Education in harmony with life.

Margaret River Montessori School
Prospectus 2016

Individual Children. Individualised Learning.

All interested prospective parents and community members, we invite you to come along and SEE our school. Please contact our School office on 97572 564 or montessori@margmont.wa.edu.au to book a tour or a time to observe in our classrooms.
WELCOME TO MARGARET RIVER MONTESSORI SCHOOL

A Message from the Chairperson
Margaret River Montessori School is a vibrant community-minded school offering a world class education to all children aged from 0 - 12 years. At Margaret River Montessori School we combine the proven methodology of Montessori education and the best of modern education theory, teaching and learning. We are concerned with the development of human potential in every child. We aim to provide children with a love of learning that will empower them for life and instil qualities such as independence, self-confidence, self-discipline and persistence.

Established in 1993, the school has grown from 3-6 “Children’s House” into a well appointed primary school with a strong academic record. We are situated in the Margaret River town site and are proud of our school, its achievements, the positive influence it has had on the lives of the children who pass through and their contributions to society in general.

If you choose to become part of our school community we are confident it will be a rewarding, enriching experience and we look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Frank Pethica, Chairperson - SCHOOL COUNCIL

The Principal’s Message
Selecting a school for your child is one of the most important decisions of a parent’s life.

In making this decision parents need to be well informed. A good knowledge and understanding of the School’s Philosophy and Educational Practices is vital. As parents you need to be confident that this is the School for you and your child.

Margaret River Montessori School caters for students from 0 to 12 years, producing wonderful students with outstanding results.

Our waiting lists are strong, and we are seeking students and families who are going to be with us for the long term benefits as we guide them toward their goals and assist them to achieve their potential.

This information pack has been prepared to help you make that decision.

When you have read this information prospectus, we encourage you to book an observation in our classrooms and see first-hand, the life advantage Margaret River Montessori School offers your child and family.

To attend one of our Open Mornings or to book a tour please call our office on 9757 2564 for upcoming dates and to register.

I look forward to you joining our School community.
Lisa Fenton, PRINCIPAL
WHAT IS MONTESSORI EDUCATION?

We must support as much as possible the child’s desires for activity; not wait on him, but educate him to be independent.

Montessori Education

Montessori Education is a method of education founded on knowledge of the development of the body and mind of the child as discovered by Dr Maria Montessori. Dr Montessori was a person of great depth and insight. She was Italy’s first female doctor before stepping into the field for which she is so well known: early childhood education. She was an ambassador for world peace with the UNICEF Charter of Human Rights, and Rights of the CHILD were adopted directly from her.

The Montessori Method

There is no mystery to the Montessori Philosophy. Its approach is scientific and an education for parent and child alike. Children have a natural love of learning. The Montessori Philosophy is simply that education begins at birth, and that during the first six years of life the child’s power of absorption is learning at its highest. From six to twelve years of age the foundations of learning are expanded to embrace and direct the child’s questioning mind, imagination and unlimited energy into exploration and research. When you enter the Montessori school, the first thing that strikes you as a parent is the secure and harmonious environment. It is this environment that is the key to developing the child’s sense of wellbeing.

The Montessori Teacher

It is as much an acute understanding of how children acquire knowledge, as it is helping them to discover knowledge that directly sets the Montessori teacher apart. Montessori teachers regard themselves as facilitators who present knowledge, concepts and understandings at the right stage in the child’s development. They work with the children individually (or in small groups), are empathetic and pro-active to their learning needs.

How does this compare with contemporary research in Education?

Current research into the brain, its development, and how people learn, has highlighted the following issues, which are critical to maximise individual potential.

- The brain is very much hard wired in terms of ‘habits of mind’ during 0-6 years.
- Therefore, the period 3-6 years in a Margaret River Montessori classroom is an extremely ‘sensitive’ period where the brain absorbs critical foundation skills - in particular language, work ethic, attention, independence, sense of order and creativity, problem solving and self-reflective management skills.

Montessori classrooms are ‘prepared environments’, structured to meet the developing needs of children. They contain specially designed materials so that all theoretical learning can be backed up with practical experience. Several age groups work together, and children are encouraged to assist and teach each other so that team skills are developed. Competition is discouraged in order for children to become actively involved in collaborative work. Dr Maria Montessori observed that in learning situations children prefer focused rather than unstructured play; that they prefer order to disorder; silence to noise; self-mastery to dependence; and cooperation to competition; are reflected in all our classrooms. The emphasis is on children achieving self-discipline. This discipline, however, does not develop by itself, but is taught and nurtured. Boundaries are therefore recognised and encouraged.
Our goal is not so much the imparting of knowledge as the unveiling and developing of spiritual energy.

Margaret River Montessori School offers educational opportunities to children from 0-12 years. Dr. Maria Montessori discovered that the needs and characteristics of children at different stages of development are the keys to establishing the environment within which the child can best learn at his or her own pace. Unlike the way many of us have been educated, in same age or year group classes, Margaret River Montessori School has a 3 year age range within each Program: 0 to 3, 3 to 6, 6 to 9, and 9 to 12 year old children. The Montessori Directress or Teacher remains with the same group for the entire 3 year period, allowing them to truly get to know each and every child. This approach is now being advocated as ‘Best Educational Practice’ in mainstream schooling. Margaret River Montessori School also fosters social awareness and responsibility in children, allowing each child to interact with children of different ages forming mentor-style relationships. It is important to note that a commitment from 0-3 and Junior Primary levels through to Upper Primary gives the best outcome for your child.

The Montessori environment supports spontaneous learning and discovery. It centres on the individual needs of children, and within this environment new information is presented when the child is determined to be ready.

Curriculum and Monitoring Student Progress
The very comprehensive Australian Montessori National Curriculum, which has been officially recognized by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is the curriculum taught at Margaret River Montessori School. In addition, to ensure that students at Margaret River Montessori School are offered a curriculum that is comparable to that which is offered in mainstream Australian Schools, teachers at the school have undertaken to map the Montessori Curriculum to the Australian Curriculum. Margaret River Montessori School demonstrates that its curriculum, teaching, learning, assessment practices and outcomes comply to requirements set out under the Government of WA’s Curriculum and Standards Authority. Our results have consistently been above benchmarks and above state averages.
0-3 Program (Montessori Playgroup)
The first six years of life are the most fundamental in the development of human beings and their potential, (Montessori Australia Foundation). This is when children learn instinctively from their environment using an unconscious process of absorption. The aim of the Montessori 0-3 Program is to facilitate the child’s growing need for independence, order, movement and language and to increase the parents’ awareness of their child’s capabilities and needs. The sessions provide time for you and your child to have fun exploring and learning together without the distractions experienced at home. Parents are shown the importance of allowing their child to complete and repeat tasks without interruption or interference. There is a wide range of age appropriate activities, prepared for by a qualified early childhood Teacher who will observe, guide and offer support where necessary.

Junior Primary (3-6 years)
The Montessori Junior Primary classroom doesn’t look like any other classroom. This classroom is filled with specialised equipment that is carefully arranged and displayed, and available for use. The furniture is all child-sized, and children use real life materials as they go about their daily life. Structured to encourage our children’s participation, the activities are part of a carefully planned curriculum that starts the first day a child enters the school at 3 years of age, through to the day they move through to secondary school. At 3 years of age children attend school for half a day Monday to Friday and transition to full days when readiness is shown. In the Junior Primary classes there are 5 defined areas, focusing on the children’s interests and their developmental needs:

- PRACTICAL LIFE: Children are encouraged to look after themselves and their classroom environment independently.
- SENSORIAL: The senses of sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell are developed.
- LANGUAGE: Learning tools such as textured letters are introduced to begin reading and writing.
- MATHEMATICS: Tactile materials are used for counting and participating in game-like activities.
- CULTURAL: The children are introduced to the world in which we live.

Montessori Middle Primary is a natural progression from the Junior Primary, where the foundations are allowed to flourish and grow. In this classroom there is still a lot of movement and work in small groups. Children change dramatically at around 6 years of age and the Montessori environment changes to meet their needs. They become intellectual in nature and begin to move from concrete to abstract reasoning. They learn through discovery and creative problem solving. It is through a child’s own exploration, imagination and creativity that knowledge and concepts are understood and mastered. Children must be allowed to grow at a developmentally appropriate rate.

Upper Primary (9 - 12 years)
Upper Primary is a time when students move from concrete thinking to more abstract thinking and become more aware of the world and those around them. They are encouraged to become active citizens of their class, school, community and the world. This is a time of great moral development which leads students to ask important questions about the world and their part in it. Students participate in a Social Education program which promotes co-operation, tolerance and above all else, peaceful interactions with all. With an aim for excellence, students are encouraged to perform to the best of their abilities and reflect on their performance in order to set personal goals for further improvement.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

At what age should my child start a Montessori education?
The 0-3 is the perfect beginning to your child’s Montessori education. When you accompany your child and participate in this foundation programme you are demonstrating the importance of lifelong learning. It is the ideal preparation for the “Children’s House”. Formal education begins at three years of age when intelligence and social characteristics are being formed. Maria Montessori called this the ‘Absorbent Period’. It is advisable however to place your child on the waiting list early.

What is the difference between sending my child to Margaret River Montessori School at three and day-care?
Montessori is formal education, not child care or kindy. The activities are part of a carefully-planned, purpose-filled formal curriculum that begins the first day the child enters the school. Children still have the opportunity to play, but the opportunities are crafted and intentional, according to the learning needs of the children.

How will my child interact and cope in a multi-age classroom?
Multi-age classrooms offer a number of advantages which enhance a child’s educational experience. All social groups interact within a wide range of ages; it’s the natural way for humans to relate. Children learn from their peers as well as their teacher. There are always groups of children working at the same developmental, academic or interest level. A family/community atmosphere is fostered within the class and school.

What level will my child be working on? What if they are ahead or behind for their age?
The Montessori Method caters for every child as an individual. Children progress at their own rate. At Margaret River Montessori School students who enrol from other Schools commence on a four week trial basis following consideration of their educational records. This period provides time for careful observation and assessment of the individual child’s needs. Unlike mainstream schools, there is no student-to-student competition within Montessori classrooms. Children gain confidence in their abilities as they successfully complete their self-correcting exercises. The level and ability of each child are continually monitored and, if a learning difficulty arises, that child will receive additional support to get them over that hurdle.
Do children enjoy the opportunity to play at a Montessori school?

Of course children enjoy play in a Montessori school. In the Montessori method the outdoor environment is intrinsically connected to the indoor classroom environment. Children have extensive opportunities to explore the outdoors on playground equipment, in sandpits, in the kitchen gardens as well as having access to a range of physical activities and sporting equipment at lunchtime. In addition, during indoor class time where children enjoy freedom, within limits, to practise lessons with the Montessori materials, they are enjoying focused and intentional ‘play’ that leads to real educational outcomes.

In 2014 we began to upgrade our outdoor play area into a nature based playground. The newly renovated playground allows students to explore and enjoy an environment they want to play in that also encourages them to be creative. Teachers and parents worked hard to create a design and install it into the school while the children eagerly awaited the results. It’s all about child led play. We have removed all hazards but the new space still allows for small risk situations where children are challenged and learn to cope and overcome obstacles through problem solving. This includes the use of recycled tires, a wooden boardwalk, a small boat on an ocean of sand and various other pieces that work to form a natural landscape to play in.

How does Margaret River Montessori School fit in with the National School testing programmes?

As in all schools in Australia, Margaret River Montessori School is required by law to undertake compulsory National Testing of students in Years 3, 5 and 7. Individual families can choose to withdraw their child from the NAPLAN testing by informing the school in time.

How will my child handle the transition to a traditional high school?

Experience shows that Montessori children cope and achieve very well in other schools. They make the transition very well both emotionally and academically. This is not a random outcome but something they have been prepared for. Montessori aims to develop children who are independent, responsible, well organised, self-motivated and adaptable. These traits play an important part in a successful transition.

Knowledge can be best given where there is eagerness to learn, so this is the period when the seed of everything can be sown, the child’s mind being like a fertile field, ready to receive what will germinate into culture.

~ Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential
Application For Enrolment

Application is hereby made for the admission of: ................................................................. (Child’s full name)

As a student in the Margaret River Montessori School to start in Term .......... in the year ........................................

DATE OF BIRTH: ........................................ GENDER: M F

HOME ADDRESS: .................................................................................................................. POSTCODE...........

POSTAL ADDRESS: .................................................................................................................. POSTCODE...........

PHONE NO: (H)................................. (W) ................................................ (MOB) ..................................................

EMAIL ADDRESS: ....................................................................................................................

FATHER’S NAME .................................................. MOTHER’S NAME: ..................................................

Student’s residency status: □ Australian citizen □ Other ________________________________

If the student is a permanent or temporary visa holder please provide the following information:

Current Visa Sub-Class __________ Visa Expiry Date ___________________

Has your child been referred to any health specialists, i.e. Speech, Occupational Therapist, and does your child have any special needs (academic/social/emotional)?

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We acknowledge that we have provided all relevant information that may affect our child’s transition into this school and that we have read the Prospectus and current Fee Schedule. We understand that new students are admitted on a 4 week trial period and that our agreement to pay tuition fees for the full 4 week period is not subject to adjustment because of illness or absence from the school for any cause unless prior arrangements have been made with the Margaret River Montessori School Council.

Guardianship / Custody - Name of person(s) who has legal custody / guardianship of the child:

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SIGNATURE: .......................................................... DATE: ....................
(Parent / Guardian)

SIGNATURE: .......................................................... DATE: ....................
(Parent / Guardian)

An application fee of $120 is required when submitting this form.

Application Fee Payment - Cash / Cheque payable to Margaret River Montessori School / Credit Card Master Card or Visa)

Credit Card No: ............... ............... ............... ............... Expiry Date: ........../ .............

Signature of cardholder: ..........................................................