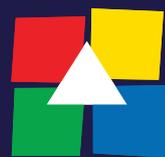




Parent Handbook

“We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity.”

Dr Maria Montessori



Forestville
MONTESSORI School

Thriving beyond...



Parent Handbook

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Welcome

We care for your children and because we care we want each and every one of them to thrive. Thriving beyond at Forestville Montessori School, affectionately known as FMS, is more than a tagline, it's a way of being, a way of doing, a way of taking every child on their own unique learning journey. Your child is important to us, central to all that we do. Your hopes and desires for your child matter to us. Your daily dilemmas as a parent are shared with us so we work together to find the best possible solutions. We might not always get that right but in our experience, it's all in the partnership, something called the Montessori triangle that is the meeting of minds between parents, students and the school.

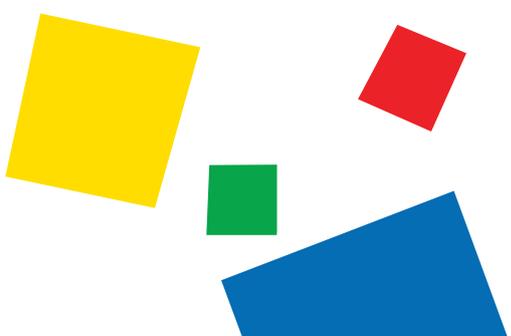
As new parents, you join the journey too.

We're excited to travel with you on your family's Montessori journey. We're grateful that after much consideration, you have entrusted the education of your children to us. We don't take that responsibility lightly. We can't wait to get to know every new student in a truly meaningful way. We call each other by our first names. We greet each other in the morning and afternoon. They're simple acts that make all the difference.

A warm welcome to your family from the FMS family.



Denice Scala
Principal



Our Identity

We are a Montessori School educating children for life and for peace.

“I beg the dear all-powerful children to unite with me for the building of peace in Man and in the world.”

Dr Maria Montessori

Our Vision

To be the launchpad for every child to lead a fulfilling life.

Our Mission

To provide an exemplary Montessori education for all children by

- Presenting an enriched, intentionally prepared environment that embodies Montessori principles
- Nurturing individual growth and development
- Fostering independence, self-discipline, personal and social responsibility
- Enabling natural curiosity to thrive and develop into a love of learning
- Designing learning that promotes a child's own explorations, discoveries, imagination and creativity
- Making positive contributions to the world beyond school



Our Values

Our core values inform all that we do from our day to day practices to our decision making and long-term thinking, at every level of our school.

“Character education cannot be taught. It comes from experience and not from explanation”

Dr Maria Montessori

RESPECT

Acknowledging, accepting and celebrating others' differences

RELATIONSHIPS

Bonding with others, conducting ourselves with dignity and sincerity

INTEGRITY

Knowing right from wrong, taking responsibility for our actions

SCHOLARSHIP

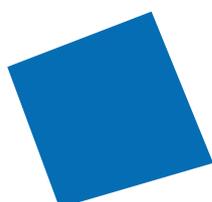
Competent, confident and smart thinking that leads to empowered, capable doing

CITIZENSHIP

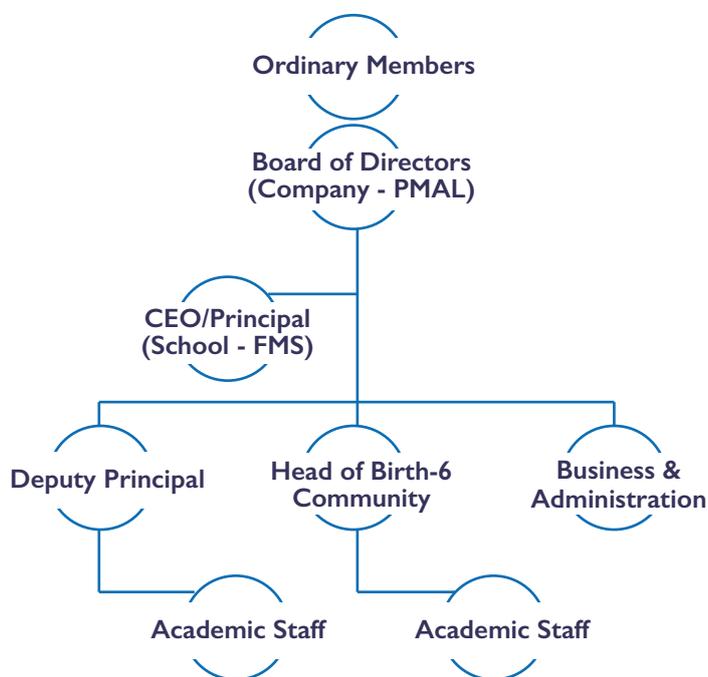
Seeking ways to contribute to society locally and globally

COMMUNITY

Sharing a sense of belonging by connecting and collaborating



Our school structure



Forestville Montessori School is operated by the Peninsula Montessori Association Ltd (PMAL) (ABN 77 002 057 025) which was incorporated under the Companies Act (1961). It is a non-profit company limited by guarantee. A new Constitution was passed in 2019 that sets out all the terms for PMAL including membership. A copy of the Constitution is held in the School Office.

Ordinary membership of one parent per child attending FMS is voluntary under the Constitution and it confers the right to one vote at any Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting, and to stand for election to the governing Board. A Member is not entitled to vote or to be counted in a quorum unless all tuition fees and other debts to the Association owed by the Member have been paid.

PMAL is administered by a Board of Directors comprised of a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 7 interested people elected by the ordinary members of the Company at the Annual General Meeting. Members of the Board hold office for a term of three years and can be re-elected up to a period of 9 years.

The Board ensures that PMAL and the school operate within the dictates of its Memorandum and Articles of Association and Constitution and is accountable to the members. The Board's main functions are to set PMAL policies in conjunction with the CEO/Principal, to oversee the management of the company, oversee the driving of the 2023 Strategy and to organise fundraising.

The School Principal/CEO is employed by the Board of Directors and is responsible to the Board for the overall administration and operations of the school and for setting and carrying out school and educational policies and procedures. The Principal is the philosophical leader of the school. The Principal is an ex-officio member of the Board.

Beyond Today - Our Strategic Plan 2018-2023



www.forestvillemontessori.nsw.edu.au

Joining a Montessori Community

This is a very exciting time for your family. What a wise choice you have made to give your child the gift of a Montessori education. You are joining a worldwide group of schools who believe in education for life and education for peace.



Our Staff

We like to think of FMS as a family. Our staff will always welcome you and go out of their way to make you feel at home.

Our educators are highly qualified. We seek to employ educators who are first and foremost passionate and compassionate people who love working with children. Ask them to talk about Montessori and you better have a good few hours set aside to engage in a deep and meaningful conversation because they are Montessorians through and through.

We value our staff. We show our appreciation to our staff by respecting what they do and ensuring they are properly resourced in the Prepared Environments. FMS is a signatory to the Multi-Enterprise Agreement for Independent Schools NSW/ACT Standards Model for Teachers.

Our educators are supported by the expertise of an Administration team. We structure the Administration Team's roles so they can take as much administration away from the educators as possible. This means our educators can concentrate on your children.

FMS is a signatory to the Independent Schools NSW (Support and operational staff) Multi-Enterprise Agreement.



Staff Professional Development

Along with our weekly staff meetings, we provide opportunities for staff to participate in professional development. Attending events, observing in other Montessori schools, participating in workshops or further study are all encouraged. In addition, ten days across the school year are 'student free days'. These are listed in the annual calendar. These days are highly beneficial because it means we can bring all the staff together to concentrate on curriculum design, the Prepared Environment and conduct discussions that benefit your children. Whole school in-service of compliance (for example anaphylaxis and child protection training) are also held on these days.

Community Team

The Community Team plays a vital role in partnership with the school to continually enhance community building at FMS.

Community engagement and relationships between parents and staff are one of the many valued aspects of FMS.

The Community Team organises regular meetings and liaises with the Class Parent Coordinator who also attends the Community Team meetings. The Community Team Leader plays a key role in planning events for each year. She/he liaises with the Stakeholder and School Relations Coordinator to align all events and activity to the School's strategic direction. It's an exciting role, inspiring the work of the Class Parent Coordinator, Class Parents and the Community Team. The Board of Directors receive regular updates from the Community Team.



Class Parents

Class Parents play a vital part in partnership with the School, to continually enhance community building at FMS. Community engagement and relationships between parents and staff are a valued aspect of FMS.

The role of a Class Parent is rewarding and a great way to forge networks with parents in your child's class as well as across the school.

A Class Parent acts as the liaison person between your child's Director and disseminates information to the families in each class. They help facilitate social events with the aim of bringing the community together.

If you are keen to support the school community in this special role, please let our administration team know.



Expectations of a Montessori Community

In a Montessori school the interrelation between child, parent and teacher is seen as essential to building a dynamic community. Here are a set of “roles” that Forestville Montessori School encourages to help guide the building of this community.

Child's Role

- To respect the rights of the group and the other individuals in the environment
- To experience his/her own life and draw his/her own conclusions
- Through the prepared environment the child will be led naturally to work. Work being the task of the human being to master the environment and later adapt and transform society
- Through his/her work the child will develop the responsibility that accompanies the freedom to choose his/her own direction

Teacher's Role

- To follow the child's interest and needs
- To prepare an environment that is educationally interesting and safe
- To lead the child to discover his/her own truth and develop his/her own abilities
- To observe, analyse and provide materials and activities appropriate for the child's sensitive periods of learning
- To maintain communications with the parent on a regular basis

Parent's Role

- To be sensitive to the needs of the child
- To see the child as having infinite possibilities to learn
- To allow the home environment to be a learning environment
- To limit negative and/or excessive stimuli in a child's life
- To provide healthy, nutritious food and where possible with children assisting with food preparation.
- To agree to communicate with the teacher on a regular basis
- To be involved with and assist the classroom teacher when and wherever possible
- To nurture and encourage your child to be the best person he/she can be
- To revel in the joy of your parenting journey

Settling your child into FMS

Joining a Montessori school for the first time is an exciting time in your child's development and education. For some children joining the Toddler Community or Pre-Primary (3-6) can be a period of anxiety due to separation from parents, home and regular routines. It is our aim to make this transition into our Montessori environment one where the child feels safe, secure and connected. On the very first day your child is introduced to our friendly staff, daily routines, the structure of the prepared environment, and their fellow students. Over the coming days and weeks your child is shadowed by the class Director who gently guides them to purposeful work and engagement with the Montessori materials.

Parents may also experience a sense of loss of closeness, control and intimacy. This is normal as you have been your child's first educator. As your child becomes ready for school, they also become ready to embrace experiences away from their parents. They are embarking on their important journey of acquiring independence and parents are honoured to support them on this journey. Parents are encouraged to ensure goodbyes are cheerful and as short as possible. Moving away from the classroom quickly allows a child time to reorientate to the classroom community, without the lingering, and often painful, separation experience.

In order to facilitate a smooth transition for younger children:

- Keep daily routines exactly the same, to support their sense of order. Young children are in a sensitive period for order. Going to school and separation from one's parents is a huge change, so keep everything else constant. Continue to tell your child the night before what they may expect the next morning, down to the finest detail: "I will hug you and say goodbye, then your teacher will say good morning and shake your hand."
- Complement their Montessori school experience with a Montessori home experience – giving them choices and independence. The freedom to choose work in a Montessori classroom is completely different from the structure of a regular classroom. It may take time for a child to adjust to the freedom within limits. At home, do not replicate the classroom, but provide experiences that are real, purposeful and develop independence, "help me to do it myself" is a motto to follow. Simple tasks provide children with freedom within limits but in very practical and authentic ways:
 - Choosing own clothes and getting dressed/ groomed independently
 - Having access to a few quality toys and knowing where to return them to
 - Letting them prepare their own snacks
- Acknowledge their fears and tears. Crying is perfectly normal and healthy. Instead of brushing it aside, try to acknowledge it but also realise there is a fine line between validating their fears and unknowingly encouraging them to dwell on it, which isn't healthy either.



- Keep the separation short and cheerful. Make the separation more painless with a quick and upbeat goodbye. Dragging it out makes it worse and gives the child more chance to enter a meltdown, which is hard to arrest when it's at full-blown proportions.
- Remind your child that you will come back. It need not be said in such a direct way. You can also include in your summary of the next morning's routine what you will do after picking your child up from school. This is not a bribe or reward, but merely part of the order of your day: "after school, we will go to the supermarket to buy dinner". In that sense, the child has something to look forward to and knows you will return.
- After school, resist the urge to bombard your child with questions. For if you ask, "what did you do?", your child will probably say, "nothing". Instead, tell your child about your day. Your child will tell you about their day in their own time.

For those older students joining the Lower Primary (6-9) or Upper Primary (9-12) for the first time from a more traditional setting can also feel anxious and unsure. On their very first day your child is introduced to fellow students who will mentor them over the following weeks. Our friendly staff will also introduce them to daily routines, the structure of the prepared environment, and lessons with their fellow students. Over the coming days and weeks your child is guided to collaborative and purposeful work and engagement with the Montessori materials and lessons.

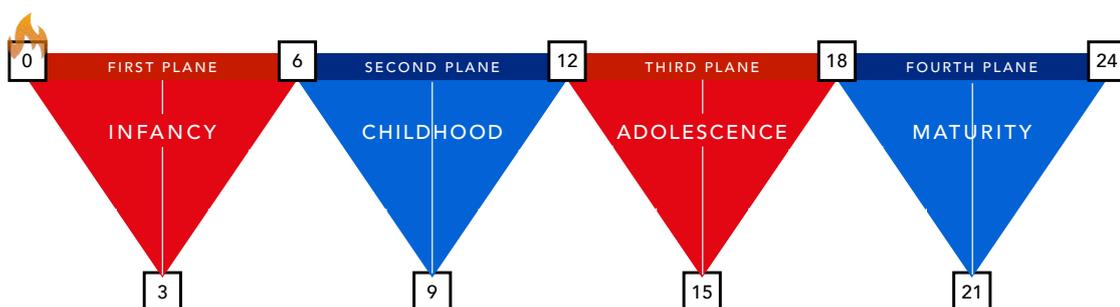
Key Elements of Our Montessori Philosophy

The Planes of Development

Maria Montessori based her entire educational philosophy on the idea that children developed through a series of four planes. Each of these planes is easy to recognise and has clear, defining characteristics. If we study and understand these stages, we can approach our interactions with children with a new perspective.

FOUR PLANES OF DEVELOPMENT

THE CONSTRUCTIVE RHYTHM OF LIFE



The First Plane: Birth-6 years

During this stage children absorb everything like sponges. They are, indeed, excellent examples of what Montessori called 'The Absorbent Mind.' This is a time in which we are able to utilise what Montessori called sensitive periods of learning. While each child is different, there are typical patterns that emerge in regards to brain development and general readiness to learn particular skills.

During the first three years of this plane, all learning is done outside of the child's conscious mind. They learn by exploring their senses and interacting with their environment. During the second half of the plane, from about 3-6 years, children enter the conscious stage of learning. They learn by using their hands, and specialized materials in the Montessori classroom were developed with this consideration.

During this time, children have a wonderful sense of order. They are methodical and can appreciate the many steps involved in practical life lessons in their classrooms. The organisation of the works on their classroom shelves is intentional, which appeals again to this sense of order.

The first plane is a time in which children proclaim, "I can do it myself"; it is a time of physical independence.

Learning about the planes of development isn't just for Montessori educators. Understanding your child's development can help at home, too.

The Second Plane: 6-12 years

During the primary year's children begin to look outside themselves. They suddenly develop a strong desire to form peer groups. Previously, during the first plane, a child would be content to focus on their own work while sitting near others. In the second plane, a child is compelled to actually work with their friends. It is during this time that children are ready to learn about collaboration.

During the second plane there is a sudden and marked period of physical growth. This may be a contributing factor to the observation that many children of this age seem to lack an awareness of their body, often bumping into things and knocking things over. Children begin to lose their teeth around this time as well. Their sense of order and neatness tend to fade a bit during this plane.

Throughout the second plane, children's imaginations are ignited. Since Montessori education is based in reality, we find ways to deliver real information to children through storytelling and other similar methods. For example, when teaching children about the beginnings of our universe, Montessori schools use what is called a Great Lesson. The first Great Lesson is a dramatic story, told to children with the use of props, experiments, and dramatics (think: a black balloon filled with

glitter is popped to illustrate the Big Bang, with bits of paper in a dish of water used while talking about particles gathering together). This lesson is fascinating for children in the way it is presented, but gives them basic information about the solar system, states of matter, and other important concepts.

Children in the second plane have a voracious appetite for information, and are often drawn strongly to what we in Montessori call the cultural subjects: science, history and geography. While we support their rapid language and mathematical growth during this time, we are also responsible for providing them with a variety of rich cultural lessons and experiences.

It is important to note that children develop a sense of moral justice at this time. They are very concerned with what is fair, and creating the rules to a new game is often as important (if not more so) than playing the actual game itself.

This is the period of time in which children are striving for intellectual independence.

The Third Plane: 12-18

The third plane of development encompasses the adolescent years. During the second plane, children become aware of social connections, but in the third plane they are critical. During this time children rely heavily on their relationships with their peers. They feel a strong desire to remain independent from adults, although they are not quite ready to do this entirely. It is our job to find ways that allow them to experiment with independence while also providing a safe structure in which they may do so.

Children in the third plane tend to require more sleep, and they sleep later than when they were younger. They long for authentic learning experiences, and Dr. Montessori imagined just that. Her ideas of Erdkinder (children of the earth) led her to contemplate a school setting that would support children's development during this time. She imagined a farm school, in which children would work to keep the farm operational, but also contribute to planning and decision making while doing so.

During the third plane children are refining their moral compass while developing a stronger sense of responsibility.

The Fourth Plane: 18-24

The final plane is a time in which young adults are striving for financial independence. They are often living away from home for the first time, and use this time to figure out where they fit into their society. Many make choices to further their education and/or explore career paths.

It is during the fourth plane that people begin to develop a truer sense of who they are as individuals.

Each plane of development should be mindfully nurtured. If a child is able to experience one developmental phase in a rich and carefully prepared environment, they are ready to fully take on the next phase when it is time.

BEYOND IMAGINED GROWING PATHWAYS

Embracing

your child's individuality
while nurturing ways to explore
a deep and meaningful understanding
of the world around them.

UNDER 3 (BIRTH-3 YEARS)

There are three programs within our Birth-3 Years:

NIDO – Birth-18 months

- Our NIDO Program allows you and your child to spend time together in a beautifully prepared environment without everyday interruptions and pressures.
- Observe and learn from talented educators who are trained in the fine art of child development.
- Staff will readily answer your parenting questions about teething, feeding, sleep, separation anxiety and toileting.

Parent & Child Program – 18 months-3 years

- Our Parent & Child Program is designed to capture your child's interest and cater for their need for order, movement and language.
- Your child will be encouraged to interact with activities designed around Practical Life (care of the environment and self), Art and Music and Language.
- Your child will be assisted to become independent.

Toddler Community – 2-3 years

- Our Toddler Community Program is where children attend without their parents as their independence has started to grow.
- Your child will enter an emotionally predictable and stable environment based on order.
- Your child will join a community, spending time with a regular group creating a sense of belonging.
- Our environment is organised into five areas: practical life, language, fine-motor activities (which we call manipulatives), self-expression and gross motor.



BEYOND INSPIRED **ED** HARNESSING CURIOSITY

Seeking

adventures to ignite your child's natural curiosity, energy and joy for lifelong learning.

PRE-PRIMARY(3-6 YEARS)

Between the ages of 3-6 years, your child has extraordinary powers of mind, Dr Maria Montessori called this stage in your child's life the 'Absorbent Mind'.

Our purposefully designed rooms are set up to support your child's love of learning, allowing them to move, touch, manipulate and explore through five distinct areas: Practical Life, Language, Sensorial, Mathematics and Cultural Subjects.

PRACTICAL LIFE

- Providing a connection between your child's home life and school, giving them the chance to practice activities they have likely seen you do many times before – such as sweeping a floor or watering plants.
- Helping your child learn to care for themselves and others leading to responsibility, self-respect, respect for others and for the environment.

LANGUAGE

- The gift of language is so important, we encourage your child's joy of learning language to grow and develop as they explore their surroundings each day.
- Your child will develop pre-reading, reading, writing, literacy and verbal skills through their daily discoveries and experiences.

SENSORIAL

- The sensorial area of the classroom appeals to the child's five senses, stimulating them to explore the environment to develop discrimination, order, refinement of movement and concentration.
- Sensorial materials form the basis for mathematics, language and the arts.

MATHEMATICS

- Our traditional Montessori materials will help your child discover and understand mathematical and geometrical concepts.
- Your child will be encouraged and supported in further understanding higher mathematical skills, problem solving and reasoning.

CULTURAL SUBJECTS

- Your child will enjoy activities in biology, history, geography, science, art, music and drama, broadening their understanding of the world around them.
- Our school is very culturally diverse across all programs helping to develop the appreciation and acceptance of all cultures within your child.



BEYOND ENGAGED CAPTURING ENTHUSIASM

Offering

your child hands-on, self-paced, collaborative learning. We explore individual interests to enable ongoing positive engagement and enthusiasm.

LOWER PRIMARY (6-9 YEARS)

Each stage of your child's life indirectly prepares them for the next. Our Lower Primary 6-9 Program has been closely integrated with our Pre-Primary 3-6 Program ensuring a smooth transition for your child.

Our classrooms support the development of intellect and mental independence that your child will be experiencing during this stage.

- New materials are introduced as your child moves toward more abstract thinking, expanding their imagination to embrace concepts larger than their immediate environment.
- We support your child's developmental needs by allowing them the time to research, collaborate with others and discover solutions for themselves in a dynamic environment.
- Our teachers will help your child follow their interests and passions by facilitating the discovery process. Your child will have the opportunity to pursue their interests in all curricular areas – developing concentration and thinking skills.
- During this stage of life, your child is becoming more idealistic and will begin the process of understanding justice and developing compassion for others.
- Studies in this program include mathematics, science, geometry, language, history, geography, biology music and art.
- Our Lower Primary 6-9 Program is registered with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).
- We also follow the Montessori Standards with rigorous academic expectations and scope for deeper understanding of concepts.
- We like to challenge our students to go beyond the NESA standards.



BEYOND ACCOMPLISHED EXPANDING HORIZONS



Playing

to your child's innate strengths
- regardless of their age or abilities -
without competitive pressure.
We cultivate thinking outside the box.

UPPER PRIMARY (9-12 YEARS)

As your child transitions into our Upper Primary 9-12 Program, they develop more abstract thinking, beginning to rely on the work and knowledge that they acquired during their time in our Lower Primary 6-9 Program.

This is a time when your child becomes a stronger independent learner, refining skills and building their inner code of ethics and moral order. It is a time of exponential growth much like the period from Birth to age 6.

- Our Upper Primary 9-12 classroom is designed to keep your child's spark for learning alive, providing areas for individual and group projects, a classroom library, and materials suited to guide and support autonomy.
- Your child will be provided with many opportunities to venture into the community. This approach to education develops a feeling of connectedness to all humanity and encourages your child's natural desire to make positive contributions to the world in which they live.
- Studies in this program include mathematics, science, geometry, language, history, geography, biology music and art.
- Our Upper Primary 9-12 Program is registered with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).
- We also follow the Montessori Standards with rigorous academic expectations and scope for deeper understanding of concepts.
- We like to challenge our students to go beyond the NESA standards.



Pedagogy - Teaching and Learning Practices

Drawing on more than one hundred years of experience and sound methodology, Montessori educators identify stages of physical, psychological, intellectual and social development, and prepare learning environments and curriculum content suitable for each stage. This knowledge, combined with the teacher's observations and record-keeping, enable Montessori teachers to design lessons that meet the needs of individual children in the Montessori environment at any moment in time. It also allows for child input and ownership of their learning, and becoming part of the assessment process. In this way the Montessori curriculum is matched to the readiness and interest of individual children, rather than expecting children to adapt themselves to the curriculum. The teaching and learning practices that result is distinctive.

Independence

We believe that nurturing this valuable character trait is both empowering and necessary.

Benefits of Cultivating Independence

In short, giving a child the gift of independence lets them know we value them and know they're capable. Children can grow up feeling empowered and safe in their abilities to make sound choices. When we trust them, they learn to trust themselves, ultimately becoming happy and productive members of their communities.

Of course, this looks different at different ages. Children birth to age six want to do things by themselves, while primary aged children want to think for themselves. Adolescents seek both physical and social independence while they tread the waters between childhood and adulthood.

“Independence is not a static condition; it is a continuous conquest, and in order to reach not only freedom, but also strength, and the perfecting on one's powers, it is necessary to follow this path of unremitting toil.”

Dr Maria Montessori

Learning without limits

Students study both broadly and deeply, covering many subjects not always offered in conventional schools. Because we do not adhere to a rigid schedule that the whole class must follow, children can focus intensely on chosen work, with minimal interruption. At the same time, she will collaborate with her teacher to ensure that work is challenging and purposeful and that basic standards are always met. In this way, the teacher is in charge of the minimum scope of work for example all syllabus outcomes but the student is in charge of the maximum.

In the Children's House children tend to work alone (Early Stage 1) as they construct themselves as individuals. When they begin to prefer working in a cooperative manner with other children, it is a sign that they are beginning to take on the characteristics of children ready for the classroom for six to nine-year olds (Stage 1 & 2). From six to twelve years (Stages 1, 2 & 3) of age children spend a great deal of time working together with others. It is a time when they are learning how to be part of a group and how to work as a team.

Choice

A broad range of concepts and activities are introduced in individual and small group lessons. The real learning however, occurs through independent activity when students explore it, repeat it and perfect it.

Child-centred

Unlike conventional classrooms, where all children are expected to pay close attention to the teacher, our program at FMS does the opposite – the teacher is trained to closely observe children's interests, tendencies and needs. You won't see the teacher standing at the front of the classroom at a whiteboard but rather down at the children's level engaged with individuals or small groups.

In the Children's House (Early Stage 1), most lessons are given to individuals or small groups. In a multi-age setting this means that younger children have many opportunities to observe lessons presented to older children and the follow-up work done by the older children after the lessons. By the time the younger children are ready for these lessons, they are already familiar with the materials and the activities.

Hands on Materials

The scientifically designed Montessori materials help children learn through hands-on use and exploration.

Through continued and connected use across age groups, children develop a concrete understanding of abstract concepts, providing a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

The children learn how to use the Montessori materials by watching the teacher demonstrate their use in an exact and precise way. When the children use the materials in the way that shows they understand how to proceed, they are able, through their own work, to discover the concepts inherent in the materials. In this way the children construct their own knowledge and understanding.



One size does not fit all

Instead of top down curriculum based upon age, the teacher is trained to respect a student's unique potential and connect her with the lesson best suited at that precise moment of development. Students are challenged according to their ability, not to generic standard.

Essential skills for a successful life

Our curriculum is designed to help every student become their best self. Through 'Grace and Courtesy' activities in the Children's House and our Peace curriculum, children help to solve conflicts, how to act politely in social situation and how to be kind and helpful to others.

Engagement is essential

Real learning occurs when children are engaged. We champion curiosity and encourage children to explore topics of interest and concepts to a level of detail only limited by their imagination.

Learning in context for deeper understanding

Unlike a conventional program with a separate time of the day for each subject, we aim to help our students gain a much deeper understanding of concepts by learning in context. The starting point for all units of work is "The Great Lessons," these impressionistic and scientific stories present students with 'the big picture' of astronomy, earth, science, geography, physics, biology, history, anthropology, culture and social studies, language, math, music and art. Meaningful learning happens when children understand the 'why' as much as the 'what' – and are inspired to learn more on their own.

In all Montessori environments, for all ages and stages, the activities demonstrated or offered by the adult are open-ended. Children are then free to repeat any activity until an inner satisfaction is achieved. Children over the age of six usually repeat with plenty of variation and by augmenting the activity. This may result in a 'great work' that gives children of this age a feeling of great accomplishment and satisfaction.

Achieving a state of 'flow'

We believe that students do their best work when they are given long blocks of time and are not interrupted. This is why our school day consists of long, open-ended periods that respect a child's curiosity and concentration. Students are free to move around the classroom and often stimulated not just by the lessons they receive but by each other.

Learning as its own reward

We have high expectations of our students, and believe that rewards and punishments appeal to the lowest levels of intellect. Given a sticker, a child will do her best for a few minutes. Given experiences that help her to believe in herself and her abilities, she will do her best for a lifetime.

Assessment In Montessori Schools

Let's define assessment...

Merriam-Webster defines assessment as:

“the action or an instance of making a judgment about something: the act of assessing something”.

If we take a look at the evolution of the word itself, we find that assess comes from the Latin word *assidere*, which means ‘to sit beside’.

While any type of assessment is a means of judging progress, Montessori teachers take the Latin root to heart. We literally sit beside the child, observing and assessing as we go.

While there are many different forms assessment can take, most of them can fit into two main categories: formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment happens while the teaching and learning is taking place. This is the type that Montessori teachers rely heavily on. It allows teachers to shift gears mid-lesson and to get an instant record of how a child is doing with a particular skill at any given moment. Summative assessment is more like your traditional test at the end of a unit, or a major standardized test at the end of the year. These tests are typically data collection points and are often used mostly by the adults and not to give feedback to the student.

How do Montessori teachers track progress?

Notes. Notebooks full of thoughtful and detailed handwritten notes. At least that's the traditional way of recording progress. FMS has now shifted over to a digital platform called Transparent Classroom. It caters specifically to Montessori schools and we have combined this approach with the outcomes from the NSW syllabus documents. FMS has programmed Transparent Classroom at particular points to highlight the child's knowledge and learning taking place.

Montessori teachers are masters of observation. They think like scientists and spend lots of time sitting back and quietly watching the children at work. When they're not giving lessons, they're observing. They write all these observations down and then review them later to help decide what lessons to revisit, what new materials to present, or even what parts of the classroom environment need attention or change.



How is mastery evaluated?

Often, mastery is evaluated while the teacher is giving a lesson. Montessori developed a fascinating tool called the 'three-period lesson'. When a teacher is presenting new material to a child, they may only present the first period, or the first two, depending upon how the child reacts to the work during the lesson. When the teacher suspects mastery, the third period portion will be given. There is a certain amount of variation depending on the subject matter, but the general pattern is as follows:

1. **First Period:** "This is ____."

The teacher introduces the skill. If the child is to learn the parts of a mountain, the teacher may say, "This is the summit. The summit is the highest point of a mountain." A visual will be presented along with any other supporting materials.

2. **Second Period:** "Where is ____?"

The teacher provides part of the information and asks the child to identify the rest. For example, the cards highlighting the various parts of the mountain may be laid out and the teacher asks the child to point to each defined part in turn. "Where is the summit?"

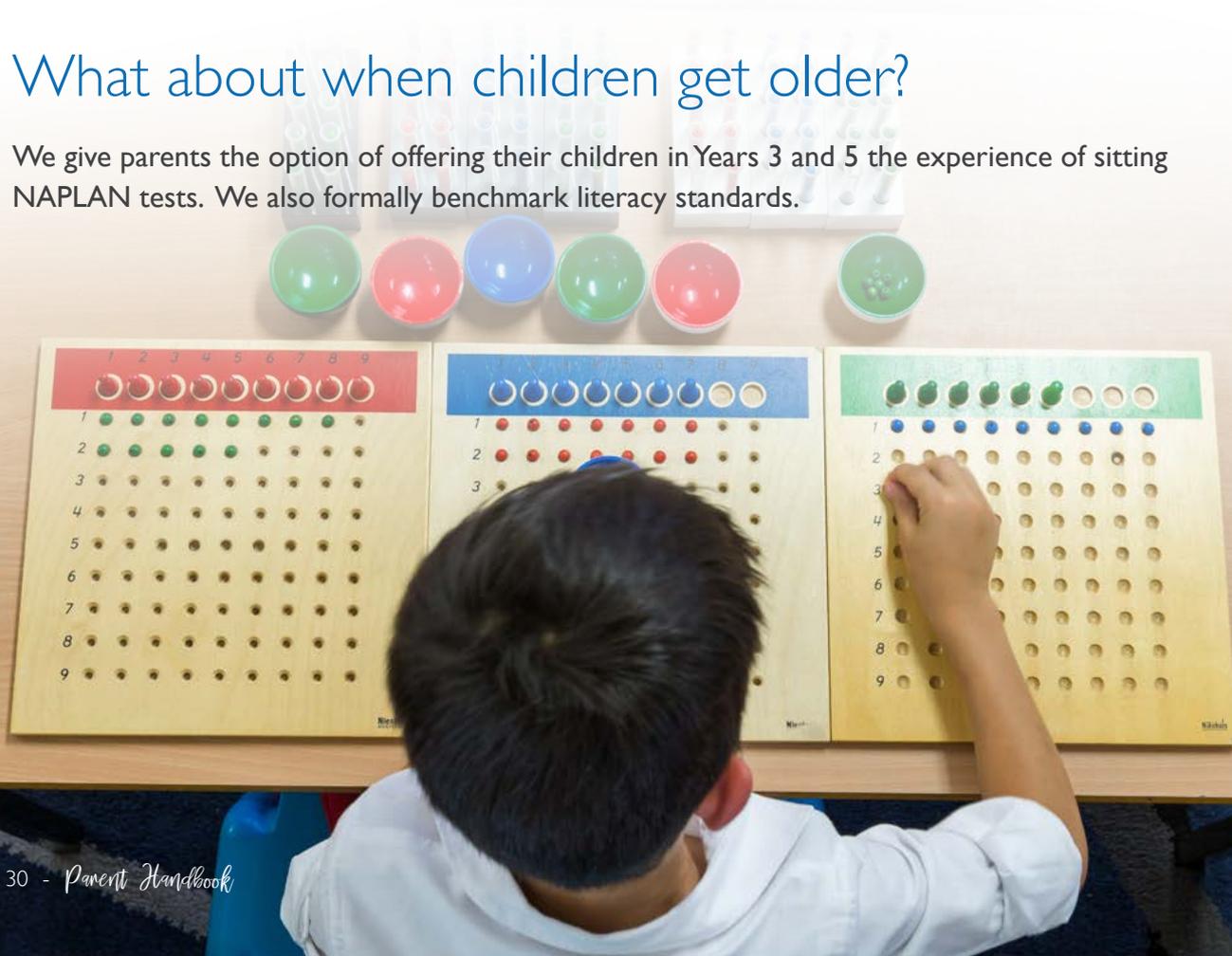
3. **Third Period:** "What is ____?"

The teacher is determining whether the child can independently recall the information. The mountain cards are now laid out without any labels, and the child must identify the parts without any cues. "What is this part?"

The best part? Because of the beauty of the materials and the tone of the classroom, the child perceives this as a sort of game rather than a test to be dreaded.

What about when children get older?

We give parents the option of offering their children in Years 3 and 5 the experience of sitting NAPLAN tests. We also formally benchmark literacy standards.



A note about self-assessment

Montessori classrooms are not just designed for teachers to assess the students, but also for the students to assess themselves. This is done in two main ways.

Most Montessori materials are autodidactic, that is they are self-teaching. They have been intentionally developed in such a way that the child cannot complete the work incorrectly, or there is a built-in means for them to check their own work. This looks different at the different levels and is best understood by visiting a classroom to observe, which we always encourage parents and prospective parents to do when they are curious. When given a lesson on how to use a material correctly, the children learn about these built-in tools and how they can use them to guide their work.

Secondly, Montessori students are taught to be reflective. As they get older (typically primary and above), individual meetings with their teacher give them the opportunity to be an active participant in planning their own education. They are not told what they must do, but they are asked how they plan to accomplish specific goals. Some of these goals are set by the teacher but others are set by the child. When needed, teachers will give strategies and suggestions, but the hope is that eventually the child will develop more of these on their own.

The primary child's journal/diary is a written account by the child of how the child will be spending her day. As with all materials in the primary environment the child must be given a lesson on how to use this tool. The journal/diary is not a place to plan work ahead of time or to write down feelings about a certain assigned topic. It is simply a responsible monitoring of the lessons and freely chosen work that the child participates in daily.

Ideally, the child will use the journal/diary to make a record of how the child spends their time daily. This includes the date, the time work starts, the name of the piece of work/lesson, and the time it concludes. Initially, the child's journals/diaries may have the curriculum areas in the margin to prompt the child to cover all areas.

We want our children to be able to take a look at their work and evaluate it with a critical eye, while still basking in the joy of accomplishment and learning. By not passing obvious judgement in the form of grades or other traditional feedback methods, Montessori children come to see their learning as a constantly fluctuating process that they are empowered by.

If we can instil those values in them as children just imagine what they will be capable of as adults.

From the age of six children (Stage 1 & 2) in Montessori classrooms take part in regular individual conferences with the teacher. In these conferences the teacher helps children to develop their ability to evaluate and assess their own work. The last question always asked at the end of an individual conference is: 'Is there a lesson you would like to have that we have not talked about?' In this way children are helped to take ownership of their own educational process.

Observation

Montessori classrooms rely heavily on the art of observation. You may see it in action some time, or you may have an opportunity to try it yourself (which we welcome and encourage!). If you ever walk past a classroom and see the children working intently, while the guide is quietly sitting in a corner with a clipboard, know that guide is working intently as well.

Why we do it

Dr Maria Montessori was a scientist and a physician. Her education and background helped her look at the world in a way that is different from most traditional educators. Observation of children was what inspired her work in education, and she used it to develop her methods. Not only that, but Montessori guides all over the world rely on observation to learn about their students, gain insight about developmental phases, inform our decision-making, and to assess the children's mastery of skills. So, what are the main goals of observation in the classroom?

It should feel more like you're observing a busy society at work rather than a traditional classroom lined with desks in rows.

1. Planning appropriate lessons

Montessori educators are trained to have extensive knowledge about child development. While most traditional teacher education programs require students to take a course on the topic, development is essentially the foundation of everything we do as Montessori guides. Practiced guides know so much about the behaviours of growing children that seemingly insignificant occurrences signal a transition into a new plane of development. The toddler that has mastered toileting and can be observed spending long amounts of time with practical life activities is making the transition necessary for the primary classroom. A child nearing six that has lost a tooth and seems suddenly very motivated by social interactions with their peers is moving into the second plane of development and will respond well to lessons involving storytelling and deeper information about cultures around the world. The challenge of the guide is to identify the moment when a child is entering a sensitive period; this is their development showing they are ready to learn specific skills that must be taught in a way that honours their growth.

2. Making sure the environment serves the children

While the guide's role in a child's education is important, the environment plays an even bigger role. It is the guide's job to make sure the classroom environment allows children to find what they need, feel inspired to work, fosters independence, and allows for safety and comfort. If, during an observation, it is noted that a piece of furniture disrupts the flow of movement, it will be moved at a later time. If many children prefer to work on the floor, it will be important to note whether there are enough work rugs for them all to use. If no children have used a specific material in a number of weeks, it may need to be reintroduced or removed from the shelf. Each item in the classroom must be placed intentionally and with a specific purpose in mind. If it is no longer serving its intended purpose, reflection and a solution are required.

3. Assessment of skills

The word assess is derived from the Latin form to sit beside. Montessori schools do not determine mastery with the use of tests, but rather by utilizing observation. Instead of giving children a piece of paper with questions on it, we watch them in action. When a child is able to independently place number tiles in random order on a hundred board, we know they have grasped the concept of ordering those numbers. A child who is able to complete complex patterns within the shape they traced using a metal inset, and who also frequently uses the sandpaper letters correctly is likely ready to learn the written formation of letters using a pencil on a piece of paper. This assessment, of course, ties back into planning appropriate lessons, as the guide has concrete information to inform their instruction.

What it looks like

1. Formal observations

A Montessori guide will likely observe in the classroom most days, or multiple guides may take turns observing. These observations typically last between fifteen and thirty minutes, but the amount of time can vary. While each guide has their own preferred method, they typically sit quietly and use a notebook to record what they observe. Children are taught about the importance of this work and they know not to disturb the adult at this time. Sometimes a guide will sit in a specific chair or use a special clipboard to signal to the children that they are working. For new guides, the temptation to intervene can be powerful, but we learn that unless a child is in danger it's often best to wait it out and see what happens. Most classrooms have a second adult that is able to redirect a child who may be overly disruptive, allowing the observing adult to continue. During this time the guide simply watches and takes lots of notes. It is important that the notes be strictly observational and that any judgement or inferencing be reserved for another time.

2. Informal observations

During the course of the work period, guides will make a great many observations in the moment. While walking across the room to retrieve something, while speaking to a child, or even whilst in the middle of a lesson, there are many helpful bits of information a guide can gather and record that will help make the children's educational experience the best it can be. As you may imagine, this results in many, many notebooks full of amazing and adorable anecdotes.

Description and Features of Our School's Structure

Multi-age groupings

Forestville Montessori School environments are prepared for multi-age groupings of children over a three-year period:

Under 3 ages 18 months to 3 years

Pre-Primary ages 3 to 6 years

Lower Primary ages 6 to 9 years

Upper Primary ages 9 to 12 years

What is the three hour work cycle?

The length of a work cycle varies depending upon the age group. Most of our classes typically have a three-hour morning work period most mornings. Some other general guidelines we follow for different age levels:

Toddler classroom 1-2 hours 3 days a week

Children's House 2-3 hours most mornings, additional time in the afternoon for 4 and 5 year olds

Lower Primary 3 hours, 5 days a week and another 2-3 hours most afternoons

Upper Primary 3 hours, 5 days a week and another 2-3 hours most afternoons

What are the goals?

When we give children this time, we do so in an effort to assist their development.

The work cycle helps children:

1. Become more independent
2. Strengthen their ability to focus
3. Find joy with the materials
4. Feel deep satisfaction with their work

What exactly do children do during this time?

While it looks slightly different at different levels, there is always some combination of most students working independently while teachers give individual or small group lessons. Great care is taken to not interrupt children while they are working, showing them the respect that this time and their exploration deserves.

In the Children's House, lessons are given mostly to individuals. Children move around the classroom selecting work of their choosing. They may work on a table or the floor, with a special rug laid out beneath them. After selecting a work from the shelves, they bring it carefully to the workspace of their choosing, and use the material as they have previously been taught. Children know they are responsible for putting the materials back neatly and selecting their next work independently. At this age, children are typically focused on their own work and may engage in what is called 'parallel play'. This can be seen as defined working and playing beside one another while focused on their own individual work.

At the lower and upper primary level, the basic structure is the same, but teachers honour the developmental need for more socialisation in children of this age. Lessons are more often given in small groups, and children prefer to work with one another. While there is a great emphasis on choice and self-directed learning, children in primary classrooms are expected to meet certain academic guidelines. For example, a teacher may require that throughout the course of the day or week, a child must do work in all academic areas. Teachers check in with students in student conferences to make sure they are meeting these goals, and gently guide them with strategies to do so.

Regardless of the level, the work cycle gives children a chance to develop autonomy, make choices, and find genuine joy in their work. Teachers hold this time as sacred, and it allows children to dive deeply into learning.



Check out this cool time lapse video that shows a four-year old's three-hour work cycle in four minutes:

<https://youtu.be/09Y-huCMjlc>

Communication

Communication channels for families

The majority of our communication with families at FMS is through our email system. We distribute regular news via our online newsletter and FMS Blog.

Our FMS Blog is where our Principal and staff share their insights into Montessori education and how it can help your child thrive beyond. The blog can be found on the FMS website.

Our school website also contains our FMS Calendar of Events page, outlining the special events scheduled each term, as well as the term start and finish dates.

Transparent Classroom is a system used at FMS by our educators helping them plan, deliver and record their daily interactions with your child. Designed by a Montessori educator, Transparent Classroom provides a new way to track the progress your child makes each day. Once we receive your consent form, you will be sent an invitation to sign up to Transparent Classroom, giving you access to your child's daily activities and achievements.

We also use social media to provide an insight into the daily events in each class, we have both Facebook and Instagram.

Communicating with families

Additional emails are sent on an as need basis. These may contain health alerts, details of special events at school or reminders about activities being arranged by our Community Team.

When you join FMS, you are provided your class Director's email address. Please feel free to communicate with your child's teacher via email, however, please note, they may not be able to reply to you straight away. If your matter is urgent, please either visit reception to pass a message on or speak to your child's teacher when you are at drop off or pick up.

If you provide your permission, your Class Parent will be sent your email address. They will use this to share any class/school updates with you on an as need basis.

At FMS we use SkoolBag, an app that helps you stay up to date with school events and other communication from the School.

Downloading SkoolBag

Please go through the following steps to download SkoolBag onto your phone:

1. Download SkoolBag
2. Create an Account
3. Add your School
4. Allow Notifications
5. Subscribe to Groups

Setting up your child's Xplor account

Xplor Home can be viewed as an app on your phone or tablet or on your computer. At FMS, we use Xplor for our Pre-Primary (3-6 Years) and Lower Primary (6-9 Years) and Upper Primary (9-12 Years) attendance register. Please **click here** to download a detailed manual, explaining how to use Xplor Home.

Who should parents speak to, about what and when?

Teaching Staff	Administration Staff	Leadership Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters relating to your child's education • Matters relating to your child's safety and wellbeing • Questions about events your child is involved with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day to day logistics • Attendance and absences • Leave forms • Health matters and updates • Payments for events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth to 6 Community – Emma • 6 to 12 Community – Anthony • Strategy, school leadership, management, student safety & wellbeing, staff matters – Denice • Montessori Philosophy and Teaching approaches, policy matters – Anthony & Emma • Enrolments and community engagement – Alena • Financial matters – Kirsti or Ellena • Ideas and feedback – any member of the leadership team • Any matters that have been discussed with any member of staff that are not yet resolved to your satisfaction – Denice

General principles for communication

As a Montessori school educating children for life and for peace we:

- Model Grace and Courtesy in all interactions
- Live our values of: Respect, Relationships, Integrity, Scholarship, Citizenship and Community
- Create an environment where children's safety and wellbeing are central to all actions and decision making
- Support our staff's wellbeing
- Begin with no judgement
- Work to resolve any conflict from a place of understanding and to reach a win/win solution
- An open door. We would rather you talk to us about any matter on your mind than feel unhappy.
- The playground, the carpark, the social scene outside of school is not the place that can solve any matters you would like to address. Talk to us.
- On the flip side, you can spread good news about the school all day, every day anywhere.

All staff are able to be reached via email, their email addresses can be found on our website under the 'Our Team' section. Please visit the website for these details.

Face to face

- Face to face to address any concerns is our preferred approach. We invite parents to make an appointment, as staff can be prepared for the meeting and give your matter due consideration.
- Teaching staff will contact you directly should they wish to inform you of anything that happened during the school day. We don't want any key messages lost in translation.



Social Media Usage

We are aware that a number of schools in Australia have had the unwelcome experience where members of their school community (parents in each case) used either their personal Social Media site or, in one case fraudulently set up a site in the name of the school to publish negative opinion about the school, staff, and in one case students. These were thereafter visited by a few parents who joined in and shared their own negative opinions about various school matters, decisions and personnel.

We know, that in the absence of clear thought and due care, there are many risks and unwelcome outcomes that can arise from misusing social media platforms. Often and in the heat of the moment, intentionally or otherwise people fail to consider the harm that can arise as a consequence of this misuse.

It saddens us that we must raise matters such as these with families at FMS. However, it would be remiss to think that this would never happen at FMS. It is therefore important to be proactive and share with you the position of the School in regard to any such usage (especially on a site purporting to be a School site). We view this behaviour as:

- divisive of our community;
- unauthorised by the School;
- unwelcome;
- unnecessary as the school has its own authorized Social Media Site to facilitate educational communication; and
- can raise legal issues under the **Enrolment Contract**, as well as those that may arise under **Defamation Law** or the new **Breach of Privacy** offences which came into effect this year.



Should any such action occur the School will contact parents who will be expected to immediately remove the social media posts and provide an apology to whoever is impacted by their actions.

More importantly, if you have concerns about your child's learning experiences you are encouraged and welcome to make appointments with relevant staff, including the Principal. It is very important to us, as contractual partners with you that we share the same goals for your child's learning and that we preserve and promote a strong, supportive and trusting relationship with you - our parents and families.



A Day In The Life of a Forestville Montessori Student

Before school care program

The school operates this service from 7:30am to 8:30am for the children aged 3-12 years old and for children attending the school only. There is a set fee for this service – see *fee schedule*

After school care program (3-12 year olds)

The school operates this program from 3pm-5:30pm for children aged 3-12 years of age who are currently enrolled at FMS. For children enrolled in our All Day Montessori, 3, 4 or 5 Day Program within Pre-Primary, After School Care is included. For all other children, bookings must be made in advance via your child's Xplor account.

If required, you can contact our After School Care team on 0493 216 844 or (02) 9452 2489.

Administration hours

The School Administration/Reception staff are available to answer any administrative queries or concerns between the hours of 8:00am and 4:00pm Monday to Friday. An answering machine is available outside of these hours for messages and these will be checked regularly. School entry is via the front gate.



Daily routines

School hours vary within the school to meet the needs of all age groups. Staggered arrival and dismissal times help alleviate parking and traffic issues.

NIDO / Parent Toddler – Tuesday

Class starts	9.30am
Class ends	11:30am

Toddler Program – Wednesday-Friday

Class starts	8:30am
Half day program ends	12pm
Full day program last pick up	12:15pm
Full day program last pick up	3:45pm

Pre-Primary 3-6 years – Monday-Friday (half-day)

Doors open	8:30am
Morning work cycle	8:30am – 11:30am
Lunch and play	11:30am – 12:30pm
Dismissal and last pick up	12:30pm

Pre-Primary 3-6 years – Monday-Friday (full-day)

Doors open	8:30am
Morning work cycle	8:30am – 11:30am
Lunch and play	11:30am – 12:30pm
Afternoon work cycle	12:30pm – 3:00pm
Dismissal	3:00pm
Last pick up	3:20pm

Pre-Primary 3-4 years – Monday-Wednesday & Wednesday-Friday (full-day)

Doors open	8:30am
Morning work cycle	8:30am – 11:30am
Lunch and play	11:30am – 12:30pm
Afternoon work cycle	12:30pm – 3:00pm
Pick up	3:00pm – 3:20pm
Afternoon care (optional)	3pm – 5:30pm
Last pick up	5:30pm

Lower & Upper Primary, 6-12 years

Doors open	8:15am
Morning work cycle	8:45am – 11:45am
Lunch & play	11:45pm – 12:45pm
Afternoon work cycle	12:45pm – 3:00pm
Dismissal	3:00pm
Last pick up	3:20pm



Primary School: Start and finish times

Primary school staff are on duty to supervise students in their respective 6-9 or 9-12 classroom from 8:15am. Any student arriving prior to 8:15am must attend Before School Care. Primary students are not allowed to wait outside classrooms or to be on the playground prior to 8:15am. No student is to be left unsupervised in the car park, outside the school gates or on premises.

Being on time

Primary students in 6-9 or 9-12 start their morning work cycle promptly at 8:45am. It is important and respectful that your child is at school on time. The classroom doors are open at 8:15am to allow students time to socialise, prepare and flow into their first work of the day. Typically, students entering the classroom late disrupt the harmony of the classroom environment and find it difficult to settle into their first work.

What To Bring To School

Birth-6 Students

Lunch

Starting 2020, 0-6 classes will have lunch in their class community prior to the half-day dismissal. Each child will need a healthy lunch each day. Please support children participate in the preparation of their lunch.

Dress

Support your child to choose clothing appropriate for the season. We prefer to see children dressed comfortably to enable them freedom of movement to participate in a range of gross motor activities. Look to provide clothing that supports their independence to regulate their temperature, consider your child's ability to use buttons, tight-fitting clothing, overalls etc. Each piece of personal belonging needs to be labelled to ensure they don't get lost.

Please keep thongs or shoes with lights at home. Lunchboxes, clothing items and shoes are to be free of TV/movie themes, and large corporate logos.



Classroom logistics

Please help your child to bring a piece of fruit or a vegetable each day to class to share.

Classes have family rosters to help with the demands of providing a prepared environment, thank you for your help with the laundry, shopping roster.

Drop-off and Dismissal

Doors open at 8:30am each day, please extend the cultural respect to be on time to your child's community, their educators as well as your child themselves, please make time to talk to your child's Director if you need support to be on time. At drop-off, it is a requirement that parents/guardians sign the child in to our care. We recommend to most families that a brief farewell supports children to begin their day with confidence.

Please note the time of departure on the sign-in-sheet prior to collecting your child from outside their classroom. Please be punctual and ready to receive them.

Primary 6-12 Students

End of day

The school day for primary students ends at 3:15pm Students are dismissed from their classrooms to their parents or caregivers. Students not collected by 3:30pm will be taken to After School Care.

Entering the classroom and supporting independence

Primary students meet the class adults at the classroom door. They are greeted and invited into the classroom.

Primary students are very capable, and parents are asked to ensure that their children are taking responsibility for their own belongings, including the carrying of items to and from school, clothing, making own lunches and managing rubbish.

Clothing

We do not ask students to wear a uniform. Our philosophy is to give all students an opportunity to be individuals. Please support your child in making practical clothing choices that are suitable for classroom work (at tables and on the floor) and outdoor play. A general guide is as follows:

- Strong footwear – closed in toes (no thongs or sandals)
- Sun-safe clothes that cover shoulders, back and midriff

- A legionnaire or broad-brimmed hat that protects the face, neck, head and ears. Children without hats are unable to participate in playtime or sports and can only access shaded areas. Sports caps, beanies and hoodies do not provide adequate sun protection and are not acceptable.
- Long hair should be neat and tidy, off the face and tied back
- We encourage colourful clothing, especially the primary and secondary colours.
- Plain T-shirts or shirts
- Dress or skirt – no shorter than half-way between thigh and knee
- Pants with T-shirt or plain coloured T-shirt
- No 'short shorts' with or without tights underneath
- Branded clothing, ripped or offensive wording/images on clothing, items of fancy dress (super-heroes, fantasy characters, onesies) are not considered appropriate school attire.

Clothing for Sports Days

Term 1 - Surf Safety

- Swimsuit (girls: one piece swimwear - no bikini / two piece swimwear or board shorts / boys: speedo style swimwear – no board shorts)
- Thongs or sandals
- Sun-safe clothes that cover shoulders, back and midriff
- Towel: poncho-style preferred
- Rash shirt provided

Term 2 & 3

- T/shirt and shorts
- Track top and pants in colder weather
- Joggers

Term 4 - Swimming

- Swimsuit (girls: one piece swimwear - no bikini / two piece swimwear or board shorts / boys: speedo style swimwear – no board shorts)
- Swim cap and goggles
- Thongs or sandals
- Sun-safe clothes that cover shoulders, back and midriff
- Towel: poncho-style preferred





Bags

A small or medium sized back-pack to fit water bottle, snack, lunch and personal belongings.

Please label all personal belongings.

Classroom Stationery

All stationery items are provided in the classrooms. Please do not send additional items or novelty items to school with your child as they cause distraction and disturbance in the classroom environment.

Snack and Lunch

Primary students are capable of preparing their own snacks and lunches. Parents provide the support that children need in order to have a healthy snack and lunch each day. Please ensure that your child has a water bottle and adequate food, especially on sports days, and if going to after school care.

Please refer to page 51 for our 'Nutrition / lunchbox / no nut policy'.

Please speak to your child about not sharing their personal snacks and lunches as we must be mindful that some children in your child's class may have food allergies, some of which can be life threatening.

Hats

A hat should always be kept in your child's bag. The hat must shade the face, the tops of ears and neck - caps are not accepted. Hats are worn whenever the children are outside (children without hats will have to play in the shade or under cover).

Sunscreen

Children are taught how to apply sunscreen in their classes and the daily routine includes them applying sunscreen before going out to play. If your child needs a specific sunscreen, please send a labelled bottle for their use in the classroom.

Primary (6-12) students are required to have their own personal sunscreen, roll-on type preferred.

Any requests for non-application of sunscreen should be addressed to the Principal in writing.

Attendance and Absences

Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. Parents of children from Kindergarten to Year 6 must ensure their children attend school every day. On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school.

Justified reasons for student absences may include:

- being sick or having an infectious disease
- having an unavoidable medical appointment
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
- exceptional or urgent family circumstances e.g. attending a funeral

Parents must provide an explanation for absences to the school within 7 days from the first day of any period of absence. Where an explanation has not been received within the 7 day timeframe, the school will record the absence as unjustified on the student's record.

FMS is also required to submit attendance data to the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) in two allocated terms every year.

Compulsory schooling

Parents or carers of children of compulsory school age are responsible for ensuring their child attends school every day. More information on compulsory school attendance is available at: https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/media/documents/attendance-behaviour-engagement/attendance/attendance_parents.pdf

Absentees – Toddler Community-12 Years

All children (Toddler Community-12 years) need to notify the school by 9:00am if their child will be absent for any reason. You can communicate this via the office landline, admin email or a SkoolBag absentee submission. If we have not heard from you by 9:00am we will phone you to confirm your child's whereabouts.

Late arrivals – Toddler Community and Pre-Primary (3-6)

If your child is late to class, you (or a guardian) and your child must report to reception first. A member of the Administration team will provide you with a late note. You are required to take the late note to your child's Director when dropping off at the Children's House. Directors will no longer allow students who arrive late to join their class without an official FMS late note.

Late arrivals

– Lower Primary (6-9) and Upper Primary (9-12)

If your child is late to class, you (or a guardian) and your child must report to reception first. A member of the Administration team will provide you with a late note. Your child hands the late note to the Class Director when they enter the 6-9 or 9-12 classroom. Directors will no longer allow students who arrive late to join their class without an official FMS late note.

If your child arrives independently without you and is late, the administration team will email you a late note. You are required to return the signed note back to FMS within 5 school days. Failure to return the note will result in NESA being advised that your child has an unexplained absence.

Early departures

– Toddler Community and Pre-Primary (3-6)

If you (or a guardian) will be collecting your child early (due to illness, meeting, appointment etc) you must let the office know in writing. On the day you will need to report to reception first, whereby the administration staff will record the reason and time for the early departure. You will be issued with a note which can then be taken to your child's classroom. The Director will pass your child into your care at this point.

Early departures

– Lower Primary (6-9) and Upper Primary (9-12)

If you (or a guardian) will be collecting your child early (due to illness, meeting, appointment etc) you must let the office know in writing. On the day you will need to report to reception first, whereby the administration staff will record the reason and time for the early departure. The classroom will be phoned, and your child will walk from their classroom to the office. Directors will no longer be passing children who are leaving early to their parents at the classroom door.

Signing in your child

Please **click here** for a detailed overview of how to sign your child in safely at FMS using Xplor Hub.

Requesting permission for other leave

It is important for all families to keep in mind the cumulative effects of student absence from school. For example, a student who is absent for more than 7 days every semester will miss more than a full school year over their 13 years of school, if the pattern continues.

Wherever possible, leave for reasons other than illness should be sought well in advance from the school. Please complete the extended leave form 14 days before the absence.

A certificate of approved leave will also need to be provided by FMS for any international flight departures – which may need to be sighted at the customs desk.

Logistics of your child's day

Do you need your child to catch the bus today? Do you need your child to go home with another family? Will your child be collected by a family member today? If you have any changes to your child's regular collection arrangements, we ask that all **changes be in writing to the office by 12 midday each day**. This will allow Directors to have adequate time to be made aware of all the happenings in their classroom and to be able to account for all children, at all times.

Running late for pickup?

3 to 12 year olds:

- If you (or a guardian) are running late for afternoon pick up, the children will automatically be enrolled in After School Care (ASC)
- Due to our duty of care obligations, the children need to be signed out from their classroom and taken to the relevant after school care program for their age. Once the teacher signs the child in, you will be charged the daily rate for that particular care service
- Children cannot wait unsupervised in Reception

Application for extended leave (travel)

It is now a requirement from the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESAs) for extended leave, e.g. for holidays in term time to be approved by the Principal. Parents/guardians must make requests for extended leave in writing and addressed to the Principal, with reasons for leave being submitted prior to the absence. This form is available from the front office. If a student takes an extended holiday during the school year, fees must continue to be paid as if the student were attending school. This guarantees the student's place at the school. If fees are not paid the student will be considered to be withdrawn. Only one extended leave of absence will be approved each calendar year.

Exemption policy statement and procedures

Where the parents of a student of compulsory school age seek an exemption from attendance at school or an exemption from enrolment, the school will process the parent's application in accordance with the guidelines from NSW Department of Education and Communities.

Parents/guardians will submit the application and supporting documentation, where requested, to the school principal. The school will send applications for over 100 days in a year to the Minister's delegate at the Student Welfare Directorate, NSW Department of Education and Communities. Applications for fewer than 100 days in a year will be considered by the School. The school principal will consider the application in accordance with the criteria in the guidelines

from the NSW Department of Education and Communities. Where the application is supported, the principal will provide the original exemption certificate to the parent/guardians. Where the application is not supported, the principal will notify the parents/guardians in writing of the unsuccessful outcome using the format from the guidelines. Copies of the application and exemption certificate or notification are kept on the student's file. The Minister's delegation and copies of exemption certificates are filed in the school's attendance records.

Public transport

Bus and train pass application forms are available from the office.

Primary School

The school does not supervise the arrival of students by public transport to school.

At official dismissal time 3:15pm, children are escorted to the intersection of Brown Street and Warringah Road by a staff member. The staff member will supervise the children as they:

- Walk to the bus stop outside the school on Warringah Road for those students heading to the Northern Beaches.
- Cross Warringah Road to the bus stop adjacent the school, for those students heading to Chatswood or the city.

FMS staff do not remain and supervise children as they wait for their bus. Please consider carefully whether your child is responsible enough to travel on public transport.

If your child is required to catch public transport prior to the official school dismissal time, a letter in writing must be addressed to the Principal outlining the time and reason why your child requires an early departure. Your child's departure will be recorded as a partial absence.



Health and Safety

Immunisations

Parents are required to submit a health record, along with emergency contact numbers, before their child commences school and update it, as the school requires. Under the *NSW Public Health Act 2010*, when children enrolls in the school program, parents must present an ACIR (Australian Childhood Immunisation Register) Immunisation History Statement or History Form, an ACIR Medical Exemption Form or an ACIR Interim Vaccination Objection Form to the office in order for the child to be accepted into the school.

Schools are legally required to maintain a register of the immunisation status of all enrolled children, and must upgrade it regularly.

The Health Department notes that the Immunisation History Statement:

- reminds and encourages parents to have their children immunised against diseases which can be prevented by immunisation, and
- helps identify children who have not been immunised. If there is a disease outbreak, the parents of non-immunised children will be notified and the children must stay at home during the outbreak period for their own and others' protection.

The Health Department recommends an immunisation schedule for children (Appendix D).

Infectious medical conditions

Parents must keep the school regularly informed regarding their child's health situation. This is especially important regarding any contagious disease so that other parents and children can be advised about possible exposure or risk.

Children should be kept at home if they demonstrate symptoms of contagious illnesses or medical problems and cannot return until they are well, for their wellbeing and that of the children at school. Some examples of contagious diseases are listed on the website below. Parents must be responsible to check with the health care professional or the website to determine how long their child must remain out of school. This follows State Health regulations.

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch55_staying_healthy_childcare_5th_edition_0.pdf (Table 1.1, pg 17)

Medication or illness at school

If a child becomes ill during the day, the parent or emergency contact person will be notified and will be required to pick up the child and take him/her home.

When a child is taking prescription or over-the-counter medication it is best to give the dosage



at home. If a child must take any medication during school hours, the parent must complete and sign a school medication form and give the medication directly to the director of their child's class before staff can administer the medication. The written permission must accompany the labelled prescription container, and must include specific doctor's instructions regarding time and quantity, method of administration and possible reactions/side effects, if any.

For ongoing conditions, each child must have a health management plan provided by his/her health care professional.

Families should advise the school when children have commenced treatment with a medication, the child should not attend for at least 24 hours to ensure the child is recovering and is not having side effects from the medication.

Medical treatment

If a student needs urgent hospital or medical treatment of any nature and the school is unable to contact the parent or guardian after making reasonable efforts, the parents/guardian authorise the school to give authority for such treatment. The parents/guardians indemnify the school, its employees and agents in respect of all costs and expenses arising directly or indirectly out of such treatment.

Parents are required to:

- Cooperate with the school in relation to the health of their child;
- Inform the school of their child's health care needs;
- Liaise with the school and the child's health care practitioner in relation to any medical issues the child may face and forward relevant information from the child's medical practitioner to the school;
- Provide appropriate prescribed medication and instructions for use to the school;
- Undertake to provide updated medical information to the school as it comes to hand; and
- Prepare appropriate plans for dealing with specific conditions of the student.

Nutrition / lunchboxes / no nut policy

Our school promotes good nutrition for all children. Discussions and information regarding good nutrition begins in the pre school and continue through primary.

Parents should provide healthy, well-balanced lunches and snacks for their children on a daily basis. No junk food is allowed at any time; for example, lollies, chocolate, sweet biscuits and cakes, chips, etc.

To provide a safe environment for children with severe allergies our school has a 'No Nut' policy.

All nuts and nut products are banned in the school environment for both children and adults.

Due to severe allergies, from time to time other specific categories of foods may be banned at a whole school level or in specific classes, when necessary. Parents/Caregivers will be informed when this occurs. In this way the health of all our children is safeguarded.

Important ongoing checklist health alerts/reminders for your child if required

- Has your child got an updated Asthma Plan? Also, an in-date nebuliser at school?
- Has your child got an Anaphylaxis Plan? Also, an-in date EpiPen at school?
- Has your child got any Allergies? Also, an up to date allergy plan?
- A specific health plan signed off by a medical Doctor is required, to ensure staff follow the necessary procedures to optimise our duty of care. Failure to provide the authorised plans may result in a child being unable to attend school.

Please note, as parents it is your responsibility to ensure these documented plans and resources are available and in date at school for your child's teachers.

Custody and court orders

Should the status of your child's guardianship change, you are required to provide written documentation to the School. Children will be released to both parents if we do not have an official Court Order or written consent by both parents. The School does not provide specific documentation for Court hearing outcomes unless subpoenaed to provide documents (at a fee) or to attend court hearings. It is up to the individual parent to table the information they wish the Court to have. The School will not take sides over one parent or another. Parents are responsible for signing a separated parents form to notify the School.

Student welfare and mandatory reporting

We respect and value equitable relationships with all children with a focus on positive education. As a non-government school, we must implement a child protection policy and procedure. As part of our duty of care obligations for children, teachers are mandated to report child sexual abuse based on reasonable grounds for forming a belief of child sexual abuse. Should you have any questions please direct them to your child's teacher in the first instance.

Emergencies and evacuations

In the event of an emergency you will be contacted. Parents are expected to collect their child in the timeframe provided by the School. In the event of an emergency and a child is not collected, the Police will be contacted.

Drill evacuations (fire and lock down) are routinely rehearsed every term across the school year. All children react differently to circumstances such as these. The sound of the siren and lock-down

procedures in particular can be distressing for some children.

Parents are notified via email which gives families the opportunity to emphasise that these drills will be rehearsals and will ensure that we are all prepared for safety if ever there was a real fire or other danger.

Most of all, the message we would like your children to hear is to remain calm and to follow their teacher's instructions.

Parking / road safety

Parents are asked to closely supervise children in their care by holding their hands to minimise the risk of accidents in the car park. Parents should pick up their children promptly and vacate the car park within 15 minutes to make room for others. Parents may park only in the designated parking area on Angel Place, and not in the turning circle or driveway in front of the school gates. Primary children may be dropped in the turning circle before school.

Parents are asked not to congregate outside the gate or on the nature strip on Angel Place as this is a safety hazard for parents, children, drivers and the community.

Out of respect and courtesy for neighbouring properties, parking too close to or across driveways or in 'no parking' zones are not permitted under any circumstances.

A traffic monitor is on duty during arrival and dismissal. Parents/caregivers must respect and follow the traffic monitor's instructions for safety reasons.

We would like to remind you that anyone who leaves a child or young person in a motor vehicle without proper supervision – potentially or actually causing emotional or physical harm – is guilty of an offence.

Angel Place (whilst relatively quiet) is still a road where accidents can occur. Teach your children to hold your hands (whatever age) and to always only walk across the road when you direct them to. With freedom comes responsibility. We always want your children to be safe.

Birthdays

In our Montessori classrooms, we make birthdays into very special occasions, which celebrate the child's development, and at the same time teach some meaningful lessons about the passage of time to our students. Birthdays are meant to be special, yet often the true meaning gets lost in all the presents and festivities. You'll find a meaningful and educational tradition for children – the Montessori birthday celebration, a celebration of life ceremony. The Montessori birthday celebration gives a concrete way for children to understand the months of the year and the earth's revolution around the sun each year. It also is a way for children to feel special and to connect with their place in the world.

2-3 Classrooms

In our toddler class the children celebrate their birthday in a collective morning tea. We light a candle and sing 'happy birthday' before the community enjoys a small healthy snack together.

3-6 Classrooms

In our 3-6 Classrooms young children celebrate their birthdays by walking around a candle or model of the sun with a globe in their hands, symbolic of the passages around the sun that the children have made during their lives. As they walk the class sings,

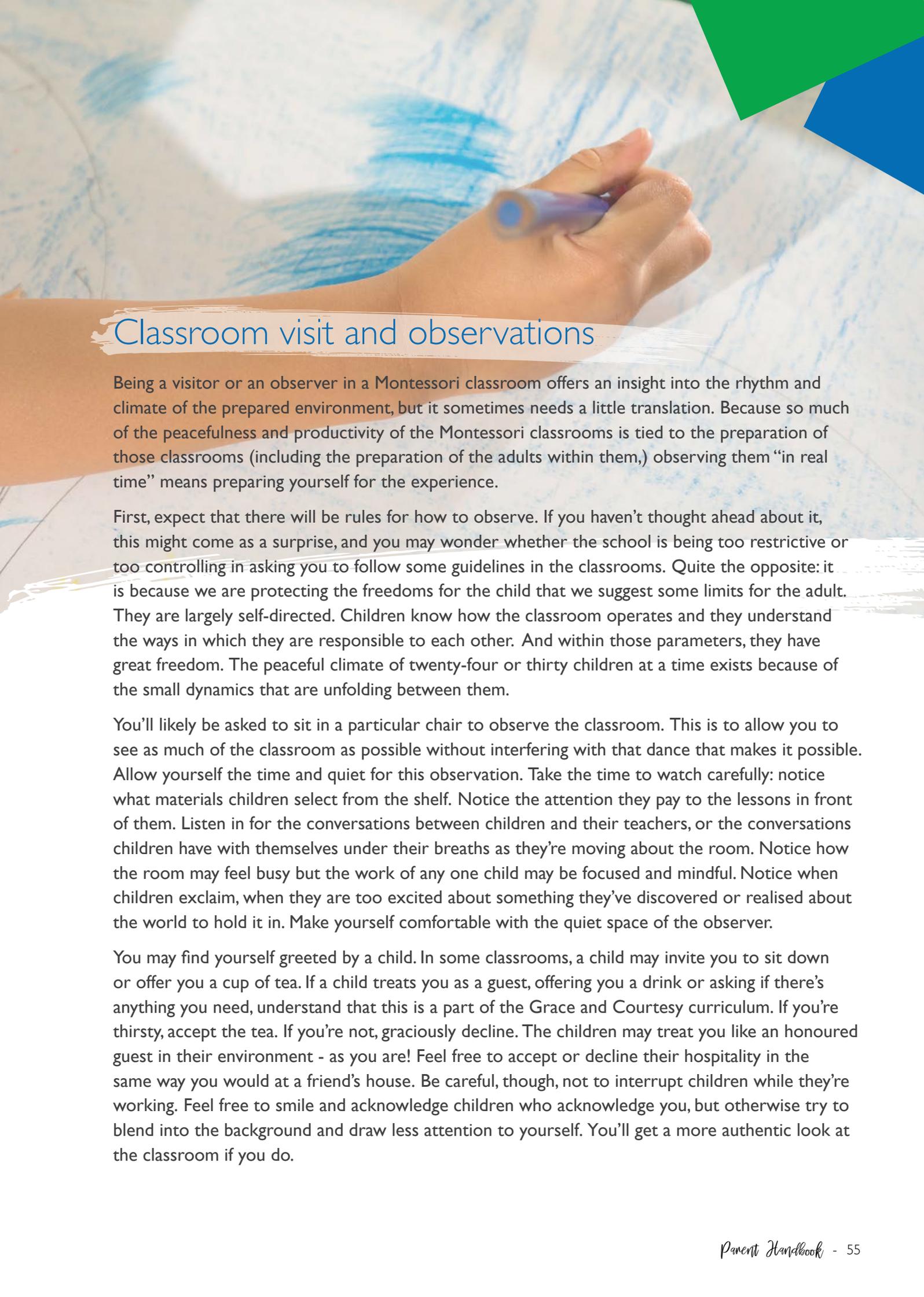
*"The Earth goes around the sun,
The Earth goes around the sun,
Once a year, every year,
The Earth goes around the sun!"*

Please talk with your child's class director as this important time for your child approaches. On the day agreed upon, please provide a photographic time line of your child's life with a photo from each year, if needed please provide some words to tell the story of your child's life. Please also provide a small healthy snack for your child's community to share. Consider if the gifting of a book to the class would assist your child to mark the occasion in a meaningful manner.



6-9 & 9-12 Classrooms

In our lower and upper primary classrooms students create their own linear personal timeline with photos they bring from home and written recount (with assistance from their parents) explaining key events in their lives. These timelines are shared with the class during a special ceremony. Students can bring a healthy snack to share with the class. Fresh fruit platters or cups are a preferred snack. Consider if the gifting of a book to the class would assist your child to mark the occasion in a meaningful manner.



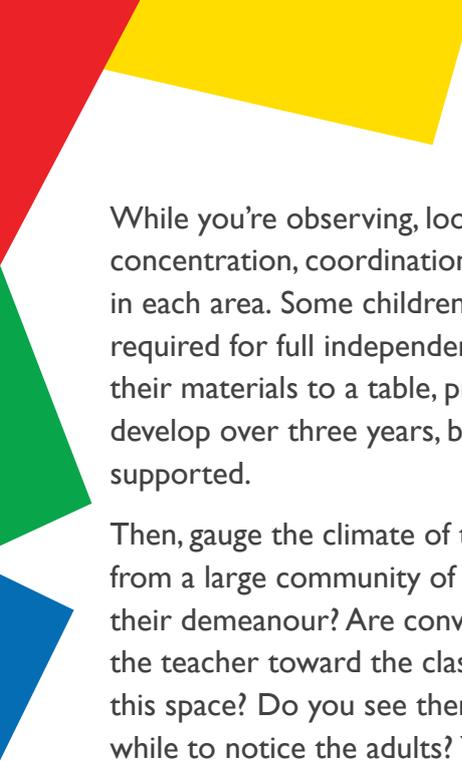
Classroom visit and observations

Being a visitor or an observer in a Montessori classroom offers an insight into the rhythm and climate of the prepared environment, but it sometimes needs a little translation. Because so much of the peacefulness and productivity of the Montessori classrooms is tied to the preparation of those classrooms (including the preparation of the adults within them,) observing them “in real time” means preparing yourself for the experience.

First, expect that there will be rules for how to observe. If you haven't thought ahead about it, this might come as a surprise, and you may wonder whether the school is being too restrictive or too controlling in asking you to follow some guidelines in the classrooms. Quite the opposite: it is because we are protecting the freedoms for the child that we suggest some limits for the adult. They are largely self-directed. Children know how the classroom operates and they understand the ways in which they are responsible to each other. And within those parameters, they have great freedom. The peaceful climate of twenty-four or thirty children at a time exists because of the small dynamics that are unfolding between them.

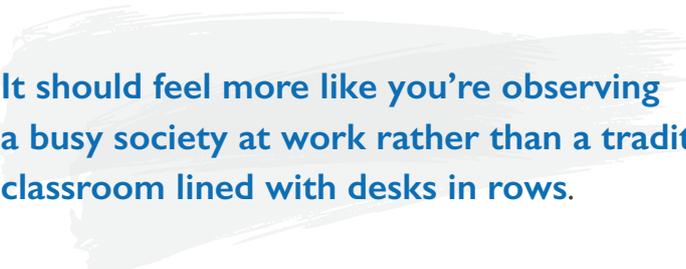
You'll likely be asked to sit in a particular chair to observe the classroom. This is to allow you to see as much of the classroom as possible without interfering with that dance that makes it possible. Allow yourself the time and quiet for this observation. Take the time to watch carefully: notice what materials children select from the shelf. Notice the attention they pay to the lessons in front of them. Listen in for the conversations between children and their teachers, or the conversations children have with themselves under their breaths as they're moving about the room. Notice how the room may feel busy but the work of any one child may be focused and mindful. Notice when children exclaim, when they are too excited about something they've discovered or realised about the world to hold it in. Make yourself comfortable with the quiet space of the observer.

You may find yourself greeted by a child. In some classrooms, a child may invite you to sit down or offer you a cup of tea. If a child treats you as a guest, offering you a drink or asking if there's anything you need, understand that this is a part of the Grace and Courtesy curriculum. If you're thirsty, accept the tea. If you're not, graciously decline. The children may treat you like an honoured guest in their environment - as you are! Feel free to accept or decline their hospitality in the same way you would at a friend's house. Be careful, though, not to interrupt children while they're working. Feel free to smile and acknowledge children who acknowledge you, but otherwise try to blend into the background and draw less attention to yourself. You'll get a more authentic look at the classroom if you do.



While you're observing, look for the keystones of Montessori education: independence, concentration, coordination and order. You should see children demonstrating varying capacities in each area. Some children may be deeply attentive, but still need support with some of the skills required for full independence in the classroom. Some may be clumsy or wobbly, but once they get their materials to a table, precise in the layout and organisation of their work. These are skills that develop over three years, but you should be able to see evidence of the ways in which they are supported.

Then, gauge the climate of the classroom. Although likely more quiet than you were expecting from a large community of children, are the children seemingly at ease? Are the teachers calm in their demeanour? Are conversations happening between people, instead of announcements from the teacher toward the class? Do you see children who seem to understand how to contribute to this space? Do you see them engaging with each other in a variety of activities? Does it take you a while to notice the adults? You should feel like you're peeking in to a community of mostly equal participants, in which any individual is moving about his or her activities, aware and attentive to their impact on the classroom, but not all at the same time or directed by an adult.



It should feel more like you're observing a busy society at work rather than a traditional classroom lined with desks in rows.

Finally, make note of the things you don't understand, and be sure to ask about them when you're out of the classroom. Are there particular materials that grab your attention? Are there interactions between teachers and children that seem interesting or curious to you? Ask questions after your visit that help you to make more sense of what you've seen.

While you can't get a complete picture of any school in a single day's observation, you can get a sense of what it might feel like to be there more often. You should use your observation to identify new questions you'd like to ask, but understand that any moment is only a single moment; begin by asking whether your observation is typical for most days in the classroom. You should be able to notice whether the contributors to that community seem at ease and comfortable. You should be able to notice whether the space seems driven by children's interests or directed by adults. And you should be able to begin to imagine your own child, despite how different things may be at home, thriving in the classroom you see. Observing in a Montessori classroom should be one of the first steps in developing an ongoing relationship with the other members of that community, a relationship that will grow and deepen as your child's influence there does as well.

Parents of enrolled children are strongly encouraged to observe in their child's classroom each academic year during Terms 2 or 3. Specific dates and times are available through the school's website. There is only enough time to schedule one observation per year per family in each class. The School will notify all parents when the online bookings are available.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to your child's classroom.

Parent/Teacher Conversations

Parent conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are held in the first and third terms. These 15-minute conferences are scheduled to discuss your child's progress. Parent conference dates are published on the Calendar of Events each year and parents reserve a time online.

Speaking with classroom Directors

Classroom Directors are generally not available before school when they are preparing their classrooms and greeting children or during dismissal when they have children in their care.

If parents have questions regarding their child's education or wellbeing the appropriate person to speak to is your child's teacher(s). Appointments are to be made directly through the teacher (Director) of the class.

Student progress reporting

Transparent Classroom (TC) provides online student record keeping for Forestville Montessori schools. With this software, our teachers are able to keep accurate records and share individual student progress directly with a child's parents.

As a necessary part of using the software, Forestville Montessori School will be collecting information about each student to track their Montessori Education (lessons, records and photos), and securely storing that information on servers located in the United States. In order for the school to use this exciting service, we obtain your informed consent at enrolment, to the collection and storage of your child's educational data and photos as part of the service.

Your child's educational journey will be recorded by our teachers and will be shared only with you as regular posts and at parent meetings as requested. You are welcome to look at the demonstration via the link <https://www.transparentclassroom.com/>

We view privacy and protection of our school's data with utmost regard, and Transparent Classroom are in compliance with the EU-US Privacy Shield, which satisfied even the updated policies of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). More specific information on how Transparent Classroom protects your child's data can be found in their privacy policy. As a necessary part of using Transparent Classroom software, please view their Privacy Policy and Security Policy.

Student Progress Reports are generated through Transparent Classroom. Reports are made available via Transparent Classroom twice a year in Terms 2 and 4.

About the written report

Our Montessori Mission is to provide an exemplary Montessori education for all children by

- Presenting an enriched, intentionally prepared environment that embodies Montessori principles
- Nurturing individual growth and development
- Fostering independence, self-discipline, personal and social responsibility
- Enabling natural curiosity to thrive and develop into a love of learning
- Designing learning that promotes a child's own explorations, discoveries, imagination and creativity
- Making positive contributions to the world beyond school.

The school report is a summary statement that shows your child's engagement with the program and records their achievements at a point in time. Our school reports your child's progress with written reports and through parent conferences twice a year. Reports are cumulative and allow parents and children to see progress over the Montessori three-year cycle in the 3-6 program, and six years in the 6-12 program.

The progress descriptors in the report are as follows:

- **New Presentation with Guided Practice**

This is an introduction to Montessori concepts, topic or material with the educator. It includes demonstrations and initial practice with materials to develop understanding of content, processes and skills.

- **Guided Practice**

This is additional support provided to the child by the educator to further develop understanding of Montessori content, processes and skills. Montessori materials are used to reinforce processes and skills.

- **Independent Practice**

This is when the student freely chooses work. This can include work with or without Montessori materials in order to deeply engage with a concept or topic. The student is able to sustain independent practice for longer periods of time without direct supervision from the educator. The student shows understanding of content and competence in processes and skills. These activities are student initiated and incorporate multiple process skills such as risk-taking, curiosity, complexity and imagination.

- **Secure and Applying**

This is when the student has thorough knowledge and understanding of the content, and competence in processes and skills. In addition, the student is able to apply this knowledge and skills to new situations. There is deep engagement with a concept or topic which includes creativity, challenges, complexity and builds on their knowledge base. These activities are student initiated, are rigorous and go beyond the initial presentations by the educator.

- **Needs More – Attention to follow-up / practice**

This is when the student has not engaged substantially with work in this area. The educator has given the initial presentation or follow-up lessons, but the student has chosen for a variety of reasons not to engage. The educator is working to support your child through this phase of learning.



Toys

We appreciate toys remaining at home. There are plenty of activities available at school, and toys can often cause a disturbance particularly if they become lost or damaged. There are exceptions and they might include staff asking children to bring an object for story-telling.

Excursions

Students' participation in experiences in the wider community is a means of reinforcing and supplementing the curriculum. Experiential learning is an integral part of Montessori Education. Regular involvement in the outside community is a major part of the primary programs.

Educational excursions and 'going out' are scheduled throughout the year in the primary program, subject to approval by the Principal.

Parents are advised of all excursions and 'going out' activities, and must give consent in writing before a student can participate.

In the preschool and primary programs an activity fee covers excursions.

Homework

Children at our pre and primary school do not receive homework assignments. Homework can be a deterrent to the child's love of learning and a source of friction between parent and child. We believe that it does not help the child to build his/her skills in time management and organisation of their own work. Montessori children concentrate very hard during school time and need time to relax and follow other interests outside of school. This does not preclude children from taking work home if they choose to do so.

Competition

Our school does not encourage competition among students in any area because it contradicts Montessori Philosophy. Montessori emphasises teamwork, development and progression at the child's individual rate, and de-emphasises comparison of work, comparison of children and winners/losers.

Transitions

As a parent, you've no doubt noticed how small changes in your child's environment can surprise them. Even we adults need to get used to changes in our lives. Our children are no different. As they transition from early childhood to primary age, they will be learning many new things about the world that require time and practice.

Parents can make these childhood transitions smooth and comfortable, helping children to gracefully, happily enter the new phase in their life that school education brings.

Here are Montessori-style ways for you to ease your son or daughter through the transitions that come naturally with moving into and then out of their preschool classroom and then into their primary Montessori classroom.

Children move first from the home into the toddler community. This can be an emotional process for both children and parents. It is important that parents hold a place of security for children during this time, collaborate with your class director to guide the process of transitioning into their new environment.

As children approach their third birthday, they will begin visits into the 3-6 preschool. Typically, the child will transition into the preschool the term after they turn 3.

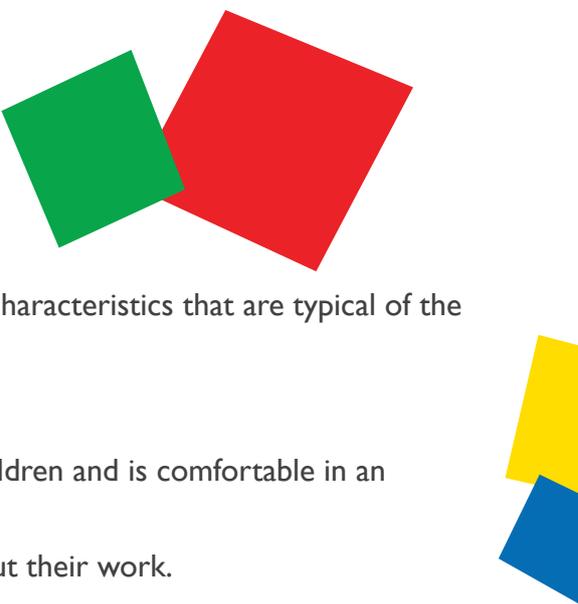
Children move from a classroom in which they are the oldest children, and into a new classroom where they are among the youngest in the room. That's a big change.

The social dynamics involved in the lower primary classroom are more complex. Your child will need to practice and experiment.

Because there is more group activity, collaboration, and new educational opportunities for children of primary school age, your child will be engaging in new ways. This can temporarily make them tired at the end of a busy, fulfilling school day. They may need a little more rest until they adjust to it all.

Children may even be uncomfortable with the changes at first. As teachers, we listen and validate their feelings, and encourage positivity. As a parent, you can do the same, supporting your child as they adjust. Most children adjust happily in no time.

Remember, too, that as your child transitions from preschool to primary school age, you as a parent are transitioning as well. You are learning to foster their growth and lifelong learning in new ways, and it is wise to give yourself the time and support to do so successfully. One way you can equip yourself to help your child enjoy success in their primary classroom is to know how Montessori techniques work, and how you can support those techniques effectively at home. We host parent education evenings every year and encourage you to come along. There is also lots of information on our website and in our blog.



Signs of readiness

Generally, the directors will notice the child's manifestation of characteristics that are typical of the plane he/she is poised to enter include:

0-3 to 3-6

- The child demonstrating a social awareness of other children and is comfortable in an environment interacting with ten or twelve others.
- The child has a desire to communicate with others about their work.
- Child is less willing to bid fond, prolonged farewells to a parent, and expresses a preference for making his/her own way to class.
- Allow the child to begin transitioning, where everyone uses the toilet independently, putting the child in underpants, the child will simply begin doing what everyone else does in this environment.

3-6 to 6-9

- The child can choose independent work, display concentration and prolonged cycles of activity/interest.
- When the receiving director notices the child becoming part of the environment the transition is almost complete.
- Child is drawn to working with others.
- Child is excited by large projects.
- Child becomes louder and more energetic.
- A focus on issues of right and wrong.
- Child asks "How?" and "Why" questions.

6-9 to 9-12

- The child can choose independent work, display concentration and prolonged cycles of activity/interest.
- May begin to experience early signs of puberty. Girls usually display signs around age 9; boys are more likely to enter puberty a bit later, around 10 or 11 years old.
- Experience a growth spurt. Child may get significantly taller and gain more weight.
- Able to persist in physical activity to reach a goal, such as when playing a game or completing a physical fitness challenge.
- May act unreasonable or rude when things don't go as planned, but is able to recognise behaviour and apologise.
- Seeks out peers to cope with uncomfortable emotions but is able to rely on own resources.
- Works cooperatively toward shared goals.
- Consistently recognised the views of other people.

Montessori Literature

To assist with parents' Montessori education, the School has a number of Montessori books in the parent library located in the Library. Books are borrowed on an honour system at no cost to parents. Parents may also wish to donate a book to our library.

Lost Property

Clothing and personal items that are named are generally returned to the child or class teacher. All items that are not labelled are placed in the Lost Property Box located outside Administration. The box is cleared at the end of each term.

Parent Information/Education Evenings

Parent information evenings are held throughout the year at the school. They are designed to inform and educate parents about the aims and methods of Montessori education. Education evenings may consist of a variety of presentations by the principal, directors, students, and outside speakers and may include question and answer sessions, demonstrations, etc. It is the responsibility of all Parents to attend these sessions and they are strongly encouraged to attend regularly.

All parent information evenings are listed on the Calendar of Events and reminders are sent by email and through the Skoolbag App for each event. Parents must RSVP as events may be cancelled if low attendance is indicated.



Financial Responsibilities

Payment of school fees

Payment of school fees is compulsory via Debitsuccess (direct debit management system) payments. Debitsuccess instalment payments can be fortnightly, monthly, or a one off payment scheduled at the start of each term. Families receiving Child Care Subsidy must however be on fortnightly Debitsuccess gap payments. For new students, the first term fees are invoiced and payable prior to commencement.

Discounts apply as follows on Pre-Primary and Primary Tuition Fees for siblings enrolled concurrently in the school:

5% for the second child

10% discount for the third child

20% discount for the fourth and subsequent children

Overseas students not eligible for any Government subsidy will be charged a higher Tuition Fees equivalent to the amount of Government subsidy available to Australian residents.

Fees, charges and other amounts are payable by the due dates as specified by FMS. If fees and charges for any students are not paid when due and alternative arrangements have not been agreed, the student may not be allowed to continue in attendance at FMS until they have been paid in full. Extra activities may not be available to students whose fees are in arrears.

The school reserves the right to recover outstanding debts through an external debt collection agency. Families shall pay all costs associated with and incidental to recover outstanding fees.

Withdrawal policy

One full school term's notice of intent to withdraw from FMS must be made in writing to the Principal. In the event that a full school term's notice is not received, a full school term's fees will be invoiced and payable.

For example, if you wish to withdraw your child for Term 3, notice must be received by the last day of Term 1, prior to school holidays. If you wish to withdraw your child from Term 1 2023, notice must be received by the last day of Term 3 2022. For the avoidance of doubt, notice given at the beginning of a Term for the subsequent term is not considered a full term's notice and a full term's fees will be invoiced and payable in lieu of notice.

Child care entitlements

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is available for families with children under 13 years of age, using FMS out of school hours care and meet immunisation requirements. This subsidy is available for out of school care for our 0-6. You must apply through Centrelink and once your application has gone through, we administer the paperwork and pass your entitlements through to you once we receive any. We are not able to estimate your CCS as this is completed by Centrelink.

Voluntary building fund

Annual fee income covers school operating costs. To assist with capital development, parents are asked to make a donation to the Building Fund each term. These donations are used for construction and maintenance of school buildings and classrooms. The donations are currently tax deductible and are revised each year along with the Tuition Fees.

Signing a Complying Written Agreement (CWA) in Xplor Home

When starting at FMS, you will need to accept a CWA for each child in Xplor Home each year. This is also required to be eligible for Child Care Subsidies (CCS). Please **click here** to download a detailed manual, explaining how to sign your CWA in Xplor Home.





Murray River

Port Moresby

Oceania



Let us take your child above and beyond

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