

Family Handbook



MARGARET RIVER
montessori
SCHOOL

Education in Harmony with Life

Last updated 25/01/2021

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Margaret River Montessori School has redefined our **Vision and Mission Statements**. Please take a minute to read and absorb these powerful messages:

our vision >

To raise the next generation of **thinkers** - strong academically, creative, imaginative and confident in their abilities; **aware**, conscious of the environment and their place in a global world; **spirited**, with an understanding of themselves, their self-worth and the joys of **kindness** and **friendship**, with unbridled energy and a **thirst for learning** to last a lifetime.

To provide a quality, innovative **Montessori** education in a **safe**, respectful and nurturing environment. Our child-centred, **individualised** approach motivates young people to be: engaged in the joy of play and life-long learning; inspired with a desire to be **independent** and achieve their best; filled with self-belief, acceptance of differences and willingness to contribute meaningfully to their **community**.

We have also established these **Five Outcome Pillars** that will help our students for life.

There is also more information about this available on our website.

< our mission



Principal's Welcome

Welcome to Margaret River Montessori School. As an Independent school offering quality individualised education, we are part of the global Montessori system and have close ties to other Australian Montessori schools and particularly those in Western Australia. In addition, we hold membership through Montessori Schools and Centres Australia (MSCA), Montessori Australia (MA) and to the Association of Independent Schools of WA (AISWA). We are outward looking with strong environmental and peace outcomes and work in partnership with local community groups. We have an after school sports and cultural activities programme and invited guests provide a wide range of interesting topics to motivate and challenge our students. We are fortunate to have an amazing natural bushland environment and beautiful landscape including a natural wetland on our property, which forms a central part of our education program. We have a strong focus on embedding indigenous cultural practices and knowledge and valuing our natural environment and provide children with ecological learning experiences in our many edible garden and native bushland learning areas. The children also have regular opportunities to engage in hands-on scientific investigation of the native flora and fauna found in the wetland through our partnership with the Nature Conservation Margaret River. We look forward to meeting you and being part of the learning journey of your child.

Lisa Fenton
Principal

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2021 MRMS STAFF

Admin

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0-3 Playgroup

Facilitator: Denise Fowler and Rae Pethica playgroup@margmont.wa.edu.au

Junior Primary

Teacher:	Raylene Field	banksia@margmont.wa.edu.au
Teacher:	Jan Johnson	marri@margmont.wa.edu.au
Teacher:	Sue Gaunt	banksia@margmont.wa.edu.au
Teacher:	Demi Wright	demi@margmont.wa.edu.au
Ed Assistant:	Sue Peters	Ed Assistant: Corinna Iddon
Ed Assistant:	Gayna Luck	Ed Assistant: Jesse Pateman

Middle Primary

Teacher:	Jordan Bernhardt	melaleuca@margmont.wa.edu.au
Teacher:	Lee-Anne French	peppermint@margmont.wa.edu.au
Health Teacher:	Cindy Heyes	cindy@margmont.wa.edu.au
Ed Assistant:	Cindy Heyes	Ed Assistant: Trish Murray
Ed Assistant:	Jana Wittorf	

Upper Primary

Teacher:	Rosie Campbell	acacia@margmont.wa.edu.au
Teacher:	Olly Chanin	jarrah@margmont.wa.edu.au
Teacher:	Tori Franks	physed@margmont.wa.edu.au
Ed Assistant:	Sandi Macdonald	Ed Assistant: Jesse Pateman

Specialist Areas

Language Teacher:	Karen Haslau	karen@margmont.wa.edu.au
Music Teacher:	Tony Lane	music@margmont.wa.edu.au
Art Teacher:	Rona Mirtle	art@margmont.wa.edu.au
Phys Ed Teacher:	Tori Franks	physed@margmont.wa.edu.au
Library Officer:	Cath Sharwood	library@margmont.wa.edu.au
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Education Support

Coordinator of Student Learning and Development:
Olly Chanin jarrah@margmont.wa.edu.au

Ed Support Teacher: Karen Haslau karen@margmont.wa.edu.au

Ed Support Assistants: Hayley Valesini, Jana Wittorff, Erica Teasdale

EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

Introducing Montessori

Dr Maria Montessori developed her method of education from her observations of children and their learning. At the time, it was revolutionary, and the results were to prove phenomenally successful. Many of her methods have been absorbed into other education systems. Her aim was to educate the whole child: to develop confidence, self-discipline and a love of learning; a child who is therefore confident both socially and academically. Dr Montessori believed that children have an innate, positive attitude to learning. The Montessori approach is child centred but adult-guided. It is structured but free for learning, and emphasises learning in an enjoyable way. It has been well researched that the first six years of life are the most fundamental in the development of human beings and their potential (Montessori Australia). This is when children learn instinctively from their environment using an unconscious process of absorption. (Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*). The infant's physical development is phenomenal. At around 3 years of age, the child is beginning to look for peer contact and new experiences. This is the optimum age to begin pre-school.

National Montessori Affiliations

Our School is registered with two national Montessori peak professional bodies.

Montessori Australia was set up to provide, nationally, services that would be difficult or impossible to set up by individual schools or state-wide Montessori organisations. Montessori Australia offers an extensive range of services to support Montessori in Australia. These include services for Montessori schools, Montessori professionals and parents. <https://montessori.org.au/>

Montessori Schools and Centres Australia provides direct governance and professional support to Montessori School and Daycare Centres nationally. MSCA is a non for profit entity whose objects are to promote, strengthen and sustain quality Montessori education for Australian students. <https://msca.edu.au/>

Parent Library

We have a wide variety of Montessori literature, articles and journals in our Parent Library located in the office. We also stock readings and DVDs on a variety of parenting related topics and from a variety of authors. Parents may borrow from the Library via the front office.

Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and WA's School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) have officially recognised the Montessori National Curriculum as an approved curriculum to be delivered in Australian schools. The Montessori National Curriculum Framework brings together in one document the educational goals and curriculum content applied in Montessori schools throughout Australia to support the development of infants, children and young people from birth to adulthood. The curriculum on which this framework is based is an international curriculum shared by Montessori schools throughout the world. This framework includes an overview of the pedagogical principles that guide practice in Montessori schools, principles that emerged from the pioneering research and insights of Dr Maria Montessori. The recognition of the Montessori National Curriculum is an enormous step forward for Montessori Education in Australia providing official government endorsement that the Montessori Curriculum meets all the national education standards. It will enable Montessori schools to implement the Montessori programme in its entirety without having to adapt or compromise key principles and practices.

Features of a Montessori classroom:

- An individual program suited to the needs of each child.
- Children working at their own pace without competitiveness.
- Freedom developed through self-discipline.
- Movement from concrete experiences to abstract concepts through specially designed materials.
- A teacher that observes and responds to the needs of each child, who directs, rather than teaches.

- A range of age groups working together, the older children acting as role models.
- A strongly developed work ethic that fosters respect for others and for one's own work.
- Each child is encouraged to develop a joy of learning and a love of life.

Our program begins with playgroup. The aim is to facilitate the child's growing need for independence, order, movement and language. This early foundation complements family learning. Children eagerly transition to Junior Primary where Montessori teachers guide the children's learning through the period of 3-6 years. Children learn in a prepared environment from the broad Montessori curriculum. Outdoor education is important and practical life work is featured in the classroom. The classrooms are known by native tree names— JP1 (Marri) and JP2 (Banksia).

Junior Primary Level:

At Junior Primary Level, (3-6 yrs.) children work to develop themselves as independent people, to grasp reality and to acquire a fund of facts and impressions. They are primarily interested in **what** and **where**.

The prepared environment, structured to aid this development, provides five areas of activity:

- **Practical Life Exercises**
- **The Sensorial Apparatus**
- **The Language Programme**
- **Number Work**
- **The Culture Area** which includes elements of **Geography, Biology, History, Art, Music** and **LOTE**

The Extended Day

At some point around the child's fourth birthday, they are invited to stay all day on some days and participate in the extended day program. This transition is dependent upon many factors, including the child's maturity, a willingness to move onto work that is more challenging, the ability to sustain an independent level of work with reduced supervision, gravitation towards the older children for friendships and an ability to separate from parents. Extended day children are better able to accommodate additional curriculum activities with a change of staff, which includes Japanese, music, physical education, excursions and swimming. A transition to the full time program is preceded by consultation with parents and is monitored to maintain a happy outcome for everyone involved.

Children transition to Middle Primary after approximately 3 years in JP. The education we provide is completely tailored to the individual child's needs. Middle primary is the first stage of *Cosmic Education* where all the components of the curriculum are integrated together. It is a time of great "wonderings" when children ask the "big" questions about life and living and who we are as cultural beings. Children work more collaboratively together and there is also quiet concentration as children focus on the enjoyment of their learning. Middle Primary children greatly enjoy the social aspect of school and play. The names of these 2 classes are MP1 – Melaleuca and MP2 – Peppermint.

Middle and Upper Primary Level:

Montessori described the Primary Level as "cosmic education" to denote the breadth of its scope. This level aims to expose the children to the structure and understanding of all subject areas. It is divided into two stages: 6-9 years (Middle Primary) and 9-12 years (Upper Primary). The children at this level are characterised by their social orientation, their questioning minds and their energy for research. They learn through their intelligence and their imagination, and want to know **why** and **when**. The curriculum covers all of the following areas: **History, Geography, Biology, Language, Maths, Geometry, The Arts, Physical Education, Technology and Spirituality**. Upper Primary (Acacia and Jarrah), consolidates the abstraction processes begun in middle primary after a solid foundation of concrete learning. The age range is generally 9-12 years and students are developing their strong moral compass. Students work in small groups and whole class activities as well as taking responsibility for their own individual learning programme. This is the time when an awareness of feelings and sensitivity to and consideration for the feelings of others and the environment are foremost.

Work Cycle

We strive for a morning work cycle of three hours. Higher levels of concentration are gained through little disruption whilst the work period is on. Therefore, outside time is limited to jobs in the outdoor learning environment. Children self-select activities with guidance and supervision for this time and intuitively begin to extend their ability to remain deeply focused for longer periods of time. We strive for few external interruptions during the morning work period.

We ask parents to be punctual to avoid disruption. Children may enter the classroom from 8.30am, and should be inside the classroom by 8.45am.

Languages, Music, Phys Ed, Visual Arts, Technologies, STEAM.

- The School has a strong Japanese Languages program presented by a specialist Languages Teacher and is taught to all full-time children.
- A specialist music teacher provides a creative music programme for all full-time students. Music has a fine tradition at MRMS. Children are exposed to many musical instruments after they have played the musical bells in Junior Primary where they learn the basis of music.
- Physical Education is an important part of the curriculum with a variety of bat and ball games, skills and cooperative play being taught. Although Montessori schools are non-competitive, the playing of sport is encouraged, with fundamental movement and game skills taught each week. Occasional After School Sport Programmes run throughout the terms.
- A specialist Art teacher provides art tuition to Middle and Upper primary. Students enjoy access to a variety of art techniques as well as learning about art history.
- Students are introduced to the place of digital and design technologies as per the WA Curriculum and Assessment Outline in line with the Montessori National Curriculum and via our STEAM programs (integrated Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths). The use of digital technology by students as a tool for learning, research, recording and presenting is integrated into the classroom at Middle Primary and is an important part of the students' work in Upper Primary.

Morning Tea, Lunch and Drinks

In Junior Primary our part-time children need to bring morning tea in a small container. All children may bring one piece of fruit or vegetable, some crackers or a small sandwich to eat during the morning. Students choose to cut up their piece of fruit or leave it whole. For fulltime Junior Primary children please provide a lunchbox that fits in the cubby space and one that your child can open easily on their own. Ask your child to practise this minor but important operation before buying a new lunch box. This will contribute to independence at meal times at school.

We strongly encourage being waste wise as much as you can! Middle and Upper Primary children need enough food for morning tea and lunch. Please include only wholesome healthy foods such as fruit, sandwiches, vegetable sticks and dips with some protein to sustain prolonged learning. We ask that each child has a water bottle and filtered water is provided for refilling in each classroom.

Parents must refer to the signs posted at the entrance of each room for foods to be excluded as per our Allergy Awareness Procedures.

News and Show and Tell

Please check with your class teacher as to what day and how Show and Tell is conducted in your child's classroom. This occurs in Junior Primary and Middle Primary.

Homework

It is not the policy of the School to give set amounts of homework, other than our daily Home Reading Program. Encourage your child to read, write stories or poems, do their own research, practise music, times tables, etc. We also encourage children to explore play and to contribute to the family through chores. In Upper Primary, there may be times when work is taken home to finish however; this is negotiated on an individual basis.

Home Reading

All fulltime students visit and borrow from the school library each week. Children bring home Non Fiction or Fiction books of their choice. Children also bring home readers from our Home Reading Program. These books are selected by the teacher according to the child's instructional reading level and are intended to be read daily by the child (once they can read independently) to their parents.

Please see the Home Reading Journal and handouts from your child's teacher for more advice and strategies for success. We encourage you to use correct language with your child, e.g. Bird not birdy. When labelling or writing your child's name, please ensure that you use cursive and a capital letter at the beginning of the name, and lower case for the rest of the name. Also, please give your child the 'sound' of the letter, not the name e.g. 'a' as in apple, not the letter 'a'.

Camps and Excursions

The aim of excursions differs for Junior Primary compared to Middle and Upper Primary. The aim for Junior Primary is to allow exploration and knowledge of different natural environments, and to promote physical development. For older children, the exploration is of the different aspects of the community in which they live, how the many parts fit together and depend upon one another, the work that people do and the ways different products are manufactured. Upper and Middle Primary students also attend an annual outdoor education camp and are involved in the organisation and preparation of their camp. These camps have a strong focus on caring for our environment, caring for ourselves and caring for our friends.

Birthdays

Student Birthdays – Ceremony and Timelines

A child's birthday is acknowledged by the classroom in a variety of ways however, in order to prevent competition and for health reasons, birthday cakes/treats from home are not permitted. If birthdays are not celebrated in your family please consult with the class teacher. It is important that teachers acknowledge children's birthdays, even ones that occur on weekends and in school holidays. Regular methods may be selected from:

- Gathering at the end of the morning/day to sing happy birthday and give the child compliments
- Sit in a circle and complete the Montessori birthday 'walk around the sun' ceremony and sing the song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9KnFEGZKng>
- Children bring in a photo from the age they are turning to add into their Timeline Booklet and write a small entry about what they were doing at that time in their lives.
- The Timeline Booklets begin with the child in Junior Primary and are continued in Middle and Upper Primary. Children are supported by staff in JP but can become increasingly independent in filling out their Timeline Booklets as they get older, creating a journal like memoir of their primary school years.

Parent - Teacher Conferences, Records and Reports

Observations and Conferences

Conferences between parents and teachers are an important means of communication and are actively encouraged. It is school policy for such conferences to be held at least twice a year with each family, and, whenever possible, both parents should attend. This, of course, does not preclude additional interviews when parents have a specific issue to discuss. At least one Observation is necessary in your child's class each year; you will then have some firsthand knowledge of your child's learning environment.

Assessment and Reporting

Parents, teachers and the children themselves will wish to be aware of the stages of development that they have reached. The most valuable way of reviewing this development for the teachers is by the teachers' observation, the child's visible work, teacher-child discussions, and teacher-parent conferencing.

Assessment Reports are produced at the end of each semester. They aim to give an outline of the child's development socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. These reports comply with the Department of Education Services' requirements in regard to mapping children's progress through levels in the Learning Areas of the Montessori National Curriculum. Reports are a way of communicating individual student progress to parents and not a way of comparing students. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) of WA have officially approved our school's reporting methods.

		Observations / Classroom Visits	Meetings with Teachers	Portfolios	Seesaw	Written Report
Junior Primary	Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten	we encourage parents/carers to undertake observations of their child at least twice per year and visit classrooms as often as possible.	Parent/Teacher meetings should occur at least twice per year either at the request of the Teacher or the Parent or both.	<p>These are maintained throughout the year for each child and are presented to them to keep as a memento at the end of JP, MP and UP.</p> <p>Portfolios can be viewed at any time upon request.</p> <p>Portfolio celebrations are an opportunity held at the end of each year for parents to visit classrooms and for children to showcase their work to their parents.</p>	<p>Seesaw is a digital portfolio or digital learning platform. It is a way of students sharing their learning with their parents. It is password protected and cannot be viewed unless you have a secure login.</p> <p>As it requires the taking of photos and videos and uploading them to the site it will mainly be used by students able to do this independently.</p>	A written report is not required. Parents can request to view their child's portfolio at any time.
Junior, Middle and Upper Primary	Pre-Primary to Year 6					<p>Students receive two full written reports per year as per State and Federal Government requirements and approval of the Montessori Curriculum and reporting process.</p> <p>Written reports demonstrate the child's level of progress and achievement against the state achievement standards and are therefore a chance for parents to see their child's progress and achievement as comparable to that of all students in Western Australia.</p>

Safe Use of Technology and Online Environments

Students in MP and UP are provided with clear guidance on the boundaries for technology and internet usage at school. MP and UP students must sign a contract at the beginning of each year. This will be distributed and collected by your child's class teacher. Students in JP do not use devices themselves but are introduced to the place of technology and the internet in our society.

Behaviour Management

A Montessori classroom has freedom within limits. The limits are those necessary for the harmony of any community. Children are expected to be caring, considerate and courteous and encouraged to consider the other person's point of view, respect his or her rights, and solve problems with discussion and reason. We endeavour to ensure that children are impressed with the needs of reality, not with the power of adults. We use the logical consequences of a child's misbehaviour to guide appropriate behaviour. All children have "Grace and Courtesy" lessons which give the child the chance to practise appropriate ways of behaviour and also to see other children model various responses to situations.

The Montessori approach is based on a profound respect for the child. It does away with the necessity for coercion by means of reward and punishment, by achieving an active discipline instead, which originates from within the child rather than being imposed from without. It allows the child liberty, not licence, to pursue the development of will and construction of self.

Restorative Justice:

When situations occur we employ a restorative justice approach with the child to ensure each 'mistake' they may make is a learning opportunity with guidance for growth and repair. It involves a 5 step approach:

- What happened?
- How did I feel?
- How did the other person feel?
- What will I do differently next time? and
- How can I make amends?

Making amends may not include saying sorry. We do not force this as it needs to be genuine. We offer a range of options for making amends if a child is having difficulty with this. If necessary, we will role play and walk side by side with the child to guide their play and interactions successfully.

Transition

Transition between phases: We aim to be flexible with transition and use observation to understand the intricacies of each individual child's developmental journey.

0-3 into 3-6 - This can happen any time after the child's 3rd birthday and once they are fully toilet trained. Please ensure you have completed an Application for Enrolment Form to ensure you are on our waitlist for 3-6/Junior Primary.

3-6 Part-time to Full-time - This is a very gradual and gentle transition process. Parents of part-time children stay in close contact with their child's class teacher about their attendance. See below for a general guideline:

- * Meet and Greet - After the Enrolment process and you have received your Letter of Offer of a place you will be invited by your child's new teacher to attend this with your child in their new classroom.
- * Orientation Day - The first day your child attends.
- * 3 half days - About 4 weeks, as an orientation period.
- * 5 half days - Until around your child's 4th birthday, although can be different for every child.
- * Extended Day Program - Full days on offer for part-time children. Request an enrolment form from the office.
- * Gradual build up to 5 full days - Your child's class teacher will formulate a plan with you for this.

3-6 into 6-9 - Usually during either the child's Pre-Primary year or their Year 1 year of schooling. Can happen middle of the year or end of the year.

6-9 into 9-12 - Usually during either the child's Year 3 or Year 4 year of schooling. Can happen middle of the year or end of the year.

9-12 into high school – The majority of our students go on to attend Margaret River Senior High School but there are other options in Busselton. The MRSHS Administration take great care to make this a smooth transition and the children and families are offered many opportunities to engage with the highschool from Year 4 onwards through parent information sessions, visits to the high school and multiple visits to our school by high school staff and ex-Montessori alumni now at the high school.

We acknowledge that every child is different and so we aim to provide flexibility with transition with the children's ultimate benefit in mind. Transition timing is not just based on your child's birthday but on their social, emotional and academic development, as well as that of other children in their current and receiving cohorts. Please speak to your child's class teacher or request a copy of our Transition Policy if you would like further information.

SCHOOL ROUTINES

School Times

Part-time Children

8:45am - 12noon

Full-time Children

8:45am - 3pm

School gates and classrooms are open from 8:30am. Children are not able to enter the School site prior to this time.

Term Dates

Term dates are advertised on our website and in our newsletters.

Parking

Please use correct entrance and exit ways on Clarke Road. All verge parking on Clarke Road is prohibited by the AMR Shire. Outside of Middle Primary on Clarke Rd and outside the Hall on Railway Tce is STAFF ONLY. Alternative parking is on the corner of Station Road and Clarke Road and on Betts Street at our wetland boardwalk. Please drive at a walking pace in carparks (5km/hr) to assist with keeping our children safe.



Buses

Any child who is 3 years and 6 months, and is living within the school bus catchment area is eligible to use School Buses. You must first register online at www.schoolbuses.wa.gov.au. Our local bus contractor is Shepherdson's Transport at 9757 2955, please contact them to arrange pick up and drop off location. Please inform us of the days that your child is to use the bus.

Bike Riding

We strongly encourage children to ride to school (either with you or on their own at an appropriate age). Bike entry and exit is via the gate on Railway terrace (behind the hall) only, to ensure children do not ride through car parking areas. Bike racks are supplied there.

Parents on School Site

Parents are welcome to enter our school site. Please do this via the front gate only. You are welcome to walk your child to their classroom and pick them up from their classroom if you like. However, please read our procedures below regarding successful drop off and pick up.

School Opening Time

Our School is NOT open for students until 8:30am. Students can only be dropped off or arrive from 8:30am. There is no supervision for students before 8:30am. If the gate you are using to enter has not yet been unlocked, please kindly wait for a staff member to arrive. Please do not climb over gates or lift children over gates and leave.

If you have work commitments and you are unable to make other arrangements please notify the front office on 9757 2564 or montessori@margmont.wa.edu.au and we are happy to assist you with this. We understand bus times are not negotiable and we are able to work with this. We thank you for your adherence to this request for the safety of our students, your children.

Drop off and Pick Up

We strongly encourage parents to handover to staff at our main gates as per the table below. Children who are handed over to staff at gates to bring their own bags and get themselves set up, show much more developed independence and resilience. Our staff provide whatever support children need to be successful at this task.

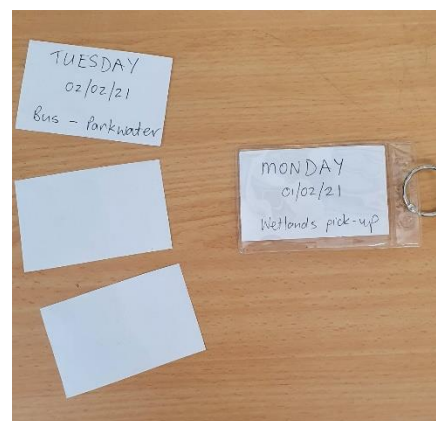
	Drop off time	Location	Drop-off style	
All ages	8:30am - 8:45am	Main gate near Admin AND Gate near Marri Class	Park and take your child to the gate (distancing) to be handed over to staff	Enter through the gate to walk your child to the classroom. *** We are experienced at assisting children to work through separation difficulties. If your child experiences separation difficulties please contact your child's teacher and we are only too happy to make a gentle and gradual plan.
All ages	8:30am – 8:45am (gate is locked after 8:45am)	MP Gate near Japanese playground	Kiss and Drop (parents do not get out of car). Cones will guide parents.	
	Pick up time	Location	Pick up style	
MP and UP	3:00pm	Wetlands	Parents wait in cars, enter from Railway Tce ON SCHOOL SIDE.	Enter through front gate to meet your child at the classroom. MP – will be waiting with a teacher at the wooden benches outside MP UP – will be waiting at the wooden benches outside UP
JP plus older siblings	3:00pm	Main gate near Admin (for Banksia students and siblings) AND Gate near Marri Class (for Marri students and siblings)	Parents park and come to gate (distancing) to collect your child	

Set your plans for the day

Students regularly become confused (and sometimes upset) when they cannot remember how they are getting home (whether or not to go to the wetlands or the bus for example). We suggest setting your plans with your child in the morning and NOT changing them. We are unable to accommodate changes (e.g. for social reasons) via the office throughout the day, unless of course in situations that become unavoidable (traffic, work, emergency, etc.).

Bag Tag for End of Day Plans In order to take away your child's anxiety about remembering how they are getting home (and eliminating the need to email or call the office) we suggest a bag tag in which you place a small note or label each day that there is a plan your child may not remember. See the example here:

If your plans are regular and your child can remember them the bag tag is not needed. It may be just for those days when the plan may be different to usual.



Sending children home with people other than yourself

You may give permission for another school parent or a relative or friend of yours to collect your children. If it is regular please inform the office and we will add them to your child's file as having on going permission to collect your child. If it is a one off the school MUST be informed ahead of time (for JP and MP children). Please do not inform the office of pick up changes that are for social reasons as we are unable to accommodate delivering messages to children and teachers for this purpose.

Dogs on School Grounds

We are unable to accommodate dogs on school grounds due to hygiene and safety requirements. If you have to have your dog with you (and sometimes it is unavoidable) please wait with them outside of any external gates.

After School Activities Drop Off and Pick Up

Music After School – All Music drop off and pick up is via the small MP gate at the southern end of the main carpark.

Sports After School – All via FRONT GATE ONLY

Late Drop Off or Early Pick Up

All entrances and exits to the School site outside of normal drop off and pick up times must be done via the FRONT GATE ONLY, and children must be signed in and out by a parent or carer in the office.

Students might be signed in late (after 9am) or signed out early via the front office (any time before 3pm).

Entering School Site outside of Drop off or Pick up

Parents entering School at any time outside of normal drop off and pick up times for any reason must be via the FRONT GATE ONLY and you must sign yourself in at the office.

UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

School Uniform

Our school uniform colours are navy blue and jade green. Please note that wearing School Uniform is optional. However the uniform is compulsory to be worn on excursions for safety and duty of care reasons, and to represent the school in the wider community. The Uniform Shop is open each Wednesday morning from the School Hall. Order forms and payment is from the front office and we do have EFTPOS. Some second items are available. We also welcome your donations of used items when they no longer fit your children.

Footwear

Sandals and lace-up shoes provide good opportunities for children to practice doing up their own buckles and laces. Other types of footwear (ie with Velcro for younger children) are certainly acceptable as they enable the child to become independent in dressing himself. Thongs, ugg boots and gumboots are not suitable as they restrict movement. Footwear needs to be well fitted, safe for children to climb and play in the playground, and the child needs to be able to put them on and off independently.

Hats

Throughout the year all children are to wear wide brimmed hats outside. A "No Hat No Play" policy applies. The uniform shop has wide brim hats for sale. We acknowledge that the UV rating is not high all year round but it we have made the decision to remain consistent throughout the year.

Suncream – Suncream is available for all students to use in each classroom. JP students are offered suncream and assisted with its application. We encourage you to apply suncream each morning at home. If you require your child to use an alternative suncream please provide it and inform your child's class teacher.

Appropriate Dress for School – We love kids to express their individuality but all clothing and shoes need to be appropriate for School – comfortable, good for climbing and floor work, sturdy, hardy, able to be managed independently.

- Not conducive to play and comfort and distract from learning - tuille skirts, tights, gumboots (too bulky for climbing), thongs (trip hazard), boots with heels, dress up type clothes, etc.
- Great for everyday – the school uniform, shorts, leggings, tracksuit pants, t-shirts, jumpers, sneakers
- Sport days require sport clothes and sneakers as the ONLY appropriate option – Please ask your child's teacher for their timetable

- Along with our Sunsmart Policy around hats, we also ask that children wear clothing that covers their shoulders.

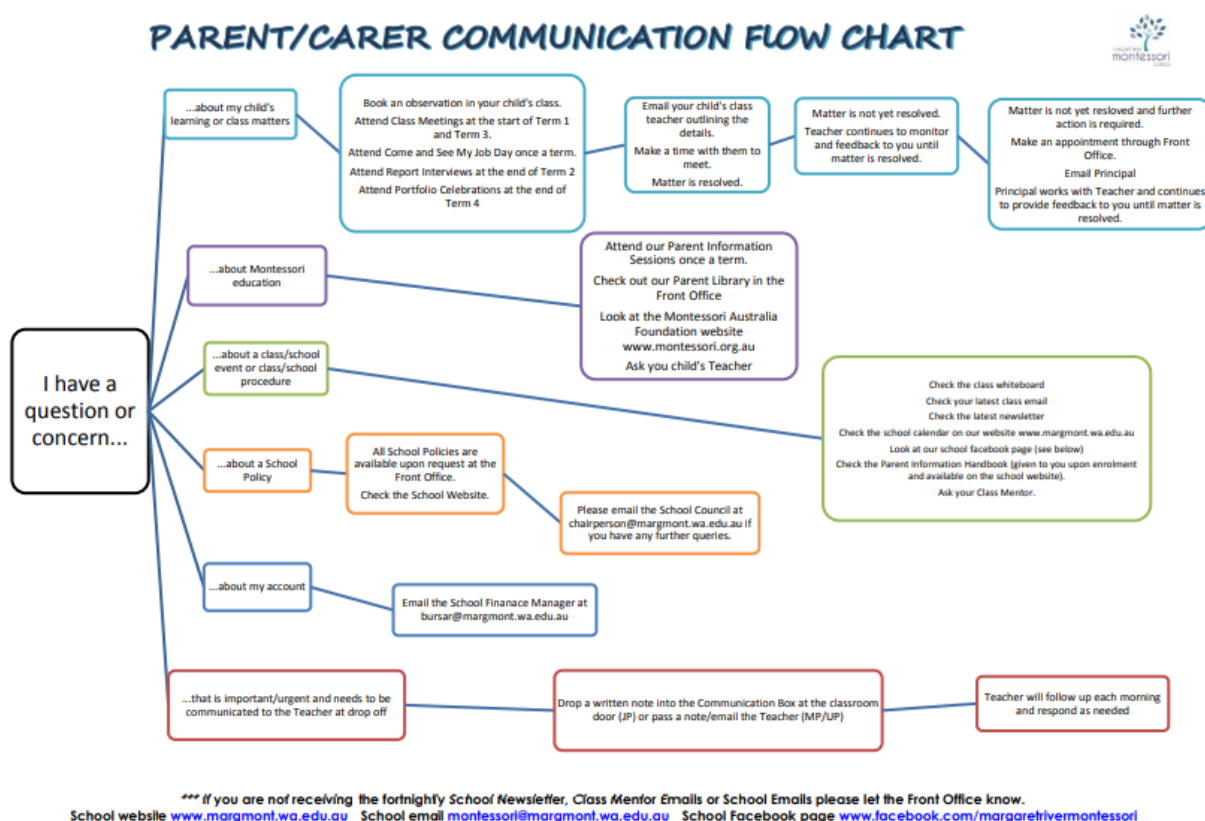
When free choice is an issue Montessori advises we provide choice within limits (ie. a choice between 'this' and 'this' instead of free choice from anything in your cupboard).

Booklists and Stationery

All student books and materials are provided to the children at school.

COMMUNICATION

It is vital for staff and Council to communicate with parents about the running of the educational program and administration of the School.



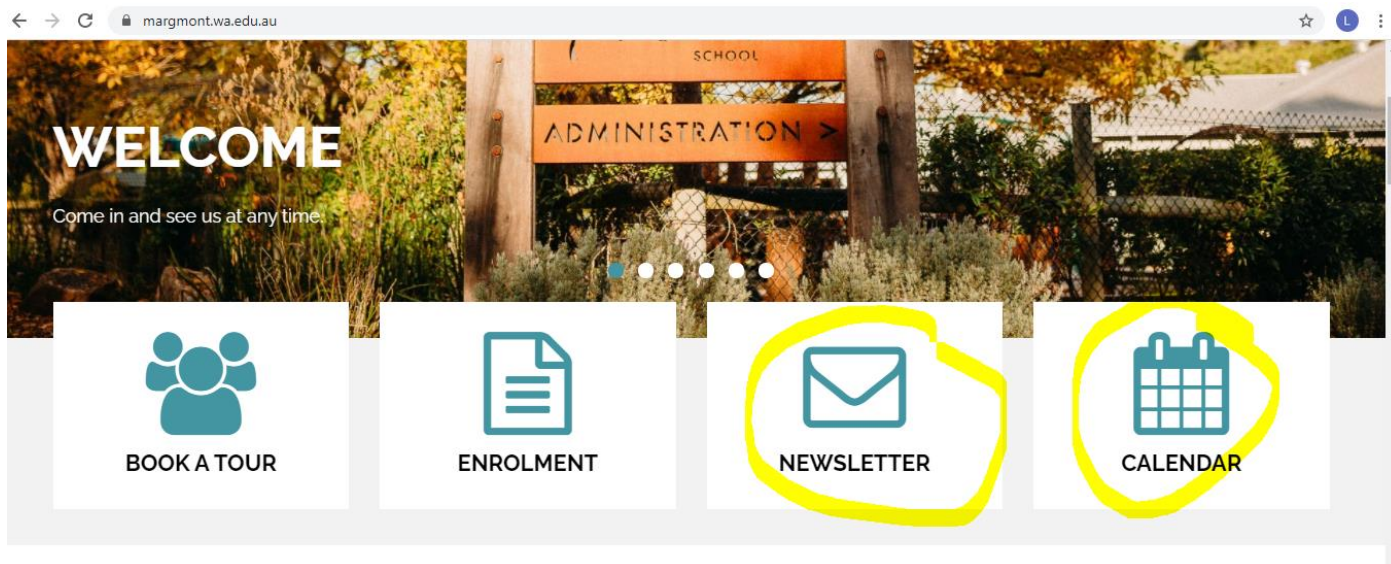
NEWSLETTER and ONLINE CALENDAR

The most important regular means of communication is the school Newsletter, which is distributed via email every fortnight. The Newsletter contains information about current school happenings, notices from the Principal, special events, requests for help, P&F news, School Council updates and term dates.

Parents, we call on you to read the newsletter and stay up to date with events that are coming up.

- Past newsletters – link to all past newsletters on our website home page
- Dates to Remember – see section in our fortnightly newsletter
- Link to Online Calendar – link via our newsletter or on our website home page





Please also take note of:

- Regular emails from Administration
- Regular emails from teachers (around once a month)
- Emails from Class Mentors
- Facebook Pages – School, P&F, Playgroup
- Website – a source of general information, including links to past newsletters and the calendar
- Monti Massive WhatsApp group – Let us know if you want to be invited to this.
- Seesaw – a School based digital portfolio platform for which you will receive your own login

Fees are emailed through our finance database. See Fees Schedule signed upon enrolment for further details.

CLASS MENTORS

We have a Parent class mentor in place for each class to support new families and to encourage a welcoming and inclusive school community. Please expect an email or phone call from the Class Mentor in your child's class and be encouraged to call on them for advice and questions.

On School Council matters:

- Annual General Meeting: This is held early in the year. It is an important event, providing parents with the opportunity to learn about important decisions and the financial situation of the School. Election of Council representatives takes place at this time.
- School Policies: These are available online on our website www.margmont.wa.edu.au
- A P&F representative is a link between the School Council and the P&F Association.

Kaigi

In Japanese "Kaigi" means "gathering". The School has a Kaigi at the end of each term. Our Kaigis are always very lively and very popular with our school community. The children perform songs, poems, etc. or present work they have been doing. Parents, relatives and friends are encouraged to attend.

Parent Commitment

Each family is requested to commit for 6 hours per term. Helping out can be:

- Participating in the school busy bee held once per term for 3 hours;
- Classroom help (excursions or cleaning, see your teacher);
- Time given by a family member (e.g. poetry, music or cooking);
- Fundraising, Raffle ticket sales, Sausage Sizzles, Cake Stalls;
- Being involved in event committees;

- Special events such as Cow Pat Lotto
- Donations of goods (e.g. wine, vouchers, gifts for raffles etc.) in place of time are accepted (equivalent value is \$150 per term or \$600 per year).

You may request to be charged for your commitment hours rather than complete them. Hours can roll over from term to term but not one calendar year to the next.

School Council

The Margaret River Montessori School Inc. is a Non Profit Organisation as per the Association Incorporation Act 1985 (WA). Its rules are contained in the school Constitution (a copy of which can be found at the school). The management of the school is conducted by a governing body known as the School Council. The School Council is composed of Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Principal, P&F Rep, and executive members. Council Members are responsible for general policy decisions affecting the management of the school.

Parents & Friends Association

Constitution: a copy to be found at the school. The P&F Association plays a major role in the running of the school. P&F meetings are held monthly where major decisions supporting the children's education occur. P&F reps are elected by the Parents & Friends Body at the annual AGM. The P. & F. executive is composed of Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Executive Members.

School Policies

Our School Policies are available by request or can be viewed on our website [here](#).

Concerns and Complaints

If you have an educational concern, you should make an appointment with the appropriate teacher.

Communication is important. We cannot solve problems if we do not know about them. The teachers are most willing to discuss any educational matters that may be of concern. If this discussion is unsatisfactory the matter should be referred to the Principal. For School Council related matters you should talk to your Parents and Friends representative on the Committee, or contact the Council in writing.

Student Complaints Process

If students have a concern or a complaint they are welcome to come and talk to any staff member that they feel comfortable to talk to or put can put their complaint in writing.

A Concern: is something that is worrying you that can usually be solved quickly by talking to the person involved or the class teacher or another staff member.

A Complaint: is when you think someone or the school has:

- done something wrong;
- failed to do something it/they should have done; or
- acted unfairly or impolitely.

A complaint cannot be so easily resolved. Staff members are always willing to listen to you and will help you to solve a problem you may have. They may recommend you talk to the class teacher or the Principal

Step 1: Tell someone you trust about your complaint or put your complaint in writing.

Step 2: The Principal or a staff member will contact you to make a plan.

Step 3: Set a time to meet to follow up on your plan.

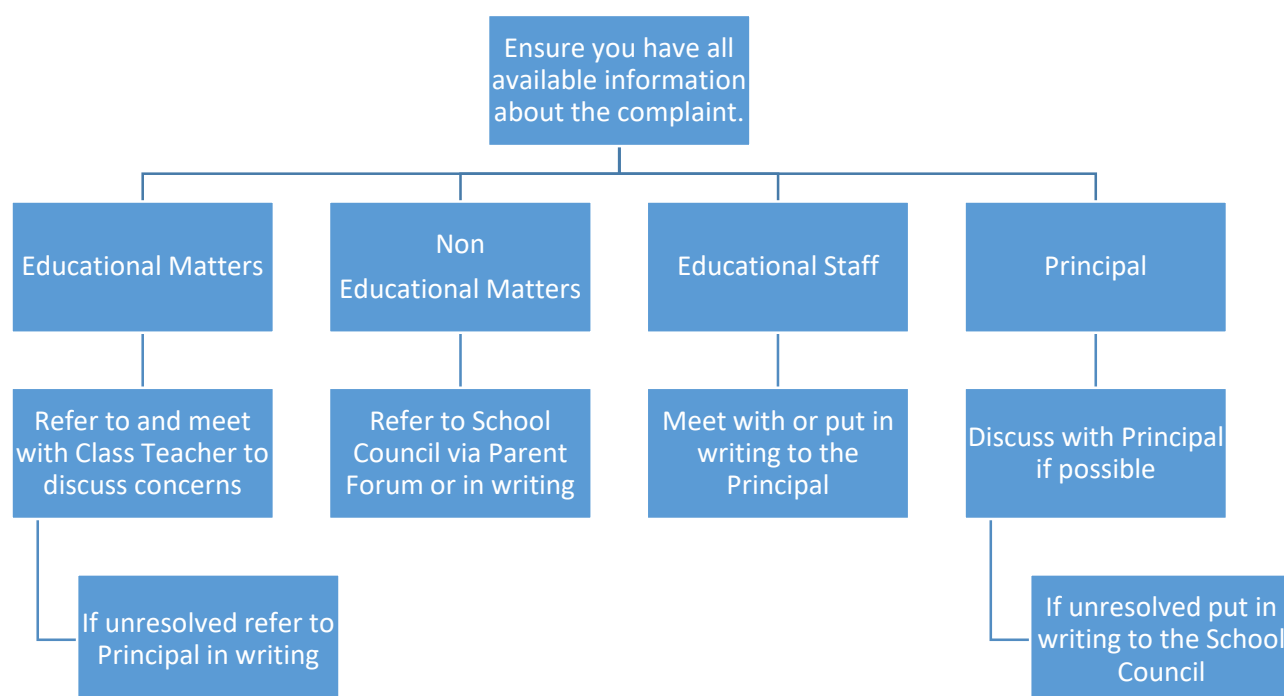
Step 4: Complaint solved. Or if not solved, go to Step 5.

Step 5: Meet and make another plan together. Persevere. Don't give up!

Each class discusses this procedure in group settings and in more detail.

Please follow the Concerns and Complaints Policy Flow Chart:

Concerns and Complaints Policy Flow Chart for Parents



ADMINISTRATION

Attendance

The Department of Education (the Department) monitors the attendance of all students enrolled in school, identifies students with attendance issues and implements appropriate measures to restore regular attendance (refer Sections 23 & 24 of the School Education Act 1999). The classroom teacher will keep the Principal advised of students who do not attend regularly at fortnightly staff meetings. Where attendance issues are identified families will be contacted by the Principal to restore an appropriate level of attendance. If a child is absent a written or verbal explanation must be received from the parent/guardian on or before the day of the absence. Parents must inform the Principal in writing of extended absences and in-term holidays. Please refer to the Fees Policy for more information.

Approved Absences - Illness and bereavement (child or family member) are the only approved reasons for absence. School work and educational support will be provided in these instances.

Family absences – Family time, birthdays, visiting relatives, etc. are not approved reasons for absence and will be considered as in term holiday absences.

In term holidays – Holidays during term time can never be considered approved absences. The School is unable to support the education of your children if you choose to absent them from school during term time.

Extended Absences - Please refer to the Fee Schedule signed upon enrolment and the Fees Policy for information about fees during extended absences.

If your child is to be absent – Please notify the front office immediately with the dates and reason for the absence (this is a legal requirement).

Absences of 5 school days or longer – Please notify the Principal in writing.

Admission/Enrolment

General

As this is a School where the child's education begins at 3 years of age it is desired, in the interest of your child, for you to plan for his/her attendance at the school until the end of his/her Primary years.

Children are admitted to the Junior Primary on, or soon after, their 3rd birthday, following teacher assessment of their readiness. This is in the form of an orientation morning, where the child attends by themselves and the parents are given feedback at the end of the session. Following feedback the child will be invited to begin their first day the following day. A 4 week "Settling in Period" will evaluate the child's assimilation into the Montessori Junior Primary. The child will then commence attending 5 morning sessions per week. A 3-4 week "Settling in Period" will apply to the new student in Middle/Upper Primary subject to the teacher's discretion. If, after the settling in period, the teacher is of the view that the child is not settling in adequately, (or over a longer period), the teacher may recommend that the child be withdrawn. The parents will be refunded the remainder of the term's fees on a pro-rata basis. In any other circumstances of withdrawal, no refund will apply, unless in special circumstances, the School Council considers a refund appropriate.

Withdrawal

One term's written notice is required for withdrawal of a child. Please refer to the current Fees Policy for more information.

Equal Opportunity

Margaret River Montessori School actively and positively supports and encourages policies which stress the importance of equal opportunity, respective of whether students are male or female, irrespective of ethnic origins and irrespective of their religious backgrounds.

Payment of Accounts

The School will issue a Fee Statement to each family four weeks before its due date. Fees may be paid by:

1) Direct deposit as per account and remittance detail on invoice;

Account: Margaret River Montessori School, Bankwest BSB 306-021; Account Number 0510267; or

2) Credit or debit card at the school office, or by phone; or

3) Cash, or cheque made payable to 'Margaret River Montessori School'.

A late fee of \$30 per four weeks overdue may be incurred on late fees.

SAFETY, HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Immunisation

Parents are required to present an Australian Immunization Register Statement (AIR), regardless of their immunisation status. This can be obtained by logging into Medicare

(<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/medicare-online-accounts>) or by phoning 1800 653 809.

Allergies and Anaphylaxis

Parents are to notify the school of any allergies their child may have.

Please refer and adhere to the current Allergy Awareness Information provided to you at enrolment. If at any time this is updated, a notification is sent out to the entire school community.

Communicable Diseases

All action in response to communicable diseases must be adhered to by parents, by reference to Communicable Disease Guidelines. (A copy can be viewed at the school.) The school will endeavor to contact families of un-immunized

children in the event of an outbreak. If an un-immunized child continues at school under the above circumstances, then parents are to present a signed note taking full responsibility for their child.

Medication at School

Staff cannot undertake assistance that will compromise normal duties/activities of the school.

All medication containers must be properly labeled with the child's name. A "request to administer medication" form, signed by a parent/guardian, is to be completed by the parent at the office when leaving medication at school.

Head Lice

Head lice are tiny insect parasites that live on the human head. Head lice reproduce by laying their eggs (nits) on the hair shaft close to the scalp. They are not dangerous, don't carry diseases and are not a sign of poor hygiene. To prevent a head lice outbreak, children found with live head lice may be excluded from school until treated. Please ask the front office for an easy and economic Fact Sheet on how to treat Head Lice successfully.

Illness at School

Children should not be sent to School when they are unwell. We will call you to collect them if this is the case to stop the spread of germs to other students and to staff. Please take note of the following guidance.

Medication – If your child needs medication of any sort in the morning to dry up their nose, stop their cough or to pep them up they are not well enough to be at school. The medication runs out after a few hours and they are then coughing and snotting again.

Noses – If your child has any mucus present they are not well enough to be at School. Children's noses run, they touch their faces, they get snot on their fingers when using tissues. We have to send a child to the bathroom to wash their hands after using a tissue and if they need a tissue constantly this is not conducive to learning for their sakes.

Coughs – A doctor once told me about one of my own children that when they are coughing they are spreading germs and they shouldn't be at school. We understand coughs sometimes linger so we use the age of the child as a determiner. Young children (JP and MP) struggle to remember to cough into their elbow every time. The less able a child is to manage their own hygiene the more precautionary we are.

Vomiting and/or diarrhoea – We will follow WA Health Department guidelines for schools, but there must be a minimum of 24 hours since the last incident before considering returning to school.

Making the Call – We will call you to come and collect your child if they are displaying signs of illness. However we appreciate you making this decision yourself to keep them at home if you notice the signs or if are unsure, rather than 'seeing how they go' at School.

If you are erring - If you are erring at all it is probably a sign that your child may need to remain at home.

Health Appraisals

Full health appraisals are done by a Child and Family Health Nurse at 4 years (Kindy). This is a free Government Health Department service. Parents may request a referral to the Child and Family Health Nurse at any time if they have concerns regarding their child's development. This must be done through your teacher.

Dentist

Our Shire is very fortunate to have the service of a Dental Van provided by the government to service local schools. All enrolled 5 to 12 year olds are offered an appointment time for a free dental check up. It is the parent's responsibility to take their child to the appointment. If you are new to the area and would like an appointment their contact number is 0407 914 864. They are located at Rapids Landing Primary School.

Child Protection

All those who come in contact with children through their everyday work whether paid or voluntary have a duty to safeguard and promote the safety of children. The School Child Abuse Prevention Policy is a public document and is available to all members of the school community via our website [here](#).

Margaret River Montessori School explicitly forbids the use of any form of child abuse, corporal punishment or other degrading punishment. Please see below for a description of these terms, as defined in the *Guide*:

Child abuse:

Four forms of child abuse are covered by WA law:

- 1) Physical abuse occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or a child's caregiver.
- 2) Sexual abuse, in relation to a child, includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:
 - a) the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence;
 - b) the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or
 - c) there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.
- 3) Emotional abuse includes:
 - a) psychological abuse; and
 - b) being exposed to an act of family and domestic violence.
- 4) Neglect includes failure by a child's parents to provide, arrange or allow the provision of:
 - a) adequate care for the child; or
 - b) effective medical, therapeutic or remedial treatment for the child.

Corporal punishment:

Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light; typically involving hitting the child with the hand or with an implement; can also include, for example, forcing the child to stay in an uncomfortable position. It does not include the use of reasonable physical restraint to protect the child or others from harm: from UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 (2006), paragraphs 11 and 15: CRC/C/GC/8, 2 March 2007.

Degrading punishment:

Any punishment which is incompatible with respect for human dignity, including corporal punishment and non-physical punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child (from UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 (2006), paragraphs 11 and 16: CRC/C/GC/8, 2 March 2007).

Parent/Carer Code of Conduct

All parents and carers agree to abide by all policies and procedures of the school upon enrolment. One such policy is the Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers, Volunteers, Visitors and Contractors. This policy is essential for all to read and is available on our School website [here](#).

Working With Children Checks

Any parents wishing to stay overnight on a school camp must obtain a WWCC and present it to the School prior to the camp. All staff, including relief staff, are also required have current WWCCs.

Photographs/Videos of Students

There are children enrolled at our school for whom parent have not provided permission to be filmed or photographed. We ask that parents only post photos or videos of their own children on social media and in other shared forums.

I'm a bit confused, can I currently come onto School grounds?

Last year a few people mentioned they were not sure about the ins and outs so we thought we'd do a Q&A because there are no silly questions and what one person asks is probably what others want to know.



COVID-related restrictions:

Do the kids, staff and parents need to continue to use hand sanitiser? AHPPC hygiene practices are still in place and with these we have also found less children and staff illnesses have occurred. Yay! However, we understand individual needs/preferences so we welcome use of your own hand sanitiser or just soap and water if preferred; just the same as some children bringing their own soaps or suncreams. Please see your child's class teacher to make individual arrangements. Hand sanitiser will be available at all gates but not required for children. Hand washing instead is available.

What about the playgrounds after school? This depends on which Phase we are up to. Ask at the school office.

When can we play after school? Afterschool play is a difficult legal issue for all schools to navigate. While it is fun and community building for parents and kids, the legal responsibility on the school and especially the Principal is untenable and most schools do not provide it. At the moment it is OK to use our playgrounds for a quick play at pick up but we ask for your cooperation with some essential guidelines:

- To concentrate the social interaction and supervision, only the MP playground area should be used
- Parents must stay in the area in which their child is playing, ie. no children up at the oval if parents are down at the hardcourt.

Standard requirements (not COVID-related):

Can I walk my child to their classroom at drop off time? Yes. Please park in the main carpark for this. Enter via one of the front gates from the main carpark.

Can I come into the school grounds to pick my child up from their classroom at pick up time? Yes. Please park in the main carpark for this. Enter via one of the gates from the main carpark.

Why are we still having drop off and pick up at gates? We have continued this practice post COVID as we have found many benefits for the children and many parents have requested that it continues to make drop off and pick up a swifter process in both the morning and afternoon.

When do I need to sign my child in or out? If you bring them after 8:45am or need to collect them before 3pm. This is ideally pre-arranged and the office has been notified. We need to record reasons for any late arrivals and any early departures for government attendance record keeping purposes.

When do I need to sign myself in or out? Any adult who enters the school grounds between 8:45am and 3pm for any reason (other than normal drop off or pick up) including teacher meetings and parent help, must come via the front office.

Why do we need to sign in and out if we are parents of the school? This is for your own safety. If we don't know you are on grounds and we need to evacuate for fire (for example) it could be dangerous for you. It is also a legal requirement for the protection of your children that no one can enter the grounds without going through the office. This was in place prior to COVID.

Where am I allowed to park (and not allowed to park)? The main carpark is the only parking for all parent and visitor parking. Please use spaces appropriately so maximum number of cars can park. Betts Rd (the wetlands) can be used as overflow parking for events and playgroup. Outside Melaleuca and the Hall is STAFF ONLY. There is NO VERGE parking anywhere around the perimeter of the school grounds by order of the Shire.

What gates can I use to come in and out? Only the gates that come from the main car park please – 2 gates into JP and one into MP. NOT the double gate outside Melaleuca. Not the back hall gate. These are staff parking only.

What if I need to drop something off to my child during school time? Please enter via the front gate and sign in at the office. You can then visit the classroom or we can take the item to your child.

What is the speed limit in the car park? We implore all drivers to drive no faster than 5km/hr or walking speed in any school car parking areas.

Now here are our questions for all parents/carers...

What other questions do you have?

What else can we help you with?

What do you need more information about?

How else can we provide what you feel you need?

Please feel welcome to drop us an email on montessori@margmont.wa.edu.au . If more questions arise we can add to this list and continue to share.



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Individual Children. Individualised Learning

