



Victoria Montessori Preschool

Parent Handbook

Contact Details

Victoria Montessori Preschool
1250 Highrock Ave.
Victoria, BC
V9A 4V7
e-mail: victoriamontessori@shaw.ca
website: victoriamontessori.com
phone: 250.380.0534

School Hours:

Monday to Friday

Montessori Classes	8:00 – 3:00
Learn through Play Program	3:00 – 5:00

General Policies and Procedures

Arrivals and Departures

Children will be greeted between 8:00 – 8:20 by a Directress. You are asked to make sure that your child is dropped off and picked up on time, as late arrivals are a disruption to the class routine. Being picked up on time is important for your child's sense of security. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter. To accommodate the Learn through Play program and provide an easy transition, children who are registered for the Montessori program are required to be picked up at 3:00. Those students who stay for the Learn through Play program may be picked up between the hours of 3:00 – 5:00.

You are asked to let the Directress know by a note if someone other than yourselves will be picking up your child.

Please telephone the school if you are running late to pick up your child.

Parents are not permitted to wait outside the classroom during school hours as you are likely to be seen by the children and this causes a distraction. Please drop off your child at the front door, say goodbye and leave immediately. As the classroom is the child's environment we ask that the parents and siblings refrain from entering the classroom.

Clothing and other items to bring to school

- Children's clothing should be loose, comfortable and able to be handled easily by the child when using the toilet or changing to spare clothes.
- Indoor shoes, which are kept in the child's storage area, should be light and comfortable.
- Outdoor shoes should be practical for running and jumping.
- A clearly labeled full change of clothes will be kept in your child's storage area at school.
- Please provide a labeled sun hat for outdoor activities.
- The children are expected to come to school with sunscreen already applied. If your child remains at school until 5:00, please provide labeled sunscreen to be reapplied for late afternoon outdoor play.
- A nap bag and fitted sheet will be provided to your child. Your child may bring a small blanket to be kept in the nap bag if desired. Once a week the nap bags are sent home. Please launder the contents and return the next school day.

Food

- The school provides a morning snack, which consists of fresh fruit or vegetables, cheese and crackers. The children are free to go to the snack table anytime during the morning work period. They serve themselves, eating either alone or with a friend.
- Drinking water is available at all times. Please provide a glass to remain at school for your child's daily use.
- Please provide a healthy, nutritious lunch in reusable containers. All children are supervised during lunch and any uneaten food goes back in the box so that parents can monitor their child's intake.

Bringing belongings into the classroom

- Cut flowers are welcome in the classroom any time. The children use the flowers for an exercise in flower arranging to beautify their environment.
- Children are welcome to bring items in the classroom for language discussions for example, shells, seeds, nests, books, etc.
- Children are asked to leave their toys and treasured personal possessions at home.

Taking materials home

- Occasionally, children will return home with something that belongs to the classroom. Even the oddest shaped piece of wood could be important, as it could be a country from a puzzle map or a piece from the pink tower, so please return to the directress.
- In a Montessori school you may find that your child does not have much, or even any paper work to take home. This is due to the fact that many activities your child completes does not involve paper. The work is done with specially designed hands-on Montessori materials. Much of the paper work is an extension of a material or a final record of an idea. It is the process of learning that the child goes through that is important, not the finished product. The children take work home daily, however it is always the child's choice to take work home, give it to a friend or leave it at school.

Changes in behaviour

Please let your child's Directress know of any significant change in behaviour or circumstances at home. Common causes of childhood distress include parents being away from home, parent illness, moving house, or death of a pet.

The home environment

The child's home is the most important learning environment. It is suggested that parents incorporate the goals and attitudes of the Montessori philosophy into life at home, for example, offering the child the opportunity to develop skills by helping around the house, taking responsibility for their own dressing, feeding themselves, or packing up their toys are a few simple ways this can be nurtured. Older children can assist dinner preparation, clear away dishes, help with the laundry and make their beds.

Keeping informed

- There is a notice board in the entrance area of the classroom to keep you updated on upcoming events and information.
- Information will be emailed on a monthly basis to each family.

Messages and Phone calls

- If you need to reach a Directress while class is in session, please leave your name and telephone number as the call will go directly to voice mail. Messages are picked up periodically during the day and a Directress will return your call as soon as possible.

School calendar

- The school will provide you with a calendar to inform you of holidays and school closures. Please inform the Directress if your child will be absent from school.

Health and Emergency

- Please make sure that all medical information regarding your child is up-to-date.
- Children with a contagious illness must not attend school until the infectious /recovery period has passed. Inform the school of any infectious illness your child may have. The school also requests that if your child shows symptoms of an illness, due to fever/flu, he or she does not attend school, as these illnesses spread quickly to other children.
- Please inform the school before the start of class if your child will be absent due to an illness or other reasons.

- The school will notify the parents promptly if a child becomes ill during school hours and we kindly request that the child is collected immediately.
- Parents are required to fill out a permission form with the name of medication, dose etc, that have been prescribed by a doctor for children who require medication to be administered at school.
- In the event of an emergency medical treatment needed for a child, the school will promptly notify parents and if necessary the doctor listed on the child's emergency medical authorization form.
- Payment of all medical treatment is the responsibility of the child's parent/guardian.
- The children will practice fire and earthquake drills so they are prepared in the event of an emergency.

Vaccinations

Inoculations are the parent's choice and responsibility, but in the case of an outbreak of an infectious illness those children who have not been inoculated may be required to remain at home for the duration of the outbreak.

Excursions

Children are occasionally taken on visits appropriate for their age and interests. We will require parental supervision and transportation volunteers to have a successful outing. It should be understood that parents supervising and transporting a small group of children are responsible for those care of the children for that period. If you have a hobby, experience, special interest or employment that would be of interest to the school, feel free to discuss with the Directress.

Birthdays

On your child's birthday both parents are invited to come to class for our special Montessori Birthday Celebration. You are welcome to bring a nutritious snack to share with the class. You may also like to donate a book in your child's name to our beautiful library. The Directress will happily provide you with some great titles that all the children would enjoy.

Observations and Evaluations

In Montessori, the Directress observes each child's social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. Detailed records are kept of all concepts presented to each student, all materials practiced and all concepts understood by the child.

Conferences and Parent Observations

- Parents will have the opportunity once a year to observe the classroom during a work cycle. This will be followed by a conference to answer questions, discuss your child and the environment. Both parents are encouraged to attend.
- The parents and Directress may request a conference at any time if there are matters of concern to be discussed.
- If the parents wish to speak to the Directress about their child, please make an appointment rather than discussing it at the door.

Montessori Educational Evenings

Parents' understanding of the Montessori methods and principles assists in the development of their child. There will be occasional educational evenings to discuss particular aspects of child development and Montessori. All parents are encouraged to attend to assist directly and constructively in the progress of their child. We also encourage parents to read literature about the Montessori approach to supplement their understanding of the educational method. Books and other information may be borrowed from the school.

Fees and Payment Schedule

Fees shall be paid with a prepayment of one month with 9 post-dated cheques from September - May. There is an NSF fee of \$35.00. If three (3) cheques are NSF in any given year, your child's services may be terminated, upon the discretion of the school. If you have made arrangements to pay "month to month", fees are due on the first of the month. There will be a late fee charge of \$5.00/day for each school day that the payment is late. This is to a maximum of five (5) days, and then services will cease until accounts are updated.

Late Pick up Charge

If a parent/guardian has not picked up their child at the agreed pick up time, a \$10.00 late fee will be charged for every $\frac{1}{4}$ hour late, or part thereof. After a 15 minute period, the directresses will try to contact the family and then the alternative person(s) from the authorized pick up list. If that person is unavailable and the parent has not contacted the school within $\frac{1}{2}$ hour of the agreed pick up time, the directress is required to notify the Ministry of Children and Families. If the parent/guardian has three (3) late pick up times, the situation will be discussed with the school and if the lateness continues, services may be terminated.

Active Play

Active play helps to promote healthy growth and development and supports body control and movement. Active play can help build strong bones and muscles, improve balance, coordination and assists with the development of gross motor and fine motor skills. Active play also helps to promote children's confidence, improves concentration and thinking and learning skills and provides opportunity to develop social skill and make friends. At Victoria Montessori the children go outside for active play after lunch and weather permitting stay outside until either 3pm or 5pm. Also, depending on the energy of the children, we will choose to go outside during the morning.

- There is no screen time (TV, computer, electronic games) at Victoria Montessori.

Active play includes:

- Use of play structure – use of balance skills.
- Large fenced field for loco motor skills (running, soccer, tag, jumping, hopping, skipping and other supervised games and activities).
- The use of coordination skills: games with ball.
- Children also have the opportunity to play house, build with lego, do various art projects, play with trucks and other learn through play activities. Most activities are un-facilitated and free play.
- Children also practise yoga outdoors.

Positive Guidance Techniques used in the classroom

Physical:

- Give help based on the individual child's needs
- Demonstrate or model the desired behaviour or skill
- Lead the child by the hand to give direction, reassurance, or assistance
- Gently hold the child by his/her shoulder when necessary to protect the child or others
- Remove the child from the scene to help him/her relax and regain composure
- Use no punishment that is meant to hurt or humiliate the child
- Get down to the child's eye level and use meaningful gestures

Verbal:

- Speak to the child at her/his eye level
- Use short sentences
- Use positive directions, telling the child what to do instead of what not to do
- Give no more than two directions at a time, preferably only one
- Give only the directions the child really needs and avoid being overly directive and bossy
- Make it clear whether the child has a choice or not. Avoid the use of "okay" at the end of the direction
- When a child exhibits a positive or negative behaviour, avoid stating whether the child is "good" or "bad"
- Praise positive behaviour and ignore negative behaviour unless the behaviour is harmful to the child or others
- Identify when a child is having difficulty conveying messages verbally or physically, and give appropriate assistance and/or reassurance