



# **Early Childhood Handbook**

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\*Emails above are attached to the class teacher in charge of each room.

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the Montessori Method of Education. We offer regular parent education evenings, parent education classes and a parent library. Please see our newsletter for upcoming events, and please do pop in to see Christina in our 0-3 room for details on upcoming parent information or just for an informal chat!

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# Mission & Vision

## Our Vision

To guide each child, not just in the moment but for life.

## Mission

To inspire our students to be lifelong independent learners, develop their sense of wonder and promote them as peacemakers and leaders.

## Values

At Sydney Montessori School our Educational Philosophy and teaching practice are research and evidence based.

As Montessori educators, we are committed to educating the whole person.

We foster a love of learning and an understanding of the world and our interconnectedness with it.

## We value:

1. Peer learning
2. Curiosity, independence and achieving your personal best.
3. Empathy and courtesy
4. Diversity and inclusivity
5. Partnerships with our families and community.

## Philosophy

Sydney Montessori School (Formerly known as Sutherland Shire Montessori School) is a parent run, community based early childhood centre, which is part of a larger education facility for children from birth to 16 years of age, following the philosophy of Dr Maria Montessori (1870-1952). The Montessori method is a wonderful tool with which to achieve the outcomes of the Early Learning Years Framework (ELYF).

At Sydney Montessori School, we encourage a holistic view of the child, promoting lifelong habits of health and wellbeing, including both physical and emotional aspects such as nutrition, exercise and personal reflection as well as the practice of gratitude and the formation of close relationships.

The Montessori approach fosters a love of learning and encourages independence by providing an environment of activities and materials which children use at their own pace. This builds self-confidence, inner discipline, a sense of self-worth and instils positive social behaviour. This approach forms the basis for lifelong learning.

Our classroom provides a prepared environment where children are free to respond to their natural tendency to work. The children's innate passion for learning is encouraged by giving them opportunities to engage in spontaneous, purposeful activities with the guidance of a trained educator. In our classroom the activities that the children engage with are referred to as their "work". The use of the word "work" is a sign of respect, and meant to highlight the importance of what the child does. Through their work, the children develop concentration and joyful self-discipline.

Central to our concept of education is the idea that the child develops by being active. Children will come to know about their world if given the freedom to engage their full attention to exploration and discovery. In the classroom, therefore, freedom is the key to the child's spontaneous activity. Children are given the freedom to choose what work they will do and for how long they will engage in that activity. A balance is maintained between the need of each individual to have sufficient freedom to grow and to develop towards independence and the necessity for order and harmony within the group.

At Sydney Montessori School we provide purposeful and stimulating early childhood activities and experiences, which enhance each child's growth and development. We provide a warm, nurturing and friendly environment, a place to develop both individually and socially. The rooms are beautifully arranged, designed for the child's comfort, security and enjoyment. Activities and materials for the children are displayed on low open

shelves. Each material has a specific purpose and is presented to the children in a manner that will enable them to direct their own learning. The materials are tools to stimulate the child into logical thought and discovery. Each activity or material presents one concept or idea at a time and has what is known as a control of error. If the child has done something incorrectly it will be self-evident. Being able to see their own mistake allows the child to work independently. The children may work uninterrupted for long periods of time at tables or on mats on the floor where they are naturally comfortable.

As teachers we are the link between the children and the environment. We invite the children to explore and discover with each activity. Children are guided in a natural and positive way, helping them to develop and refine their senses and skills as well as movement and language. When children are given access to materials especially designed to support their development, they have the capacity to learn by their own actions.

Our Montessori classrooms are not merely a space for individual learning. It is a vibrant community of children, where the child learns to interact socially in a variety of ways. The three year age range enables older children to teach the younger and learn much themselves from the experience while the younger children are inspired to more advanced work through observation of the older ones. With such a variety of levels within the classroom, each child can work at their own pace, unhindered by competition and encouraged by co-operation.

In Montessori terms the classroom is referred to as "The Prepared Environment". There are key principles which underpin the prepared environment:

- *Independence* – Our classroom is presented so as to enable the child to become physically independent of the adult. When the child is able to do things for themselves they start to choose and decide things for themselves. The environment must allow for these both in the way that the materials are prepared and the approach and attitudes of the adults.
- *Indirect preparation* - Just about every activity in a Montessori classroom has two purposes: one direct and the other indirect. While the direct goal aims at providing the child with a skill they can use in the present, the indirect goal focuses on preparing abilities they will put to good use later in life.
- *Order* –This underlies not just the physical set up of the classroom but also the less tangible aspects of the classroom such as the consistency of the adults and their approach, the order of presentation and social order.



- *Choice* - The environment gives the child the opportunity to choose what they do from a range of activities that are suitable to their developmental needs.
- *Freedom* - Children have the freedom to choose; to work for as long as they want to, or to observe or reflect, to work without being interrupted by other children or by the constraints of a timetable. This freedom is afforded to them providing that their activity does not interfere with other children's right and freedom to do the same.
- *Mixed age range* – In a class of mixed aged children, children learn from each other in a non-competitive environment which directly prepares the child for living in society.
- *Movement* – Within our classroom children can move freely so that they can exercise their freedom to bring themselves into contact with the things and people needed for development.
- *Control of error* - The environment and the activities within it is prepared in a way that allows the child to become aware of mistakes and to correct them themselves so that there is an understanding that it is alright to be wrong and that we can learn from our mistakes.
- *Materials* -These activities are the keys to the child's development and will be directed by the child's developmental needs at each age range.
- *Role of the adult* – The adult's role at our school is to facilitate the child to teach themselves by following each child's own internal urges that will lead them to take what is needed from the people and things around him. The Montessori teacher is foremost an observer, unobtrusively yet carefully managing each child's development, recognising and interpreting each child's needs. Montessori teachers need to be an example: calm, consistent, courteous and caring. The most important attribute of a Montessori teacher is the love and respect they hold for each child's total wellbeing.
- From conception, the child is undergoing a process of self-construction. The application of Montessori philosophy and the specifically designed Montessori materials aids the child's ability to absorb knowledge and continue on this path of self-construction.
- The main areas of our program are: Movement, Practical Life, Sensorial, Language and Mathematics. Considerable emphasis is also placed on Creative Arts, Music, Science, Geography and Cultural Studies. Acquisition of one's own first culture is central to a child's

development, and the materials offered aim to help the child grow as an individual appreciating the larger context of his or her own world.

## Our Place – Who We Are

Our school acknowledges the Dharawal speaking people, traditional custodians of the land. Sydney Montessori School's Early Childhood Centres include Long Day Care and Preschool rooms. It is community based and part of a larger education facility for children from birth to 16 years of age. Sydney Montessori School aims to give children the opportunity to meet the highest level of education, social and personal outcomes, following each child's personal developmental trajectory, through the Montessori method of teaching.

## Centre Information

### Hours

#### Preschool

The Preschool follows the pattern of term dates of most NSW Independent Schools. Term dates for 2016 and 2017 are as follows:

#### **2016**

Term 1: Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April  
Term 2: Wednesday 27 April – Friday 1 July  
Term 3: Tuesday 19 July – Friday 23 September  
Term 4: Tuesday 11 October – Thursday 15 December

Long Day Care: Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2016 - Friday 21 December 2016

#### **2017**

Term 1: Monday January 30<sup>th</sup> – Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April  
Term 2: Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April – Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June  
Term 3: Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July – Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September  
Term 4: Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December

#### **Long Day Care dates:**

First Day: Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2016  
Last Day: Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017  
Return: Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018

The Preschool operates between 8.50-3.00, Monday – Friday. All children enrolled in the Preschool must be enrolled to attend 5 days per week.

3 & 4 year olds attend between 8.50-12.00

5 year olds attend between 8.50-3.00

### **Afternoon Care**

For children aged 3 and 4 and enrolled in the Preschool, we have the facility to stay until 3pm at extra charge. Places must be applied for and are accepted at the teacher's discretion and on the basis of the child's readiness and as positions become available.

### **Out of School Hours Care**

For Children aged 4 and above, the school has a before and after school hours care facility. Please see the office for bookings and for more information. Before care begins at 7.00am and after care begins at 3pm and ends at 6.00pm.

#### Long Day Care

The Long Day Care is open 49 weeks per year, with a 3 week break over the Christmas period. Its hours are 8.00am-6.00pm Monday – Friday, excluding public holidays. Children may be enrolled for a minimum of 2 days per week, preferably consecutively.

### **Staffing**

We ensure that educator-to-child ratios are met at all times, with suitably qualified staff, who are also familiar with the Montessori method. All staff are trained in child protection, first aid, and key staff are also trained in emergency anaphylaxis and asthma.

Information about our staff, including the name, position and qualification of each staff member is displayed near the class entrance each day.

### **Staff Roles**

Each classroom has a variety of trained and experienced educators who support and guide children with their learning and wellbeing.

Our Montessori educators work with children – preparing the environment each day and guiding children to explore all our wonderful, purpose built, Montessori materials. Our educators observe the children and record each child's learning achievements.

Our Montessori teachers run each classroom and are responsible for the programming of each child as part of their class team.

Our Nominated Supervisor is Raquel Charet, who is also the school principal and is ultimately responsible for the running of the school. She reports to the board of the Sutherland Shire Montessori Society. As such, she is responsible for ensuring that the school is compliant with government regulations.

The Educational Leader of the early childhood centre is Christina Dean. Christina oversees the educational program of the centre to assure quality Montessori education in line with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

Sue Pynenburg is the school's Business Manager and works with Yvonne Eggins to manage the finances, building maintenance and WHS. Bec Talty is our enrolments registrar; please see her for matters relating to enrolment, change of details, events and marketing. Our receptionist is often the first point of call for any communication and assistance.

### **Staff Qualifications**

The qualifications of our staff meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and the relevant NSW specific laws.

All of our educators have, or are working towards at least a Certificate III in Children's services. At least 50% of our educators have or are working towards a Diploma level qualification. Most of our teachers hold a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, in line with the NQF.

In addition to this, all of our teachers have or are working towards a Montessori teaching qualification.

### **Educator to Child Ratios**

Across our centre, our educator to child ratios meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework and NSW Department of Education & Communities.

For children under 2, we have a ratio of 1:4, for 2-3 years we have a ratio of 1:5. For children over 3 years there is a ratio of 1:10.

### **Class Groupings**

Our preschool has 2 classes, Kiah and Kalina, each made up of mixed groups of children 3-6 years old. We have 2 Long Day care classes. Tara has children aged 18 months - 2 years. Akasha has children 3-6 years old. We have found that fewer transitions mean that educators can build stronger relationships with children and families. Mixed age groupings allow for children to have more social learning experiences. It allows younger children to learn from their older peers and for older children to practice a gentle approach and

kindness to younger children. Mixed age groups allow for siblings and other family members to be in the same class together. It fosters a more natural, family-like environment. Our environment fosters a sense of belonging and strives to make children and their families feel safe. All round, fewer transitions mean less anxiety.

## **Government Licencing and Approvals**

Sydney Montessori School is an approved early childhood centre. We are currently licenced to provide Preschool and Long Day Care services for up to 100 children. Sutherland Shire Montessori Society is the Approved Provider of Sydney Montessori School.

## **Our Approach**

### **Community and Families**

Our centre strives to create a true community of children, their families and educators. This community is characterised by rich relationships, built through an encouragement of open and ongoing dialogue, as well as the creation of shared meaningful experiences and fun.

We specifically have mixed age groupings so that children and their families have the time to build relationships with educators, other children and their families, over a 3-4 year period of time.

The nature of our centre as a community means that we strongly (but gently) encourage families to contribute to the centre in any way that they feel comfortable, whether that be by sharing cultural experiences, helping in the garden or on working bees, cooking and reading with the children or doing craft with them. Families are integral to our community. Our school provides many parent education sessions through the year. These sessions cover a variety of topics including health and wellbeing, parenting and pedagogy. Our Parents and Friends committee also organise many social events for our community members.

We believe that our community is the foundation of our centre. Therefore, we seek regular feedback from parents and staff and incorporate this into our ongoing review process.

### **Cultural Diversity**

Respect for religious and cultural diversity is a foundation of our practice. We encourage families to be open with us about their religious and cultural heritage and to share it with our classes. We strive to learn and teach about different religions and backgrounds with an underlying philosophy of teaching acceptance and respect for all.

As Australians, Indigenous culture, history and practise is of particular interest to us and we strive to incorporate as much exposure to indigenous cultural experience into our program as possible.

## **Respect for the Environment and Sustainability**

It is important to us that children are educated to respect the environment and that the ethics of sustainability are embedded in our indoor and outdoor program. We do this by allowing our indoor and outdoor spaces to have a natural flow, so that the learning environment incorporates both areas seamlessly. We provide children with gardens and the means with which to reuse and recycle. This includes access to recycling, composting, worm farms, gardens and a kitchen with which to prepare food grown by the children, in their garden. Explicit education around the environment and sustainability is embedded into our programming.

## **Our Educational Program**

### **The Montessori Program**

We educate our children using the Montessori philosophy and method. We believe that the Montessori method is a wonderful tool with which to achieve the outcomes of the Early Learning Years Framework (ELYF). We believe that children have an innate instinct and drive to learn and that it is our role as educators to foster this natural drive. We do this by respecting individual differences thereby promoting an enjoyment of learning and a sense of community responsibility. We encourage a holistic view of the child, promoting lifelong habits of health and wellbeing, including both physical and emotional aspects such as nutrition, exercise and personal reflection as well as the practice of gratitude and the formation of close relationships.

The fundamental goals of the Montessori philosophy and environment are to develop:

- Mutual respect
- Concern and responsibility for self and others
- A sense of self worth
- Social awareness
- Self discipline
- Habits of initiative and persistence
- Creative intelligence and imagination
- Self confidence as an independent learner
- A love of learning

Montessori education begins at birth and is an education for life. The school environment is designed to:

- develop in each child a positive attitude towards school
- help each child develop self-confidence as an independent learner
- develop habits of initiative and persistence
- help develop each child's sensory motor skills
- sharpen the child's ability to discriminate and evaluate
- help the child develop socially
- help the child develop creative intelligence and imagination
- promote a positive self image in the child
- empower the child's voice

We do this by providing an indoor and outdoor 'prepared environment' in which all learning activities are beautifully presented in a home-like environment, for children to choose and work on independently and according to their own interest. We believe that children should spend their days in an orderly environment that is prepared to feed their naturally inquiring minds, so that they can learn independently through practical application.

Our educators see themselves as 'guides', because their role is to observe children and facilitate in their learning. They do this by following the child's own interest, but always guiding them toward meeting their full potential; building on their strengths and supporting them when they need it.

We believe that social and emotional learning is just as important as academic learning. Therefore, children are encouraged to work and play together. We believe that social and emotional learning is ongoing and that young children need the help of their educator guides on the path toward social competence.

## **Curriculum Planning and Documentation**

We acknowledge and respect parents as the child's first educator. We welcome and encourage feedback and guidance from parents and input into the child's program of learning.

We believe in teaching children by following their individual interests and programming with that in mind. Educators observe the child and know them, so that planning and programming is relevant to each child individually, as well as to the group. Our documentation reflects this individuality. We believe in sharing information with families by having a fully transparent program, available for all community members to view, and by sharing our observations and experiences of children with their families.

We showcase our work in the daily Floor Book, which is prominently displayed for parents and carers to see. The week's entries are scanned and emailed to parents and carers at the conclusion of each week. Educators formally report to families twice yearly in Terms 2 and 4. Parent conferences are also available and we encourage you to attend.

## **Our Montessori Learning Cycle**

The Montessori program is designed as a continuum of development during the child's most formative years. Optimum learning takes place when a child is able to progress through the consecutive stages of our environments, from the 0-3 parent education program all the way through to our High School. It is particularly important for the child to be able to experience the final year in each cycle of development. Our program can be likened to an elaborate jigsaw puzzle, with each of the puzzle pieces representing a separate learning experience that the child is exposed to throughout the program. In the final year of each cycle, part of the puzzle comes together, with the completion of the final stages and the consolidation of work on the Montessori equipment for that cycle. The whole puzzle comes to its culmination at the end of Year 10, delivering the whole, prepared Montessori young adult.

The puzzle might be left unfinished if the child is removed from the Montessori environment too early. On the other hand, if the child has not participated in the earlier age groups then we might be building a puzzle with some pieces missing or using pieces from an altogether different puzzle! This is why we strongly recommend that families attempt to offer their child a full Montessori cycle from infancy right through to graduating from our High School.

## **Excursions and Incursions**

From time to time our educators organise excursions. These offer children valuable opportunities to gain a greater insight into their community and to learn from these experiences.

For your child to participate in an excursion, you will need to sign an Excursions Permission form.

We welcome families to join us on our excursions.

## **Orientation**

Before starting with us, you will be required to do a 20 minute observation in one of our classes. Following enrolment, you and your child will meet with your child's class teacher in an orientation visit.



During your orientation visit, the class teacher will discuss important information with you and clarify information from within this parent handbook. This is also a good opportunity for you to share with the class teacher any information that you feel we need to know in order to assist your child for a smooth transition.

## **Transition to Primary Classes**

When your child is around 6 years old, and the teacher feels that they are ready to begin visiting our Primary classes, we will work with you and the Primary class teacher to ensure that the transition visits are smooth.

Our transition to Primary classes programs is exemplary in its foundation in following each individual child's needs and learning trajectory. Parents will meet with the Principal before this transition process.

We will document a transition plan and arrange multiple visits to the new classroom as well as arranging opportunities for you to observe in the new environment and meet and exchange information with the class teacher.

## **Birthdays & Special Events**

Birthdays are special times for children. You are welcome to bring cupcakes or a healthy snack to share with the class. Please also bring a photo from each year of their life for our birthday ceremony. Please discuss this with your class teacher if you would like to join the celebration activities on the day.

Please let us know if your family do not celebrate birthdays as we respect cultural and religious diversity.

## **Your Child's Day**

### **Settling Children**

*Separation anxiety is a normal stage in a child's life*

Introducing your child to care can be an emotional time. It is fair to expect some tearful goodbyes in the early days. However, there are many ways in which you can assist your child's transition.

When children attend our 0-3 parent education program their transition is often easier as they are familiar with the environment, staff and other children. If dropping your child off is distressing to you, please feel free to join our 0-3 group for a cup of tea and a calming chat.

Understanding your child's needs and providing an environment that meets those needs is crucial. Our educators play an active role in gathering information about you and your family to create a smooth transition between the home and the educational environment. Communication between parent, child and educator is crucial in helping our families to adjust.

We encourage parents to participate in our programs, allowing them an insight into their child's day to day activities. Parents are welcome to spend time in the centre and share those special moments with their children or phone us during the day to check on their child's progress.

## **Extended Day**

### Preschool

At around the age of 5, your child will become ready to stay from 9-3 for the kindergarten year in order to study our BOSTES accredited kindergarten program. In most NSW schools, 5 year olds attend kindergarten. In Montessori schools, this means that in the final year of the First Plane of Development, when the child is 5, they are in kindergarten. As such, we invite them to stay for the full day. The afternoon extended day program provides a Montessori approach to delivering the NSW Board of Studies Teaching Educational Standards (BOSTES) early stage 1 syllabus outcomes (kindergarten).

## **The Process of Becoming an 'Extended Day Student'**

### Long Day Care

When your child is 5, during their kindergarten year (i.e. when they will be five by 30 June of that year) and the teacher deems them ready, they **MUST BEGIN TO STAY FOR 5 DAYS A WEEK**. This is so that your child is given the full school kindergarten program, in preparation for Grade 1. This is a time in which they are given a more intensive approach to subjects such as literacy, numeracy, fine motor skills etc. 5 year old Long Day Care children experience an intensive kindergarten program.

At around the age of 5, or when the teacher deems that they are ready to stay for the extended day program, the teacher will approach the parent with a transition plan for the child to begin staying for the extended day. The child will stay for a couple of visits and slowly, at their own pace, move to a full time position. This process will occur keeping in mind the child's best interests. The teacher will keep parents informed throughout the process.

## **Transition to Primary (Stage 2)**

Around the time that a child turns 6, and sometimes up to 6 1/2, children start to move towards the Second Plane of Development. This process of transition is unique to each child and our teachers are very experienced at observing these changes in children and responding to them appropriately. The signs of a child's readiness are physical, social,

emotional, behavioural and academic. When your child is ready to move to Stage 2, because they have entered into the Second Plane of Development, you will be informed by letter from our school enrolments registrar. Much planning goes into the transition of each child, keeping in mind age and gender balances for each class, as well as social mixes and working relationships for each child. The placement of each child in a specific class is done carefully by the school. It is the school's policy not to move children once placed.

Children visit Stage 2 in the term preceding their permanent move to Primary. A schedule of visits, as well as other information, will be sent to you in the transition letter.

## **Daily Routines**

### **Kiah and Kalina**

8.50am:	Centre open to children
8.50am:	Morning work cycle (indoor & outdoor environment)
11.45am:	Group time
12 noon:	Morning children pick up
12.00pm:	Lunch time
12.30pm:	Play time
1.00pm:	Afternoon Work Cycle
3.00pm:	Centre closes for children and relevant children transition to OSHCare

### **Tara Long Day Care**

8.00am:	Centre open to children
8.00am:	Morning work cycle (morning snacks prepared as required)
9.45am:	Group time
10.00am:	Fruit
11.45am:	Lunch

12.30pm:	Quiet time (sleep or rest as required)
2.00pm:	Outside games
2.45pm:	Group time
3.00pm:	Afternoon tea
3.15pm:	Prepare to go outside
3.45pm:	Outside play
5.30pm:	Preparation for home time
6.00pm:	Centre closes to children

### **Akasha Long Day Care**

8.00am:	Centre open to children
8.00am:	Morning work cycle (morning snacks prepared as required)
11.45am:	Morning circle
12 noon:	Lunch
12.30pm:	Quiet time (sleep & rest as required)
1.00pm:	Outdoor play
2.00pm:	Afternoon Work Cycle
3.00pm:	Shared afternoon tea
3.15pm:	Continued indoor & outdoor work
3.45pm:	Outdoor play
5.30pm:	Preparation for home time
6.00pm:	Centre closes to children

### **Arrivals**

Please make sure that a parent or carer signs the Attendance Register Form.

It is vital that children come to school on time (in Long Day Care it is best that children arrive by 9.00am, where possible). Late arrival is disruptive to both your child and the rest of the class and your child will not complete their full work cycle.

Please tell an educator any important information about your child, as necessary.

## **Departures**

### Preschool

It can be distressing for your child to be picked up late. If you are late for pick up, your child will be sent to the office. If tardiness becomes habitual, you will be asked to fill in an OSHCare form and your child will be sent to OSHCare at that time.

In an emergency, please contact the school to advise us that you are running late.

### Long Day Care

Children must be collected by 6pm. A late fee of \$15 applies for the first 10 minutes or part thereof and \$1.50 per minute after 6.10pm. This will be billed separately. Only authorised persons listed on your Enrolment Form are allowed to collect them. If we are unsure, our educators may ask for proof of identity.

When collecting your child, please ensure:

- Your child has their belongings
- You speak to educators about your child's day

## **Food & Mealtimes**

We encourage the provision of fresh foods for nutrition, as well as the reduction of packaged foods, in line with our sustainability philosophy.

You must provide enough food for your child's lunch each day. We recommend that containers be easy for your child to manage independently. Small lunchboxes are preferable so that they can be refrigerated.

Due to government regulations we cannot heat children's food and drink. Please provide a nutritious lunch. Refer to the school's Nutrition Policy for more information.

## **Lunch Times**

All children participate in a shared lunch meal each day. This is a wonderful opportunity for children to practice important skills of grace and courtesy, develop greater levels of independence and control their fine and gross motor skills.

## **Morning & Afternoon Snacks**

Through 'practical life' activities, children are encouraged to prepare their own snacks during their work cycle. This includes fresh fruit, bread/rice crackers with spreads. Please ensure that your child brings a piece of fruit each day for these activities. Clean water is readily available for children to drink at all times.

## **Breastfeeding Space**

We encourage mothers to breastfeed their babies. The 0-3 room is available as a safe and comfortable place for parents to breast and bottle feed their young children.

## **Sleep & Rest**

To support children's individual need for rest and sleep, our daily routine provides opportunities for children to sleep and/or rest in a quiet and supervised environment.

When supporting children during sleep and rest times, our educators follow the SIDS & Kids Safe Sleeping Practices to reduce the risks commonly associated with sleeping.

This information is available to families on request. Our educators may also comfort individual children if required.

If your child has any special sleep routines or needs, please discuss these with your child's class teacher.

## **Toileting**

In our preschool we will only take children who are toileting independently. Therefore, we do not have nappy changing facilities in the Preschool classrooms.

In our Long Day Care setting, our educators help guide, encourage and support children who are learning to develop their independence. We encourage you to visit [www.aidtolife.org](http://www.aidtolife.org) for more information on toilet learning or see Christina in 0-3. During toilet training, educators will endeavour to support efforts made at home.

Our educators follow safe & hygienic nappy changing and toileting procedures at all times – including cleaning toilets, nappy changing equipment and surrounding floor areas. These are cleaned several times each day.

If your child wears nappies, we ask that they arrive in a clean nappy each morning. Our educators record all nappy changes in our Nappy Change Register.

# Your Child's Health & Safety

## Medication

Our educators can only administer medication to children if they have prior permission from their families.

If your child needs medication, please complete an 'Administration of Authorised Medication Record'.

You will be responsible for supplying our educators with the prescribed medication and any instructions regarding its storage and administration.

Please ensure that any medication that you supply:

- Is in its original container
- Has an original label that is clearly readable
- Has the child's name clearly on the label
- Is prescribed by a medical practitioner

Our educators will store and administer in accordance with the instructions provided by you or your child's registered medical practitioner.

All medication that is administered by educators is recorded on the 'Administration of Authorised Medication Record'.

## Emergency Administration of Medication

Our educators can administer medication in an emergency if we receive verbal permission from the child's primary caregiver, an Authorised Person (as identified on the child's Enrolment Form) or a registered medical practitioner.

Please Note: We do not administer Panadol, Neurofen or similar products, unless prescribed by a doctor.

## Immunisation

You are required to provide evidence of your child's immunisation when enrolling. This information is recorded and regularly updated on your child's Enrolment Form.

Information for parents on immunisation is available to parents upon request.

NOTE: Only children who are fully immunised or have approved exemption from immunisation are eligible to claim for Child Care Rebate.

## **Infectious Diseases**

If your child is diagnosed by a registered medical practitioner with an infectious disease, it is your responsibility to notify the school as soon as possible.

If there is a case of a vaccine preventable disease in the centre or we receive notification from NSW Health authorities of an outbreak, we will contact all families immediately.

By law, we need to exclude all children not vaccinated against the disease for a period of time or until you can provide evidence of immunisation.

## **Head Lice**

Please thoroughly check your child's scalp regularly for head lice. If an educator suspects that your child has head lice, you will be contacted to pick your child up for immediate treatment.

## **Sickness, Injuries & Accidents**

If a child is injured, becomes ill or suffers a trauma while in our care, we will contact the person listed as your child's primary caregiver or emergency contact as soon as possible.

Our trained educators will administer first aid, as necessary.

## **Emergencies**

In the event of an emergency, Sydney Montessori School has in place a clear procedure to ensure the safety of our children, staff and visitors. Emergency drills are practiced each term so that children are prepared and know what is required in the event of such an emergency.

In the event of an emergency, we will contact the person listed as your child's primary caregiver or emergency contact as soon as possible.

## **Attendance**

### Absences – Long Day Care

Sydney Montessori School is required by law to keep records of children's attendance. In keeping with this, we ask that you sign your child in and out of the centre on drop off and pick up.

You are required to pay the usual fees, regardless of whether your child attends the centre or not.



Up until the age of 5, absences can be taken for any reason and do not require supporting documentation. When your child begins their Kindergarten year, they begin the school kindergarten program. Legislation for school children is different to that of preschool children. For Kindergarten children, the school roll is marked at 9.15am, and students must attend school punctually and for the full day. If your child arrives after 9.15am, your child will be marked as 'partially absent' on the roll. By law, all absences and partial absences must be explained in writing by the parent or guardian. You can pick up an 'absence slip' from the office to fill out, send a note in to school, or an email to [admin@sms.nsw.edu.au](mailto:admin@sms.nsw.edu.au)

The Commonwealth law only allows Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate payments to be claimed for up to 42 days of absence each financial year. These absences can be taken for any reason and do not require supporting documentation.

If your child is away, please leave a message with reception to let us know.

### Absences – Preschool

Sydney Montessori School is required by law to keep records of children's attendance. In keeping with this, we ask that you sign your child in and out of the centre on drop off and pick up.

When your child begins extended days, they begin the school kindergarten program. Legislation for school children is different to that of preschool children. For extended day children, the school roll is marked at 9.15am, and students must attend school punctually and for the full day. If your child arrives after 9.15am, your child will be marked as 'partially absent' on the roll. By law, all absences and partial absences must be explained in writing by the parent or guardian. You can pick up an 'absence slip' from the office to fill out, send a note in to school, or an email to [admin@sms.nsw.edu.au](mailto:admin@sms.nsw.edu.au)

If your child is away, in addition to completing an absentee slip, please leave a message with reception to let us know.

**What to bring on each day** – Please check with your child's teacher.

## Communication

### Parent Information

In line with our commitment to the protection of the environment and sustainability, Sydney Montessori School endeavours to communicate with the parent body primarily via email. The school produces a weekly newsletter. The link is emailed to you each Friday and contains important information and updates, as well as photos of children in their activities.

In addition to this, each child will be allocated a file, kept at the front of the classroom for paper communication. This can also be used for the distribution of party invitations.

The preschool have a communication book, for parents and staff, to share information.

The Principal and staff are also happy to talk with parents on a daily basis. Should you have any concerns relating to any aspect of the service or programs, they can be referred to the immediate staff member in charge of your child's class.

## **Newsletters (and School Calendar)**

At Sydney Montessori School, we make every effort to have open communication and be as transparent in our processes as possible. Each week, you will receive the school newsletter via email. This also has a school calendar with important upcoming dates, term dates, notifications and news from the different stages. It is important that you read the newsletter weekly so that you are aware of all information necessary.

## **Email**

Notifications and important information is routinely sent out to parents via email. It is your responsibility to keep the school updated of any changes to your email. A good test of whether the school has the correct email for you is whether or not you receive our weekly newsletter.

Teachers also appreciate communications via email. Please feel free to email them about any concerns you have or to pass on any important information about your child.

## **Complaints and Feedback**

Our service values the feedback of educators, staff, families and the wider community in helping to create a service that meets regulation and the needs of enrolled children and their families. We encourage open communication through opportunities to respond and feedback on the program.

A component of this feedback is the ability to put forward a complaint and have this managed appropriately with due consideration for accountability and quality improvement.

Open communication is encouraged and the School will respond to feedback provided about the service. We ask that you let us know of any concerns as quickly as possible to enable a timely resolution. We ask that, where possible, parents speak to the class teacher initially. If complaints cannot be resolved with the class teacher then parents are welcome to see the Educational Leader. If the matter is still unresolved, please see the School Principal who can further assist the process.

Sydney Montessori School will offer a variety of ways to communicate and provide feedback including:

- verbal or written comments or feedback on the program and activities can be made
- greeting and chatting to families on arrival and departure.
- providing avenues for families to provide formal feedback (such as by emailing or writing to the Principal).
- conducting surveys and discussing programming.
- holding meetings/information session with families from time to time.
- The Department of Education and Communities will be notified of any complaint made to the service alleging a serious breach of regulation within 24hours of the complaint being made.

### **Family Pockets/Files**

Each family also has a communication pocket, situated at the front of the classroom. These are occasionally used to distribute information to parents of the school. This includes invitations to classroom events and other special events, literature from the Montessori community and the local community. Parents are also welcome to put their child's birthday party invitations in the pockets. Any other literature must be approved by the Principal before being put into the pockets. Please clear your family pocket regularly.

### **Parent Library**

You will find a Parent library and relevant community information and fliers in reception. Please feel free to browse our selection. More resources and advice is available in the 0-3 room. Please speak to Christina Dean, the Educational Leader for more information.

### **Getting Involved**

As a community school we fully support parental involvement in our program. We love for parents to come in and share cultural elements from their backgrounds with our children. Parents often come and work with the children on crafts and in the garden. Parents share professional knowledge with their children, such as nutrition, dentistry, yoga and the like. In addition to this, the school hosts many events during the year, such as fetes, open days and parent working bees. We encourage you to be an active participant of our school community.

### **Parking**

There is ample parking on Manchester Rd and View St. Please be mindful of our neighbours and avoid parking across driveways at all and in front of houses for extended periods of time.

## Children in Traffic

To reduce the risk of driveway injury, close and active adult supervision is necessary. The *Kids and Traffic* message to keep young children safe in driveways is:

***Hold their hands or hold them close to keep them safe.***

See <http://www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au/>