



## *School Prospectus*

*“Whoever touches the life of the child,  
touches the most sensitive point of a whole  
which has roots in the most distant past  
and climbs towards the infinite future.”*

*~ Maria Montessori*

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### Mission Statement

*To provide each child with a well-rounded individualised educational and developmental experience that is grounded in Montessori principles and that nurtures an enduring love of learning. We guide the child towards independence and self-confidence, creating a strong foundation on which to build future learning.*

## **Maria Montessori & the Montessori Method**

Maria Montessori was born in Chiravalle, Italy, on August 31, 1870 and was educated in Rome. She rebelled against the classical career choices for women at the time and in 1894 became the first Italian woman to graduate in medicine (University of Rome).

Upon graduating, her first appointment was in the San Giovanni Hospital. In 1897 she became a voluntary assistant at the psychiatric clinic of the University of Rome.

The children here were referred to as 'idiot children', but Montessori was convinced that these children were not useless – their minds had just not been stimulated. She worked with them at the clinic and gradually saw glimmers of hope as they responded to her efforts.

On searching for information about the treatment of mentally deficient children, she came across the work of two French doctors, Jean Itard and Eduard Seguin. Itard made a particular study of deaf mutes, but he is better known for his attempts over several years to educate and socialise an abandoned boy known as 'The Wild Boy of Aveyron'. His particular approach was to stimulate the boy's mind systematically through the senses.

Eduard Seguin was a student of Itard and he later founded his own school for deficient children in Paris. His particular approach was to devise a sequence of muscular exercises to bring about a change in behaviour and so educate the child through a method he described as physiological.

The study of the work of these two French doctors gave Maria Montessori a new direction in her life. She took principal ideas of 'education of the senses' and the 'education of movement' and adapted and developed them into a system that became her own.

Her next step was to turn her mind to the study of education. Through her reading, some of the ideas and insights of educational thinkers and reformers such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel became synthesised in her mind and, together with the ideas she had taken from Itard and Seguin, the 'Montessori Method' began to take shape.

By 1899 she was involved in the establishment of the orthopaedic School in Rome, where she spent two years training teachers in the special method of observation and education and experimenting, using different materials and methods and using all the ideas she had gleaned from her studies.

Some of the children she taught, who had been labelled 'uneducable', learned to read and write and some even sat the State primary examination and passed with higher grades than so called 'normal' children. These events, together with the many public lectures she gave in Italy and other European countries, brought her fame. She was now known as an 'educator' as well as 'doctor'.

In 1901 Maria Montessori gave up her work at the Orthopaedic School for personal reasons and went on to further her studies at the University of Rome.

In 1904 she was appointed Professor of Pedagogic Anthropology at the University and, at the same time, continued with her many other activities.

In 1906 Montessori was asked to organise the infant schools that were being built in a slum clearance and re-housing programme. The first school, a large tenement house in San Lorenzo, was for children aged three to six. She called it 'Casa dei Bambini', the Children's house.

In the following two years, other Children's Houses were founded. Montessori was now able to apply her methods to normal children in these schools. She believed that, if her methods achieved such startling results with retarded children, then these same methods would improve the performance of normal children.

The children in her first two Children's Houses were what we would call deprived. They were often neglected and lacked care and stimulation from their parents. In many cases the parents themselves were illiterate. Under Montessori's care, these children began to learn successfully. In another school, children from relatively privileged backgrounds also proved that Montessori's methods were superior to the conventional teaching of her day. It was soon evident, in fact, that all children were capable of achieving and becoming independent learners when taught her methods. Montessori's hopes were realised.

International fame and recognition now came quickly. Visitors came from many parts of the world to see for themselves the successful and stimulating teaching and learning taking place in the Children's Houses. They were inspired by what they saw and conveyed the word when they returned home. In this way, the Montessori movement spread all over the world. In 1909 the first Montessori Training Course was given. Private Montessori schools were established in Europe. Montessori travelled extensively, giving lectures and training courses in England, Spain, Australia,

Holland, and the Americas. Her method was endorsed and financially backed by people such as Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, Sigmund and Anna Freud, Ghandi and Piaget.

In the early twenties, Montessori was appointed Government Inspector of Schools in Italy. In 1934 friction arose between Montessori and Mussolini and all her schools in Germany and Italy were closed by 1936. With the growing political tensions in that part of Europe in the thirties, she left Spain to live in Holland. By 1939 she was in India, where she was interned throughout the war years, and developed the movement in the sub-continent. As a result, to this day India is the great centre for Montessori teaching.

The war years caused Montessori to pursue a passionate quest for lasting peace through education. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and in 1950 she became the Italian delegate to UNESCO. **Maria Montessori said, "Love is a gift to mankind, which must be treasured and developed to the fullest possible extent, for it is this that unites each and every one of us, and only in this way can we bring about a good, caring, peaceful world".**

When her internment ended in 1964, she visited England and revived interest in the movement there. For the next few years, despite advancing years, she continued to travel extensively, teaching and lecturing, and she was honoured by many countries with royal, civic, and academic awards.

She died at Noordwijk, Netherlands, on May 6 1952 at the age of 81. Following her death, the movement continued to grow steadily. By the early sixties the growth had accelerated and there was a world-wide revival of interest in her ideas that has continued to the present day.

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

### **What is it?**

It is a system of education in both a philosophy of child growth and a rational for guiding such growth. It is based on the child's developmental needs for freedom within limits and on a carefully prepared environment that guarantees exposure to materials and experiences through which to develop intelligence as well as physical and psychological abilities. It is designed to take full advantages of the self-motivation and unique ability of young children to develop their own lives, but the children themselves must direct their responses to those possibilities.

### **How did it begin?**

Dr Maria Montessori, the first woman to graduate from the University of Rome Medical School, became interested in education as a doctor treating retarded children. After returning to the University for Further Study she began her work with normal children in 1907, when she was invited to organise schools in a reconstructed slum area of San Lorenzo, Italy. Later, she travelled all over the world lecturing about her discoveries and founding schools. She died in 1952.

### **Is it for all children?**

The Montessori system has been used successfully with children aged 2 years from all socio-economic levels, representing those in regular class as well as the gifted, the retarded, the emotionally disturbed, and the physically handicapped.

It is also appropriate for classes in which the student teacher ratio is high, because the children learn at an early age to work independently.

### **Key premises of Montessori education are:**

1. Children are to be respected as different from adults and as individuals who differ from each other.
2. Children possess unusual sensitivity and mental powers for absorbing and learning from their environment that are unlike those of adults, both in quantity and capacity.
3. The most important years of growth are the first six years of life, when unconscious learning is gradually brought to conscious level.
4. Children have a deep love and need for purposeful work. The child works, however, not as an adult for profit and completion of a job, but for the sake of the activity itself. It is this activity which accomplishes the most important goal for the child, the development of his or her mental, physical and psychological powers.

### **Is the child free to do what he chooses in the classroom?**

The child is free to move about the classroom at will, to talk to other children, to work with any equipment he or she understands, or to ask the teacher to introduce new material to him or her. The child is not free to disturb other children at work or to abuse the equipment that is so important to the child's development.

### **What does it do for the child?**

Observers of Montessori children have described them as having developed self-discipline, self-knowledge, and independence, as well as enthusiasm for learning, an organised approach to problem solving, and academic skills.

### **What does the teacher do?**

The teacher is working with the individual children, introducing materials and giving guidance where needed. A primary task is careful observation of each child in order to determine his or her needs and to gain the knowledge needed in preparing the environment to aid the child's growth. The method of teaching is indirect, in that it neither imposes upon the child as in direct teaching, nor abandons the child as in a non-directive approach. Rather, the teacher is constantly alert to the direction in which the child has indicated he or she wishes to go, and actively works to help the child achieve his or her goals.

### **What happens when children go from a Montessori class to a traditional class?**

Most children appear to adjust readily to new classroom situations. In all likelihood this is because they have developed a high degree of self-discipline and independence in the Montessori environment, and because of the adaptability of young children in general.

### **How can parents help at home?**

To give the child the best opportunity for development, the Montessori principles and philosophy should be implemented in the home from birth. Parents need to read books as well as attend workshops, lectures and courses, if possible, on implementing the Montessori philosophy in the home. If the home and school environment complement each other, the child will receive the maximum benefit.

## **SUBJECTS**

### **Practical life:**

In the practical life area, children carry out familiar home activities, such as sweeping, polishing, dusting, pouring and preparing foods, etc. These activities are designed to help the child achieve independence and confidence through meaningful activity with real life objects; they help develop co-ordination, concentration, independence, hand dexterity, care of one's self and environment, patience and grace and courtesy.

### **Sensorial:**

The sensorial material allows the child to understand his environment while learning his senses. Each piece of material has one isolating quality such as colour, size, weight, size, shape, texture, sound, smell, etc. which enables the child to take in impressions with true understanding and gives purpose, order and structure to his/her learning. Montessori materials are didactic and allow the child to see his/her mistakes and correct them, which develops perseverance and a positive self-image and attitude towards mistakes.

### **Language:**

At Villa Montessori, many activities are designed to proceed naturally towards the development of skills for reading and writing. The child first learns the phonetic sounds of the letters, which leads to building short phonetic words, he/she progresses at his/her own pace to reading longer phonetic words and is finally introduced to the different parts of grammar.

### **Mathematics:**

The child is introduced to mathematics through the use of concrete materials. By working with the specifically designed materials, he/she learns the physical quantities and matching abstract symbols.

The child always works from the concrete to the abstract. By working with concrete materials, the child can see and understand the operations of Addition, Multiplication, Subtraction, and Division. A solid foundation is formed for Algebra and Geometry through working with concrete materials.

### **Cultural subjects:**

We introduce the children to cultural subjects (**Geography, History, Botany, Zoology, Science, Technology, Music and Art**). To help feed their imagination and understanding of the real world during the time that they are the most sensitive to them, which enables them to understand their role and the fact that they are part of the whole system.

## **Admission Policy**

- Discrimination is against South African law. Pupils and staff are appointed on merit. The school's ethos is rooted in the belief that all people, regardless of race, colour, language, creed and gender, are of equal worth and are treated equally in the selection for, and in the general operation of the school.
- Primary school applicants and applicants with special needs or barriers to learning may be required to spend a day or two in the classroom in order for the teacher to assess their academic, social and emotional level.
- Where selection becomes necessary because the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places, selection is based on the following criteria:
- Preference will be given to applicants who have submitted the application form and accompanying documentation, and paid the admission fees (comprised of the registration fee and the deposit).
- Preference will be given to siblings, except where this is not in the best interest of the child/children.
- Preference will be given to applicants who have previously attended a Montessori school.
- The capacity of the school to provide an acceptable quality of education to the applicant. This provision applies particularly to applicants with special needs and barriers to learning.

## **Registration & Admission Procedure**

- Telephonic/email enquiry is made by interested parents.
- School prospectus and application form is emailed.
- Application form; accompanying documentation; and proof of payment of the registration fee; is returned to the school
- Fees are payable prior to commencement of attendance.
- On the first day of school, pupils and their parents are required to arrive half an hour prior to commencement of classes in order to meet the teacher(s) and familiarise themselves with the morning routine.
- Parents of new pupils are welcome to phone the school periodically to establish how their child/children are coping with his/her/their slightly daunting, but incredibly exciting new school adventure.

## **Age Range & Classes**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toddler:<br>18 months – 3 years' old | <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood:<br>3 – 6 years' old | <input type="checkbox"/> Junior Primary:<br>6 – 9 years' old |
|---|---|--|

## **Facilities**

- All classes are equipped with Montessori materials in the practical life, sensorial, language, maths and cultural (geography, botany, zoology, history, science, music and art) subject areas.

## **Security**

- The safety of the children and staff is of paramount importance at all times.
- The property is equipped with an alarm system
- The school is linked to CPS security (24-hour armed response).
- CCTV cameras are installed in all the classes and on the playgrounds
- No child will be released to any unauthorised persons

## **Operating Hours**

- The school gate is opened at 06:45am
- **Pre-primary School Hours:**          **Primary School Hours:**
  - Half Day: 6:45am – 1:00pm     ○ Half Day: 8:00am – 1:30pm     ○ Full Day: 6:45am – 5:30pm
  - Full Day: 8:00am – 5:30pm

## Arrival & Departure Policy

- **All classes start promptly at 8:00am.** Please ensure that your child/children are not late for school, as he/she/they miss out on a vital part of their day and late arrivals are disruptive to the other children in the class.
- Children must be collected on or prior to the times stipulated above. Failure to do so will result in a **penalty fee of R100.00 per 30minutes** (or part thereof) being charged. **If you are running late, please contact the office!!**
- Children will not be released to any unauthorised person. In the event of your child/children being collected by an unfamiliar person, please ensure that, prior to collection, you inform the school with the relevant details and we will also request a copy of the person's ID (i.e. – name; relationship to pupil; and scheduled collection time).

## School holidays for primary school children

- Holidays are held in the breaks between each term.
- Aftercare children are allowed to come to school during the holidays
- A casual fee of R120.00 per day per child, which includes lunch and an afternoon snack for children who do not attend the aftercare

## Academic Staff:

### All teachers (called 'Directresses):

- are first aid and CPR trained and certified;
- are committed to life-long learning and professional development and attend workshops and training courses periodically to update, refresh and expand their knowledge and skills repertoire; □ are dedicated and loving educators who subscribe to the maxim:

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The great teacher inspires." ~ William Arthur Ward

## Absenteeism Policy

- In accordance with government policy, a pupil who has been absent, for more than thirty days, during the school year may not be promoted to the next level.
- Parents are required to notify the school office before 8:30am of their child's/children's absence.

## Medical & Health Policy

- Please do not send your child/children to school if he/she/they has/have a high temperature, unexplained rash or contagious condition.
- Should your child show any signs of illness whilst at the school, you will be notified immediately and asked to collect them, as they will be more comfortable at home.

## General School Rules

- Parents are requested not to allow children to bring toys to the school, as there is no place for toys in a Montessori environment. Also, children become distressed if a favourite toy is broken and parents are displeased if an expensive toy is lost.  
**If parents find any Montessori equipment in their child's bag, please ensure it is returned. Montessori equipment is expensive and difficult to replace, and often one missing part can render the material useless. And you will be required to replace any equipment that they break!**
- Children are not allowed to bring cell phones to school. In the event that a child needs to contact his/her parent(s), the class teacher will escort him/her to the office to use the school phone.

## **Breakfast, Lunch & Afternoon Snack**

- Porridge is served on arrival up until 08:15 every morning for preschool children only.
- A healthy snack must be packed for your child/children to eat at mid-morning snack time. A sandwich and some fruit, yoghurt and/or a cheese wedges are usually ample.
- Sweets, chocolates and fizzy drinks/Energade and high sugar biscuits are not allowed.
- **Kindly note that due to allergies Villa Montessori has a strict no nut policy!! Including all nut products (peanut butter etc....)**
- **Please do not send fruit with small seeds as the children can easily choke on these**
- A hot lunch is served to the half and full day preschool children at 12:00
- A hot lunch is served to the full day primary school children at 14:30pm with the aftercare children
- An afternoon snack, such as a sandwich & juice/tea, is served to full day children at 3:00pm.

## **School Requirements**

- Change of clothes and extra underwear for potty trainers
- Change of clothes for all the preschool children
- Sun hat and sun block in the bag everyday
- Juice/water bottle in their bag everyday
- Hand towel these will be sent home every Friday to be washed and returned on Monday
- Drinking cup with a handle to be left at school
- Children who sleep need a mattress and a mattress cover and blanket (in winter) these will be sent home every Friday to be washed and returned on Monday
- Each child that sleeps needs a stretcher bed (available from Makro)
- Disposable nappies and wet wipes required for toddlers
- 2 ID photos to accompany the application forms

## **Stationery:**

- Please ensure that all items purchased are of a good quality, as the cheaper brands break easily and you will need to replace these often.
- Please cover and label all books/files with paper and plastic.
- All personal items must be labelled (books, files)
- Items may need to be replenished during the year
- All other stationery is a shared resource for the 1 – 5 year olds
- Only pre and primary school children's stationery must be labelled individually

## **School uniform for primary school children**

- **The school uniform for primary children is compulsory** and is to be worn with neat dark blue denim long pants or shorts
- Neat Black school shoes or tekkies and black socks are to be worn with the uniform
- No boots or high heels or make up allowed at school
- Girls hair must be tied up at all times and Boys short and neat hairstyles
- Please ensure that your child has a dark black/blue coloured cap/hat in their bag everyday
- No other shirts or clothing is allowed to be visible under the uniform

## **Birthdays**

- When your child/children have a birthday during the week and he/she would like to celebrate with us on the **Friday of the birthday**, we would appreciate it if you would let us know ahead of time, as we use this as an exercise for teaching the children the understanding of time.
- Also, we thoroughly enjoy parents being able to participate in these celebrations.

## **Extra Murals**

- Please note that **Rina's Ministries Montessori Music and Tots in Teams** are compulsory and are added onto the monthly invoice. **And as an added bonus Villa Montessori pays for all children over 3 years old to do the Helen O'Grady drama program**
- A variety of other extra murals are offered at the school and interested candidates should contact the extra mural provider(s) directly and make arrangements for payment direct to them. NO cash is to be put into their boxes as the school cannot be held accountable for these monies!!

## **Code of Ethics**

- The principles and ideas of Montessori on the integrity and needs of children underpin all aspects of the school. Pupils, parents and academic and administrative staff strive to apply these same principles in their work and relationships with each other. All members are expected to act with integrity and dignity and to respect each other.

## **Preschool children are required to:**

1. arrive at school on time;
2. treat others with respect and dignity;
3. look after their own belongings;
4. pick up their own litter;
5. stay within the allocated areas in the playground;
6. respect classrooms and equipment;
7. adhere to classroom rules;
8. replace equipment that they break;
9. never throw sand, stones or sticks; and
10. Never threaten any other person physically or verbally, use racist, offensive or derogatory language, harass another person, bully or steal.

## **Code of Conduct**

- In order for us to follow the Montessori method as well as possible we have instilled some ground rules. Ground rules protect the rights and liberty of each individual child and the group as a whole. They promote the internalisation of good social behaviour and values including: self-control of impulses, consideration for others, and a sense of responsibility for oneself and the welfare of the group. Ground rules can help to make life at school easier, make the days run more smoothly, enable children to be more independent and help to develop responsibility. The number of ground rules is generally kept to a minimum stated and presented in a positive manner with the emphasis on safety, respect for others and the environment and the results benefit all members of the group.
- The children are made aware of behaviour which is acceptable and that which is not. Issues arising between children are always discussed with them first, failing which, the time-out method ("The Thinking Chair") has proved successful in the Preschool. Parents will be called in to discuss discipline problems if need be. If a disciplinary problem does arise, it is dealt with individually, keeping the child's self-esteem in mind at all times.
- Please make yourself and your child/children aware of the following general conduct rules:



## **Primary School Code of Conduct Agreement**

A detailed code of conduct to be adopted by the primary school children can be found in the Application Form ('Primary School: Code of Conduct Agreement'), which must be signed by primary school pupils and their parents and submitted with the remaining registration documentation.

## **Primary Children Discipline Procedure**

Level 1: Verbal Warning: The teacher issuing the verbal warning will hand the child a verbal warning slip, which the child needs to take home and ask a parent to sign. Verbal warning slips will be kept on file. Three verbal warnings for the same offence will lead to a written warning

Level 2: Written warning: A written warning will be given to the pupil to take home for a parent's signature and the teacher involved will contact the parents.

Level 3: disciplinary hearing: When serious offences are committed and verbal/written warnings are inadequate, the school will hold a disciplinary meeting before a decision is taken on what action should be imposed, which could result in suspension or expulsion.

## **Primary School and after care pupils must agree to:**

1. not be late for school;
2. be prepared for school;
3. do his/her work to the best of his/her ability;
4. treat others with respect and dignity;
5. look after his/her belongings;
6. respect the property of others;
7. not play in areas that are out of bounds;
8. ensure the toilet is clean and tidy after he/she has used it;
9. make sure that he/she keeps his/her classroom neat and clean;
10. make sure that he/she throws away his/her rubbish in the dustbin;
11. ensure that he/she does not misuse any of the equipment;
12. not use insulting or offensive language;
13. not bully, intimidate or behave in a violent manner;
14. not take property that does not belong to him/her;
15. observe school rules to the best of his/her ability;
16. respect his/her teacher and the teachers on aftercare duty;
17. treat the school property with respect and replace anything he/she breaks;
18. report to his/her teacher anything that makes him/her unhappy;
19. complete his/her homework every day;
20. not disturb another person working in the classroom;
21. give his/her parents notices to sign and return them to school; and
22. Read the code of conduct and understand it.

## **Admission Fees**

- Admission fees is a non-refundable registration fee
- Non-refundable registration fees are payable upon submission of application forms
- Re-registration will take place each year
- The admission fees can be made by direct deposit, or electronic transfer (EFT)

## Payment Options

- The annual fee can be paid on a monthly, termly or annual basis.
- 10% reduction of the fees for each sibling attending school – this does not apply to aftercare siblings □  
Invoices will be emailed monthly
- Overdue accounts are subject to a 10% late payment penalty charge

## Annual Fee: Option 1

- **Annual fees are payable in advance on/prior to the first day of January**
- In this case, a 5% full settlement discount is deducted from the annual fee.
- In order to be eligible for the discounted rate, fees must be paid on/prior to the first day of January.
- Payment can be made by direct deposit, or electronic transfer (EFT)
- In the case of direct deposit and EFT payments, please use your child's/children's full name(s) as the reference

## Termly Fee: Option 2

- **Termly fees are payable in advance on/prior to the first day of January, April, July & October**
- **Termly fee = annual fee ÷ 4**
- Payment can be made by direct deposit, or electronic transfer (EFT)
- In the case of direct deposit and EFT payments, please use your child's/children's full name(s) as the reference
- Overdue accounts are subject to a 10% late payment penalty charge.

## Monthly Fee: Option 3

- **Monthly fees are payable in advance on/prior the first day of each month**
- **Monthly fee = annual fee ÷ 11 for those starting in January and for existing students**
- **Monthly fee = annual fee ÷ 12 for those starting later in the year payable over 12 months i.e. until December**
- Payment can be made by direct deposit, or electronic transfer (EFT)
- Overdue accounts are subject to a 10% late payment penalty charge.
- In the case of direct deposit and EFT payments, please use your child's/children's full name(s) as the reference
- Compulsory extramural and toiletries fee will be added to the invoice

## Banking Details:

FNB

Villa Montessori Pre-school CC

Account number: 62595988943

New Market Mall (branch code:210827)

## Termination of Tuition & Notice Period Policy

- In the event that you wish to remove your child/children from the school, notice of one month must be submitted in writing to the office on or by the final day of the penultimate term of attendance.
- Failure to do so, you will be liable for one full term's fees in lieu of notice.
- We reserve the right to ask a child to leave the school if it is in the best interest of the child or the school.
- If school fees are not received monthly we will be forced to suspend tuition and the account will be handed over to Accountability, who we subscribe to and they are partners with TransUnion

Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence.

## **Conclusion**

Parents are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the contents of this prospectus and in the event that they have any queries with the information contained herein, please have no hesitation in contacting us.