

All staff must report personally to a child protection social worker at the Ministry for Children and Families office any suspicions of child abuse or neglect as defined by The B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect. Staff are to share information only with those whom it is appropriate to receive this information (e.g., child protection social worker, the police, the principal and/or Appointed Board Member). The Principal, or alternatively, the Vice Principal, must be notified about any abusive behaviour occurring at school but staff does not need their permission to make the report to the child protection social worker.

RELEASE OF A CHILD

Parents must fill out the Authorized Persons section on the Maria Montessori Academy Information form that lists all persons who have parental permission to remove their child from the premises of Maria Montessori Academy. A child will not be released to any person not on the list unless the parent informs the Administration in writing or by phone call that a person not on the list will be picking up their child. In this instance it will be understood by both the parent and the person picking up the child that photo identification will be required to be shown at the office if that person is unknown to Maria Montessori Academy staff. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the authorized persons list current.

A child will not be released to anyone deemed to be exhibiting potentially harmful conduct such as intoxication, medication, or unusual behavior.

DISMISSAL/AFTER SCHOOL PICK UP POLICY

At the end of the day, students are dismissed at 3:00 pm, except the Half-Day Preschool students. Preschool/Kindergarten children must be signed out by a parent/guardian/approved adult. Students in Full Day/Afternoon Preschool/Kindergarten, and Grades 1-6 may attend After School Care until 5:00 pm. Students in Grades 1-6 who are not picked up from the classroom by 3:05 pm, will wait in the office while parents are called, and arrangements are made for pick up. **Students in grades 4-6 must either go directly to After School Care at 3:00 pm or may wait for parent/guardian/approved adult pick-up on the gym wall near the pickup/drop-off lane or on the black top play area where they are to be picked up by 3:30 pm at the latest.**

Students in Grades 1-12 may walk, bike, etc. home after school with their parents' permission.

MISSING CHILD POLICY

If a child is discovered to be missing, the following procedures are to be initiated:

1. The Principal or the designated Person in Charge and the Office Administrator will be notified immediately of the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the child
2. The Office will supply a picture of the missing child, if available, to the Principal or Person in Charge, to confirm his or her identity
3. All staff will be discreetly notified, questioned, and shown the picture as necessary
4. An appointed person will stand at the front door to act as a central communicator
5. A school wide page will be made calling that child to the office
6. A room by room and playground search will be done simultaneously
7. If after 10 minutes, the missing child is not found, a decision to inform the police and parents will be made by the Principal or the Person in Charge
8. After the child is found, an incident report will be written, and a meeting will be held to decide what remedial action should be taken to avoid future incidents of a similar nature

FIELD TRIPS

Trips to other locations, organized to augment or reinforce the learning taking place in the classroom are usually for children in Kindergarten and up. When possible, the children use our school or city buses, but parent volunteers for driving are sometimes essential. All drivers must fill in a declaration of car license number, insurance coverage (a minimum of 2 million is required), individual seatbelt use, and current safety of their vehicle. *All drivers must have a valid driver's license.* Cell phones must not be used while driving. Cars equipped with airbags should not transport children under 12 years old in seats with airbags. Signed parent/guardian permission forms for each child are required for participation in field trips. These are signed at the beginning of the school year with advance notice prior to each trip given by the classroom teacher, including a description of the trip. Children are expected to behave as if in the classroom on these occasions and failure to do so may result in their removal and the loss of future privileges. *Whenever an off-site field trip and/or event is planned every precaution will be taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those attending (staff, students, parents, visitors). Each trip will be evaluated according to specific and appropriate standards.*

As required by legislation all children over nine kg (20 lbs.) need to be in booster seats until they are 1.45 metres (4'9") tall or age nine. Children over one year old and between nine and 18 kg (20-40 lbs.) are required to be seated in a child car seat.

Supervision ratios (other than Island Health regulated ratios) will vary according to each trip but for most it will be 1 adult to 15 children.

Overnight field trips away from the school:

- Parent's permission is required with full knowledge of the trip's particulars including the name of supervisors.
- Students are not allowed the use of drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes.
- Medications are to be given to the supervisors and with prior permission.
- Safe and appropriate transportation will be proved by qualified personnel.
- The venue will be appropriately checked for any concerns regarding safety.
- An emergency back-up plan and/or contact will be put into place.
- Parents should be aware that failure to comply with the rules of the field trip may result in disciplinary action including a call to the parent to come and pick up their child from the field trip site.
- Different age groups will have distinct levels of requirements and activities which will be made clear before each trip and in some cases, waivers or Acknowledgement of Risk will be required to be signed.

“Education is not something the teacher does, it is a natural process which develops spontaneously...”

-Maria Montessori

PLAYGROUND SAFETY

Everything possible is done to ensure a safe and suitable playground. Children must be under adult supervision on the playground. Supervisors are on duty during all scheduled play times and do everything in their power to make sure the children are following the safety rules in place. Aggression and rough play are not allowed at any time and will be dealt with in an appropriate manner.

PLAYGROUND rules include but are not limited to:

- Respectful behavior always
- Every item is treated with respect
- Equipment is to be used in the correct area and for the purpose and age group it was intended (e.g., Skipping ropes for skipping)
- Rocks, sand, and other projectiles remain on the ground
- Wait your turn to use equipment or apparatus
- Play only in designated areas
- Retrieval of an item that goes over a fence can only be done with supervision and/or permission from a supervisor
- Any injury or dangerous play should be reported immediately to a supervisor
- All items to be returned to their appropriate spot after each playtime
- Aggressive or violent items (e.g., toy guns) are not allowed
- The sandbox is covered after each playtime
- Playground use before and after school is permitted provided all school rule are followed and the student must be supervised by an adult

ACTIVE PLAY POLICY

Preschool/Kindergarten children have a minimum of 30 minutes of active play each day.

Elementary students have a minimum of 30 minutes of active play each day.

Senior School students have a minimum of 30 minutes per day or 150 minutes of active play each week.

SCREEN TIME POLICY

This varies between the age groups.

- Our Preschool/Kindergarten students do not have any screen time during their day.
- Our Elementary students may use educational videos to support class learning and introduce information technology.
- Our Senior School students will use personal devices to support their learning and complete their assignments. Also, Senior School students will be shown videos sometimes to support in-class learning.

It is important to note that, with the exception of laptops in our Senior School, we do not permit any of our students of any age to **use** phones, or other personal electronic devices on school grounds at any point during the school day. Students have access to the phone in the office should they need to contact their parents.

INTERNET USE POLICY

Internet access is available to students and staff at Maria Montessori Academy. The Academy's goal in providing this service is to facilitate resource sharing, innovation, and communications consistent with our school's educational objectives. Access includes local, national, and international connections to:

- libraries, companies, agencies, and businesses;
- discussion groups on a variety of subjects;
- information news services;
- electronic mail communication.

Responsibilities of Staff Members

It is expected that faculty members at Maria Montessori Academy will use the Internet for instructional purposes. Staff members should maintain the highest ethical behaviour in using the Internet and should promote that behaviour among students. Staff members will:

- Make every attempt to maintain the curricular focus of Internet use by locating and directing students toward worthwhile sites on the Internet
- Supervise student use
- Model and provide instruction in the ethical and appropriate use of the Internet in a proper school setting as provided in the following guidelines
- Follow the same criteria for Internet resources that are acceptable to Maria Montessori Academy's curriculum and principles

Responsibilities of Students

Students will learn and follow the Guidelines set forth in this Internet Use Policy.

Guidelines for Internet Use

Acceptable Use: Maria Montessori Academy networks are to be used responsibly, efficiently and legally and must support the educational objectives of Maria Montessori Academy. Transmission of any material in violation of any federal or provincial regulation is prohibited.

Adherence to all guidelines and/or policies within the Maria Montessori Academy Parent, Student, and/or Staff Handbooks, but are not limited to, the following:

- Violating copyright laws
- Forwarding personal communications without the author's prior consent
- Using threatening or obscene material
- Distributing material for commercial purposes
- Providing political or campaign information

Netiquette Rules

Users must abide by network etiquette rules. These rules include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Be polite
- Use appropriate language – swearing, using vulgarities, or any other abusive language is inappropriate
- Never reveal your personal address or telephone number or those of anyone else
- Never reveal credit or checking account information or social security number across Internet
- Do not disrupt the use of the network
- Do not attempt to gain unauthorized access to system programs or computer equipment
- Assume that all communications and information accessible via the network are private property
- Understand we do have a security system that blocks access to certain sites and social media.

Acceptable Use:

Internet use must support the educational objectives of Maria Montessori Academy. Use of other organizations' network or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Transmission of any material in violation of any Canadian or provincial regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted materials, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. Use for commercial activities is generally not accepted. Use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited.

Privileges:

The use of the Internet at Maria Montessori Academy is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use will result in limitation or cancellation of user privileges and school disciplinary action.

**Disclaimer:* Maria Montessori Academy will not be responsible for any damage suffered, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, service interruptions, or inaccurate information.

Security: Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. Attempts to login to the system as any other user or to share a password will result in cancellation of user privileges. If a security problem is identified, notify the Principal at the school. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users. Note that electronic mail is not guaranteed to be private; system operators have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the authorities.

Vandalism:

Vandalism will result in the cancellation of user privileges and school disciplinary action. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy equipment, programs, and/or data of anyone connected to the server and/or the Internet. This includes uploading, creating, or transmitting computer viruses.

Privacy:

Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not assume that files stored on servers and hard drives of individual computers would always be private.

Please see Board Policy regarding Internet use.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE AND CALENDAR

In setting a policy for annual school schedules, it is necessary to consider the requirement of preparing a true Montessori environment and the schedules that most other Public or Private schools follow. At Maria Montessori Academy we follow the public-school board policy for holidays but usually close earlier and open later, to provide essential classroom cleanup and preparation. We have established breaks in November and February to facilitate family time. Professional development for staff includes approximately 3 days per year. To provide the continuous time block needed to prepare Montessori materials adequately, the school closes one week before the end of June. This allows the staff to devote these days to material production for the next year, planning, for classroom cleanup, and readiness for the new school year. Calendars are provided to the parents in the summer via email, posted on our website, and updated in the weekly newsletter.

SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS

Each holiday season has its own special flavour and celebration. At school, we try to keep the students on an even keel through each. Outlined below are the themes usually followed at school.

Thanksgiving: Our emphasis at Thanksgiving is to give out of our abundance to those less fortunate. We do this by collecting nonperishable food for the Mustard Seed Food Bank.

Halloween: We continue with a harvest theme and use pumpkins for food items. Please do not send costumes or Halloween candy to school.

Christmas: Leading up to the break in December, students will engage in winter celebration themes in a manner that is respectful to all backgrounds. Our emphasis is on the spiritual elements of the season including Christmas, Hanukah, and Kwanzaa with a downplaying of the commercial aspects.

Valentine's Day: The children are free to exchange cards but with the provision that they give to **all** the children in their class (Preschool, Kindergarten, and Elementary). The cards are distributed to individual holders either by the teachers or parents and/or children. The cards are then opened at home, avoiding confusion at school. Some years, Elementary classes do an in-class "Secret Valentine" project, in which no Valentines from home are required.

Easter: While there is no curriculum dedicated to the Easter season, we do endeavor to answer student's questions regarding the origins. Our focus is on spring and new life.

Birthdays: On or near the date of the child's birthday you are welcome to send a previously agreed upon snack for the class. In place of a birthday snack/treat, Preschool/Kindergarten classes often celebrate at circle time with singing and circling the "sun" for each year of life. Teachers are not responsible for distributing party invitations. Please use parent emails as this helps avoid disruption and disappointment.

RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING

Recycling is an ongoing project at Maria Montessori Academy. We feel this project serves to educate the students and reinforces our role as stewards of the earth.

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERING

Parents can volunteer throughout the year in individual classrooms or with classroom events such as field trips or concerts. Teachers appreciate offers to assist in sewing, or repairing items used in the classroom or for projects.

TOYS AND OTHER PERSONAL ITEMS

It is important to consider the nature of items brought to school. Violent, (e.g. toy guns) aggressive or suggestive toys or books are **NOT** acceptable. **If loss, damage, and/or theft of an item is likely to cause distress the item is better left at home or given to a teacher for safekeeping.**

BOOK FAIRS

There are usually 2-3 Books Fairs held each year in the library where students and their families can purchase reasonably priced new books. This is not only a fundraiser to help provide the library with new books, but it also promotes reading in a fun and supportive manner.

OUT OF SCHOOL CARE

Out of School Care is offered to children ages 3-11 (Grade 6) and currently attending Maria Montessori Academy. Before School Care is offered from 7:30 am to 8:30 am and after school hours are 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. The Out of School Care Program is by pre-registration only and is for a one school year commitment. Fees may be paid in full or monthly. Any

withdrawals require two-month's written notice or equivalent fees.

Please see our Out of School Care Handbook for more information regarding our Out of School Care Program.

PHOTO DAYS

Individual photos are usually taken in October and class photos taken in November. Notices are given out beforehand for each of these photo sessions. Proper grooming and full mandatory school uniform are expected. If students do not have their photo taken, parents must provide a photo to the office for ID purposes.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Each classroom teacher will regularly practice all emergency procedures (including lock down) and allow for various scenarios. In addition, the staff and students will regularly practice emergency procedures to ensure the safety of the school population.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

Several reasons such as snow, flooding, or lack of electricity or heat may necessitate a school closure. Teachers will keep an up-to-date list of school families at home. The Principal will direct Teachers as to a course of action to take regarding a school closure. Emails, social media, and the website will be used to communicate any decision. Closure may also be advertised on the local radio station.

Refunds will not be given if the school is closed for safety and/or emergency reasons.

EARTHQUAKE SUPPLIES

The school has a container that has all the items needed for 3 days should there be an earthquake or other disaster. A specific amount is taken from the Student Enrichment Fee to keep the supplies at the right number and current. We do not have individual student survival kits but rather community supplies.

OUTREACH DAYS

The families at Maria Montessori Academy support selected areas of need both within Victoria and further afield. On these special days (marked on the calendar) the students bring \$2 (or more) for the jar outside the office and can wear appropriate casual clothes. Some days may have an optional theme (e.g. Crazy hair). If it is a holiday, Outreach Day will not be rescheduled. Occasionally, a class or group may not be participating due to another activity requiring them to be in full uniform.

PARENT GROUP (MMAPG)

The MMA Parent Group is a vital part of the school. Many enrichment opportunities would not be available without their support. Their two main functions are to raise funds and to build community within the school. Parent Group meetings

are held monthly at the school. There is usually a Parent Group Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer as well as several other sub-committees for various projects and/or activities. Information will mostly be sent out by email.

KEY MONTESSORI CONCEPTS

- Emphasis on cognitive structures and social development**
- Teacher has unobtrusive role in classroom activity**
- Child is an active participant in learning**
- Environment and method encourage internal self-discipline**
- Instruction, both individual and group, adapts to each student's learning style**
- Mixed age groupings (3 years)**
- Children are encouraged to teach, collaborate, and help each other**
- Child chooses own work from interests and abilities**
- Child formulates own concepts from self-teaching materials**
- Child works if they wish on chosen project**
- Child sets own learning pace to internalize information**
- Learning is reinforced internally through the child's own repetition of an activity and internal feelings of success**
- Multi-sensory materials for physical exploration**
- Organized program for learning care of self and environment (polishing shoes, cleaning sink, etc.)**
- Child can work where they are comfortable, moves around and talks at will (yet does not disturb the work of others)**

GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT MONTESSORI TERMS

Absorbent Mind: a special mind characteristic of children ages 0-6 that allows them to take impressions from the environment through the senses and through manipulation.

Freedom: the ability to act directly without the need for intervention.

Isolation of Difficulty: the removal of specific distractions and/or difficulties that allows the learner to focus on one particular aspect of the task.

Liberty: the opportunity for spontaneous activity within the educational framework of order and discipline.

Normalization: the process where the true nature of the child is allowed to reveal itself through their work.

Sensitive Period: a special intense predisposition to the acquisition of a particular trait, knowledge or skill that lasts for a limited time and where optimal learning can occur.

Prepared Environment

A Montessori classroom is a specially prepared learning environment designed to meet the developmental needs of young children and to appeal to their diverse learning styles. The Montessori environment is also prepared to foster independence, grace and courtesy and a sense of personal responsibility. Each classroom is organized into five curriculum areas: Activities for daily living, sensory education, language skills, math, and the cultural subjects, which encompass the arts and sciences.

PARENT READING

For those who are new to the Montessori method, we suggest the following list of three highly recommended books. These books are an excellent place to begin to learn about Montessori so that you can better share in your child's

education and understand what is taking place in the classroom.

The Absorbent Mind - Maria Montessori, c. 1964 Schloken Books Inc.

Montessori: A Modern Approach - Paula Polk Lillard

A Parents' Guide to the Montessori Classroom - Aline Wolf, c. 1980 Parent-Child Press

Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius – Angeline Stoll Lillard, Oxford University Press; 2016

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Montessori Method of Education?

Montessori is a scientific method of education, a philosophy of child development, and an approach to children that helps them maximize their potential. Doctor Maria Montessori, who lived from 1870 to 1952, was a brilliant and original educator. Her most important discovery was that children learn in a fundamentally different way than adults. When Montessori studied children's innate capacity to absorb knowledge, she discovered that they learned best when they were free to work and play in a carefully prepared, nurturing environment. In time, Montessori went on to create schools where teachers and parents worked together to create prepared environments where children worked with specially designed learning materials that optimized their potential.

Why do you have multi-aged groupings in one classroom?

Multi-age or family groupings maintain a social setting normal in life. Children reach developmental stages at varying times so their needs are more readily met. Young children are stimulated and motivated by what they witness others doing. Older children act as role models for younger children and can often be teachers for them. This builds confidence and cooperation.

Why do you wear uniforms?

There are many positive reasons for wearing uniforms. An attractive uniform can instill a sense of pride and belonging to a school environment that is nurturing and safe. Studies have shown that schools that have converted to uniforms have decreased aggression and competitiveness. Wearing a uniform allows the student to resist peer pressure and put their concentration on their schoolwork. In many cases, school uniforms are less expensive than the clothing a student would wear to school and help keep financial status in the background. There are several opportunities during the school year for the children to wear casual clothes if they choose. When the students go out in public for a field trip their behavior and their uniform show them as exemplary students thus enhancing our reputation.

How can I get involved in the school?

Parent involvement is welcomed and adds to our community spirit. Parent Group fund-raising is important for enriching your child's education as Montessori equipment is more expensive than textbooks and store-bought toys. Listening to children read is a wonderful way to get involved. Each classroom has different needs and the teachers in each classroom will make their needs known. Parent-child classroom evenings are also becoming more frequent at the school. See what your child is doing and prepare to be impressed!

What happens when my child leaves Montessori?

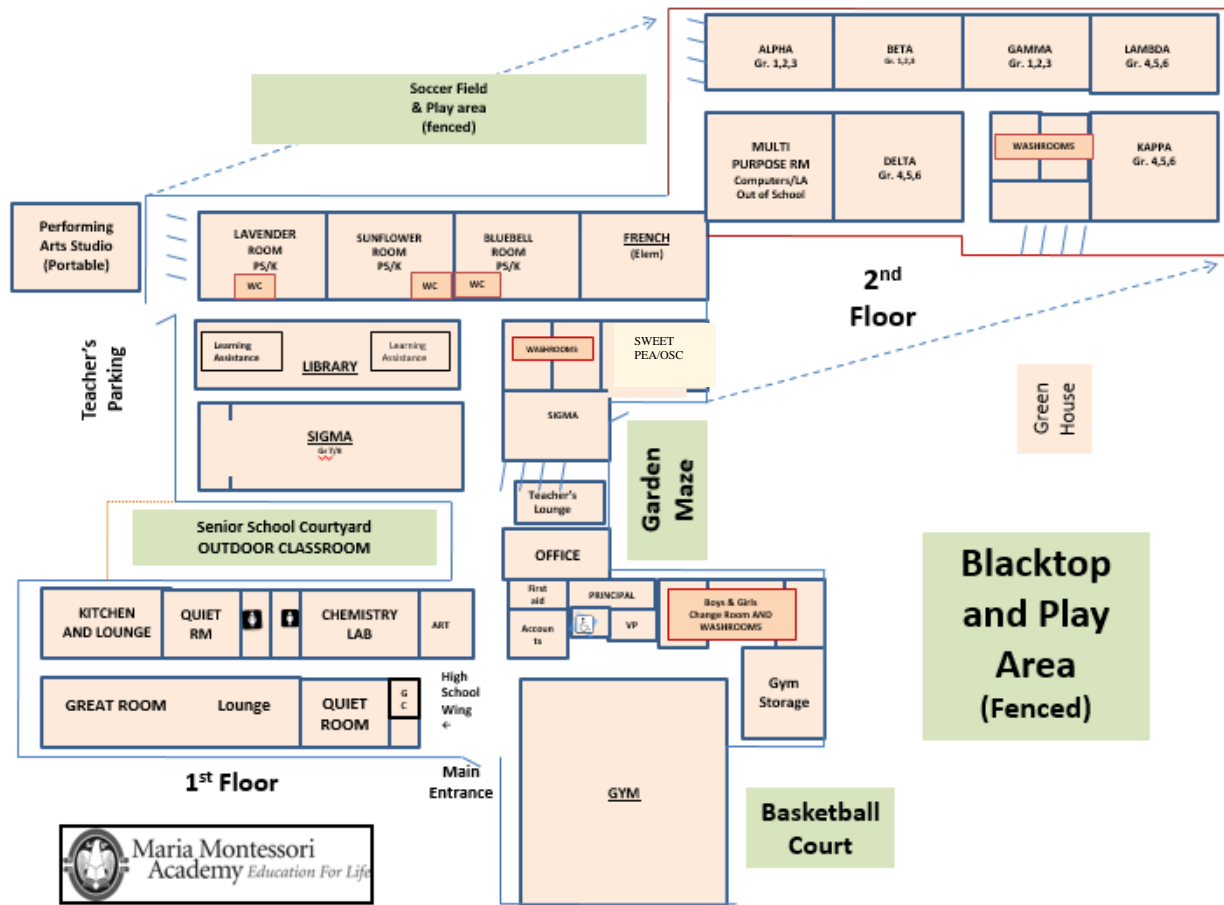
For a variety of reasons, children do go on to other schools rather than completing their schooling at Maria Montessori Academy. Since one of our goals has been to give our students skills towards independence, we find children can successfully adapt to new and different learning situations.

What is a "three period" lesson?

The three-period lesson is the foundation of all Montessori presentations whether at the Preschool or Elementary or Middle School level. The *first period* consists of giving the child new information usually through an individual or small group presentation. For example: "this is red" or "this angle is congruent."

The second period allows the child to work independently with this information through various parallel activities. Lastly, the *third period* allows the child to provide evidence that he/she understands the information given. This may be by an oral answer, pointing at something, or for the older child a written "test".

MAP OF SCHOOL AND CLASSROOMS



MARIA MONTESSORI ACADEMY CLASSROOMS

Preschool and Kindergarten (ages 3 - 5)

Bluebell Lavender Sunflower Sweet Pea

Lower Elementary (ages 6 - 8 or grades 1 - 3)

Alpha Beta Gamma

Upper Elementary (ages 9 - 11 or grades 4 - 6)

Kappa Lambda Delta

Senior School

Sigma (Middle School) (ages 12-13 or grades 7 & 8)

Omega (High School) (ages 14-17 or grades 9 to 12)